



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Friday, 26 November 2021**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Friday, 26 November 2021**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea)** took the chair at 10:00.

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

## *Bills*

### **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (INDUSTRIAL MANSLAUGHTER) BILL 2021**

#### **First Reading**

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

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that I have received written authority from the Hon. Adam Searle, MLC, advising that the member for Canterbury will have carriage of the bill in the Legislative Assembly. I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for tomorrow.

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

#### **Amendments**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it does not insist on its amendment disagreed with and agrees to Legislative Assembly amendments Nos 1 and 2.

## *Members*

### **BIRTHDAYS**

**The SPEAKER:** I note that today is the last sitting day of 2021. In addition to marking Christmas and the New Year over the break, many of our colleagues will be celebrating their birthdays, including the members representing the electorates of Wallsend, Ku-ring-gai, Cootamundra, Pittwater, Myall Lakes and Maitland. I wish them all a festive break but also happy birthdays over that break.

## *Announcements*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform members that I have granted approval for one still camera photographer to cover proceedings in the Chamber today, on a pool basis, so there may be a photographer taking photographs from the back of the Speaker's gallery or from the side doors. I have also approved a photographer from the Legislative Assembly's department to take photos for the record in a discreet way.

## *Bills*

### **VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL 2021**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**Consideration resumed from 25 November 2021.**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform members that I have received three further amendments, which will be added to the other amendments to be considered. I understand that they have come from the member for Fairfield. They will be addressed in accordance with the earlier resolution of the House.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:03):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 on sheet c2021-237A in globo:

**No. 2 Eligibility criteria—diagnosis by specialist**

Page 7, clause 16(1)(d), line 34. Insert ", by a medical practitioner who holds specialist registration in the recognised specialty that is relevant to the disease, illness or condition," after "diagnosed".

**No. 3 Eligibility criteria—cause of death**

Page 7, clause 16(1)(d)(ii), line 37. Omit "on the balance of probabilities". Insert instead "to a high degree of certainty based on professional medical opinion".

**No. 6 Eligibility criteria—period to death**

Page 7, clause 16(1)(d)(iii), line 41. Insert ", after consultation with a specialist palliative medicine physician," after "that".

**No. 7 Eligibility criteria—not at the suggestion of others**

Page 8, clause 16(1). Insert after line 2—

- (ga) the person is acting on the person's own initiative and not at the suggestion or urging of another person,

**No. 8 Eligibility criteria—disability is not a disease, illness or medical condition**

Page 8, clause 16. Insert after line 8—

- (3) To avoid doubt, a disability is not a disease, illness or medical condition for the purposes of this section.

**No. 9 Eligibility criteria—mental health impairment is not a disease, illness or medical condition**

Page 8, clause 16. Insert after line 8—

- (4) To avoid doubt, a mental health impairment within the meaning of the *Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020* is not a disease, illness or medical condition for the purposes of this section.

I understand that just a few moments ago there would have been circulated to all members a sheet indicating the grouping of amendments that I intend to pursue this morning, by leave. Within that group, amendment No. 2 on sheet c2021-237A would specify that a diagnosis that a person has a relevant disease, illness or medical condition must at some point have been made or confirmed by a relevant specialist. It may have been made or confirmed by a specialist before the person makes the first request. If either of the coordinating or consulting practitioners are a relevant specialist, the confirmation may be made by them. But if at the time of the assessment neither of those practitioners is a relevant specialist and the diagnosis has not been made by a relevant specialist, then the assessment could not be finalised until such a diagnosis has been made or confirmed by a specialist. The purpose of this amendment is simply to make sure that any decision to end a person's life under the bill is based on an accurate diagnosis made or confirmed by a relevant specialist.

Amendment No. 3 would replace the current test of "on the balance of probabilities" for the prognosis of six or 12 months to live with a more appropriate test of a "high degree of certainty based on professional medical opinion". The balance of probabilities means up to a 50 per cent chance the prognosis is wrong and the person may have much longer to live than six months. During speeches from members about the bill, we heard a number of examples where that kind of thing occurred in people's own experiences. Amendment No. 6 would ensure that a person does not needlessly end their life out of a fear of inadequate pain control or other suffering that could be relieved. Sponsors claim that the bill is targeted at a small number of people whom palliative care cannot help. The fear that palliative care cannot relieve a person's suffering should be tested by a consultation with a specialist palliative medicine physician, who are the experts in complex and difficult cases. The amendment would ensure that consultation with an appropriate palliative care practitioner was included in the process.

Amendment No. 7 strengthens the protections from elder abuse and coercion by explicitly excluding requests made not voluntarily but at the suggesting or urging of another person. Amendment No. 8 clarifies that a disability is not a disease, illness or medical condition for the purposes of this section, and amendment No. 9 clarifies that a mental health impairment is not a disease, illness or medical condition for the purpose of this section. There is a clause in 16 (2) that addresses this issue at the moment, but I believe these two amendments are necessary because of the word "merely" in that clause. Including the word "merely" leaves open a possible application where, for example, a mental health impairment, such as bipolar disorder, could be held to be a relevant medical condition if it was considered resistant to treatment and associated with suicidal ideation or other life-threatening behaviour likely to result in death within six months. Amendments Nos 8 and 9 would clarify that this is not the intended outcome. They are there to strengthen the intent of a clause already in the bill.

As I have said previously, I am looking to strengthen the protections in the bill to ensure that it achieves its stated objective in these cases. Since the House indicated principle support at the second reading stage, I am not looking to frustrate but to ensure that, if the bill is going to proceed, it goes forward with the strongest possible protective terms so that vulnerable people who are not supposed to be caught up in the bill are in fact not caught up in the bill.

I make a few more comments about the test that I am proposing of a "high degree of certainty based on professional medical opinion". I do not believe that we should be proceeding to make voluntary assisted dying available for people who might or might not be in their last six or 12 months but rather those that we are very confident are in their last six or 12 months. There is a distinct difference when talking about a decision that involves death. The degree of certainty should be higher than a mere probability of a 51 per cent chance against a



49 per cent chance. A more appropriate test is one that aims for the best degree of certainty that professional medical opinion can provide. That is what that amendment proposes.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:08):** I thank the member for Riverstone for the appropriate grouping of his amendments. A number of these amendments were addressed in amendments that were unanimously supported by the House. Some of the concerns outlined were addressed yesterday. Amendment No. 2 is about diagnosis by a specialist. It would mandate that a patient's diagnosis was made by a specialist in the field of the patient's condition. Coordinating and consulting practitioners will have access to clinical reports and results from diagnostic tests like X-rays, ultrasounds and CT scans. In very common conditions, this is normally managed by a general practitioner and may not require the involvement of a specialist to make the diagnosis. A coordinating or consulting practitioner who has any uncertainty about diagnosis must refer the patient to a medical practitioner who is qualified and experienced to make a determination. This is the appropriate approach the House decided to take. The onus must be on the coordinating practitioner and the consulting practitioner to use their clinical judgement to be satisfied about the patient's diagnosis.

Amendment No. 3 relates to the cause of death. The balance of probabilities test is well established in Australian terminology and used in other Australian voluntary assisted dying laws. It is used identically in this bill as it is in the Western Australian Act. To satisfy the balance of probabilities test, something must be more likely than not to happen. It is considered an accurate estimate in determining the probable period in which someone can live. It is easily understood and used in the medical fraternity, and has case law to support it. It is used by medical practitioners in providing reports to insurers and compensation authorities.

Prognostication is not an exact science, but there is usually only a very narrow window of inaccuracy, with prognosis tending to be more optimistic over pessimistic. Experience in Victoria is that doctors are very reluctant to give a six-month prognosis until a person is very close to death and deteriorating rapidly. The amendment before the House inserts a higher threshold than what is used in other States. It is inappropriate and will exclude access to people who are eligible.

Amendment No. 4 as circulated would have provided that there is no separate criteria for a neurodegenerative disease and would have been seen by many as a cruel amendment. That is no reflection on the member who circulated the amendment. The impact of the amendment would have seen many people with a neurodegenerative condition excluded from voluntary assisted dying. The 12-month prognosis for neurodegenerative conditions is included in all Australian voluntary assisted dying laws because neurodegenerative conditions have a different trajectory than other conditions. Neurodegenerative conditions, like motor neuron disease, often involve highly intolerable suffering that is closer to the 12-month trajectory. Patients can lose their fine motor skills relatively early in the disease, commencing tube feeding and ventilation before they reach the six-month life expectancy. Patients can lose the physical ability to self-administer, and will need time to consider their options.

The six-month end-of-life trajectory does not reflect the suffering experienced in non-malignant neurodegenerative conditions; it is closer to a 12-month trajectory. Amendment No. 6 relates to the period to death. The amendment would make a palliative care specialist consultation mandatory eligibility criteria. Forcing a patient to see a palliative care specialist in order to access voluntary assisted dying is disturbing and goes beyond patient autonomy. Not all patients will benefit from specialist care, and the bill already requires two experienced medical practitioners to inform patients about their palliative care options. Patients will and should be able to make their own decisions about whether they want to seek further advice from palliative care specialists.

General practitioners and other medical health practitioners provide palliative care to patients across the State every day, and are well placed to inform patients about their options. Palliative care experts are generally needed in complex cases. Most patients at the end of their life are already receiving palliative care, and the data shows that most patients who request voluntary assisted dying will have already received palliative care. In Victoria, 84 per cent of patients were receiving palliative care. Voluntary assisted dying has been operating for 23 years in Oregon, and 95 per cent of patients there were receiving palliative care. I worry that forcing a patient who is requesting voluntary assisted dying to see a palliative care specialist would risk conflating voluntary assisted dying with palliative care. Patients who request voluntary assisted dying would find it confusing to be funnelled off to palliative care specialists and they would wonder how it relates to their request.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:13):** I will address one or two of the member for Sydney's points. It is true that the balance of probabilities is used in other Acts of this kind around Australia, and it is entirely inappropriate that is the standard used. It is a perfectly appropriate standard for some things in law. As we all know, criminal law has a higher standard than Sydney law and that is for perfectly good reason—the consequences are different. When considering depriving a person of their liberty by imprisoning them, we expect a much higher standard of proof than if we merely make that commercial decision as to the rights or wrongs of a commercial dispute. The standard of proof is different because the consequences are so different. That is why

I argue that in this particular context we require the highest standard of proof, not the lowest standard that might well be appropriate for other decisions.

I note the comment of the member for Sydney that most patients who access VAD in Victoria and in some other jurisdictions already access palliative care. If that is the case, it is not really such a burden or such an obstacle to doing this correctly. To insist on a referral to palliative care provides an assurance that, if somebody is going to conclude that their condition is intolerable to them, they have been given the opportunity to explore all the alternatives that may make it tolerable and that may in fact lead them to a different conclusion. Without that information from the best available sources, they may make a decision that is not well informed. It is for the benefit of the person that they be given the full range of information and choice. They need to have that access as part of the process.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:15):** I continue to address some of the grouped amendments proposed by the member for Riverstone. Amendment No. 7 on sheet c2021-237A requires the person not to be acting at the suggestion of others. The bill already includes strong safeguards against pressure or duress. Patients will be assessed by two experienced doctors to determine if they are acting voluntarily and without pressure or duress. Those doctors will be trained. As a result of amendments proposed by the member for Pittwater, with whom I worked most collaboratively, which passed with the unanimous support of this Chamber, we will also have guidelines on how to detect the signs of pressure or duress. Those amendments also require new mandatory information be given to, and questions asked of, the patient about coercion.

Amendment No. 7 does not address the issue of coercion but rather seeks to add a stronger threshold for the decision to be considered voluntary. It requires that the patient be acting on their own initiative. Patients may have someone who knows them, perhaps a loved one, and who knows the patient is suicidal or is experiencing severe distress about their trajectory. Conversations that patients have had with loved ones or healthcare workers that do not involve pressure or duress should not be factors that exclude a patient from eligibility. The co-sponsors of the bill oppose the amendment. Amendment No. 8 sheet c2021-237A relates to disability. The bill expressly states that disability is not a condition that can enable access to voluntary assisted dying. Amendment No. 9 on that same sheet deals with the issue of mental health impairment. The bill expressly states that a mental health impairment is not a condition that, solely, can enable access to VAD.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (10:17):** I support the member for Sydney's comments with respect to the co-sponsors' opposition to the amendments proposed by the member for Riverstone. In particular, I address amendment No. 6 on sheet c2021-237A, which mandates a consultation with a specialist palliative medicine physician. As someone who comes from regional area, I can say that we struggle to access any health services, particularly specialist services. In a regional area it is very difficult to access any kind of specialist in any area of health. Whilst I understand the Premier has committed to expanding palliative care funding and ensuring that it is adequately resourced to enable equitable access to palliative care services in regional areas, the amendment proposed by the member for Riverstone would currently result in a lot of people in regional areas not being able to access voluntary assisted dying.

Whilst people in regional areas who want to access palliative care will be able to access it, adding a step to the voluntary assisted dying process could create a barrier for people who are experiencing a terminal illness and who choose to end their life through voluntary assisted dying by requiring them to jump through another hoop. In regional areas that additional step, which the member for Riverstone would like to create, may be difficult and may add time to the process for the person to be able to tick the boxes. I think that then creates an unwieldy and unworkable system for voluntary assisted dying, particularly for people living in rural and regional areas. My support for the bill comes from the basis that it is both safe and equitable. In my view, these amendments make the bill inequitable and unwieldy.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (10:19):** I will speak briefly with particular regard to amendment No. 2. As someone who also comes from a regional area, I support the comments of my colleague the member for Port Stephens. We will always have concerns if there are going to be additional obstacles and barriers for those people who wish to access voluntary assisted dying. In Port Macquarie, we are really fortunate that we have some outstanding specialists as well as a wonderful palliative care unit. I spoke about that during my contribution to the second reading debate. That is obviously not uniform across all of regional and rural New South Wales; we know that. Like all members in this place, we absolutely applaud the commitment from the Premier to continue to invest in that space.

I acknowledge the member for Oatley, who is in the House. During the debate yesterday, he moved a number of amendments, when we moved ours, as a group. He spoke briefly to them, and they address some of the concerns relating to making sure that guidelines and safeguards in the assessment of patients who could be eligible for voluntary assisted dying are in place. Most patients in the end stages of a terminal illness will have already seen a specialist—in fact, probably numerous specialists—and will have had extensive reports since the time of

their diagnosis to the point their illness is considered to be terminal. There would have been extensive reports that both coordinating and consulting practitioners would have used to determine both diagnosis and also prognosis.

Furthermore, doctors assess whether patients are able to give voluntary informed consent for their healthcare decisions every single day. This is not something that is peculiar to voluntary assisted dying. I have worked as a registered nurse in palliative care, in general wards and in aged-care facilities. Those conversations between health professionals and patients happen every single day, asking for consent on a whole range of things. As any healthcare worker would know, we ask for consent from patients every time we do anything—from giving them an injection to providing them with blood or to a specialist asking for their consent to perform an operation. We need to make sure that we do not try to put additional barriers in for this particular process in the access to voluntary assisted dying.

I also note that the member for Oatley did make some changes that would require the health secretary to prescribe the process that coordinating and consulting practitioners should follow in fulfilling their obligations. I believe it is a superior approach. It was a wise amendment that was overwhelmingly supported by this House. Again, we should be really cautious about doing anything that puts in place further barriers for access to voluntary assisted dying. I support the comments made by the member for Port Stephens, particularly when it comes to those patients in regional communities.

We all know there are challenges in terms of access to health specialists, but let us not make it even more difficult in the particular case of terminally ill patients; they already have a very limited time. To continue to frustrate that process and, in many cases, their suffering and their anxiety is not a wise approach. I hope that every member of this House thinks very carefully about putting in additional barriers and about the impacts those barriers could have and will have, particularly on those living in our regional communities. I thank the member for Sydney for continuing to advocate for all of us across the State. God forbid that we ever be in the situation that we need to access voluntary assisted dying.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 on sheet c2021-237A of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....19  
Noes .....47  
Majority.....28

**AYES**

Atalla, E  
Chanthivong, A  
Conolly, K  
Davies, T  
Elliott, D  
Henskens, A  
Lalich, N

Layzell, D  
Lindsay, W  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Perrottet, D  
Preston, R

Roberts, A  
Smith, N (teller)  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G  
Zangari, G (teller)

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
Anderson, K  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Coure, M  
Crakanthorp, T  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dominello, V  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M

Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hazzard, B  
Hoenig, R  
Hornery, S  
Kean, M  
Leong, J  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R

Piper, G  
Provest, G  
Saffin, J  
Scully, P  
Sidgreaves, P  
Singh, G  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Tuckerman, W  
Voltz, L  
Ward, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A (teller)  
Williams, L  
Wilson, F

Greenwich, A

Parker, J

NOES

**Amendments negatived.****Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:30):** I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-241B:No. 1 **Eligibility to act as practitioner—relevant specialist**

Page 9, clause 18. Insert after line 22—

- (2) At least one of the medical practitioners acting as coordinating practitioner or consulting practitioner for a patient must hold specialist registration in a speciality that is relevant to the disease, illness or medical condition with which the patient has been diagnosed for the purposes of section 16.

This amendment proposes to insert into the bill a requirement that exists in the Victorian bill of its kind that either the coordinating practitioner or the consulting practitioner must be a relevant specialist. We have repeatedly heard from proponents of the bill that the bill is the strictest in the world and has the most safeguards, yet it has omitted the basic provision that is included in the Victorian bill. The Victorian law requires that one of the two practitioners be a relevant specialist.

By failing to require the involvement of a relevant specialist at any stage in the process—there are options for it, but there is no requirement in the bill for a relevant specialist—there is a real risk, not imaginary, that a person could end their life unnecessarily because neither the assessing nor consulting medical practitioner knew about the latest treatment options. As an example of how this might occur I refer to a situation in Canada. A study of 45 people diagnosed with lung cancer who were euthanised at The Ottawa Hospital showed that in 13 of those 45 cases—28.9 per cent—there was no confirmation of the condition by biopsy, an otherwise standard diagnostic procedure. In 10 of those cases there was no consultation at any stage with a medical oncologist to discuss prognosis and treatment options. In some of those cases the time between diagnosis and euthanasia being performed was as short as three weeks.

Treatments for lung cancer have improved considerably over the years, leading to a reduction in mortality and an increase in the five-year survival rate, which is now 21.7 per cent according to the United States National Cancer Institute. One could argue that some of those patients potentially ended their lives unnecessarily because they did not have access to the best information about their condition from a person qualified to give it. That is the risk that we face in New South Wales under this process if there is not a mandated requirement for a relevant specialist to be involved. The simplest place to put that mandated requirement is at the start of the process, as Victoria has done, to say that one of the two practitioners should have the requisite skills and the proper expertise to ensure that the diagnosis is correct.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:33):** The member for Riverstone's amendment concerns a lot of the same issues raised in the previous amendment debate. The co-sponsors of the bill strongly oppose the amendment and recommend that supporters of the bill do not support it. Requiring one of the assessing doctors to be a specialist in treating the patient's terminal illness will provide a significant barrier to access for those eligible for voluntary assisted dying. This is especially the case for people in rural and regional areas with rare conditions. Specialists do not do home visits. They have long waiting times and are not in every region. Most will not undertake the health secretary's training to participate in the scheme. The Victorian requirement for one of the assessing doctors to be a specialist in the patient's condition has proven to be a significant barrier to access. That is feedback from Victorian Health and specialists and doctors within Victoria. In the first six months of this year data from the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board in Victoria shows that only 11 medical practitioners on the portal specialised in neurology—all were in metropolitan areas. Only six specialised in haematology—four of whom were in metropolitan areas.

Only 14 per cent of medical oncologists are trained. If similar trends happen here, it would be about 37 per cent across the State. But this is not just a barrier; specialist assessments are completely unnecessary. Most people at the end stage of a terminal illness with a very dire prognosis have already seen a range of specialists and doctors, as the member for Port Macquarie said, and have extensive files identifying their clinical status, diagnosis and prognosis. Where that is not the case, or where the assessing doctor is uncertain about the diagnosis or prognosis, the bill has strong requirements for the doctor to refer the patient to a relevant specialist. That ensures that specialist expertise is assessed when required.

The doctors permitted to assess patients under the bill have the experience to interpret diagnostic reports and to know when a patient needs more tests or needs to see specialists. I acknowledge the concern of the member of Riverstone and I acknowledge that the concern was addressed unanimously, and in a much safer way, in an

amendment by the member for Oatley. That amendment requires the Health secretary to establish guidelines for making referrals and requires that those guidelines must be followed by the practitioner. That is an appropriate approach. It has been reviewed by NSW Health and it is an approach which is consistent across Australia. The co-sponsors of the bill strongly oppose this amendment.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:36):** There were a couple of interesting comments there. Firstly I will address the amendments from the member for Oatley, which I support and welcome. Any step towards strengthening the safeguards in the bill is a welcome development, in my view. If it is to proceed—I am going to vote against it at the third reading stage—I want the bill to go forward in as safe a condition as possible. And yet, I do not believe that the amendment moved by the member for Oatley and supported by the House is nearly as strong as this amendment, because this ensures that the best specialist advice is underpinning the decision being made. That is not ensured by the member for Oatley's amendment, nor by any other provision of this bill. It might be and probably often will be that a specialist has been involved, but the bill does not explicitly require it at this point and that makes the bill less safe than it should be. That is the key element we are going to hear about more than once.

Whenever there is a tension between safeguarding vulnerable people and enhancing access to voluntary assisted dying, the co-sponsors will always err on the side of enhancing access and weakening the safeguards. That is the dilemma we face. We are going to hear a lot about barriers to access, but that means that when there is a tension between the two, the safeguards take second place. They are not as strong as they could be. Vulnerable people—whether they are people who voluntarily enter the scheme, or whether they are caught up in it through pressure, duress, trickery or whatever it might be—will end up in this pathway because the safeguards were not as strong as they could be. I believe that, if we have a tension between the two, we should be ensuring that nobody is put at risk of dying against their will or without the proper information because we did not provide the proper safeguards. When there is a tension between the two, I will come down on ensuring that the safeguards are strong.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (10:38):** In accordance with the vote yesterday, there was a clear expression of the will of the House in support of a workable voluntary assisted dying scheme in New South Wales. There was majority support for it in the House. The amendment of the member for Riverstone requires one of the treating practitioners to be a specialist; again, that creates a significant barrier for people living in rural and regional areas to be able to access voluntary assisted dying. I know somebody in my area who has a neurodegenerative disease. For her to access a neurologist, she has had to see a specialist in Sydney. No-one in the Hunter Valley is able to provide the support that she needs. Requiring people who live in rural and regional New South Wales and who are already suffering a terminal illness to have one of the treating practitioners under this scheme to be a specialist will prevent them from being able to access this scheme. There is no question in my mind that that would be the case, which would then make this scheme unworkable for people living in regional and rural areas.

Again, I support the bill and the co-sponsors support the bill because it is proven to be safe. It is based on a model that has been working safely in other jurisdictions, particularly in Victoria. The fundamental aspect around the safeguards of the bill is also about ensuring that it is workable. We do not want to end up with a bill that is so unwieldy and has so many barriers to access voluntary assisted dying, particularly for people in rural and regional areas, that there is no point to the scheme being in place.

For those reasons, I do not support the amendment of the member for Riverstone. Based on his contributions to this amendment and the previous amendments he moved, he appears to be constantly denigrating the professionalism of the doctors who will be involved in this scheme and who will provide the advice and support to the people who are facing a terminal illness. They have already undergone years and years of training to be able to provide the advice to make the assessments and the prognosis that is required for people to participate in the scheme. I think the suggestion that those doctors do not have the ability or appropriate training and that we need to insert a specialist into the scheme denigrates their professionalism, training and ability to deliver the choice and control that the scheme will achieve if it is supported in its current form without these amendments.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:42):** As one of the co-sponsors of the bill, I oppose the amendment regarding the eligibility to act as practitioner and relevant specialist. Proposed section 18 of the bill details the "eligibility to act as coordinating practitioner or consulting practitioner". That is very comprehensive. As we know, that proposed section was amended yesterday with the full support of the House to remove some practitioners from the eligibility requirements. I leave my comments about that for another day. The House supported that amendment, although The Greens did not like the suggestion that people with overseas qualifications do not have the same rigour as people in Australia. I am not saying that is suggested. We supported that in the spirit of the proposed section to the bill.

Amendment No. 2 of the member for Riverstone regarding holding a specialist registration that is relevant to the disease, illness or medical condition strikes me as bringing back the idea of diagnosis. The whole nexus of

the coordinating practitioner or consulting practitioner is with regard to the steps for seeking voluntary assisted dying. They are not the same thing as diagnosis. Having listened to the comments by the member for Riverstone throughout the debate, the amendment strikes me as a last ditch attempt to see if there is a different diagnosis or prognosis. So it seems to me utterly paternalistic in that it does not acknowledge that coordinating practitioners or consulting practitioners under section 18 are specialists, have been practising for over 10 years and have completed the approved training and a whole raft of other things.

The second comment I add is about regional and rural health. As others have mentioned in this debate, the idea of being able to find a registered specialist relevant to the unique illness or medical condition with which the patient has been diagnosed for the purposes of section 16 and which fits the bill is out of step with the reality of health care in the regions, where at the moment it can take six to 12 months to seek out those kinds of specialists. There are safeguards in place in relation to eligibility requirements for medical practitioners. Adding this amendment second-guesses that process, and it second-guesses the patients themselves. I find very disappointing the suggestion of a need for this amendment. It is not within the spirit of the legislation.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (10:46):** For people in regional areas, these issues are real. In my own case of seeking medical treatment, eventually three specialists told me to go down to Sydney to get the care I needed. This is not the first rodeo for these terminally ill people. Once their illness is at the stage of terminal, they have seen many medical practitioners. The complex maze people have to go through when they are diagnosed with a serious illness is so difficult, and add to that the layer of regional access to health care. The amendment will take the work, the space and the knowledge of those specialists from people whose lives could be extended or saved. If I were at a terminal stage, I would not want the treatment of someone whose life could be saved to be postponed because my suffering was so extreme I wanted to die but was not able to do so without accessing a specialist. If you want to know how hard it is, listen to this. Spud Murphy's wife, Fiona, could not even get a palliative care specialist to give her pain medication in the middle of the night. She was dying night after night after night, in extreme pain and not able to access morphine. That is what living in regional New South Wales is like. This amendment will create barriers to the provision of care, assistance and relief, because those opposite are trying to stop the bill.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (10:47):** I will make a couple of comments to the debate thus far. The member for Ballina asserted that including a specialist in this process will somehow divert the purpose of that specialist position into a diagnostic or prognostic role and thereby somehow divert the person seeking voluntary assisted dying from the process they want to engage in, which is to end their life. Including a specialist is a safeguard rather than a barrier. A person who has had lengthy training, sometimes more than a decade of training in a particular speciality, is the person most able to provide the most accurate diagnosis and prognosis and could provide at least alternatives to patients to widen their options or give them something else to consider. It is certainly not a barrier. In fact, it is another safety mechanism.

I will address also the comments from the member for Port Stephens, who asserted that the efforts of the member for Riverstone were equal to denigrating our medical professionals. That is certainly not the case. I have spoken in this place and on this bill indicating that there are many occasions when doctors or health professionals make mistakes. That is very well known. It is upon us in this place and it is our duty to craft this legislation to not just copy what others have done but to critically analyse the frameworks in other jurisdictions and work out what has worked and what is not working, and then to learn those lessons and incorporate them into our framework. Let us set a better and stronger standard for our community, not just copy and paste what may already exist. I support the amendment of the member for Riverstone.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (10:50):** I will speak very briefly on, and express my concerns about, this amendment. It is interesting that the people who oppose this amendment are city-based MPs. I look around the Chamber and I see a number of regional MPs, including the member for Coffs Harbour. I express my concern that a lot of people in our communities have trouble even accessing a GP. That is a really sad predicament in a modern country like Australia, with its incredible resources and wealth. In the past 10 years I have had two GPs retire and I have been on a two-year waitlist to get a GP.

The very thought of asking someone in the sunset months, weeks or days of their lives to go to a GP to get a referral to a specialist and to expect a specialist to be available in a local community is unrealistic. Even to expect a specialist appointment to be available in a Sydney-based community, which for us would mean a 1½ hour drive down the expressway, with a tollway, in ill health is unrealistic. It is a barrier to be expected to get in to see a GP and to get a referral in a timely manner while you have a degenerative terminal illness. It is almost a ridiculous assumption that those referrals would be available. I would love referrals to be available to everybody across New South Wales, but even to access a GP in regional and rural New South Wales is a struggle for a lot of people. Accessing a specialist during the terminal stages of an illness is not achievable and is a barrier to moving forward on voluntary assisted dying.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The question is that amendment No.1 on sheet c2021-241B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:52):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 2, 17, 21, 29 and 32 on sheet c2021-241B in globo:

**No. 2 Eligibility to act as practitioner—independence**

Page 9, clause 18. Insert before line 23—

- (2A) A medical practitioner is not eligible to act as the consulting practitioner for a patient unless the medical practitioner is independent from the coordinating practitioner.
- (2B) Without limiting subsection (2A), a medical practitioner is not independent from the coordinating practitioner if the medical practitioner is—
  - (a) a family member of the coordinating practitioner, or
  - (b) employed at, or is a partner in, the same medical practice as the coordinating practitioner.
- (2C) The regulations may provide for additional matters in relation to the requirement for the consulting practitioner to be independent from the coordinating practitioner.

**No. 17 Independence**

Page 12, clause 26. Insert before line 6—

- (4A) A medical practitioner must not accept a referral under this section unless the medical practitioner is independent from the coordinating practitioner.
- (4B) Without limiting subsection (4A), a medical practitioner is not independent from the coordinating practitioner if the medical practitioner is—
  - (a) a family member of the coordinating practitioner, or
  - (b) employed at, or is a partner in, the same medical practice as the coordinating practitioner.
- (4C) The regulations may provide for additional matters in relation to the requirement for the medical practitioner to be independent from the coordinating practitioner.

**No. 21 Independence**

Page 12, clause 27. Insert after line 44—

- (5) A psychiatrist or other registered health practitioner or person must not accept a referral under this section unless the psychiatrist, registered health practitioner or person is independent from the coordinating practitioner.
- (6) Without limiting subsection (5), a psychiatrist or other registered health practitioner or person is not independent from the coordinating practitioner if the psychiatrist, registered health practitioner or person is—
  - (a) a family member of the coordinating practitioner, or
  - (b) employed at, or is a partner in, the same medical practice as the coordinating practitioner.
- (7) The regulations may provide for additional matters in relation to the requirement for a psychiatrist or other registered health practitioner or person to be independent from the coordinating practitioner.

**No. 29 Independence**

Page 17, clause 37. Insert before line 22—

- (4A) A medical practitioner must not accept a referral under this section unless the medical practitioner is independent from the consulting practitioner.
- (4B) Without limiting subsection (4A), a medical practitioner is not independent from the consulting practitioner if the medical practitioner is—
  - (a) a family member of the consulting practitioner, or
  - (b) employed at, or is a partner in, the same medical practice as the consulting practitioner.
- (4C) The regulations may provide for additional matters in relation to the requirement for the medical practitioner to be independent from the consulting practitioner.

**No. 32 Independence**

Page 18, clause 38. Insert after line 14—

- (5) A psychiatrist or other registered health practitioner or person must not accept a referral under this section unless the psychiatrist, registered health practitioner or person is independent from the consulting practitioner.

- (6) Without limiting subsection (5), a psychiatrist or other registered health practitioner or person is not independent from the consulting practitioner if the psychiatrist, registered health practitioner or person is—
  - (a) a family member of the consulting practitioner, or
  - (b) employed at, or is a partner in, the same medical practice as the consulting practitioner.
- (7) The regulations may provide for additional matters in relation to the requirement for a psychiatrist or other registered health practitioner or person to be independent from the consulting practitioner.

My amendments go to the independence from each other of the coordinating and consulting practitioners. The bill currently provides that the coordinating and consulting practitioners must independently assess the person. The amendments build on that requirement by helping to ensure that any assessments by practitioners under the bill are made by practitioners who are independent of each other.

The other day in his speech in reply, the member for Sydney referred to two independent doctors assessing the person. If that is the intent of the bill, I am simply seeking to ensure that it is given effect to guarantee the safeguard that the two practitioners will have a connection to each other and will reach the same conclusion independently. I understand that is the intent the member for Sydney had in proposing the structure of this process in the bill. I would like to give that practical effect as an assurance to people looking at this scheme that there will be not a cosy little arrangement where the same couple of doctors work together and do not really question each other on the process.

Again, I do not mean to besmirch the reputations of doctors generally; I just know that we have to write the law for all of the people, all of the time and take into account all the possible pitfalls that might arise in the interests of protecting the public of New South Wales. This is one simple inclusion. It occurs in a number of different places and that is why I have grouped these amendments together. It is a simple inclusion to say that we want that assurance that these two doctors are not partners, are not in the same practice and are not connected. They independently arrived at the judgements they make.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:54):** I thank the member for Riverstone for his appropriate grouping of these amendments and indicate that I will be the only co-sponsor talking on them to ensure that we have sufficient time to properly debate his other amendments. These amendments are based on an assumption that medical practitioners will collude or influence each other's decisions. The bill requires the consulting practitioner to make a decision about each of the eligibility criteria and, independently of the coordinating practitioner, form their own opinions on the eligibility criteria. The consulting practitioner must use their own clinical judgement.

The 2021 bill requires two experienced medical practitioners to each undertake an independent assessment of a patient seeking voluntary assisted dying and to make their own independent decision against each eligibility criterion. Each medical practitioner must sign that they have done their own assessment and come to their own decision. Any medical practitioner breaching these requirements—not making their own eligibility determinations—faces serious professional consequences through national law. Requiring the two medical practitioners to come from different medical practices is arbitrary and provides no safeguard.

What matters is that the assessment processes themselves are independent, as is locked in the bill. The amendments also have serious access issues, particularly in rural and regional areas where there is only one or two practices and some doctors will consciously object, as is their right in this bill. It is unclear how the amendments will treat hospitals where numerous medical practitioners work but are unlikely to have any association. The co-sponsors of the bill strongly recommend that supporters of voluntary assisted dying oppose these amendments.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:56):** That was not an unexpected response but I genuinely implore the co-sponsors of the bill to consider this matter, between this moment and the time next year when the bill is proceeding through the other place, to see if this step cannot be incorporated in some form to provide transparency and accountability to the process, which builds in a protection that is not there at the moment. I commend the amendments to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The question is that amendments Nos 2, 17, 21, 29 and 32 on sheet c2021-241B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:57):** I move amendment No. 3 on sheet c2021-241B:

No. 3 **First request—not before 21 days after diagnosis**

Page 9, clause 19. Insert after line 26—



- (1A) The request must not be made until at least 21 days after the person was diagnosed with at least 1 disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, progressive and will cause death.

Amendment No. 3 would provide that the first request must not be made until at least 21 days after the person receives a diagnosis of at least one disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, progressive and will cause death. The logic to asking for this kind of cooling off period or settling period is that a person can obviously and genuinely be shocked and devastated by such news. For those of us who have had close friends or family members receive such a diagnosis, we can understand the impact and the difficulty a person has in coming to terms with that news. It is quite shattering.

Even on smaller issues at times, when we get bad news, people might say to us, "Don't go and do anything hasty. Don't make a rushed decision. Think about it. Sleep on it. Take your time to work through your options." That is what this provision is designed to do—to ensure that a person who has been given a diagnosis for the first time, which will be shattering and most unwelcome, and will upset their world, does not make a decision that is final and irrevocable until they have had time to stabilise and think it through.

Given we are talking about a diagnosis of likely death within six months—and a process that will take days or weeks after it commences, rather than months—I do not think it is unreasonable to say, "Let's just build in that safety measure at the front end." If the person makes the request after 21 days it can be assumed to have been the time for the person to talk to friends and family to come to terms with the news—perhaps to reach out for a second opinion, if they wanted one—and so on. But they are not going to do anything immediately in the aftermath of devastating news that might not be something they can revoke later.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:59):** I do respect that the member for Riverstone and other members are wrestling with the concept of voluntary assisted dying and are trying to address their concerns with amendments. Co-sponsor members will be strongly opposing this amendment. Should someone who has been given a frightening diagnosis with an imminent death really be forced to wait 21 days before they can commence the process to seek voluntary assisted dying? The patient will be deteriorating rapidly at this stage, and three weeks could be disastrous. This is a long and involved process that the Victorian experience shows takes around a month to get through. What if the patient is too sick to get through the process after 21 days? What if they lose capacity? What if the prognosis is less than 21 days? This amendment is strongly opposed by the co-sponsors of the bill and we urge all supporters of voluntary assisted dying to oppose it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The question is that amendment No. 3 on sheet c2021-241B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....20  
Noes .....48  
Majority.....28

#### AYES

Chanthivong, A  
Clancy, J  
Conolly, K  
Cooke, S  
Davies, T  
Elliott, D  
Finn, J

Henskens, A  
Lalich, N  
Layzell, D  
Lindsay, W  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T

Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Smith, N (teller)  
Upton, G  
Williams, R  
Zangari, G (teller)

#### NOES

Aitchison, J  
Anderson, K  
Ayres, S  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Constance, A  
Coure, M  
Crakanthorp, T  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Daley, M

Gibbons, M  
Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hazzard, B  
Hoenig, R  
Hornery, S

Parker, J  
Piper, G  
Provest, G  
Saffin, J  
Saunders, D  
Scully, P  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Tuckerman, W  
Voltz, L

## NOES

Dalton, H  
Dominello, V  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Evans, L

Leong, J  
Lynch, P  
Marshall, A  
Mehan, D (teller)  
O'Neill, M

Ward, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A  
Williams, L  
Wilson, F

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:08):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25 and 26 on sheet c2021-241B in globo:

**No. 11 Informing the treating practitioner**

Page 11, clause 25. Insert after line 22—

- (1A) Before starting the first assessment, the coordinating practitioner must, if the coordinating practitioner is not the patient's treating practitioner—
  - (a) inform the patient's treating practitioner that the coordinating practitioner has accepted a first request from the patient, and
  - (b) request the following—
    - (i) a copy of any part of the patient's medical record that the treating practitioner considers may be relevant to assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria,
    - (ii) any other information the treating practitioner considers may assist the coordinating practitioner in assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria.
- (1B) If the coordinating practitioner is not the patient's treating practitioner, the coordinating practitioner must not complete the first assessment until the treating practitioner has responded to the request by—
  - (a) giving the coordinating practitioner the information requested, or
  - (b) advising the coordinating practitioner that the treating practitioner does not have any relevant information.

**No. 12 Informing the treating specialist practitioner**

Page 11, clause 25. Insert before line 23—

- (1C) Before starting the first assessment, the coordinating practitioner must, if the coordinating practitioner is not the patient's treating specialist practitioner—
  - (a) inform the patient's treating specialist practitioner that the coordinating practitioner has accepted a first request from the patient, and
  - (b) request the following—
    - (i) a copy of any part of the patient's medical record that the treating specialist practitioner considers may be relevant to assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria,
    - (ii) any other information the treating specialist practitioner considers may assist the coordinating practitioner in assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria.
- (1D) If the coordinating practitioner is not the patient's treating specialist practitioner, the coordinating practitioner must not complete the first assessment until the treating specialist practitioner has responded to the request by—
  - (a) giving the coordinating practitioner the information requested, or
  - (b) advising the coordinating practitioner that the treating specialist practitioner does not have any relevant information.

**No. 13 Informing the treating practitioner**

Page 11, clause 25. Insert after line 27—

- (4) In this section—

*treating practitioner*, for a patient, means the medical practitioner from whom the patient generally receives ongoing health services.

**No. 14 Informing the treating specialist practitioner** (if amendment no 13 succeeds the form of this amendment needs to be changed so that only the definition itself is inserted)

Page 11, clause 25. Insert before line 28—

(4) In this section—

*treating specialist practitioner*, for a patient, means the medical practitioner from whom the patient is receiving, or has most recently received, treatment or care in relation to the disease, illness or medical condition in relation to which an assessment is being made about whether the patient meets the requirements of section 16(1)(d).

**No. 23 Informing the treating practitioner**

Page 16, clause 36. Insert after line 32—

(1A) Before starting the assessment, the consulting practitioner must, if the consulting practitioner is not the patient's treating practitioner—

(a) inform the patient's treating practitioner that the consulting practitioner has accepted a referral for a consulting assessment in relation to the patient, and

(b) request the following—

(i) a copy of any part of the patient's medical record that the treating practitioner considers may be relevant to assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria, and

(ii) any other information the treating practitioner considers may assist the consulting practitioner in assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria.

(1B) If the consulting practitioner is not the patient's treating practitioner, the consulting practitioner must not complete the assessment until the treating practitioner has responded to the request by—

(a) giving the consulting practitioner the information requested, or

(b) advising the consulting practitioner the treating practitioner does not have any relevant information.

**No. 24 Informing the treating specialist practitioner**

Page 16, clause 36. Insert before line 33—

(1C) Before commencing the assessment, the consulting practitioner must, if the consulting practitioner is not the patient's treating specialist practitioner—

(a) inform the patient's treating specialist practitioner that the consulting practitioner has accepted a referral for a consulting assessment in relation to the patient, and

(b) request the following—

(i) a copy of any part of the patient's medical record that the treating specialist practitioner considers may be relevant to assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria,

(ii) any other information the treating specialist practitioner considers may assist the consulting practitioner in assessing whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria.

(1D) If the consulting practitioner is not the patient's treating specialist practitioner, the consulting practitioner must not complete the assessment until the treating specialist practitioner has responded to the request by—

(a) giving the consulting practitioner the information requested, or

(b) advising the consulting practitioner the treating specialist practitioner does not have any relevant information.

**No. 25 Informing the treating practitioner**

Page 16, clause 36. Insert after line 39—

(4) In this section—

*treating practitioner*, for a patient, means the medical practitioner from whom the patient generally receives ongoing health services.

**No. 26 Informing the treating specialist practitioner**

Page 16, clause 36. Insert after line 39—

(4) In this section—

*treating specialist practitioner*, for a patient, means the medical practitioner from whom the patient is receiving, or has most recently received, treatment or care in relation to the disease, illness or medical condition in relation to which an assessment is being made about whether the patient meets the requirements of section 16(1)(d).

The amendments will ensure that the coordinating and consulting practitioners, when making assessments, have all the relevant information from treating doctors and treating specialist practitioners. The sponsors of the bill have suggested that all such information will be available to the assessing practitioners. The amendments will simply make sure that this is always the case. Again, members supporting the amendments are attempting to give effect to a verbal commitment made by the bill's sponsors. We are simply writing that commitment into the bill to make sure that the information available from the treating GP and the treating specialist is actually sought and does have to form part of the assessment process. To do that, those practitioners must contact the treating GP and the specialist to obtain that information. That is all that these amendments achieve. Again, the amendments apply to a number of clauses in the bill, which is why they have been grouped together in this way. These amendments build in an assurance that the step of informing the treating practitioner will actually occur.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:09):** I appreciate that the member for Riverstone has appropriately grouped these amendments. However, the amendments that relate to informing the treating practitioner are fraught, and the co-sponsors of the bill strongly encourage members to oppose them because they would commit serious violations of confidentiality. Some patients may have personal reasons as to why they do not want to inform their treating practitioner—for example, because they are a relative or family friend. What if the physician conscientiously objects? What if they are unavailable? Some people do not have a treating practitioner and see whichever doctor is available at their local clinic. Patients in public hospitals often see multiple physicians, who are overseen by a registrar.

Most assessing practitioners will consult with the treating practitioner if there is one, and it would be appropriate in that case, but mandating this is problematic. I am also concerned that the definition for "treating practitioner", which is included in amendment No. 13 on sheet c2021-241B, would require some patients to wait for multiple practitioners to be consulted. A patient with cancer could have a palliative care physician, a radiation oncologist, a regular oncologist, a surgeon and a general practitioner, all of whom provide ongoing health services. If the coordinating practitioner and the consulting practitioner have the clinical information they need to be satisfied to make a determination about a patient's eligibility, they should be able to make that decision. This amendment will result in long and unnecessary delays for patients, and the co-sponsors do not support that.

Amendments Nos 12 and 14 on sheet c2021-241B, which surround informing the treating specialist practitioner, are problematic for reasons similar to those outlined in relation to amendment No. 13. It is a serious violation of confidentiality to inform any doctor about a patient's end-of-life choices against that patient's wishes. Some patients may have personal reasons as to why they do not want to inform their treating practitioner—for example, because they are a relative or family friend. What if the treating specialist conscientiously objects? The definition of "treating specialist", which is included in amendment No. 14, would require some patients to wait until multiple practitioners have been consulted. The combination of these amendments will result in long and unnecessary delays for the patient. I am the only co-sponsor who will speak to these amendments. On behalf of the co-sponsors, I strongly oppose them.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:12):** I have heard the objections that were put by the member for Sydney. None of them outweigh the public benefit. Under these amendments, protections will be made available to each treating and/or specialist practitioner who is involved in a patient's care to ensure that the right information is in front of those who are making an assessment. It is absolutely essential to the integrity of this process, if it is to occur, that assessments are accurate and correct. That can only be achieved if all of the necessary information is in front of the doctor who is making the assessment. Therefore, I do not think any of the practical obstacles that have been outlined are insurmountable. Answers can be found for each of those pragmatic problems and challenges. If these amendments are not supported at this stage, I urge members of the other House to find solutions to these problems to ensure that this step of informing the treating practitioner is built into the bill.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:13):** I support the amendments of the member for Riverstone. In this particular process, it is important for the treating practitioner and the specialist practitioner to have all of the available information. If someone is assessing an individual who is considering voluntary assisted dying, everything must be on the table in order to understand that decision. Therefore, I support the amendments put by the member for Riverstone, and I urge others to support them.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The question is that amendments Nos 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25 and 26 on sheet c2021-241B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:14):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 16, 20, 28 and 31 on sheet c2021-241B in globo:

No. 16 **Must adopt report**

Page 12, clause 26, lines 3–5. Omit "the coordinating practitioner may adopt the decision of the medical practitioner about the matter in relation to which the referral was made". Insert instead—

the coordinating practitioner—

- (a) if the decision is that the patient does not meet the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—must adopt the decision of the medical practitioner about the matter, or
- (b) if the decision is that the patient meets the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—may adopt the decision of the medical practitioner about the matter.

**No. 20 Must adopt report**

Page 12, clause 27(3), lines 33–36. Omit from ", coordinating practitioner" to "referral was made". Insert instead—

, coordinating practitioner—

- (a) if the decision is that the patient does not meet the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—must adopt the decision of the psychiatrist, other registered health practitioner or other person about the matter, or
- (b) if the decision is that the patient meets the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—may adopt the decision of the psychiatrist, other registered health practitioner or other person about the matter.

**No. 28 Must adopt report**

Page 17, clause 37, lines 19–21. Omit "the consulting practitioner may adopt the decision of the medical practitioner about the matter in relation to which the referral was made". Insert instead—

the consulting practitioner—

- (a) if the decision is that the patient does not meet the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—must adopt the decision of the medical practitioner about the matter, or
- (b) if the decision is that the patient meets the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—may adopt the decision of the medical practitioner about the matter.

**No. 31 Must adopt report**

Page 18, clause 38(3), lines 3–6. Omit from ", the consulting practitioner" to "referral was made". Insert instead—

the consulting practitioner—

- (a) if the decision is that the patient does not meet the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—must adopt the decision of the psychiatrist, registered health practitioner or person about the matter, or
- (b) if the decision is that the patient meets the eligibility criteria in relation to the matter for which the referral was made—may adopt the decision of the psychiatrist, registered health practitioner or person about the matter.

The bill requires an assessing practitioner to refer to a relevant expert if they are unable to determine if a person meets specific eligibility criteria. However, as it stands, the assessing practitioner can reject that expert's opinion and go ahead and make an opposite determination. The amendments require an assessing practitioner to adopt the determination by an expert that a person does not meet an eligibility criteria. That means if the expert consulted replies saying that in their professional judgement a person does not meet the eligibility criteria, the assessing practitioner must accept that outcome. It is a default setting that if one of the professional people involved qualified to make the decision determines that eligibility has not been met, the assessing practitioner must accept that outcome and agree that eligibility has not been met. The amendments give effect to the safeguards that are expressed in the bill and make sure that they are followed through. As the bill is written, an assessing practitioner may accept the outcome and, therefore, may not. If it is to be a genuine safeguard to protect against inappropriate outcomes including death, it should be a "must" not a "may".

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:15):** The co-sponsors of the bill oppose the amendments for many reasons. The concerns raised by the member for Riverstone are addressed by the member for Oatley's amendments, which create clear guidelines for the referral process and how that is to be followed. That is the appropriate way for the Health secretary to establish those guidelines. It is also important to acknowledge that when we are dealing with a referral from the coordinating or consulting practitioner to a specialist, the bill stipulates that the coordinating or consulting practitioner have a question mark. The specialist will either say, "No, you do not need to have that question mark", or they will potentially endorse that question mark and deem the person to be ineligible. The amendments risk having the opposite effect of what the mover is requesting because should the coordinating or consulting practitioner have a concern that a person does not meet the eligibility criteria

but the specialist says, "No, they do", the specialist ticking off the eligibility would override the coordinating or consulting practitioner's concerns, when that practitioner has spent more time with the patient. The amendments could therefore have adverse impacts that contradict what I know are the genuine intentions of the member for Riverstone. For those and other reasons we strongly oppose the amendments. They would effectively water down the safeguards in the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The question is that amendments Nos 16, 20, 28 and 31 on sheet c2021-241B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**Amendments negated.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:18):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-253B in globo:

**No. 1 Access to voluntary assisted dying—residential facilities**

Page 41, lines 24—43, page 42, lines 1—44, page 43, lines 1—46, page 44, lines 1—45, page 45, lines 1—46, page 46, lines 1—32, clauses 91—97. Omit all words on those pages and lines. Insert instead—

**91 Transfer of person to another place of residence**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) a person is receiving relevant services from a relevant entity at a residential facility that has decided that it will not provide services relating to voluntary assisted dying at the facility, and
  - (b) the person advises the relevant entity of the person's desire to access voluntary assisted dying.
- (2) The relevant entity must take reasonable steps to facilitate the transfer of the person to another place of residence where the services may be provided.

**No. 2 Access to voluntary assisted dying—health care establishments**

Page 47, lines 19—41, page 48, lines 1—46, page 49, lines 1—44, page 50, lines 1—28, clauses 100—106. Omit all words on those pages and lines. Insert instead—

**100 Transfer of person to another health care establishment**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) a person is receiving health care from a health entity at a health care establishment that has decided that it will not provide services relating to voluntary assisted dying at the establishment, and
  - (b) the person advises the health entity of the person's desire to access voluntary assisted dying.
- (2) The health entity must take reasonable steps to facilitate the transfer of the person to another health care establishment that does provide the services.

The amendments would preserve the right of freedom of association for residential facilities and healthcare facilities that for whatever reason adopt a policy of not permitting voluntary assisted dying on their premises. We have in this context in this bill provisions that would say to a residential care facility operator, "You and your staff don't have to participate in this process but you have to allow it to occur on your premises. You have to allow access to somebody to undertake this on your premises. You can't opt out of the system completely." My amendment would ensure that if a person in a residential facility or in a healthcare establishment sought access to voluntary assisted dying, they would be given information and would be facilitated in a transfer to another healthcare establishment or residential care facility to enable the activity to occur, but would no longer be on the premises of the facility which had that philosophical objection.

That would be a way of completely recognising the conscientious right of not only individuals but organisations founded on a particular philosophy. I suspect I am talking largely about faith-based organisations but there could also be others that have such a stance, not to be involved with voluntary assisted dying. This amendment would not impede access to the person seeking that outcome, but it would mean they would not do on those premises. This is fundamentally important in an aged care home. It is a critical element to recognise that that is people's home. That is their place of safety. That is the place where, of all places, they should not feel under threat and where, if a doctor comes into those premises, it is to help them, to look after them, to provide health care, not some kind of threat or cause of fear.

I suspect for residents in aged care homes fear can be heightened—sometimes rationally, sometimes less so. But that should be their place of safety. It should be their refuge, their sanctuary. It should not be invaded. That sense of safety and refuge should not be undermined by having such an activity occur in their home. This is a tension, in this case, between the request of an individual for choice and control over what they do and the rights

of all the other residents in that home for it to be their home and place of safety and security. They should not have to deal with that issue in their home.

This Parliament should not prioritise and privilege the rights of the one over the rights of the many in that way, when the rights of the one can still be accommodated in another way. But you cannot accommodate the rights of the many if you go ahead and conduct this activity on their premises, in their home. It is fundamentally important that we respect the rights of those people living in that place to be free of any contact with voluntary assisted dying, free of any fear—rational or irrational—that it may apply to them in their home on some future occasion. That is a genuine, significant issue for residents of aged care homes and I do not think this Parliament should foist that upon them.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (11:22):** I find these amendments quite sad, but I have one point of agreement with the member for Riverstone—this is these people's home. It is the home of obviously many people but particularly this one person we are talking about who is in this very critical time of their life. That any institution, faith-based or otherwise, would consider requiring a terminally ill person to leave their home when they are at their most vulnerable I find absolutely appalling. What is more appalling is that the terminally ill person would be lucky if there was any requirement for that institution to participate in facilitating their transfer to this other location that the member for Riverstone is talking about. What is the mechanism to enable that to happen? If the organisation is opposed to having the voluntary assisted dying provided in that person's home, then I imagine they are probably not going to facilitate any other part of the process. We can make no mistake about what these amendments do, and amendments Nos 1 and 2 basically do that.

Amendment No. 1 allows an aged-care home run by a faith-based institution that has a conscientious objection to a resident accessing voluntary assisted dying to bear little or no responsibility for their transfer to a hospital, a family home or any other place. What sort of an institution would do that to somebody who is a resident in their home? What sort of person would do that? Those people are residents in their home; they are not staying in a hotel. The institutions are their legal homes in many cases, however the structure is made. But amendment No. 1 from the member for Riverstone could see them kicked out of their homes, albeit maybe not onto the street, if they have the temerity to choose to access voluntary assisted dying in their final days.

Under amendment No. 2, non-permanent residents will be denied access to voluntary assisted dying altogether. There is no anxiety for those people about calling a cab or how they will deal with it, because it is just denied to them. Those terminally ill people will not be able to access voluntary assisted dying while ever they are staying under the roof of a home that is operated by a non-participating entity. While I understand the point of the member for Riverstone that there are other people in those homes, they are not places that deny the fact that people are at the end of life. They understand that. Most of those people will be reasonably mature and perhaps even insulated from the particular issue of somebody who is choosing voluntary assisted dying. That is not difficult to manage in that situation, but it is a huge impost on the individual who is being forced to remove themselves from their home if voluntary assisted dying is denied to them there. Those are the unfair intentions of the amendments, which obviously have been concocted to ensure that the beliefs and values of institutional boards and managers are put ahead of the needs and wants of the people in their care. I find the amendments unacceptable and I oppose them, as will the supporters of the bill.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:27):** I too oppose the amendments. I agree with the member for Riverstone that a residential aged-care facility is a home and a place of safety, and that should not be under threat. It is a place of rest, and the safety of the residents should never be undermined. But I am really challenged by the concept that the member for Riverstone would expect someone in the end stages of their life and with a terminal illness to be forced to move out of the home that has been their chosen residence, often chosen by their family after considering a whole bunch of criteria. Residents should not be expected to uproot during the sunset moments of their lives. They are places where people usually go to see out the last days and years of their lives, and eventually die. It is an almost inevitable reality of the aged-care service provider.

I thank everyone who works in aged-care facilities across our community, because they work in a palliative environment at an end-of-life facility. They work so hard to offer such dignity and such profound care, and the facilities often work with families who have a destination in mind for residents. Families and residents make decisions coming into those facilities, knowing the structures around them. It is interesting to think that we may have discriminatory practices in the future that exclude residents from choosing certain facilities across our community because they may want to participate in voluntary assisted dying at the end of their lives. It is difficult to get a place in an aged-care facility, which would add to the stress and the challenges of the end-of-life process and voluntary assisted dying. Supporters of the bill cannot possibly support compounding that stress by asking for a specialist or expecting people in the last stages of their lives to move homes.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (11:29):** I speak against the amendments as well. I have the experience of my own mother who has lived in her own house for some 50 years and who recently moved to

Newcastle. We tried to get her into a house near us but that did not work. We tried to get her into independent living and that did not work. Now she is in supported living. That is her home. She gets the best care she could possibly have. She feels secure. She feels very safe and she is very happy there. She is not very mobile. She gets quite a bit of anxiety. To move her anywhere is very difficult. Even moving her home this weekend, for example, she is not physically or mentally able to do that. It is quite traumatic. We cannot even get her home for Christmas. To think of someone in her situation, if she were to get a terminal illness, to move her out of there would be incredibly traumatic, incredibly stressful and something I would not want to inflict upon any elderly person who feels happy, safe and secure in their own home. It is not just a place of residence; it is their home. I speak very strongly against the amendments.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (11:30):** I absolutely respect the right of any member to bring forward any amendment to any bill. Of course, I have enjoyed the opportunity to participate with members in this debate. Having been in lockdown for such a long time, I cannot think of 92 other people I would rather spend time with during this period! What I would say in respect of these amendments is that we would not ask this of a strata scheme. For a person who lived in a strata scheme, there would not be amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act that allowed a strata scheme to make a decision to prohibit someone from accessing voluntary assisted dying in their home. In the same way, these are the homes of people where they feel comfortable, where they have some form of choice, and we have been told by the people proposing this amendment that they do not want this to be allowed to happen in someone's home.

Just like the Kerrigans in *The Castle*, every Australian's home is their castle. It is their place of security and sanctuary. I find it an absolute affront not just to this legislation but to basic Aussie values to say that in someone's home they cannot make the decisions they want. Just as we have strong views in relation to border protection and who may come into our country, we have the right to decide what happens in our homes. These are the homes of people in this situation. I think it is an affront to Australian values to say that we are going to say to someone, "No! We're not going to allow you to do that."

Just like a strata scheme, I do not believe in setting up an unfair, inequitable and in fact discriminatory set of laws that discriminate against the residential category in which you live to access what would be, as the Chamber has clearly indicated will be the law if this bill should pass the upper House, an option for people who are terminally ill. I will not be supporting these amendments because I think they are un-Australian. I will not be supporting these amendments because it is unfair to people who are terminally ill. I will not be supporting these amendments because they set up a discrimination against aged and sick Australians, who deserve the right to decide what they do in their own home.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:33):** I am frankly angered and appalled at the absolute lack of empathy of any member who has just spoken for the other residents in those homes. I am appalled that the capacity to think outside the box is not there to see the effect that this can have on other people who are vulnerable, old, ill, infirm and who rely on the care and support of medical staff in a home. They see that medical staff may have a different role and that could be totally terrifying and undermining of the security and safety of those people, as well as of the wellbeing they have in their own home.

I appreciate the tension, the dilemma, for the one and for the many; but I had none of the appreciation of that dilemma from those who just spoke; no concern for those other residents whose peace of mind in their last place could be shattered by this, fearful of what would happen to them, rational or irrational. I accept that the safeguards and the rules are there, but I also understand human nature. I know something about how people feel, and this could be incredibly threatening to those residents. If an aged-care facility has a policy of not supporting this process and not being involved, which the bill already supposes and understands, that should carry through to not having it occur on the premises as well. It is for the sake of the residents whose peace of mind will be jeopardised and whose last home can never be the same if this happens in their home. It is not about the operators; they can deal, they will find a way. It is about the people who live there. It is a dilemma, and I accept the challenge. I appeal to members to see beyond their narrow arguments and look at the effect it has on other people as well.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The question is that amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2021-253B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:35):** By leave: I move amendments Nos 18, 19, 30 and 33 on sheet c2021-241B in globo:

No. 18 **Coercive and controlling behaviour**

Page 12, clause 27. Insert after line 32—



- (2A) If the coordinating practitioner has reasonable grounds to suspect the patient is, or has within the last 5 years been, subject to abusive behaviour from a family member or a carer, the coordinating practitioner must refer the patient to a psychiatrist, or another registered health practitioner or person who has appropriate skills and training, to make a decision about whether the patient—
- (a) is or is not acting voluntarily, and
  - (b) is or is not acting because of pressure or duress.

**No. 19 Coercive and controlling behaviour**

Page 12, clause 27. Insert after line 44—

- (5) In this section—
- abusive behaviour** means behaviour that is violent, menacing or intimidating, or has or is reasonably likely to have 1 or more of the following effects—
- (a) making a person dependent on or subordinate to another person,
  - (b) isolating a person from the person's friends, relatives or other sources of support,
  - (c) controlling, monitoring or regulating a person's day-to-day activities,
  - (d) depriving a person of, or restricting a person's, freedom of action,
  - (e) degrading, frightening, humiliating or punishing a person.

**No. 30 Coercive and controlling behaviour**

Page 18, clause 38. Insert after line 2—

- (2A) If the consulting practitioner has reasonable grounds to suspect the patient is, or has within the last 5 years been, subject to abusive behaviour from a family member or a carer, the consulting practitioner must refer the patient to a psychiatrist, or another registered health practitioner or person who has appropriate skills and training, to make a decision about whether the patient—
- (a) is or is not acting voluntarily, and
  - (b) is or is not acting because of pressure or duress.

**No. 33 Coercive and controlling behaviour**

Page 18, clause 38. Insert after line 14—

- (8) In this section—
- abusive behaviour** means behaviour that is violent, menacing or intimidating, or has or is reasonably likely to have, 1 or more of the following effects—
- (a) making a person dependent on or subordinate to another person,
  - (b) isolating a person from the person's friends, relatives or other sources of support,
  - (c) controlling, monitoring or regulating a person's day-to-day activities,
  - (d) depriving a person of, or restricting a person's, freedom of action,
  - (e) degrading, frightening, humiliating or punishing a person.

These amendments insert a requirement that if a coordinating or consulting practitioner suspects on reasonable grounds that the patient is or has within the last five years been subject to abusive behaviour from a family member or carer, they must refer the patient to a psychiatrist or other registered health practitioner or person who has appropriate skills and training to make a decision about whether the patient is or is not acting voluntarily and is or is not acting because of pressure or duress. The amendments define "abusive behaviour" to mean behaviour that is violent, menacing or intimidating or has or is reasonably likely to have one or more of the following effects: making a person dependent on or subordinate to another person; isolating a person from the person's friends, relatives or other sources of support; controlling, monitoring or regulating a person's day-to-day activities; depriving a person of or restricting a person's freedom of action; or degrading, frightening, humiliating or punishing a person.

By putting these provisions in the bill, we will ensure that the assessing practitioners are particularly attentive to signs that a person is subject to abusive behaviour. The intent of the amendments, and they occur in a number of places and are complementary, is to wave the red flag if there are signs of abusive control or coercion. They ensure that an additional step is taken where there are such signs and the assessment will consciously take into account the red flags to ensure that a person's decision, if it is made, is voluntary.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:37):** I appreciate the member for Riverstone moving the amendments in globo, as he has done so appropriately. The co-sponsors of the bill oppose these amendments. They require that the consulting practitioner refer the patient to a psychiatrist or other health practitioner if it is

suspected the patient has been subject to abusive behaviour at any time in the previous five years. The bill already contains clear procedures and training for consulting practitioners to look for signs of coercion or abuse, take a certain course of action and confirm whether the person is acting under duress. We also oppose amendment No. 19. "Abusive behaviour" is appropriately described already, and that is carried throughout the bill. It states:

... pressure or duress includes abuse, coercion, intimidation, threats and undue influence.

I move to amendment No. 30. A psychiatrist is not the person you would send someone to if you suspected they were subject to abusive behaviour from a family member. Being a victim of abuse in any way does not mean the person has a mental illness or needs to see a psychiatrist. It must be remembered that a person is presumed to have capacity to make their own decisions unless of course there is evidence to the contrary. The bill already contains procedures for training consulting practitioners to look for signs of coercion and abuse and to confirm that a person is not acting under duress.

We also oppose amendment No. 33. Abusive behaviour is already appropriately described, and that is carried throughout the bill. That includes abuse, coercion, intimidation, threats and undue influence. I acknowledged the member for Riverstone's concern, and I acknowledge that the member for Pittwater and the member for Oatley ensured that their concerns are addressed. The bill now has the most rigorous protections of any voluntary assisted dying legislation in Australia. We have the broadest definition when looking at issues of coercion or duress. We have mandated Health secretary guidelines that must be followed and questions that people must be asked, which are provisions that do not exist in any other legislation for voluntary assisted dying in Australia. I have worked hard with members to address their concerns in that regard. I feel those have been appropriately reflected within the bill and the processes that were adopted through amendments that the House unanimously supported yesterday. We oppose the amendments moved by the member for Riverstone.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos 18, 19, 30 and 33 on sheet c2021-241B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

*[In division]*

**The SPEAKER:** I clarify that, pursuant to the earlier information I gave regarding the still photographer, we have also approved one pool video photographer, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

Ayes .....24  
Noes .....47  
Majority.....23

#### AYES

Bali, S	Finn, J	Petinos, E
Chanthivong, A	Lalich, N	Preston, R
Clancy, J	Layzell, D	Roberts, A
Conolly, K	Lindsay, W	Smith, N (teller)
Cotsis, S	McDermott, H	Speakman, M
Davies, T	McGirr, J	Taylor, M
Dib, J	Mihailuk, T	Upton, G
Elliott, D	Perrottet, D	Zangari, G (teller)

#### NOES

Aitchison, J	Greenwich, A	Piper, G
Anderson, K	Griffin, J	Provest, G
Ayres, S	Gulaptis, C	Saffin, J
Car, P	Hancock, S	Saunders, D
Catley, Y	Harris, D	Scully, P
Constance, A	Harrison, J	Sidgreaves, P
Coure, M	Haylen, J	Smith, T
Crakanthorp, T	Hazzard, B	Tesch, L
Crouch, A (teller)	Hoenig, R	Tuckerman, W
Daley, M	Hornery, S	Voltz, L
Dalton, H	Leong, J	Ward, G
Dominello, V	Marshall, A	Washington, K
Donato, P	Mehan, D	Watson, A (teller)

## NOES

Doyle, T  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M

O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Parker, J

Williams, L  
Wilson, F

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:46):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 22 and 34 on sheet c2021-241B in globo:

**No. 22 Assessing whether suffering can be relieved**

Page 12. Insert after line 44—

**27A Referral for opinion—palliative care**

- (1) If the coordinating practitioner is not a specialist palliative medicine physician, the coordinating practitioner must refer the patient to a specialist palliative medicine physician to make a decision about whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria mentioned in section 16(1)(d)(iii).
- (2) If the coordinating practitioner makes a referral under subsection (1)—
  - (a) if the decision is that the patient does not meet the eligibility criteria in section 16(1)(d)(iii)—the coordinating practitioner must adopt the decision of the specialist palliative medicine physician, or
  - (b) if the decision is that the patient does meet the eligibility criteria in section 16(1)(d)(iii)—the coordinating practitioner may adopt the decision of the specialist palliative medicine physician.
- (3) A specialist palliative medicine physician must not accept a referral under this section unless the specialist palliative medicine physician is independent from the coordinating practitioner.
- (4) Without limiting subsection (3), a specialist palliative medicine physician is not independent from the coordinating practitioner if the specialist palliative medicine physician is—
  - (a) a family member of the coordinating practitioner, or
  - (b) employed at, or is a partner in, the same medical practice as the coordinating practitioner.
- (5) The regulations may provide for additional matters in relation to the requirement for a specialist palliative medicine physician to be independent from the coordinating practitioner.

**No. 34 Assessing whether suffering can be relieved**

Page 19. Insert after line 22—

**41A Referral for opinion—palliative care**

- (1) If the consulting practitioner is not a specialist palliative medicine physician, the consulting practitioner must refer the patient to a specialist palliative medicine physician to make a decision about whether the patient meets the eligibility criteria mentioned in section 16(1)(d)(iii).
- (2) If the consulting practitioner makes a referral under subsection (1)—
  - (a) if the decision is that the patient does not meet the eligibility criteria in section 16(1)(d)(iii)—the consulting practitioner must adopt the decision of the specialist palliative medicine physician, or
  - (b) if the decision is that patient does meet the eligibility criteria in section 16(1)(d)(iii)—the consulting practitioner may adopt the decision of the specialist palliative medicine physician.
- (3) A specialist palliative medicine physician must not accept a referral under this section unless the specialist palliative medicine physician is independent from the consulting practitioner.
- (4) Without limiting subsection (3), a specialist palliative medicine physician is not independent from the consulting practitioner if the specialist palliative medicine physician is—
  - (a) a family member of the consulting practitioner, or
  - (b) employed at, or is a partner in, the same medical practice as the consulting practitioner.
- (5) The regulations may provide for additional matters in relation to the requirement for a specialist palliative medicine physician to be independent from the consulting practitioner.

These amendments require a referral to a specialist palliative medicine physician to ensure that all options for relieving a person's suffering have been explored before resorting to ending the person's life. I know the proposed addition has arisen previously. It is important to make explicit that if addressing unrelievable suffering is so fundamental to the purpose of the bill, we need to test or know for sure that it is in fact the case that palliative care

is unable to provide the relief that the person seeks. Without a referral to a palliative care specialist, who is equipped to provide the best information about what is possible, it is not safe to assume that a person's suffering or pain cannot be relieved.

As I have said on a number of occasions, this is a genuine life or death issue. It is not a minor matter. Therefore, the steps taken in pursuing the process need to be excessively cautious. A very high bar needs to be set to ensure that people are not dying when they do not need to or when they would have done something different had the information been different. If the information is not there, people are not able to make a genuinely voluntary decision on the basis of all the information that they should have. It behoves this Parliament to tread very cautiously when the stakes are this high. Where an outcome for a person is irrevocable, we need to be certain that we have the right basis for proceeding in that manner.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:49):** The co-sponsors of the bill oppose these amendments—and I will be the only co-sponsor to speak on them. Forcing all patients seeking voluntary assisted dying to see a palliative care specialist is a disturbing proposal. It represents yet another barrier that opponents of the bill want to put up to make it harder for people to get access to voluntary assisted dying. The bill already requires two experienced medical practitioners to inform patients about their palliative care options. Patients will be able to make their own decisions about whether they want to seek further advice from a palliative care specialist. General practitioners and other medical and health practitioners provide palliative care to patients across every State every day. They are well placed to inform patients about their options.

Most patients at the end of life are already receiving palliative care, and the data shows that most patients who request voluntary assisted dying will have already received palliative care. I worry that forcing the patient who is requesting voluntary assisted dying to see a palliative care specialist would risk conflating voluntary assisted dying with palliative care. I note that the amendments moved by the member for Port Macquarie do ensure that doctors are all provided with the information and resources on palliative care. I note the amendment moved by the member for Wagga Wagga that goes to the principles of the proposed Act also goes to ensuring there is proper regional access for palliative care. But the co-sponsors of the bill strongly oppose these amendments.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (11:51):** I will briefly address the comment made by the member for Sydney about healthcare professionals being well trained in palliative care on a broad scale. I do not support that assertion. I have had my constituents explain to me their personal experience of a loved one going through the end stages of dying and the impact of our local hospital, Nepean Hospital, not having a dedicated palliative care unit. It required their loved one to be admitted to the general hospital. Throughout the final weeks before their passing, they were shifted from ward to ward, cared for by different nurses who were not trained in the palliative care speciality and, as a result, the loved one received less than optimum care. In contrast to that, I place on record my complete and thorough admiration and support for the palliative care specialist staff at Nepean Hospital, who my family had direct engagement with.

Those specialty-trained professionals, nurses and specialists, worked with my extended family during the process of my father-in-law passing away from pancreatic cancer. He was cared for in the home with 24-hour family care but with the support and trained expertise of palliative care nurses and staff. That process was difficult, but it was supported by professionals. As much as this is a very difficult subject matter for all of us, we are talking about peoples' lives and the choices of whether to live or to pass away. It is very important that we speak with accuracy when we speak to these amendments. I speak on behalf of my community who has experienced the medical system through the process of a loved one passing away without the trained professional specialist staff who should have been around that patient. It was a very different experience. In that regard, for that reason and that rationale, I support the amendments moved by the member for Riverstone.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:54):** I speak on the amendments. I support the comments made by the member for Sydney and I make the point that the member for Riverstone's amendments seek to put further hurdles in the passage of people who to be eligible for VAD must have an illness or disease or a medical condition which is advanced, progressive and will cause death within six months. That last six months should be given over to that person to make their decision and to be able to go through the process without excessive hurdles, which are just going to burden them in that end of life decision.

I hear all the talk about suffering and that this is important because it is a life or death decision. Last night we were debating in this place while a whole bunch of people were sleeping rough in the parliamentary precinct. They want to live and we, as a society and as a Parliament, have not even got the ability to deal with their very real world problems by providing accommodation for those people. But here we are talking about the nitty-gritty of a bill which is dealing with people who we know will die and who want to be given the ability to make a decision on how they will die. I think these excessive hurdles undermine the intent of the bill, which has already been quite overwhelmingly supported by this House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:55):** I acknowledge all the comments that have been made on these amendments. I support the member for Riverstone and also the member for Mulgoa. One thing that I will not support is the comment that palliative care is a hurdle. Palliative care is not a hurdle. This amendment speaks to the referral to a specialist palliative medicine physician for an opinion and by no means is this putting up barriers or stopping the process. I think we need to be very clear on that. I have a lot of time for the member for The Entrance, he is a dear colleague of mine, but I cannot let that particular comment slip through. To say that this referral for an opinion from a palliative care specialist is a hurdle—I will not cop those words being spoken in this House.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos 22 and 34 on sheet c2021-241B of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....22  
Noes .....45  
Majority.....23

**AYES**

Chanthivong, A  
Clancy, J  
Conolly, K  
Cooke, S  
Cotsis, S  
Davies, T  
Dib, J  
Finn, J

Henskens, A  
Lalich, N  
Lindsay, W  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Preston, R

Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Smith, N (teller)  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G  
Zangari, G (teller)

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
Anderson, K  
Butler, R  
Catley, Y  
Constance, A  
Coure, M  
Crakanthorp, T  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dominello, V  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M

Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hazzard, B  
Hoenig, R  
Hornery, S  
Leong, J  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R

Parker, J  
Piper, G  
Provest, G  
Saffin, J  
Scully, P  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Tuckerman, W  
Voltz, L  
Ward, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A (teller)  
Williams, L  
Wilson, F

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:02):** By leave: I move amendments Nos 4 to 7, 10, 15 and 27 on sheet c2021-241B, amendment No. 5 on sheet c2021-252A and amendments Nos 4 and 5 on sheet c2021- 237A in globo.

**c2021-241B**

**No. 4 Making a first request—gestures**

Page 9, clause 19. Insert after line 36—

- (5) A request made in a way other than verbally may be made only with the assistance of an interpreter.

**No. 5 Making a first request—person must be alone**

Page 9, clause 19. Insert before line 37—

- (5A) A request under this section may be made only if—

- (a) for a request made without the assistance of an interpreter—the person making the request is alone with the medical practitioner, or
- (b) for a request made with the assistance of an interpreter—the person making the request and the interpreter are both present, and are the only persons present, with the medical practitioner.

**No. 6 Refusing a first request—any reason**

Page 10, clause 21, lines 7—13. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (2) The medical practitioner may refuse the request for any reason.

**No. 7 Refusing a first request—patient with suicidal ideation or mental health impairment**

Page 10, clause 21, line 17. Insert "(4A) or" before "(5)".

**No. 10 Board to send information to coordinating practitioner**

Page 11. Insert after line 18—

**24A Board to give information to coordinating practitioner**

- (1) Within 5 business days after receiving a first request form for a patient from a coordinating practitioner, the Board must—
  - (a) acknowledge receipt of the first request form from the practitioner, and
  - (b) give the practitioner—
    - (i) if the Board has previously been notified of a first request by the patient—copies of any documents previously received by the Board in relation to the patient, or
    - (ii) if the Board has not previously been notified of a first request by the patient—a notice advising the practitioner that the Board has not been notified of any previous first request by the patient.
- (2) The coordinating practitioner must not begin a first assessment of the patient until receiving an acknowledgement under subsection (1)(a).

**No. 15 Unable to decide**

Page 11, clause 26, lines 30–34. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (1) If the coordinating practitioner for a patient does not hold specialist registration in a specialty for the disease, illness or medical condition in relation to which an assessment is being made about whether the patient meets the requirements of section 16(1)(d), the coordinating practitioner must refer the patient to a medical practitioner who holds specialist registration in a specialty for the disease, illness or medical condition.

**No. 27 Unable to decide**

Page 17, clause 37, lines 3–5. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (1) If the consulting practitioner for a patient does not hold specialist registration in a specialty for the disease, illness or medical condition in relation to which an assessment is being made about whether the patient meets the requirements of section 16(1)(d), the consulting practitioner must refer the patient to a medical practitioner who does hold specialist registration in a specialty for the disease, illness or medical condition.

**c2021-252A**

**No. 5 Protection for persons acting in accordance with Act**

Page 61, clause 137, lines 11–13. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

a thing in accordance with this Act.

**c2021-237A**

**No. 4 Eligibility criteria—no separate criteria for neurodegenerative diseases**

Page 7, clause 16(1)(d)(ii), lines 37–40. Omit from "cause death" to "otherwise—". Insert instead "cause death".

**No. 5 Eligibility criteria—suffering**

Page 7, clause 16(1)(d)(iii), line 41. Omit "suffering". Insert instead "pain or other physical symptoms".

I speak generically about my intent and philosophy in moving those amendments. As I have said on previous occasions, my intent is to ensure that if the bill does proceed from this place it does so with the most robust protections and the greatest safeguards for vulnerable people so that it does not have unintended consequences for people who should not have been involved.

It has been my standpoint all along to wherever possible increase the protections, make them more explicit, make them stronger and address what I see as inadequacies in the bill where there might be a grey area or, in some

cases, great gaps. Some of the amendments in this group include things to do with a person making a request by gesture. There is the potential for a gesture to be misinterpreted, and a gesture is untestable or unrecordable later if no record has been kept of that gesture; it cannot be verified. That is a problem with communicating in that manner. In other places in the bill we expect clear and unambiguous language, and we have had a discussion around that. But where a gesture is used as a way of making a request or a communication, we have to ask: How can that be verified as clear and unambiguous? I flag that as the subject of one of the amendments. I think we will be looking at a way of interpreting what the gesture might mean.

There are others relating to the two-way provision of information from the board back to a practitioner. If a previous request has been made by a person who has contacted a practitioner, the board is in a position to pass that information on. That may be relevant to an assessment. That is a step that is missing which is purely procedural, administrative and behind the scenes, and need not impede the patient, but is necessary for the person assessing that person's eligibility to have all the information on the table in front of them at the time they do so. Others of these amendments relate to the protection in the bill for doctors who believe they are following the provisions of the bill but are not doing so. I believe there is greater protection given to the doctors than to any other person who might be caught up in this process. It is a standard that is not normally applied in law to effectively indemnify people who contravene the law but do so believing they are following the law.

That is an overreach, in the sense that it is out of kilter and out of balance, in the way the bill is written. Generically, I am concerned about weaknesses and gaps in this bill. I have highlighted the presumption of capacity; the fact that health workers can initiate conversations and that supposed prohibition is totally undermined; and the fact that neither doctor involved needs to be a specialist in the particular disease involved, which is in the Victorian bill. In relation to self-administration, when I was speaking last night I raised some concerns about what I feel is a total lack of safeguards for the self-administration process. Once the drug has gone out the door from the board, I believe that situation is totally unregulated and totally unsafe. The combination of these amendments—and I appreciate that there are a number of them—is to try to tighten those provisions, provide protections, make them more explicit wherever possible and name what I see as the gaps in the process.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:07):** I thank the member for Riverstone for the grouping and for his continually orderly and respectful approach to this process. The co-sponsors will be strongly opposing these amendments. The bill should not discriminate against people because they communicate in different ways. Doctors are familiar with a range of forms of communication; they are used in the clinical setting every day. I commend the comments of the member for Gosford in relation to this yesterday. Most communication is actually not verbal; some people will need to write, use an electronic aid, use thumb movements or blink. Medical practitioners will use their clinical judgement on whether assistance to understand that is needed. If the patient can communicate with a medical practitioner, then that is what counts. Worryingly, in many situations an interpreter will not be the appropriate person to translate. That amendment will simply exclude people based on disability. It is a particularly concerning amendment, and the co-sponsors certainly oppose it.

Amendment No. 5 on sheet c2021-241B will require a person to be alone when making a first request. This amendment will force a vulnerable person to request voluntary assisted dying without the support of their loved one. That is cruel. Doctors know how to deal with coercion. They often see patients who are being pressured by well-meaning family members into having treatment or surgery that they do not want. The medical practitioners' training will also cover how to recognise signs of pressure or duress, and the bill creates new offences in that regard. They can ask to see a patient alone if they believe it is necessary. The member for Riverstone claims to care about people who are vulnerable and I know that he does, but people who are dying often need the support of someone they love. We have no right to prohibit that support. Amendment No. 6 on sheet c2021-241B will allow the medical practitioner to refuse the first request. I am not sure why the member for Riverstone would like to insert into the bill further clarity surrounding a doctor's ability to conscientiously object. Inquiries across the country and feedback from doctors have consistently concluded that the bill should be clear on the doctor's capacity to conscientiously object, and it does; that was clarified yesterday.

Amendment No. 15 on sheet c2021-241B will require a coordinating practitioner who is not a specialist in the patient's terminal illness to refer the patient to a specialist practitioner. That could subject patients to unnecessary consultations. Most people at the end stage of a terminal illness with very dire prognosis have already seen a range of specialists and doctors and have extensive files clarifying their clinical status. The amendments of the member for Riverstone on sheet c2021-252A relate to Director of Public Prosecutions proceedings; those matters were comprehensively addressed by the member for Kiama yesterday in his amendments, which were supported with a unanimous resolution of the House. While I appreciate the grouping of these amendments, the co-sponsors of the bill strongly urge members to oppose them.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (12:11):** I speak to the issue raised by the member for Riverstone about the ability of a patient to use a gesture to signify their desire to proceed down this pathway. I understand that many

people communicate via many different ways, and that is very well-founded. But in giving the ability to the oversight board and the Parliament to review the data from annual reports, which I have no doubt will happen once the bill becomes law, we have to be absolutely certain that the data being gathered is accurate so the board, those involved in the process and members of Parliament are able to assess how people are using this system.

My question is how can we be certain that we will be providing clear enough guidance to those people involved in this process so that they will interpret a gesture as being definitive of a person's wish? It seems like a nebulous concept. This issue can be looked at a little more deeply, if not in this House then perhaps in the other place, so that we can absolutely guarantee that the person's gesture will be accurately recorded in the database and therefore will be picked up in a data collecting process and reported on in annual review processes and in the Parliament. I think we need to be very careful to ensure that the framework around gestures is a lot more secure for everybody involved in this scheme.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:13):** I refer the members who support these amendments to an incredible human being called Stephen Hawking. We have very clear memories of Mr Hawking in the very final time of his life and the contribution he made as someone who was not able to communicate verbally and not able to move. His wishes, communications and understanding of the universe were made very clear with an Intel communication system. The intent of those opposed to these amendments is to not prevent Stephen Hawking from making a choice about how he chooses to die, or to prevent many others who now have, through the NDIS, incredible access to means of communication from doing the same. Professional treating doctors also have the means to bring in other modes of communication to support people with disabilities to have equal access to voluntary assisted dying at the end of their lives.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:14):** The intent is certainly not to stop people from communicating but simply to find a way to ensure that that communication is accurately interpreted and recorded for the purposes of accountability and protection. That is all I am trying to put a spotlight on, to make sure that that can be achieved. And there is a very small point in relation to comments from the member for Sydney about what was on sheet 252A. The member for Kiama did indeed deal with the first four of those items. I was only referring to item 5 here. I thank the member for Kiama for making the changes he did in that particular aspect. I think that it improved the bill. Nonetheless, I do support and hope that the House will support these amendments.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos 4 to 7, 10, 15 and 27 on sheet c2021-241B, amendment No. 5 on sheet c2021-252A, and amendments Nos 4 and 5 on sheet c2021-237A of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....22  
Noes .....43  
Majority.....21

**AYES**

Bromhead, S  
Chanthivong, A  
Conolly, K  
Cotsis, S  
Davies, T  
Dib, J  
Finn, J  
Lalich, N

Lindsay, W  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R

Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Smith, N (teller)  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G  
Zangari, G (teller)

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
Butler, R  
Catley, Y  
Coure, M  
Crakanthorp, T  
Crouch, A  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dominello, V  
Donato, P

Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hazzard, B  
Hoenig, R  
Hornery, S  
Leong, J  
Lynch, P

Piper, G  
Provest, G  
Saffin, J  
Scully, P  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Tuckerman, W  
Voltz, L  
Ward, G



## NOES

Doyle, T  
Evans, L (teller)  
Gibbons, M  
Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J

Mehan, D (teller)  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Parker, J

Washington, K  
Watson, A  
Williams, L  
Wilson, F

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:21):** I move amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-258A:

**No. 1 Membership of Voluntary Assisted Dying Board**

Page 65, clause 149(2), lines 30—32. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (2) A person may be appointed as a member of the Board if the Minister and the Attorney General are satisfied the person is—
- (a) an Australian legal practitioner with at least 7 years' legal practice experience, or
  - (b) a Judge or other judicial officer, or a former judge or other judicial officer, of a superior court of record of the State or of another State or Territory, or of Australia, or
  - (c) qualified to be appointed as a Judge or other judicial officer of a court referred to in paragraph (b), or
  - (d) the State Coroner or a person nominated by the State Coroner, or
  - (e) a representative of the New South Wales Board of the Medical Board of Australia, or
  - (f) a representative of the Australian Medical Association (NSW) Limited or the Royal Australasian college of Physicians, or
  - (g) a representative of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists or Australian Clinical Psychology Association Limited, or
  - (h) a representative of Palliative Care NSW Incorporated.

My amendment refers to the fact that the bill, as it is currently drafted, only requires a legal practitioner with at least seven years' professional experience to be on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board. The amendment also proposes provisions to have other professionals considered for the board. They include, but are not limited to: judges or other judicial officers who are qualified to be appointed as a judge or other judicial officer of the court; the State Coroner or a person nominated as the State Coroner; and representatives of the New South Wales Board of the Medical Board of Australia, the Australian Medical Association (NSW) Ltd, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and Palliative Care NSW Incorporated. I believe it is important to insert this amendment into the bill because we need to have a wide range of professionals who are eligible to be on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board. I thank the member for Sydney for considering these amendments this morning. I note that the supporters of the bill considered these amendments as well. I look forward to hearing their contributions on my amendment.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:23):** I thank the member for Fairfield for moving his amendment. The co-sponsors of the bill have considered the amendment and we will not support it. We have heard repeatedly from members on the other side that New South Wales should not follow what other States have done, that we should ignore the well-established terms that have been used elsewhere, even though those terms would provide certainty in interpretation. Yet the same arguments are now being pushed to change the bill to blindly adopt the provisions in the bill that was introduced in the other place in 2017, which was opposed and defeated at the time. The 2017 bill would have been the first of its kind to pass in this country. The 2021 bill has had the advantage of laws and inquiries across the country to inform its drafting.

The proposed addition to the membership of the board is not relevant to this bill. The membership of the board has been established drawing from other States and the roles that this board will have. Yesterday the member for Coogee moved amendments to ensure that two registered medical practitioners are on the board. The co-sponsors supported this as it is clear how medical practitioners can add value to the role. It is not clear how the State Coroner, for example, would add value to the process. The board will have the power to refer matters to the Coroner and the Coroner would not be limited in inquiring into any matter. Why would we want them or some other professionals to be tied up with matters of the board? It would be an inefficient use of their time, to say the least. The health Minister and the Attorney General will have the discretion to determine who else in addition to the chair and deputy chair, who will have legal experience, will be best placed to serve on the board. We oppose the amendment.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that amendment No. 1 on sheet c2021-258A of the member for Fairfield be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes ..... 17  
Noes ..... 45  
Majority..... 28

**AYES**

Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Chanthivong, A  
Conolly, K (teller)  
Cotsis, S  
Davies, T

Finn, J  
Lalich, N  
Lindsay, W  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Preston, R

Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Smith, N (teller)  
Upton, G  
Zangari, G

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Constance, A  
Coure, M  
Crakanthorp, T  
Crouch, A  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dominello, V  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M

Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hazzard, B  
Hoenig, R  
Hornery, S  
Leong, J  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D (teller)  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R

Parker, J  
Piper, G  
Provest, G  
Saffin, J  
Scully, P  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Tuckerman, W  
Voltz, L  
Ward, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A (teller)  
Williams, L  
Wilson, F

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:33):** I move my amendment No. 2 on sheet c2021-258A:

**No. 2 Board to record and keep statistical information**

Page 70, clause 176(1). Insert after line 22—

- (ca) the number of death resulting from, or likely to have resulted from, the administration or self-administration of a prescribed substance during each financial year,
- (cb) the number of prescriptions written for prescribed substances during each financial year,
- (cc) the number of cases in each financial year in which the first medical practitioner to whom a patient made a request for voluntary assisted dying wrote a prescription for a prescribed substance for the patient,
- (cd) the number of cases in each financial year in which a medical practitioner was present when a patient took a prescribed substance,
- (ce) for each financial year, the median duration, expressed in weeks, of a professional relationship between a coordinating practitioner and patient before the coordinating practitioner wrote a prescription for a prescribed substance for the patient,
- (cf) for each financial year, the kinds of diseases, illnesses and medical conditions that made a patient eligible for access to voluntary assisted dying during the financial year,
- (cg) for the patients who died during a financial year as a result of, or as a likely result of, the administration or self-administration of a prescribed substance—
  - (i) the median age of the patients, and
  - (ii) the education levels of the patients, and
  - (iii) the percentage of patients who held private health insurance, and

- (iv) the percentage of patients for whom a psychological assessment was carried out immediately before the administration or self-administration of the prescribed substance, and
- (v) the reasons patients requested access to voluntary assisted dying, and
- (vi) any adverse events that occurred as a result of the administration of the prescribed substance, and
- (vii) the amount of time between the administration or self-administration of the prescribed substance and the death of the patient.

Clause 176 should be amended to require the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board to collect a broad range of statistical information. As currently drafted, the clause only requires the board to collect statistical information about the disease, illness or medical condition of the patient, the age of the patient, and the regional residency status of a patient. I note that in Oregon, often held as the exemplar of the assisted suicide regime, the following information is also collected: whether a patient had been given a psychological assessment before they were given a lethal prescription; whether a patient had private health insurance; a patient's annual income; a patient's education level; a patient's reasons for requesting assisted suicide; and the length of time the doctor had been treating the patient. The broad range of information is made public, enabling public scrutiny as to the operation of the law and the people it affects and also allowing academic research. In order to promote transparency and accountability, similar details should be collected and made public by the board. The public should be made aware of the details, breaches and alleged breaches of the law. As I said, the amendment adds to clause 176 (1) (c). I will talk to some of the inclusions. Paragraph (ca) proposes that the board records:

the number of death resulting from, or likely to have resulted from, the administration or self-administration ...

The amendment also proposes that the board records:

- (cb) the number of prescriptions written for prescribed substances during each financial year,
- (cc) the number of cases in each financial year in which the first medical practitioner to whom a patient made a request for voluntary assisted dying wrote a prescription for a prescribed substance for the patient,
- (cd) the number of cases in each financial year in which a medical practitioner was present when a patient took a prescribed substance,
- (ce) for each financial year, the median duration, expressed in weeks, of a professional relationship between a coordinating practitioner and patient before the coordinating practitioner wrote a prescription for a prescribed substance for the patient,
- (cf) illnesses and medical conditions that made a patient eligible for access to voluntary assisted dying during the financial year ...

For patients who have died during the financial year as a result, or a likely result, of the administration or self-administration of a prescribed substance, I note that paragraph (cg) in the amendment proposes that the board records the information in subparagraphs (i) to (vii), ranging from the median age of the patient, the education levels, the percentage of the patients for whom psychological assessment was carried out, the reasons for the patient's requested access to voluntary assisted dying, any adverse events that may have occurred during this time and the amount of time between the administration or self-administration of the prescribed substance and the death of the patient. We are talking about the board record-keeping that statistical information. I think it is important to be open and transparent. I would urge those supporting the bill to consider these amendments in line with looking at transparency and openness when it comes to the recording and reporting of this statistical information.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:37):** I thank the member for Fairfield. I can assure him that we have considered the amendments that he has put forward. I am going to speak to both amendment No. 2 and amendment No. 3 on sheet c2021-258A because they are identical. Amendment No. 2 suggests that the board keep this information and amendment No. 3 suggests that it be published in the annual report. They are identical.

**The SPEAKER:** Amendment No. 3 has not been moved yet.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I acknowledge that. The amendments, though, are just not in good faith. Again, they are an opportunity for those opposite to disrupt and oversubscribe every single element and every step of this process. It is difficult to find words to describe these suggestions: "Intrusive" comes to mind, as do "disrespectful" and "absurd". Again, the amendments further discriminate against not only terminally ill people who have chosen to access voluntary assisted dying but also their families. They suggest that the information that we are going to collect include the education levels of the patient. Can someone from that side of the argument explain to me how on earth that is relevant? How is it relevant whether you did year 10 or whether you had a university degree if you want to access voluntary assisted dying? Somebody explain that to me.

Secondly, the amendments propose recording the percentage of patients who held private health insurance. So are we going to ring the patient's family after they have passed and check whether they had private health insurance? Again, what difference does that make? They propose recording the percentage of patients for whom the psychological assessments were carried out immediately before the administration. Where is the respect for these people? They will have gone through all of the steps and safeguards that are now in the bill but under the proposed amendment they must undergo another psychological assessment immediately before the administration of the prescribed substance.

**Ms Anna Watson:** It's cruel.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I acknowledge that interjection; it is cruel. The other part of the amendment that I cannot understand relates to recording the amount of time between the administration or self-administration of the prescribed substance and the death of the patient. Again, what does it matter how long it takes for a person to die? The bill already provides for record-keeping and for statistical information to be kept by both the board and the Minister, who will have the discretion to expand those provisions. Further, the bill does not constrict the board's power to expand on those provisions. There is absolutely no need to include this amendment in the bill. Some of the subclauses within the amendment have already been covered. But, quite frankly, others are outright unworkable. Do members really want the board to call the families of a deceased person to check on their educational level or whether they have private health insurance? The co-sponsors of the bill will oppose this amendment.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:40):** First, I will address the question from the member for Port Macquarie about why we would want to record the length of time between administering poison and death. Recording that information is fundamental to understanding whether or not this process works as promised. Is it painless? Is it dignified? Is it a better death than one would otherwise experience? Members have heard about overseas cases in which it took people days to die after taking the poison—days! And they were in agony during that time. It is absolutely fundamental to know whether we might face that same reality when the system is introduced in New South Wales. That is absolutely crucial information. Why would the co-sponsors of the bill not want to know whether the system works? Why would the co-sponsors not want to know about adverse events?

Clearly, the intended effect of the process is that the patient dies, but we do not want for them to go through excruciating pain or to suffer disability as a result of the administration of the poison. From the perspective of the co-sponsors of the bill, you would hope that under the record-keeping process the time between the administration of drugs and death is short. But we should know those details because it is absolutely fundamental to the promise the co-sponsors of the bill have made to the community that this is a better way. If voluntary assisted dying does not work, we need to know. If the drug that is administered is the wrong one or is not working, somebody needs to know in order to fix it.

Clearly, an analysis on the success of a program cannot be made if the outcomes are not monitored. I was staggered by the contribution from the member for Port Macquarie. There is no harm in collecting information, particularly if it is de-identified and not about a particular person. But in our role as members and lawmakers, who are accountable to the public, it is crucial to ensure that we do not get it wrong. So it is absolutely critical that we know those outcomes. Members may discuss whether or not every item in the amendment is exactly right or whether the requirements under the amendment should be withdrawn in future, but recording basic information about who died, why they died, how they died and whether the system is delivering the intended outcome is absolutely critical.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:43):** I support the contribution from the member for Riverstone. The process of record-keeping and the data that is to go to the board is a process, and that process must collect as much information as possible. We must be open and transparent to everybody in the community about what is going on. The information that is recorded under this amendment will go directly to the board. In another amendment, I will touch on what information will be provided to the community. But as the member for Riverstone said, if the process is not working and is not efficient, and we can identify additions to strengthen the voluntary assisted dying process, why should that not happen? If things need to be fixed, they should be. Collecting as much data to see where people are and what is going on with their conditions is important for the future and for people who may choose this process of dying in this State. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (12:44):** Collecting data, specifically from the time that a person ingests a poison until the time they die, is critical for this place and those overseeing the framework to have a clear understanding of the evidence. We know other jurisdictions have not only reported many differences in the length of time that someone takes to die but also uncovered and disclosed the various experiences of people during the process of passing away who have ingested the poison. Those experiences include seizures, vomiting up the poison and bodily reactions on top of their physical ailments and the physical condition that is causing them to pass away. Those distressing situations lead to a lengthy process of passing away.

It is fundamental that people with the oversight of the process understand those de-identified situations because we need to know whether poisons being recommended by the Health secretary are working and are the desired and best approach for each individual person. Unless we have transparency in that information, we cannot make the best decision for the citizens of New South Wales who seek to undertake that process. We must ensure that we in this place and those who are oversighting the process have all the information so that we can refine the process in the future. We need to know and have accurate and transparent de-identified information. For those reasons, I support the amendments.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that amendment No. 2 on sheet c2021-258A of the member for Fairfield be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....22  
Noes .....43  
Majority.....21

**AYES**

Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Chanthivong, A  
Clancy, J  
Conolly, K (teller)  
Cotsis, S  
Davies, T  
Finn, J

Henskens, A  
Lalich, N  
Layzell, D  
Lindsay, W  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Perrottet, D

Preston, R  
Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Smith, N (teller)  
Speakman, M  
Upton, G  
Zangari, G

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
Butler, R  
Catley, Y  
Constance, A  
Coure, M  
Crakanthorp, T  
Crouch, A  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dominello, V  
Doyle, T  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M  
Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J

Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hazzard, B  
Hoenig, R  
Hornery, S  
Leong, J  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D (teller)  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Parker, J

Piper, G  
Provest, G  
Saffin, J  
Scully, P  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Tuckerman, W  
Voltz, L  
Ward, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A (teller)  
Williams, L  
Wilson, F

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:52):** I move my amendment No. 3 on sheet c2021-258A:

**No. 3 Board to record and keep statistical information**

Page 71, clause 179(2). Insert after line 10—

- (ba) the number of deaths resulting from, or likely to have resulted from, the administration or self-administration of a prescribed substance during the financial year, and
- (bb) the number of prescriptions written for prescribed substances during the financial year, and
- (bc) the number of cases in the financial year in which the first medical practitioner to whom a patient made a request for voluntary assisted dying wrote a prescription for a prescribed substance for the patient, and
- (bd) the number of cases in the financial year in which a medical practitioner was present when a patient took a prescribed substance, and
- (be) for the financial year, the median duration, expressed in weeks, of a professional relationship between a coordinating practitioner and patient before the coordinating practitioner wrote a prescription for a prescribed substance for the patient, and

- (bf) the kinds of diseases, illnesses and medical conditions that made a patient eligible for access to voluntary assisted dying during the financial year, and
- (bg) for the patients that died during the financial year as a result of, or as a likely result of, the administration or self-administration of a prescribed substance—
  - (i) the median age of the patients, and
  - (ii) the education levels of the patients, and
  - (iii) the percentage of patients who held private health insurance, and
  - (iv) the percentage of patients for whom a psychological assessment was carried out immediately before the administration or self-administration of the prescribed substance, and
  - (v) the reasons patients requested access to voluntary assisted dying, and
  - (vi) any adverse events that occurred as a result of the administration of the prescribed substance, and
  - (vii) the amount of time between the administration or self-administration of the prescribed substance and the death of the patient.

Section 179 relates specifically to the annual report. In any annual report there is information required to be given to the public, which is important. This amendment, whilst similar to a previous amendment, is now referring to the annual report being made public to all. In brief summary, subclauses (ba) to (bg) (i) to (vii) seek to include in the annual report the number of deaths which resulted from voluntary assisted dying, the number of prescriptions written and the types of diseases, illnesses and medical conditions that made a patient eligible for access to voluntary assisted dying. Members of Parliament always receive numerous reports, and Ministers lay reports on the table constantly. The reports that government agencies prepare are important to the Government of the day. It is vitally important that those processes are scrutinised and recorded and, more importantly, reported to the public so that the public understands what is going on in particular processes—in this case the annual report for the voluntary assisted dying process. I leave my comments there and urge members to support the amendment.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (12:55):** I thank the member for Fairfield for his concern regarding the issue of statistics. The amendment repeats, at least in part, the categories that were referred to in a previous amendment that was proposed and negatived. Paragraph (bg) specifically repeats each of the areas that the member considers necessary. I share with the member and other members who have generally supported his position on those issues the belief that it is important that there be appropriate statistical gathering of information. I assure him that in speaking to Labor and Liberal Ministers in each of the other jurisdictions about similar provisions to those contained within clause 179 (2), they have had no difficulties in gathering the statistical data that health secretaries and health Ministers considered would give them the necessary evidence to respond to any issues that may arise.

I as health Minister, and I am sure any subsequent health Ministers of either political persuasion, will be very much focused in the next few years on how the bill will work once it becomes legislation. I assure the member for Fairfield that I have already had discussions with senior Health officials about gathering the necessary data and making it public. Today I spoke with a Minister in another jurisdiction who was able to make the data that I requested available to me within minutes, so it is a focus that each jurisdiction has. I assure the member that will continue.

I appreciate the reasons that the member for Fairfield and others who support that position are concerned—and I think that is entirely appropriate—but with the experience I have had after five years as health Minister, I cannot agree that it helps to take such a prescriptive approach to particular categories of data. As the process progresses, I am quite sure we will need to look at different categories of data. As health Minister, I assure the House that I will be working with the Health team to ensure that whatever data is pertinent to the issues will be included in the report. I will make those directions as the legislation permits. On that basis, I do not see the need for the amendment. It would be preferable if we did not proceed with this prescriptive approach. Having said that, all the data will certainly be made available as required in the board's annual reports and, under the relevant section, when the data comes to me it will be made available to the Parliament within six days.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:58):** I support the member for Fairfield in relation to this amendment. As members of Parliament, we have significant responsibility when we change a law as fundamental as this one to ensure we know the outcomes of what we have set in train, as we would do if we embarked on any significant legislative venture or new direction. We have to be accountable. We have to be able to monitor the outcomes of what we have legislated for and to be in a position to review it. That all has to happen in a very publicly accountable way. The intent of both the previous amendment and this one is to fulfil that obligation that we each, as members of this House, have.

I appreciate that the Minister will do what Ministers do and collect data. That does not absolve us of our responsibility to ensure that we set this up properly with the appropriate mechanisms in place. That is why I believe it is appropriate for the Parliament to specify the minimum requirements of the Parliament, even if the Minister retains flexibility to collect other things and do additional things on top of that. But it is our responsibility. We are the ones passing this bill and, if it goes into law, we are the ones who have to set it up on a trajectory that can be monitored so that we can be held accountable and indeed, if needed, it can be adjusted on the basis of the data that is collected.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that amendment No. 3 on sheet c2021-258A of the member for Fairfield be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....23  
Noes .....45  
Majority.....22

**AYES**

Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Chanthivong, A  
Clancy, J  
Conolly, K (teller)  
Cotsis, S  
Davies, T  
Dib, J

Finn, J  
Henskens, A  
Lalich, N  
Layzell, D  
Lindsay, W  
McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T  
Perrottet, D

Preston, R  
Roberts, A  
Sidoti, J  
Smith, N (teller)  
Taylor, M  
Upton, G  
Zangari, G

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Constance, A  
Coure, M  
Crakanthorp, T  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dominello, V  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M

Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hazzard, B  
Hoenig, R  
Hornery, S  
Leong, J  
Lynch, P  
Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R

Parker, J  
Piper, G  
Provest, G  
Saffin, J  
Scully, P  
Sidgreaves, P  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Tuckerman, W  
Voltz, L  
Ward, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A (teller)  
Williams, L  
Wilson, F

**Amendment negatived.**

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 to 191 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 to 191 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

**Third Reading**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:07):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I speak by leave to thank the opponents of this reform for the respectful and genuine way that they have conducted themselves throughout this debate. I acknowledge that their opposition to this reform is genuine. The way they have conducted themselves shows their strength of character and maturity to be able to deal with a complex issue that they are so strongly opposed to. I thank them for their conduct throughout this. I thank the 28 co-sponsors and the many supporters of this reform, who have worked so collaboratively and collectively with me throughout this process. The Parliament has seen some of its most passionate and emotional speeches, and it has been at its best through this very long debate that we have had.

I particularly thank advocates Go Gentle and Dying with Dignity that have worked so hard and for so long for this reform. I have a particular closeness with a former constituent, Shayne Higson, whom I have spoken to multiple times throughout this debate. I thank her for her dedication and determination. Shayne's passion for this reform comes from her own personal experience of seeing her mum die in a very horrific way. Shayne, let us dedicate the passage of this legislation through this House to your mother. She would truly be proud of you. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

**The SPEAKER:** I will clarify for the benefit of members that given we have finished the consideration in detail stage of the bill, the division time was 10 minutes rather than five minutes. There is one minute remaining of the regular 10 minutes. If any of the Whips indicate that a member is on their way, I have the discretion to extend the vote for a further four minutes. I will be guided by the Whips as to whether a member who wishes to vote is on their way to do so.

Ayes .....52  
Noes .....32  
Majority.....20

#### AYES

Aitchison, J	Greenwich, A	Piper, G
Anderson, K	Griffin, J	Provest, G
Barilaro, J	Gulaptis, C	Saffin, J
Bromhead, S	Hancock, S	Saunders, D
Butler, R	Harris, D	Scully, P
Car, P	Harrison, J	Sidgreaves, P
Catley, Y	Haylen, J	Singh, G
Constance, A	Hazzard, B	Smith, T
Cooke, S	Hoenig, R	Stokes, R
Coure, M	Hornery, S	Tesch, L
Crakanthorp, T	Leong, J	Tuckerman, W
Crouch, A (teller)	Lynch, P	Voltz, L
Daley, M	Marshall, A	Ward, G
Dalton, H	Mehan, D	Washington, K
Dominello, V	O'Neill, M	Watson, A (teller)
Donato, P	Park, R	Williams, L
Doyle, T	Parker, J	Wilson, F
Evans, L		

#### NOES

Atalla, E	Kamper, S	Preston, R
Bali, S	Lalich, N	Roberts, A
Chanthivong, A	Layzell, D	Sidoti, J
Clancy, J	Lee, G	Smith, N (teller)
Conolly, K	Lindsay, W	Speakman, M
Cotsis, S	McGirr, J	Taylor, M
Davies, T	Mihailuk, T	Toole, P
Dib, J	Minns, C	Upton, G
Finn, J	Pavey, M	Williams, R
Gibbons, M	Perrottet, D	Zangari, G (teller)
Henskens, A	Petinos, E	

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** I thank all members for their respectful contributions to this debate. I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

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*Documents***UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 26 November 2021.

*Committees***JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Inquiry**

**Mr LEE EVANS:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the adequacy of funding allocations for the NSW Electoral Commission for the 2023 State election, the full details of which will be available on the committee's home page.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Eurobodalla Healthcare Services**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly direct the Minister for Health and Medical Research to ensure the new hospital in Eurobodalla provides all healthcare services, and direct Southern NSW Local Health District to provide urgent relief for medical workforces and reconsider its provision of local radiation oncology treatments, received from **Mr Ryan Park**.

*Private Members' Statements***NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:18):** We know just how tough it has been this year for our local community organisations. But it has also been a year when those groups have shone through in what they have done to connect our communities and provide opportunities for them to gather during COVID restrictions, whether remotely or outdoors, and now that we can once more gather to see each other and experience our community organisations. Many of these organisations are run by volunteers who give their time and skills to help make our community a better place, and they are excited to be open, carrying out their activities and meeting again. The New South Wales Government is investing in our State to help us move towards economic recovery. We continue to support community organisations through annual funding programs like the Community Building Partnership [CBP] program and the Arts and Cultural Funding Program. This year Community Building Partnership funding will go towards a range of projects in my community to improve and upgrade sporting clubs, school and educational institutions, religious organisations, and musical groups.

There are a wide range of sporting clubs in my local area, and thanks to living on our beautiful Sydney Harbour we enjoy access to many water sports. There are many organisations in my electorate that enjoy harbour locations. I recognise the Mosman Rowers Club for its success in securing funding to install new solar panels. It has a significant green initiative on the bay. I thank president Kathrina Doran and Professor Robyn Bushell for their support for the club and championing this project, and many other projects, to deliver renewable energy. The Northern Beaches Outrigger Canoe Club at The Spit has secured funding to purchase a new OC6 outrigger canoe. I congratulate president Grant Hughes and his team on this success. I am sure the rowers and canoeists look forward to being out on the water together again, even at such an early hour of the morning.

As the Middle Harbour 16 Ft Skiff Sailing Club has seen an increase in junior and senior sailors, their CBP funding will allow the club to purchase a new rescue boat. I congratulate president Peter Tinworth on securing that funding and thank him for all his work for the club. I recognise Mosman Croquet Club for its successful application for funding to construct the northern boundary for court 2. I thank outgoing president Mary Gibson. Mary is a kind and loving woman who nurtures all the new entrants to croquet. She has volunteered with the club for many years. I welcome the new club president, Cali Craig. I also recognise Northern Suburbs Rugby Football Club, which successfully secured funding for a new scrum machine. I thank chairman Grahame O'Donnell and general manager Jack Burey for all their work for their local rugby club.

Community Building Partnership funding is also going towards education in my community. I congratulate Mosman-based Sydney Institute of Marine Science [SIMS] Chief Executive Officer Professor Martina Doblin

and General Manager Mark Scognamiglio for securing funding to upgrade their teaching laboratory. The work that the SIMS undertakes has an impact not only in Australia but also across the globe. Beauty Point Public School P&C Association has received funding to install acoustic insulation in the school hall. I thank the P&C president Lauren Adlam for her commitment to supporting the students and school community.

Many people in my community appreciate being able to return to religious services in person, in particular during this season. I congratulate Cremorne Synagogue President Harold Marshbaum for securing funding to replace the fixed wooden seating with new upholstered benches. I wish all at the synagogue a happy Hanukkah. Reverend Brett Graham at Scots Kirk Mosman has secured funding to install play equipment at the church. Reverend Maxwell Wood and the rector's warden, Paula Turner, have secured funding to repair the roof, downpipes and guttering of St Luke's Anglican Church, Mosman. I hope to be back there this year to hear their beautiful choral performances before Christmas.

The Rotary Club of North Sydney Sunrise successfully received funding to install a new fitness station at Anderson Park, to be installed by North Sydney Council. I thank President Allen Colburt for his work on this project and leading the Rotary club during this challenging year. I congratulate Link Wentworth Housing Chief Executive Officer Andrew McNulty for seeking and securing funding to refurbish the community room at the organisation's residence in Nicholson Street, Wollstonecraft. I thank Sydney City Brass Managing Director Danny Alexander and Musical Director Jason Katsikaris for their work for the club, which rehearses at the Mosman Club. The band has secured CBP funding to purchase additional percussion instruments and instrument mutes for performances. It is great to see the work that these organisations do, which are fundamentally led by volunteers. We would not have the character, nature and spirit of our community without them. I am excited to see them back together again, making music, playing sport and having religious worship services. I look forward to engaging with these organisations again over Christmas.

#### **COUNCILLOR LORETTA BAKER**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:23):** I acknowledge Councillor Loretta Baker, the first female mayor of Maitland City Council. Councillor Loretta Baker was elected as the Mayor of Maitland City Council in 2017. I pay tribute to a woman who is an amazing representative of our community. I have known Loretta since 2005, when we set up the non-party-political Women's Network Hunter NSW. That organisation supported my predecessor in this place, former member for Maitland and Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Robyn Parker, and it also supported Councillor Lisa Tierney, who was one of the early female councillors in our electorate.

That was a completely non-political, nonpartisan way of promoting women. When I moved to Maitland there were just two women on the council of 12 councillors and one mayor; so, two out of 13. Loretta was part of the Women's Network. She has lived and worked in Maitland for nearly 40 years. She is a local registered nurse and registered psychiatric nurse, and someone who has devoted their entire working career to helping people access high-quality health care. She received the NSW Premier's Award for her important work with homeless people and those struggling with mental health and addiction. She did an amazing project at one of our caravan parks, where she provided incredible new opportunities for people living very transitory experiences to get education and jobs and pull their lives back together.

She has served our community as a local councillor for 13 years and was elected as mayor four years ago, in 2017, but her work for the community did not stop when she became mayor. As mayor, she led the council's \$2 million COVID relief program, which supported local residents and small businesses that were struggling. As we emerge from COVID, we need the strong, stable and caring leadership that Loretta brings to our community more than ever before. The other thing I find quite impressive and inspiring about Councillor Loretta Baker is her commitment to the sustainability of our environment. Under her leadership, council launched an unprecedented neighbourhood tree-planting program to improve our city. That has led to the planting of 15,000 native seedlings under the Maitland Greening Plan.

Maitland has a lot of new estates and new developments. I acknowledge the presence of the planning Minister in the Chamber; he would know a lot about hot cities. Doorknocking in Woodberry, where there are not a lot of trees overhead, is very different from doorknocking in Lorn. The difference is those very old, established trees. Councillor Loretta Baker's contribution to the greening of our city has been really important. She has also built more footpaths and cycleways than any other councillor in Maitland's history, and that is really important to us.

I have worked very closely with Councillor Loretta Baker on ensuring that the State Government is aware of our massive need for roads and infrastructure. Maitland is the fastest-growing centre in New South Wales outside of Sydney. Maitland City Council has invested a record \$71 million in upgrading and repairing local roads and footpaths. I have sought meetings with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads on this issue, and we had a big community meeting. At that meeting I was a little bit worried because I know the community is so angry

about the congestion they experience every day. You start to open the box and you think, "Wow, this is going to go pretty hard." But Loretta stood up, listened to the community and took it on board.

Our community has a very clear understanding about the lack of investment in critical infrastructure by the State Government over the past 10 years. Labor spent \$380 million in investment when it was in government 10 years ago; in the past 10 years this Government has spent barely \$100 million on investment in our roads. Even though she is a Labor mayor, Councillor Loretta Baker is very committed to working with all sides of government, and she has. She had a very good relationship with the former Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter, the Hon. Scot McDonald, as she does with the current Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon. Taylor Martin. She is working all the time to get the essential infrastructure and roads that our community needs.

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:28):** I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Maitland and the magnanimous, bipartisan way in which she recognised not only the current contribution of Mayor Loretta Baker but also that of the former environment Minister and member for Maitland, the Hon. Robyn Parker. I acknowledge the great efforts that Loretta Baker and her council have been making in relation to tree planting and combating the heat island effect in Maitland. Maitland is a wonderful community with some wonderful architecture. I am thinking of John Choi's amazing work along the riverfront. It has some amazing heritage and amazing green places. It is great to see a council working so collaboratively with Government through things like the Public Spaces Legacy Program to ensure that we have green and cool places, particularly in the growing region of Maitland.

### WEDDIN SHIRE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:29):** In the north of the vast electorate of Cootamundra is the Weddin Shire, a local government area with just over one person for every square kilometre. The community may be small, but it is a powerhouse. The region has a rich and celebrated history and is looking to capitalise on the opportunities of the future. I am proud of the assistance that the New South Wales Government continues to provide to the shire, enabling it to undertake vital projects and bring to life work that has been dreamed of by the community for decades. Across the towns and villages of the Weddin Shire we are supporting upgrades and improvements to community spaces and places, the vital meeting points for the community. That includes \$134,778 for the Caragabal Memorial Hall, which is helping to continue the hall's refurbishment, including upgrading the kitchen, toilet, guttering and pipes. In Grenfell, a huge amount of work is underway, ensuring that the town and the wider Weddin Shire have the facilities they need for the future.

We are investing in the environment, supporting the Weddin Community Native Nursery to continue its work in supplying native species for local Landcare with a grant from the Community Building Partnership program. We are investing in the health of the Weddin Shire, building a brand new state-of-the-art ambulance station in Grenfell, which is fit for purpose and gives our hardworking paramedics the facilities they need to continue providing their vital service. It was a joy to catch up with local paramedics at the opening of the new Grenfell Ambulance Station in March this year. We are investing in the spaces and places that bring the community together, helping the showground to replace its electrical infrastructure and upgrade its pavilion to ensure that not only can the show go on but also that it can be done safely with the power lines moved underground. Similar support for renovations at the Grenfell Picnic Race Club and the Grenfell Uniting Church have ensured that volunteers have the comfortable environments they deserve with renovated kitchens.

The Weddin Shire is looking to the future, seeing the opportunities that lie ahead and creating the infrastructure to cater for it. We are supporting it in its transformation of Grenfell's Main Street, which is a multimillion-dollar upgrade that will create a space for future events and infrastructure. That work includes creating infrastructure for future access to power for electric car charging, better digital connectivity in the Grenfell CBD, upgrades to the streetscape, protection of the heritage verandahs, new seating, plantings, a sculpture in celebration of the town's own Henry Lawson and, of course, improvements to accessibility so that everyone can enjoy the public space. We have also supported the transformation of Henry Lawson Oval, giving the Grenfell Girilannas and Goannas and the junior rugby league teams a home ground they can be proud of, and a recreation space for the entire community with a new fitness circuit, grandstand and amenities.

Through the continued investment into regional sport, the Grenfell Kart Club received funding to extend and resurface its existing race circuit. That will benefit the entire community, allowing more events to be held at the kart club, which will bring more people into Grenfell. No community can grow and thrive without adequate sewerage treatment facilities, and the New South Wales Government is ensuring that there are no blockages in the pipeline of Grenfell's growth with a \$12.3 million upgrade of the Grenfell Sewage Treatment Plant. This once-in-a-generation investment into the future of Grenfell ensures that the cost burden of this vital infrastructure does not fall on the shire's ratepayers.

Ensuring that our young people get the greatest start in life is one of the Government's highest priorities, and the Weddin Mobile Preschool is dedicated to educating and developing children across the shire. We are helping the preschool in that essential task with a \$154,000 grant for a range of projects, including cultural resources to increase the number of Aboriginal children and children from disadvantaged backgrounds attending the preschool program. As they grow, we are providing them with the best environments to learn, installing new LED lighting at Grenfell Public School, Henry Lawson High School and Greenethorpe Public School in the first two tranches of the program.

We are investing in improving Weddin shire's local road networks. Under round three of the Fixing Local Roads Program, almost \$12 million has been invested into improving the safety of Weddin shire's roads, including Greenethorpe-Koorawatha Road. This investment is continuing to strengthen the local road networks after previous years of deterioration. There is not enough time in this speech for me to outline all the work this Government is doing to help to bring to life our projects in the Weddin shire. But let me say that I am proud of the cooperation between Weddin Shire Council, the community and the New South Wales Government and what we have achieved together.

### KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (14:35):** On Saturday 4 December 2021, Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby councils face an election of their local government representatives, and those two councils could not be more different. Eighty per cent of my electorate is in the Ku-ring-gai Council area, and 20 per cent is in the Hornsby Shire Council area. I estimate that 99 per cent of the local government complaints reported to my office relate to Ku-ring-gai and not Hornsby. Under the experienced leadership of Mayor Philip Ruddock and General Manager Steven Head, Hornsby Shire Council is generally well run. Its councillors have operated by consensus between the elected representatives, including those who are members of the Liberal, Labor and Green parties.

By contrast, Ku-ring-gai Council during this last term of council has until very recently been led by Mayor Jennifer Anderson. In the current term, two blocs of Ku-ring-gai councillors have developed, resulting in a high degree of dysfunction and poor decision-making. The level of dysfunction in the council has now come to light publicly, but it has been evident for some time to those who follow the council. Jennifer Anderson has frequently used her mayor's casting vote to impose the views of her usual bloc of councillors—Martin Smith, Donna Greenfield, Cheryl Szatow and Callum Clarke—upon the community.

This bloc of councillors has recently been boycotting meetings of the council since the recent change of mayor but has still been able to attend local events. Some of the decisions of the last Ku-ring-gai council that I most regret include the Harris Farm rezoning decision for Eastern Road in Turramurra, the blocking by Martin Smith of progress on the indoor basketball facilities at St Ives High School, and the attempt to force 20-plus-storey developments on my area. Of the Jennifer Anderson bloc of councillors it is instructive to note that councillors Szatow and Clarke are not standing for re-election and Councillor Greenfield has taken an unwinnable position on a ticket in the Wahroonga ward.

The council has failed to use \$6 million in New South Wales Government grants to upgrade local soccer and basketball facilities, with work not commenced within three years of the funds being awarded to the council. When Old Barker Rugby Club secured another State Government grant of \$850,000 to upgrade the Turramurra Memorial Park pavilion to have better female amenities, the club was thanked by the council by the council increasing its rent by 500 per cent. The council has also charged a project management fee to improve a council asset to be deducted from the State Government grant for the project. My attempts to get common sense from the general manager on both decisions fell on deaf ears. I would encourage the ratepayers of Ku-ring-gai to look carefully at the options, as there appear to be many worthy candidates who are standing at this election.

The most important issue that the new council will have to come to grips with is the manner in which all of the available working capital of the council has been tied up in its acquisition in 2012 of the property at 828 Pacific Highway, Gordon, which was acquired for \$23 million. This was a wasteful decision recommended to councillors by the current general manager. The acquisition was said to be because staff accommodation was not fit for staff under the occupational health and safety standards. The property at 828 Pacific Highway, Gordon, was purchased as alternative staff accommodation, but it has never been used for that purpose.

The staff are still accommodated where they were in 2012. All records about the decision have been deleted from the council website, but I understand that the former mayor, Jennifer Anderson, used her casting vote at the last meeting of council in 2012 to authorise the purchase. In about 2008 the council acquired adjoining properties on Dumaresq Street, Gordon, using section 94 contributions, to create a park. The park has never been constructed. The three properties continue to be residential premises rented by the council, and not community assets, which is what section 94 is directed to. The \$23 million acquisition of 828 Pacific Highway, Gordon, in 2012 has been

the catalyst for council having to sell community assets, like the Gordon and East Roseville bowling clubs. Many people in my electorate have written to me to oppose this, and Gordon Golf Club is still under threat. Like my constituents, I believe that existing public recreation places should, wherever possible, be kept to provide open space for residents, especially those close to areas where there has been an increase in density, such as Killara and Gordon. In both council areas, the community deserves the best operating council possible. I encourage all ratepayers to look very carefully at the people who are standing for election. I look forward to working with the new council to deal with local issues of importance to the community.

### OVERSEAS STUDENTS

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (14:40):** The electorate of The Entrance is home to the Central Coast campus of the University of Newcastle. Recently the university established another campus in the Central Coast's capital city, Gosford, with the strong support of the State Government. Members will know that I am a proud graduate of the University of Newcastle. I record the debt I owe to the State and to my fellow citizens. My education was delivered free to me when I attended university. The gift of a free education is something that I will never forget receiving from my fellow citizens and the State.

Australia is rightly recognised as having a world-class education system. Therefore, it is not surprising that many people from overseas want to be educated at Australian universities. According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, between 2017 and 2018 education was Australia's third-largest export. In terms of the international education sector, before the current pandemic in 2019 the income generated by education was around \$40 billion. Of that \$40 billion, students from the People's Republic of China contributed \$12 billion to the Australian economy.

China remains the largest contributor to Australia's international education export industry, despite restrictions on global trade in 2020 due to COVID-19. The income raised from educating Chinese students studying in Australia has increased steadily over the past six years, and many Australian universities rely heavily on the income that they derive from foreign students. The Australian National University, the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney all earn more than 40 per cent of their income from foreign students. Twenty per cent of students at my own university, the University of Newcastle, are international students. Of those, students from China represent the largest group.

I underline that our education sector is an important renewable resource for our country's export income. However, instead of supporting that, the Australian Government has left the universities sector to its own devices during the pandemic. As a consequence, there has been a massive restructuring and undercutting of our education capacity, and 17,000 workers in the industry have lost their jobs. Instead of supporting this important renewable industry, the Australian Government has picked a fight with the People's Republic of China, which is our largest trading partner and the country in the Asia-Pacific region that contributes the largest number of international students to our universities. The Australian Government's actions have been described by Labor's shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs in the national Parliament as "the most dangerous election tactic in Australian history".

Education is central to our relationship with the Pacific region. In my view it is also central to our relationship with Asia, in particular with the People's Republic of China. Instead of investing in war, our future in the Pacific would be better served by investing in the access to education we can provide our neighbours. However, this will not occur—and there is no possibility of this occurring—while we have a Morrison Liberal-Nationals Government. That is why I will be working my hardest to get rid of the Liberals and the National Party at a Federal level come the next Federal election.

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:44):** Yesterday marked the start of the United Nations 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It was 25 November, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Internationally, around one in three women have been abused in their lifetime. In times of crises the numbers rise, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent humanitarian crises, conflicts and climate disasters. In Australia the level of violence against women is described as being of epidemic proportions yet, as much as we talk about this, we do not, at a public policy level, respond to a problem of epidemic proportions. On average one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner. There are many forms of gender violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, workplace sexual harassment, street harassment and coercive conduct. I know this issue well, not only through my role working with the domestic and family violence sector, police and survivors as the member for Lismore but also through my background of working in women's refugees—and even a men's refuge—since the 1980s.

My electorate is impacted by violence against women all too frequently. Per capita, the Tenterfield shire rates sixth highest in the State for incidents of domestic and family violence. The Richmond-Tweed police district

reported a 19 per cent increase in sexual assaults in the past year. But gender-based violence is not inevitable. It can and must be prevented. That is where we must turn our attention—more on prevention. The organisation Our Watch is a leader in prevention of violence against women and children in Australia. This week it released an updated framework of actions to address the gendered drivers of violence. The other day we heard from Karen Willis, who is now with Unions NSW's gender equity program, and she said there were four drivers. These were men's control of decision-making, sex-role stereotyping, poor responses to violence against women and aggressive male peer relations. These are the four areas we have to give a lot of attention to.

Women's Safety NSW partnered with Our Watch to deliver the Change the Story and Changing the Picture frameworks, with the latest research on what drives violence against women and what works to prevent it. Our Watch CEO Patty Kinnersly says that evidence shows that we can stop violence against women before it starts, provided all parts of society play a role. That means a whole-of-government approach, but with all parts of society. She says that we need to address the gendered drivers of violence at every level and promote and embed gender equality everywhere we live, work and play. Ms Kinnersly says research shows that some men's attachment to the idea that they must be in control, be tough and aggressive, and suppress their emotions is not only harmful to men but to women too. She said that it is crucial that men are engaged in violence prevention work.

Change is needed across all levels of government and all sectors of society. I welcome the NSW Police Force's participation in the campaign with its message that gender-based violence is everyone's business and there are no innocent bystanders when it comes to domestic and family violence. Assistant Commissioner Leanne McCusker says community attitudes and changing behaviours will make the biggest difference in reducing not only incidences of violence but also discrimination towards women. It is encouraging to see such widespread support for the 16 days of activism campaign in Australia, New South Wales and our local electorates, and we need to be talking about it wherever we are.

The United Nations says stopping the violence starts with believing survivors; adopting comprehensive approaches that tackle the root causes; transforming harmful social norms; empowering women and girls; providing survivor-centred essential services across policing, justice, health, and social sectors; and sufficiently financing the women's rights agenda. It speaks to Sustainable Development Goal 5, which Australia has signed on to, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The date of 25 November was chosen to commemorate the brutal killing of the Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, on that day in 1960. The three women went to visit their husbands in prison when they were stopped on the road by military intelligence officers and murdered.

#### TRIBUTE TO CHRIS ENGLISH

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:49):** As a lifelong local, my community is my family. I am so lucky to live in a community of generous and warm people, who make my community the best place to live. This afternoon I use the time of the House to tell the story of Chris English, a well-known and highly respected member of the Kiama community. He had an intrinsic warmth and quiet confidence that came with enormous love and respect from all who knew him. Chris was one of those Kiama locals that was his happiest when he was helping others. He was the sort of bloke that would literally give you the shirt off his back.

Tragically, Chris suffered a horrific accident on 26 March 2018 that left him a quadriplegic. As the then president-elect of Kiama Lions Club, the news of his injury reverberated throughout not just Lions but our entire community as the significance of his injuries was better understood. I commend Kiama Lions, which did such an incredible job supporting Chris and his wonderful wife, Bobbie, in various ways following the accident. Like so many of our service clubs, Lions is one big family. Its members spend their volunteer hours helping people across our community, but they really do rally when one of their own is in real need. I had the opportunity to visit Chris in Prince of Wales Hospital whilst Parliament was sitting. I was pleased to spend some very special time with him, and I will forever hold that time very dear. Sadly, Chris has passed away, and his ashes were scattered by family members at a treasured location.

One of the issues that Bobbie raised with me was the significant challenges faced by Chris and Bobbie in supporting Chris at home following his tragic accident. As a local MP, and the then disability Minister, I was absolutely shocked to discover that at-home financial support would be rendered by My Aged Care rather than the National Disability Insurance Scheme. What is even more shocking is that there is a totally unfair and inequitable duality in supports provided by both schemes, which sets up two distinct classes of care. If you are perfectly well and acquire a serious injury over the age of 65, as Chris did, you are placed into a particular category of support through My Aged Care. This is totally at odds with the treatment of other Australians who have a disability prior to turning 65.

To put it bluntly, we live in a country where the Commonwealth Government has enshrined aged discrimination in the supports it provides to different Australians. This is inherently wrong. If Chris had acquired

his injury prior to turning 65, he would have received an entirely different category of support. He would have been assessed on the basis of need, he would have had a plan with goals that he wanted to achieve and he would have been given greater choice and control over his life. Not so with My Aged Care. This is nothing short of age discrimination by the Commonwealth Government, and it appears that this is accepted by both major political parties.

I have previously written to Senator Richard Colbeck and former Minister Stuart Robert, and I have raised this matter with the current Minister, Linda Reynolds. In fact, I had placed this matter on the agenda of disability Ministers meetings when I was our State's disability Minister. All I have received to date from the Commonwealth is excuses and no interest in action—bureaucratic babble and Federal fob-offs. There are so many aspects of disability policy on which the Commonwealth and the NDIS have been simply too slow to move. The NDIS has been a great reform for so many Australians but there is waste, there is mismanagement, and the pace of reform is simply too slow, which means the aspiration to empower Australians with a disability is falling far short. Right now the Commonwealth continues to sit on the NDIS Reserve Fund, which has more than \$1.7 billion that could be spent right now on people with disabilities. It could be spent on people like Chris who need supports because of no fault of their own.

As I always do, I do not come to this Chamber just with a complaint; I come with a solution. I am calling for either an exemption for people aged over 65 who have an accident or illness to be supported under the NDIS, or for My Aged Care to better cater for those with profound and complex disability unrelated to aging. This could be done through discretionary additions to My Aged Care packages where this is necessary.

We are not talking about a large category of people. And it is not as if the Commonwealth is ignoring them under either system. My point is entirely about consistency. In a country like Australia, I did not think it mattered who you were, your age or circumstances; I thought we treated everyone equally. For this Federal Government, this is clearly not the case and I am, frankly, appalled. Chris English should not have passed without the supports he needed and he certainly should not have passed away in a different category to others with exactly the same condition. I want to do one thing for Chris, and that is to ensure that he leaves a legacy and that his plight and circumstances benefit others.

I know that Bobbie would dearly love for Chris' long-term legacy to right this utter wrong, to change this unfair policy, to ensure there is greater choice and control for disabled older Australians and much more in-home nursing, and to ensure that other support will be available to overworked carers such as Bobbie and her family. Chris put up a courageous fight to come to terms with his injuries. He will be fondly remembered in the Kiama community not just for his tremendous service but also for his extraordinary courage that followed his accident. For Bobbie the campaign to change government policy will be continued with vigour. As her local member of Parliament, I am proud to support her and so many other Australians who are suffering. I will not allow their suffering to be in silence.

### SMALL BUSINESSES

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:55):** In my last contribution of the year to private members' statements, I will discuss Small Business Month to emphasise the importance of small businesses and what the Government is doing to support them right across New South Wales. My local community boasts an array of successful small, medium and large businesses that contribute to a healthy local economy. I understand the concerns that owners have and the pressures that they are under. I have thoroughly enjoyed visiting the business sector across my electorate during October and sharing stories with many passionate owners. In the St George area we are blessed with a diversity of small businesses. From mechanics to wholesalers to cafes and restaurants, our local area has a wide selection of options to reflect the diverse needs of our community.

This is important as it allows members of the community to shop locally and keep their money in the local economy. Whether it be Spago at Beverly Hills, Jumbuck Meats at Oatley, Little Alley cafe at Narwee, the Lugarno shops and newsagent, or my favourite, Mortdale Wholesalers, our local area is blessed with exceptional service and dedicated business owners. These kinds of businesses drive our local economy. Small businesses employ almost two million people across New South Wales and, as former Prime Minister John Howard once said, they are the engine room of Australia. I am proud to say that this Government has never forgotten the importance of small businesses right across New South Wales. Our support for them is reflected in the strong economic figures. Small businesses also play a large part in developing that character and atmosphere in local areas. Beautiful destinations such as Edmonds and Greer in Oatley and Jaaks in Kyle Bay provide places for residents to relax and enjoy the beauty of our local community.

It is important for areas like ours to support small businesses to retain our character, atmosphere and natural setting. Often the work of small business owners and employees goes unnoticed. They are the unsung heroes of our local communities, and this makes Small Business Month all the more worthwhile. October is a chance for all

of us to support small businesses and thank them for the positive impact that they have on our local society. The Government truly recognises the importance of small businesses right across New South Wales from the beach to the bush, is committed to encouraging innovation and supporting small businesses at all stages of growth, and knows that supporting small businesses creates jobs and stimulates the local economy.

The Government is investing in the skills New South Wales needs to grow. The establishment of the Disability Sector Scale-Up program is improving the commercial viability of small, medium and large enterprises in the disability sector. We are also committed to supporting regional businesses and communities. The \$110 million Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund is attracting more business to regional areas and helping to offset job shortages created by the drought. To couple with this, Regional Development Australia is in partnership with the Federal Government to develop further regional projects.

We also recognise the importance of investment and therefore the Government is furthering tax relief to encourage businesses to put more money into the economy. That includes payroll tax schemes, small business employment initiatives and further small business grants. As well as encouraging investment, innovation and skills development, the Government is committed to streamlining the process of running small businesses for owners. Business Connect, which advises business owners, has received positive feedback, and the Service NSW Easy to do Business program has been instrumental in creating a streamlined and easy process for its customers. During future small business months—or, in fact, any month at all—I encourage every member in this Chamber, as well as those who are listening in online, to join the Government in supporting local businesses. I also thank small business owners and employees across New South Wales for the contribution they make to our local communities.

#### OFFICE OF TRANSPORT

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:00):** With the indulgence of the House, I make a brief private member's statement to acknowledge the great work of the office of the former transport Minister, Andrew Constance, which has supported me in my role as the member for Pittwater and also as Minister for Transport and Roads in stewarding that challenging and large portfolio during an uncertain period. The team has done an amazing job of supporting Andrew Constance over many years, particularly the wonderful Ann Lewis, who has served this State for more than 10 years. Ann is retiring today, and I acknowledge that in this House. She is an absolute joy and delight, and has served the member for Bega with incredible capacity.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** And patience.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** And patience. Members may be operating under the delusion that the member for Bega is incredibly impressive. I have determined that that is actually not the case; he just has exceptionally good staff. So I acknowledge Ann Lewis as well as Ellen Choulman, Mia Burns, Kaycie Bradford, Asher Miners, Stuart Wallace and Trent Hile, who have all shown incredible service to the people of New South Wales in ways the general community would not understand. They have sweated, worked hard, stressed and put all of their talents and capacities towards the service of the community. They have my undying admiration for their talent, capacity and forbearance in dealing with someone like the member for Bega! I also recognise Dan Harwood, Dan Rubinich and Angus McKenzie-Wills, who will continue on in their roles. I thank all of the abovementioned people for the service they have provided to the people of New South Wales, the former Minister for Transport and Roads and me in my present position.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I acknowledge the contribution from the member for Pittwater and I endorse his comments in relation to the member for Bega and former transport Minister. I thank the member for Pittwater for bringing that to the attention of the House. Private members' statements having now concluded, that brings to a close an historic day, an extraordinary week and a challenging year. I wish everybody here—members, Hansard, Clerks and staff—a wonderful Christmas period and a very relaxing and refreshing New Year break. I look forward to seeing everybody in 2022.

#### MAKE AMAZON PAY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—**The Prospect Electorate contains the largest Industrial, Manufacturing and Logistics base in NSW. This week marks the beginning of Black Friday Sales, Australia-wide and throughout the world. Although it is a time where we can purchase quality goods and Christmas presents at a favourable price, it is so important to acknowledge and reflect on the conditions of employees working tirelessly behind the scenes of these sales. I would like to draw the attention of the Chamber in particular to the company Amazon, a multinational technology company that delivers shipments of goods throughout the world. No doubt, as the orders on Amazon are increased by the Black Friday Sales, so do the workers face undeniable pressure and stress to fulfil these orders. In light of the recent passing of the Modern Slavery Amendment Act 2021 in both Houses of the Parliament of NSW, we must observe the treatment and the conditions of workers that produce and



deliver the goods we enjoy during this time of year. On a national level, Amazon employs approximately 3,500 workers across fulfilment centres in Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, with corporate offices in all cities I have just mentioned, and in Adelaide.

Additionally, Amazon claims that they employ over 2,000 people under Amazon Flex. However, we should be concerned that there are no concrete figures found as to the workforce composition of labour hire compared to direct employment. On an international level, Amazon employs approximately 1.458 million employees. This includes all fulltime and part-time employees but excludes contractors and temporary personnel. These figures are astronomical and reveal the sheer influence that the company has on many lives throughout the world. However, the important figures that we must observe concern the revenue received by Amazon from its customers in exchange for sales of goods. For the quarter ending 30th September 2021, the revenue for Amazon International was \$110.812 Billion (USD). This was a 15.26% increase year-over-year. The gross profit of Amazon International for the quarter ending 30th September 2021, was \$47.882B, a 22.65% increase year-over-year. With figures that are so impressive, one would assume that Amazon would focus on delivering secure and safe work conditions combined with a decent wage for their employees. However, this is not the case.

As the profits of Amazon soar, workers are left with little, or no pay rises, forced to work unimaginable hours and without breaks. In the United Kingdom, Amazon has posed severe health and safety concerns for their employees. It is reported that ambulances were called out over 600 times between the years 2015-2018 to Amazon warehouses. The GMB (Britain's General Union) report that three of these call outs related to pregnancy and maternity problems and another three for major trauma. Further, 80% of GMB members reported they suffered pain as a result of their workload with one pregnant woman reporting she had been forced to stand for the entirety of a 10-hour shift. Tragically, a woman suffered a miscarriage while working, which she believed was as a result of continuous pressure to hit targets. In the United States, Amazon has run anti-trade union campaigns, with messages such as 'Don't sign your choices away' plastered on computer screens throughout the facilities. Amazon has also employed a raft of new workers to ensure the number of pro-union employees were diluted.

We know that worldwide, AmazonFlex drivers aren't receiving a minimum wage, have no rights and are pressured to drive dangerously overloaded motor vehicles to avoid having their employment terminated without warning. In too many sites across the world, Amazon workers are forced to work in unsafe conditions, often too afraid to speak out due to the fear of losing their jobs. It is crucial that we continue to fight for our Amazon workers in Australia. I would like to thank and commend the efforts of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA), the Transport Workers Union (TWU) and the Australian Workers Union for working tirelessly to stop the Americanisation of wages and working condition in Australia and working hard to protect safety standards for the transport workers who deliver Amazon's goods to customers. As we enjoy online shopping this holiday season, we must remind ourselves of the Amazon workers who keep filling and delivering our orders. More broadly, as you start your Christmas shopping this year, know that eight of 10 products on the shelves have been produced through supply chains relying on enslaved workers. Please be mindful this Black Friday and at Christmas to purchase products from reputable organisations which openly care about their workers and provide secure and safe working conditions.

#### **FRONT LINE ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)**—Speaker, in my final private member's statement in this house for 2021, I want to express my gratitude. I'm grateful to the frontline, essential workers who kept Port Stephens healthy, well and safe during this most difficult of years. On behalf of good people of Port Stephens, in the Parliament of NSW, I firstly want to thank the hardworking local doctors and pharmacists and their staff who overcame the frustrations of the Morrison government's shambolic vaccine stroll out, and administered thousands upon thousands of vaccines. In fact, they vaccinated so many people, that Port Stephens now has one the highest vaccination rates in the world, with more than 95% of people over the age of 16, double dosed. It's been an incredible effort. Alongside those that administered the vaccines, I'm grateful to every single person who rolled up their sleeve, got vaccinated and protected themselves, their loved ones and our community.

Not all of us had the benefit of bunkering down during lockdown, there were many who couldn't work from home – our essential workers. And if there's a positive to come out of COVID, it's surely this – that we now know who's truly essential. It's the people who turned up to work their shifts at our local supermarkets and takeaways; the workers who ensured our bins were emptied each week; transport workers who delivered our online shopping; teachers and educators who continued to care for children at early education centres; cleaners, power industry workers and manufacturers. These are the workers who kept our community going. Tonight, I say thank you. And as restrictions continue to lift, I urge everyone to continue to be kind and respectful towards our retail, fast food and hospitality workers. I was horrified to hear that a high percentage of retail workers reported being coughed on, spat on, physically or verbally abused during COVID.

As a mum of a child working in retail, I witnessed firsthand, the impact disrespectful behaviour of customers can have on frontline workers. These workers are in the service industry but they are not servants. They deserve our respect. I back the SDA's campaign and urge everyone to keep their cool this holiday season, because "no-one deserves a serve". Then there were our nurses, paramedics and hospital staff who have been working in an overstretched, under resourced health system during a global pandemic. Thank you so much to the team at Tomaree Community Hospital and hospitals across the Hunter. I don't have enough gratitude for everything you've done in the most difficult conditions. This week, I spoke to members of the Nurses and Midwives Association who said nurses on the frontline are at breaking point. And I can understand why. They're completely exhausted. Truth is, they were already at breaking point well before COVID.

Saying "thank you" feels entirely inadequate for everything they've been through. So instead, to the government I say this: if you are truly thankful for nurses, if you think they're heroes, then give them what they need - nurse to patient ratios and better working conditions. I'm also grateful to our police who continued to enforce the law, even when it was changing by the hour and everyone was confused as to what the law actually was on any given day. I particularly want to thank Inspector Dan Skelly from Raymond Terrace who has assisted me to find solutions for local families in very challenging circumstances. To our teachers and school staff, we're all incredibly grateful. Whilst our schools have been opening and closing, online and face to face, they've been adapting, pivoting and pirouetting to keep kids engaged in their education. Again, I say to the government, if you were truly grateful for everything teachers have done, you'd properly resource our public schools, and improve teacher salaries and conditions.

They deserve so much better. I'm also grateful for the unsung essential workers - those that never stopped caring for the most vulnerable members of our communities - aged care workers, disability support workers, child protection workers and our hardworking, overstretched homelessness and domestic violence service workers. An especially big 'thank you', to everyone at Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Service and the Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre. As normality gradually returns, I also want to mention the many small business owners who've done it so tough this year and encourage everyone to support our local businesses this holiday season to help them recover. 2021 has been a hell of a year, but we've come through it okay, because of the care, kindness and compassion our community has shown one another. So I extend my final gratitude to the good people of Port Stephens - I couldn't be more proud to be your representative in the Parliament of NSW.

#### **CLEANING UP CRUISING IN SYDNEY HARBOUR**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—One of the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the temporary shutdown of the dirty, polluting cruise ship industry. Without massive cruise ships spewing out toxic exhaust on our doorstep, residents in Balmain and Balmain East have been able to enjoy a quieter neighbourhood and cleaner air for the last 18 months. But now lockdowns have ended, the new Premier is pushing to restart cruise ships as early as this summer. This means also restarting the unbearable noise, fumes and pollution at the White Bay Cruise Terminal. Our community has been battling with the cruise ship industry since 2013 when this terminal was opened under the O'Farrell Coalition government, having been approved by Ports Minister Tripodi in the outgoing Keneally Labor government a month before the 2011 state election. That was a decision an inquiry by the NSW upper house later branded a "serious error".

Our community knows that the cruising industry fights against any reforms that seek to improve air quality in the public interest. Since the terminal was built at White Bay, residents have suffered 24/7 noise, toxic emissions, odours and light pollution. We have repeatedly raised concerns about air pollution including particle pollution which is known to have serious health impacts even at low levels. Many of us have already experienced health symptoms. This is important context for our new Minister for Transport and Roads, Rob Stokes, who is now responsible for ports and the cruise ship industry, including the White Bay Cruise Terminal. This week, residents from my local area have penned hundreds of emails to the new Minister to express their strong support for the installation of shore to ship power. Shore power provides a win-win solution to the problems at White Bay, allowing cruise ships to operate at port while reducing environmental, noise and air pollution.

Australia is now one of the few international cruising destinations that doesn't require cruise ships to plug in while at berth. This means the industry sends its oldest, dirtiest and most polluting ships to Balmain - ships that wouldn't even be allowed to enter other international ports. Some of these ships are over 30 years old! They are the equivalent of old jalopies that spew toxic black exhaust that lingers in the air long after it has rambled up the street. The good news is that our community has already won some recorded some historic wins in this campaign, including the enforcement of low-sulphur fuel regulations for ships at White Bay Cruise Ship Terminal and the government's commitment to produce a new feasibility study for shore power. We've also won the installation of a conduit within the power supply that is being installed from the Rozelle sub-station to White Bay for the Sydney Metro West. This will reduce the cost of shore power by around \$7.4 million - almost 20%.

The government has also recently committed to a new shore power feasibility study. The original feasibility study produced in 2017 concluded that while shore power was feasible and would reduce pollution, it wasn't a 'cost effective' strategy - unbelievable. In the three years since, cruise ships have continued to berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal – all burning dirty and dangerous diesel fuel and bringing significant noise pollution. Remarkably the original report did not even consider the health impacts of cruise ship pollution! This was despite ships still being allowed to burn fuel in Sydney Harbour which had up to 35 times the sulphur than fuel they were required to use overseas. But since 2017, the number of ports that have taken up shore power globally has more than doubled and more and more cruise ships have been fitted with shore power technology.

NSW is no longer at risk of falling behind when it comes to regulating cruise ships. We are at the back of the pack, living in the dark ages. And it is residents in my local area who pay the price for this government's inaction. Their health is suffering and they are living with noise and vibration 24/7. We know that the new Minister knows this is a problem. In March this year he told the Sydney Morning Herald he doesn't want the cruise ship terminal at White Bay and would rather it was moved to Garden Island, site of naval activity since 1788. I'm working to ensure the government will work to lighten the load of this industry on our community and finally clean up cruising in Sydney Harbour.

### TEACHING IN THE WYONG ELECTORATE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)—**

If the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster. Stephen Covey

I was catching up on some teacher reading over the past few weeks just keeping my knowledge up-to-date professionally when I visited the website Not waiting for Superman and came across an article talking about teacher workload. Now I talk to teachers all the time and I am of course aware of the Gallup Inquiry conducted by the New South Wales Teachers Federation, but I also see the ever increasing workload placed on teachers through family members and friends still a part of the profession. In the article, Teacher Workload – The Startling Misconception Ruining Education, it made some interesting observations which I think the Department of education and the government should take note of. The article says quote;

Talk to many teachers and they will tell you that there is much which is broken in our modern school systems ...

From the way data is used, to the madness of reducing definitions of success down to what can be most easily measured.

But the BIGGEST reason teaching jobs are broken in many schools is actually very simple.

It boils down to one simple thing ..

.. that teachers have a capacity for workload, beyond which we cannot do more.

It might appear ludicrous to point out such a simple fact, but many educational leaders completely ignore it. This has wide ranging consequences for teachers working today. Sound Educational management is simply a matter of deciding how the capacity of teaching staff is best used, this is achieved through choosing where best to focus efforts and resources to get the best results for the students. My mantra as a Principal used to be "How does this help kids?" Teacher capability for workload is impacted by additional students, larger classes or busier timetables, regularly changing priorities, curricula, or increased expectations. The article correctly points out that teacher professional judgement is no longer trusted, and now teachers have to meet onerous requirements for evidence to prove that learning has taken place. There is nothing wrong with collecting data and testing of student knowledge, but when the process starts to impact on actual teaching and lesson preparation then we have problems.

The article says that when educational leaders choose to combine this with making teachers accountable for the impossible, in an atmosphere of enforced silence it becomes abuse. (Code of Conduct) The profession today appears to be attempting to develop a new breed of 'super teacher' by overworking educators to extreme levels. Good teachers are leaving the profession or worse being forced out because they are not "getting with the agenda". Telling teachers to 'work smarter' to solve the problems created by unrealistic workload expectations is, in many cases, insulting. Poor or incompetent teachers shouldn't be in schools, but I fear we are now pushing out the competent as well with unreal expectations. If I return to Stephen Covey...

To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction.

The current direction of the Department is chaotic and contains unrealistic expectations around the implementation of new curricula which is being politically driven and in some cases not educationally sound.

I would now like to acknowledge the more than 28 Schools – Public, Private and Alternate, that serve the Wyong Electorate. I acknowledge the teachers, school leaders and school support staff. There is absolutely no doubt that 2020 and 2021 have been two of the most challenging years experienced in the teaching workforce due to Covid-19. Bluehaven PS, Gorokan HS, Northlakes HS, Gorokan PS, Toukley PS, St Mary's CS, Kanwal PS,

Tuggerawong PS, Tacoma PS, Wadalba CS, Woongarra PS, Warnervale PS, Jilliby PS, Wyong Creek PS, Mackillop Catholic College, Wyong Christian School; St Phillips Young Parents Hub, Lakes College Bluehaven, Lakes Grammar Anglican School, Wyong PS, St Peters Catholic College, St Cecillas Primary, Chittaway Bay PS, Berkeley Vale HS, Wyong HS, Tuggerah PS, HopeTown, Glenvale SSP, Gosford HS, Belmont Sports HS, Broadmeadow Performing Arts, and Darkinjung Barker.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas, a restful holiday and sincerely wish that 2022 will be a year of sustained supported learning, classroom practice and regular routine for both students and teachers. Thank you all for the incredibly important work you do in changing the lives of young people – there's no more important task or pursuit.

### COMMUNITY SPORTS VOLUNTEERS AWARDS

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Sport NSW delivered the annual NSW Community Sport Awards at Bankwest Stadium which acknowledges the outstanding contributions and commitments to NSW community sport over the past year. Recognising finalists and winners across ten award categories, the NSW Community Sports Awards highlights the contributions made by officials, coaches, administrators, teams, clubs, events and councils. Local members of the Camden community Peter Dow and Max Laybutt were among 23 Distinguished Long Service Award recipients. These awards honour the individuals from a wide range of sports who have given exceptional service to their sport over a period of decades. The recipients received their award from the Hon. Natalie Ward, Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. Peter Dow received the 2021 Distinguished Long Service Award for his decades of service to Motorcycling. Peter has been a supportive grandfather to the sport of Motocross over many years.

In 1980, his interest in Wesley Wheels and driving rally cars in England with his brother led him to join the Macarthur District Motorcycle Sports Club. In 1999, Peter helped secure a property for which was a safe and supervised place for young people to ride. Peter also rebuilt and revived the Motocross track at Oran Park and has a long association with his beloved and has served on the communities of the Thumpernats, Amcross series, Supercross with Spokes Promotions, along with State and Australian Championships. Max Laybutt received the 2021 Distinguished Long Service Award for his decades of service to Karting. In 1959, Max was studying Mechanical Engineering via correspondence and was in the process of trying to find a smaller vehicle for kids so they could learn how to drive. It was during that time that he saw an article on karting. That same year, Max started karting in rural Condobolin and quickly became an official and public officer. In 2003, Max was appointed as the Treasurer of Karting NSW and continued that roll until 2010. In 2004, he was appointed National Treasurer and was in that roll until 2011.

Max is passionate about assisting with the training of new junior and senior officials and drivers of the sport. At 81 years of age, Max still attends race meetings, is an official most weekends and occasionally races his 4SS kart. Sport NSW relies on members of the community such as Peter and Max who have generously devoted countless hours of time, year in and year out over many decades to help encourage and make a difference in their chosen sport. Peter and Max have been dedicated champions for their sport and have provided a magnificent community legacy for others to aspire to and follow. Chairperson of Sport NSW Carolyn Campbell said "Sport NSW will forever be in debt because of their exceptional work" Lastly, I would like to personally congratulate Peter Dow and Max Laybutt on being honoured with the Distinguished Long Service Award. Both your service in Motorcycling and Karting respectively, over the past decades has been officially recognised because of the real difference you both have made.

Your commitment and service to the people of Camden and NSW has demonstrated willingness to go above and beyond for the community and the sport you love. The Camden electorate and Sport NSW is lucky to have you and has become a better place because of your devotion and dedication. I thank you both for your service and congratulate you on such a significant achievement.

### WHITE RIBBON DAY 2021

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta)**—The 19th November 2021 marked the beginning of White Ribbon Day campaigns across our nation with many community groups, businesses, and other organisations banding together to say NO to domestic and family violence. It's an unfortunate reality that just about every single Australian will either directly or indirectly experience domestic or family violence at some point throughout their lifetime. This year's White Ribbon Day theme is "How Can Men Make Change?" Learn, Give, Take Action" and it's important that as a community, we stand together and make it known that domestic violence of any form will not be tolerated in our society. Domestic violence stops with you, me, and all of us. By working together, we can change the accepted attitudes and underlying social norms which may accept, excuse, or condone any such actions. The only way for us to incept change is by making it known throughout our community that we ourselves must change.

The once accepted attitudes and behaviours, which need not entirely relate to just violence, but also discrimination against women and the impact it has had on generations throughout our nation. We must stand together, and we must act. I would like to commend White Ribbon Australia for providing an array of resources on their website at [whiteribbon.org.au](http://whiteribbon.org.au) which aim to educate individuals from all walks of life and provide them with a better understanding of issue relating to men's violence against women, and what they can do about it. Each year the Fairfield City community band together at the annual White Ribbon Day march hosted by the Fairfield City Police Area Command. Unfortunately, due to the nature of COVID-19 and with community safety in mind, this year's march had to be cancelled. However, this does not mean that our Local Area Command is sitting idly by.

The 25th of November 2021 will mark the beginning of a 16-day long campaign hosted the NSW Police Force and our very own Fairfield City Police Area Command. Throughout this campaign the NSW Police Force will operate proactive policing operations across the state with the aim of disrupting and preventing offending while ensuring the safety of any victims. In the Fairfield City community, it has been reported that nearly half of all reported incidents are domestic violence related, and since COVID-19 started, these numbers have substantially increased. It is imperative that as a community we stand together, and we act. If you witness domestic or family violence, please report it - it may just save someone's life. Anyone who is suffering and experience domestic or family violence should not have to suffering silence. Help and support is ALWAYS available, with a wide range of additional services ready to help any individuals. Catering to the diverse multicultural mix that makes up the Cabramatta electorate.

It would be remiss of me not to mention however, if for any reason you do not want to go to the Police, other support services are also available including:

- 1800 RESPECT;
- Domestic Violence NSW;
- Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services.

I encourage all members of this Parliament to take part in White Ribbon campaigns throughout their electorate and to raise awareness. Together we can put an end to domestic and family violence, but societal change is necessary. Together we can stand united and say NO to domestic and family violence.

#### **SHELLHARBOUR SHARKS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB TEAM OF THE CENTURY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—Earlier this year the Shellharbour City Sharks Rugby League Football Club unveiled their Team of the Century at their Centenary Dinner. I was lucky enough to be in attendance for this commemoration of over one-hundred years of talent associated with the club. The invaluable efforts and achievements of this club, as well as the past and present stars is something which deserves to be recognised and celebrated. Originally rugby union was the dominant game. However, in 1920, Shellharbour took a leap of faith, and in doing so began its rich 111-year and counting history as a rugby league club. The club began in the South Coast Second Grade Competition, winning their opening and first ever game thanks to Christy McCabe kicking two goals in their victor over Bomaderry.

In 1931 the club entered first grade, and their propensity for success was on display early as they made the final in their first season. The following season the club was in red hot form leading into the Grand Final against Jamberoo. The final ended in an exciting and nail-biting 7-all draw. Unfortunately this match was also extremely intense and gruelling, leading to Shellharbour losing multiple key players and not being able to match their efforts for the Grand Final Replay. Junior competitions were first introduced in 1938. Following that, in 1939, the Sharks had their first taste of success. The club once again were up against Jamberoo in the Grand Final. However, unlike what occurred in 1932, Shellharbour was able to finish the job in one swift quick hit, grabbing the game with both hands in a hotly-contested 4-nil victory.

Although success in the premier competition was lacking in the 1940s and 1950s, the clubs development of young and upcoming was on full display. The under 19 premiership in 1944 was won dominantly, with the Sharks going undefeated for the season. The under-18 side were also premiers in the 1957 competition. This was the beginning of a period of supremacy for the youth set up, where they also became premiers in every season from 1959-1964, with the exception of 1962. 1962 also saw the clubs 23-year title drought end when the Norm Ward coached Sharks upset Albion Park in the Grand Final 13-6. That year also saw club legend Ron Costello, who went on to represent Australia and who the clubs current home ground, Costello Oval, is named after, make his first grade debut.

The 1960s were a fruitful time for the club. Reserve Grade won four consecutive competitions from 1962-65, and won at every youth level in 1963. In 1969 Doreen Holtz became the first woman to be elected to an

executive position in Group 7 when she became the treasurer for the club. In 1971 Shellharbour became the only club to win the competition at every senior level, in which they won the Group 7 league, Second Grade and Third Grade. The club also went on to also win First Grade in 1973. At the turn of the century, the Sharks broke a 28-year drought winning the First Grade Premiership in 2001. The Sharks most recent First Grade success came in 2018, culminating in 6 First Grade titles for the club. This, in addition to the 14 Second Grade Premierships, 2 Third Grade Premierships, 11 Group 7u-18s Premierships and 3 Illawarra u-18s Premierships is indicative of a club engrained by a winning culture.

The panel deciding the Shellharbour Sharks Team of the Century was headed by John O'Dwyer OAM. The backline consisted of fullback Harry Smith, who was one of the first running fullbacks in the 1960s which the current game is moulded around, explosive and pacey wingers Aaron Grant and Jamie Mankonga, and hard-running and punishing centres Doug Senior and the late Harry Bush. Livewire Stephen Hill and Matt Carroll, the prolific and inspiration current club captain, are the teams playmakers. Tough and hulking middle forwards John Armstrong and Russell Holdsworth, as well as the Australian representative lock Ron Lynch were chosen for the formidable pack. Second-rower Barry Stanton, who played close to 300 first grade games for the club, and Ron 'Caffa' Costello, somebody who embodies what the club is all about and who the club's home ground is name after, make up the edge forwards. Hooker Cole Skelly, who had a tenacity for goal-kicking and was a friend of teammates, opponents and fans alike, is selected as rake. Trent Merrin, Adam Docker, Warren Paillas, Hans Schuster and the late Doug Steele round out the interchange list for the Team of the Year.

The Shellharbour Sharks are a well-loved local club who have not only nurtured a plethora of young and upcoming talent, but created a genuine and sustainable community for the area to interact with and celebrate with pride.

#### *Christmas Felicitations*

#### **CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—To my colleagues, staff, family and friends Merry Christmas and a happier new year. If there was ever a word needed to describe the qualities required to survive 2021, 'resilience' would be the first and most appropriate word. For the community I represent, we have experienced fire, flood, drought and in the last year, a second devastating wave of COVID. For several months, this wave would literally divide our community as Shellharbour City would go into lockdown and Kiama and the Shoalhaven would be free until a Statewide lockdown later in the year. I take this opportunity to thank all those who battled this year on our frontline. Our incredible medical staff; our nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and particularly our pathologists who worked overtime at testing clinics around the State. I thank our teachers who did their utmost to help steer the State's students through this very difficult year of learning.

I take this opportunity to thank my incredible electorate office staff that assisted with literally thousands of COVID inquiries; to Jesse Martin, Jess Plater, Ben Blackburn, Paula Turnbull, Henry Streamer, Jacob Sich, Nic Mulligan and Bryan Fishpool – my thanks for your diligence and dedication. A special tribute to my outgoing electorate office manager Melissa Jobson who has been an incredible and valued staff member for eight wonderful years. I have been blessed to have had the diligence and dedication of Melissa who has held it all together through the toughest of times. I want to congratulate Ben and Bryan in particular as they celebrate more than 10 years of service as part of my team. I also want to single out our Electorate Office cleaner Val Tasevski for his diligence and dedication. Everyone in my office absolutely loves Val and we thank him for not only keeping our office in check but for keeping us entertained.

In my ten years as a local MP, I have secured more than two billion dollars to duplicate the Princes Highway throughout our entire electorate with the Gerringong upgrade, Berry bypass, Albion Park Rail bypass and South Nowra upgrade now complete and the Nowra Bridge Project and the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade moving forward at a cracking pace. This was the year we secured \$700 Million for Shellharbour Hospital to build a brand new hospital to service a growing population in the southern Illawarra. This hospital will have more beds, more services and more doctors and nurses. This is in addition to the long overdue upgrade of Shoalhaven Hospital that will start next year which will also see a massive upgrade in services for our local community. This was the year we'd start works to upgrade the South Coast line with major works getting underway next year. But there is still much more to do. From the big campaigns like the Nowra bypass to the smaller ones around community and sporting grants, rest assured that 2022 will be a year where I will continue my passionate advocacy for our community.

I would like to acknowledge my former Ministerial staff. Loki Ball, Mitch Clout, Anne King, Jordan Matthews, James Malin, Matthew Barden, Andrew Johnson, Wayne Soul, Adelaide Cuneo, Alex Briggs, Kurt Brabender and Jack O'Brien. Be it dramatically reducing the number of children in Alternative Care Arrangements, establishing the Age and Disability Commission, securing carriage of the Children's Guardian legislation which expanded the Reportable Conduct Scheme, reforming and launching 10 year strategies for carers

and for volunteers, concluding the transfers of people with disabilities from Large Residential Facilities to new and modern homes with the right supports, championing reforms to the NDIS that have made a huge difference to fairness and equity for NSW participants, halving street and rough sleeping by establishing Together Home, increasing the number of assertive outreach teams from 1 to over 60, pioneering reforms to empower caseworkers such as the Greenfields Project, establishing the Aboriginal Children's Guardian and Knowledge Circle in response to the Family is Culture Report, overseeing long-overdue reforms in Youth Justice through the Shearer Review and the expansion of targeted early intervention programs – we can be very proud of the huge amount of reform we delivered in just a few short years. You all remain valued friends and I will forever treasure not just all our wins but the time we spent together.

To my community; thank you for giving me the honour of lifetime by representing you. I can never repay your generosity and care. I want to thank my close friends that have helped me survive my most difficult year in politics. You all know who you are. To my family including my mum and dad, my sister and brothers and the newest edition to my household – Oscar, thank you for being there when I needed you. Merry Christmas one and all.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I wish a very summery, jovial and cheerful festive season to all, especially the residents of my electorate of Gosford – who continue to support me in this place. It would be an understatement to say 2021 has been a challenging year. This year has thrown so many curve balls yet the people of NSW have demonstrated time and time again their ability to manage crises, maintain resilience and bounce back stronger than ever. Whether it be flooding, bush fires, heatwaves or the COVID-19 pandemic, the people of New South Wales have shown to the world how to navigate confidently through crises and overcome any problems we have faced. The people of New South Wales should be extremely proud to be one of the highest vaccinated jurisdictions in the world. To-date, New South Wales has managed to exceed all expectations and record an astonishing almost ninety-five per cent first-dose vaccination rate amongst residents sixteen years and older. Even more stunning has been our ability to persevere through disinformation, fake news and wild conspiracy theories to record a double vaccination rate of almost ninety-three per cent.

Of course, these phenomenal statistics do not just occur by chance and are the product of hard work and tenacity of so many professionals, workers and residents in our communities. Let me start by acknowledging these heroes. To our frontline and healthcare workers, from our amazing and committed doctors, who have listened so patiently to the concerns of residents and provided assurances and expert advice on vaccines – thank you! To our absolutely brilliant and steadfast nurses, who have shown so much compassion and care – in the face of adversity and devastation – thank you! To our paramedics and health transportation workers, who have worn the personal protective equipment and risked their health to assist those affected by COVID-19 – thank you! To our NSW Police officers and law enforcement workers, who have borne so much of the brunt of this pandemic and so much frustration in our community, your commitment despite these challenges are so commendable and honourable – thank you!

To our dutiful and outstanding principals, teachers, educators and school office staff, your abilities to be flexible, fluid and respond to constantly changing health advice, has been unreal and I cross my fingers your much-deserved holiday is relaxing and filled with happy memories, surrounded by loved ones. To our small and medium-sized business community, who have had to shut-down and had countless restrictions imposed on their livelihoods, this year has been like none other and I thank you all for being so compliant and understanding of the justification behind these actions. I encourage everyone in my community and around New South Wales to get out this festive period and support our small to medium-sized businesses, they are our backbone and drivers of so much of our economic activity and employ millions of residents. Let's support them and get our State roaring again.

To our aged care workers, thank you for caring for our elderly and vulnerable residents during the darkest periods of this pandemic. You have been the warmth, love and guiding light to so many residents when family and close friends were not allowed to visit facilities. There are so many more of you I want to thank: our hospitality staff, transportation workers, sublime cleaners, medical receptionists, allied health professionals, construction workers and tradies, real estate agents, all our government department workers, our churches and religious leaders and organisations that have supported and cared for our most vulnerable members of our community. A special, joyous and festive shout-out to some extraordinary organisations in my electorate of Gosford who have conscientiously served the community throughout this year and are deserving of recognition. To the Umina Community Group, for all the work you do to improve Umina Beach and make it an even better place to live.

All the fabulous Rotary Clubs including Gosford North, Gosford, West Gosford, Kariong-Somersby, Woy Woy and Umina Beach. The Country Women's Associations at Woy Woy and Umina Beach. The Lions Club of East Gosford and the Lions Club of Woy Woy. The Gosford Chamber of Commerce and the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. Mary Mac's Place in Woy Woy and all the angels that work tirelessly to ensure no resident goes

without a meal or fundamental services. Coast Shelter, Pacific Link Housing and Kariong Neighbourhood Centre and of course all the vibrant and community-minded Aunties at the spectacular Mingaletta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre in Umina Beach.

I would like to sincerely thank the Gossie Good Times electorate office team. It's been an intensely challenging year and words cannot express my gratitude to each of you for your deep commitment to supporting constituents. To Richard & Rhys, Jo & Jesse, Kajal & Hannah, I thank you and celebrate each of your individual skills, talents and support of myself and each other during 2021. I also sincerely thank our talented COVID team - Nathan, Charli, Maynard & Deb - for your contribution to supporting the Gosford electorate during 2021. Our community is such a spectacular place to live, work and play, and it was wonderful to see so many people enjoying the beauty of our natural environment whilst simultaneously facing the challenges of lockdown, home-schooling, changed workplace arrangements and/or working from home. I wish all Central Coasties the freedom to enjoy the place we call home in safety, with time to spend with families and friends over the summer ahead. Merry Christmas and a very happy new year.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Members from all political spectrums, and their loved ones, a happy, safe and restorative holiday season. In these unprecedented times, where we have seen the House closed due to Covid, it has been an honour and a privilege to work amongst so many dedicated and passionate people, regardless of our political differences. I would like to wish everyone a peaceful Christmas time with their families after such a difficult two years of not seeing loved ones, separated due to border closures or being overseas. For all the family members unable to be together again this holiday period, I extend my greatest sympathies. Special thanks to the Minister for Health Brad Hazzard, the Cross Border Commissioner James Mc Tavish and all their amazing staff who have supported the people of NSW as they navigated the pandemic and border closures.

To the staff at the clerks' desk who prepare Hansard I say thank you and merry Christmas – your team does an amazing job recognising and recording everything that happens within the House. I thank Hansard for their work. All errors remain mine. My sincere thanks goes to the Legislative Assembly attendants, front desk staff, the IT staff and Security Officers, Human Resources, Payroll and a special thank you to Jo Sully in EO Services and James Kleppen at Capital Works. To the cleaning staff who have kept us all safe during this pandemic with their attention to detail and care of our offices. It has been a reassurance to know that we are in your capable hands. I, and all Members, are incredibly thankful and grateful for the work you do. I wish each and everyone one of you a happy Christmas. To all the people who will be working over the Christmas period to keep us safe, I extend my gratitude. In particular the NSW Police Force, the NSW Ambulance Service, the Rural Fire Service, SES, Marine Rescue, Air services, Surf Lifesaving, doctors and our amazing nursing staff. All of whom have been on the front line of this pandemic. I wish you and your loved ones best wishes for Happy Holidays and a magnificent New Year.

To the Bundjalung people I wish to pay my respects and acknowledge their ongoing custodianship and care they provide to the land. I wish to personally acknowledge the passing of Arakwal Elder Auntie Dulcie Nicholls who successfully negotiated an Indigenous Land use Agreement on behalf of the Arakwal people in 1994. The land was handed back to Dulcie and the Arakwal family in 2019 after a very long Native Title fight. Many thanks to the people who make up the Ballina electorate you have rallied to look after all members of our community during the pandemic. Your resilience dealing with drought, fires, floods and now the pandemic has been remarkable and it is an honour to serve you. I would like to thank the Ballina Shire and Byron Shire Councils and all their staff for supporting the community and providing ongoing essential services to roads, rubbish and the environment and the support and advice they provided the community.

I would like to show my appreciation to all the organisations and business that have supported our community through the pandemic. In particular, I would like to extend my greatest thanks to; all Rotary clubs in the Ballina Electorate, SCOPE Clubs, County Women's Association, Meals on Wheels, all the Church groups, Red Cross, St Vincent De Paul, Anglican and Uniting Churches, GPs, Specialists and their practice staff especially First Light, Healthy North Coast, mental health staff, all the practices impacted by the QLD border closures, and Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology and QML Pathology practitioners and their staff. Special thanks to Lynne Weir, Wayne Jones and the Northern Area Health District team. I would like to acknowledge Julie Stewart, airport manager at Ballina Gateway Airport, and all staff, security and crew.

All the teachers and school staff who had to pivot to online learning, all not-for profit charities that stepped in to feed, provide for and service the vulnerable, including the Hot Meal Centre, Cherry Street Bowling Club, Liberation Larder, and all the cafes and hospitality venues who stayed open and supported our front-line workers and those in need with free coffees and food - The Cove, Thai on High, TAs lunch box, and Mumbai Masala and all the Clubs. Thank you North Coast Community Housing, and Department of Communities and Justice for looking after the most vulnerable members of our community, all the disability service providers and their staff,



conservation organisations such as CAWI, Bangalow Koalas, Friends of the Koalas, Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospitals and WIRES who continued to rescue our wildlife and all the vets who also support our wildlife.

To the caravan parks who provided a safe place to stay for the homeless and those who were unable to return home due to State lockdowns, I thank you. I want to wish my incredibly hard working staff in the Ballina Electorate office who have served our community with compassion and dignity through the last 18 months of the pandemic a very Happy Christmas - Jacqui Alinaitwe, Siobhan Foley, Digby Hildreth, Mary-Jane Heenan and Violet Innes. Without you we would not have helped so many during this incredibly challenging time. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a wonderful time with family and loved ones.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—Speaker 2021 was another year many of will not forget or won't want to remember. As 2021 draws to an end its time to be thankful for those who we hold dear in this place and out in our constituencies. Above all I thank my long suffering wife Gayle, she has like all of us had a very stressful year. Honey thank you for being there for me and family. The next closest people I thank is my long suffering staff, Anne England, Bella Beattie and Abbey England. This year we also had some help from time to time from Julie Lees and Janelle Beattie. A special mention must go to Tracy McCovey a friend of the office. I thank the support from the Clerks, Chief Clerk Helen Minnican, Simon Johnson, Carly Maxwell, Rickee Murray and the legend of the NSW Parliament Mr Les Gonye who is on the road to retirement thank you and congratulations I'm personally looking for to "Lestifus for the rest of us "celebrating his retirement.

The little thanked and recognised Hansard, thank you all for your conscientious work making the sometime babbling of members into a somewhat Churchillian oration. Members of the Committee's staff thank you for all your hard work through the year with making 2021 a very challenging Committee's year with numbers of virtual meetings with the obligatory technical difficulties. I thank my Whip colleagues Adam "Crouchy" Crouch and Ben Sheath at time all we are missing is a whip and a chair with the challenge of herding cats. What a year. Leader of the House Attorney the Hon General Mark Speakman and his assistants. This year we lost a Premier the Hon Gladys Berejiklian someone I consider a friend with a current investigation on foot I wish her well. NSW welcomed a new shiny Premier Dominic Perrottet he has a very big pair of high heels to fit into but in my opinion he has started going hard on getting NSW out of the cloak of Covid-19. The people of NSW can be assured Dom is a very safe pair of hands.

To all the Ministerial staff thank you for your efforts in 2021 without your efforts members would be lost. The cleaners and attendants have had a tough year with increased sanitising has added another layer of responsibility. The catering staff, thank you for your work this year always bright and cheery I look forward to getting back to normality returning, having breaky with colleagues from all sides of isle. I thank members of all Political persuasions for a polite and constructive year, as members of the NSW Parliament we are responsible for representing those who elect us and respecting one and other without sliding into the depths of grubby personal accusations. At the end of 2021 we look back on a unique year with sitting weeks being interrupted our offices closing with staff working from home members like me being placed in isolation after being a close contact in Parliament doing the fourteen days then just when I thought it was safe to go outside the state was plunged into lockdown. So with a hopeful heart I wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and family oriented new year. Thankyou.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—As those closest to me are aware, Christmas is my favourite time of the year. It is a time to reflect on the achievements throughout the last 12 months. It is also a time to be grateful and reflect on the hard work and be thankful to all those who have helped to make these great things possible. As I have said many times before, I am truly blessed to represent the wonderful people of the Goulburn electorate and I am extremely proud to be part of a government that delivers for regional New South Wales. It has been another tough year with the pandemic and its associated challenges. Despite this, I am pleased to see my electorate commitments continue to be delivered including the amazing Goulburn Base Hospital redevelopment, Crookwell Hospital upgrade is progressing well, Barton Highway duplication is well underway, and the Moss Vale Bypass hit a new milestone recently, with the tender being recently announced.

As we continue to open up as a state and return to the 'new norm' I am very proud of my electorate, and the way they have come together to support our local businesses and our local regional communities to bounce back, often under trying circumstances. There is a lot happening in Goulburn and surrounds and I am truly blessed to be representing the constituents I am honoured to serve. We have fought some big fights together this year, including the Bungonia Waste to Energy Project, securing a MRI service for the Goulburn Hospital redevelopment, major funding for so many projects including schools, sporting organisations and grassroots community groups. We have worked hard together on these matters and I again wish to thank the Electorate for working with me to secure these wins.

Having said that we still have many challenges facing the communities in my electorate and I along with those communities, will continue to take up the fight. I again wish to thank the emergency services for their efforts,

including health staff, teachers, the doctors, the nurses, the police and all those whom continue to make me proud of their efforts and flexibilities, to keep our communities safe, healthy and happy. I would also like to thank the Premier, my parliamentary colleagues, the ministerial staff and all those whom help out behind the scenes to keep this parliament running smoothly. I am very blessed to have dedicated electorate staff who have also experienced a tough year, their enduring commitment and support to the many constituents who have contacted my office can be nothing but commended. To Alicia, Cheryl and Paige I say a heartfelt thank you.

Finally, I thank the most important people in my life – my wonderful family, my husband, Michael, and my gorgeous granddaughter, Letty, my sons and their partners, Tom, Brittany, Bradley, and Katie. Thank you for your understanding and support throughout the year. I look forward to quality time spent with you all during the Christmas period. As we look towards 2022, I will continue to deliver for the many communities of the Goulburn electorate and working together on the final stages of the roadmap out of the pandemic. But in the meantime, I would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and I hope you all enjoy a lovely break with quality family time.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—We have reached the end of the year and what a year it has been. As we approach the festive season, I reflect back on 2021 and on the challenges our communities have come through. Hopefully we are now at a point where we can look forward to travelling and spending some quality time with our family and friends as we head into Christmas. There are a few people I would like to thank for their support this year. Firstly I would like to thank the Clerks of the Legislative Assembly who always work hard, and never more so than in these last three weeks with extended sitting times. I thank the Speaker, Jonathon O'Dea; the Assistant Speaker; the Deputy Speaker; and the temporary Speakers – we can be a rowdy bunch and it's not always an easy job to maintain order but somehow they manage to do just that. I also thank all staff in Parliament House who keep things going and make sure everything runs smoothly.

I would like to thank my electorate staff – senior electorate officer Stella Patane; Jess Daniele; George Barcha and Katerina Sotiropoulos. This has been a particularly challenging year for them working remotely, but they have continued to keep the show on the road and I thank them for their service to the people of Fairfield and for their personal support. I thank the Fairfield community for their support – I will always be grateful they gave me the honour of representing them. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns, for his leadership and all the Shadow Ministers and my Labor colleagues who continue to serve the people of NSW. I thank my wife, Melissa and our four children – I would not be able to do this job without their love and support, and I am grateful for it.

2021 proved to be yet another year where the COVID-19 pandemic chose to reappear, this time in the form of the deadly Delta strain, providing the people of NSW with an even greater challenge to beat it. June 2021 saw us in lockdown once again, this time with harsher restrictions over a longer period of time. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow members of Parliament who represented their communities, particularly those in the twelve local government areas of concern. The pandemic also highlighted the presence of some very special everyday heroes and I would like to extend my thanks to them for their assistance and support of the community. I thank our frontline essential workers - the doctors both in our hospitals and in general practice, nurses, teachers, cleaners, police, emergency service workers, and supermarket and retail staff. Once again, they have sacrificed long periods of time away from their families to put the needs of the community first and I thank them for this effort.

I also thank those involved in the vaccination program – COVID clinic staff; general practitioners and pharmacists who came on board; and volunteers such as the St John Ambulance Divisions who went above and beyond to assist with a rapid roll-out of the vaccine. The efforts of all these people has been invaluable and I thank them sincerely on behalf of the community. A special thanks goes out to the NSW Police force and to the Australian Defence Force for their assistance with monitoring and with supply of essential items for those in isolation. It was a particularly challenging time for them, especially in the twelve local government areas of concern, as the battle to contain the virus raged on. Lockdown brought with it many challenges and many families found themselves on the bread line due to work restrictions, loss of jobs and closure of businesses. I thank all the community groups who ramped up their efforts and stepped in to support those who were doing it tough.

I especially would like to thank all those who were involved in the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program – we were able to deliver essential goods to many families across the electorate and I would like to thank all the suppliers, the volunteers, the facilitators and my staff for their contribution in the delivery of so many packages to those in need. I also thank church and community leaders; and representatives of CALD communities who assisted with the translation of Public Health orders for the community. As we head into the festive season, it is with a sigh of relief that we can hopefully look forward to a time of peace and joy, rather than restrictions. As a member of the House I wish everyone a merry Christmas, a restful break and a happy start to 2022, when we come back to do it all again.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah and a very Happy New Year. I want to start by thanking all of the staff who make this Parliament work, including those in Hansard, the Clerks, the Serjeant at Arms, the special constables, the Parliamentary Counsel, the cleaners who keep our office sparkling, maintenance staff, everyone in catering who keep us caffeinated and the Library, members of the Press Gallery the Department of Parliamentary Services staff, and the Legislative Assembly staff. I acknowledge my Greens colleagues in this House and in the Upper House: Abigail, Cate and David — and all of their staff who are generous with their time and expertise. I thank my colleagues the Member for Ballina, Tamara Smith and the Member for Newtown, Jenny Leong.

As the first ever Greens Member elected to the Legislative Assembly this House used to be quite a lonely place so I was so grateful to be joined by Jenny and Tamara in 2015. These women are tenacious, skilled and passionate and do a really remarkable job of representing their communities in this place. I also want to acknowledge and thank my staff who have worked diligently throughout the COVID pandemic. Often late and on weekends to ensure that folks with urgent questions about border restrictions or visa applications or vaccinations get the right answer quickly. Ned Cutcher who is a constantly patient, deeply knowledgeable and exceptional Electorate Officer. Parissa Zand who is a highly skilled and inquisitive person who brings a brightness to our team — after she has had a coffee. And Eleanor Nurse.

Thank you to all our short term relief staff including David Lewis and Craig Channells. All my staff have worked extremely hard this year to serve the people of the Balmain Electorate. The workload afforded to staffers on the crossbench is significant and COVID has only made that more apparent. I am sure all members will agree that our electoral staff do an amazing job. I thank all the members of the House—Government, Opposition and crossbench. Outside these walls, I want to acknowledge those who will not be getting a holiday this Christmas—our frontline workers and emergency service personnel. These people have done a remarkable service to this State in 2021 and we are so grateful. I also want to thank everyone in my community, none of whom are ever shy with their frank and fearless advice. I have one of the most active, engaged and informed constituencies but also the most supportive and for that I'm grateful.

I also want to call out those in the community who work constantly with my office on a range of issues:

- The Friends of Callan Park including Cynthia, Ros and Hall
- Kate Horrobin and everyone from Stop Cruise Ship Pollution
- The Balmain Association and all its members including Kath and Michelle Hacking
- Ismet Tatan
- Les Johnson and Bill Ryall who regularly provide expert advice to us

Finally my partner Shelley, my daughter Beatrix and my family. I thank the House for the opportunity to deliver felicitations and wish all the members a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2022.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—It is an honour to represent the people of the Myall Lakes, and my first greetings for the season are for the people who repose in me their trust to represent them in the NSW Parliament. I thank them for that honour. From students, to school teachers, business owners to healthcare workers, you help make the Myall Lakes community and you have played a vital role in keeping the Myall Lakes moving through this difficult period. I also thank my dedicated staff who help me to give the Myall Lakes a voice: Gary Hoson, Tanya Thompson, Sacha Shipway and Jenny Archdall. I thank my family for their support, not least my wife, Sue. I thank all members of Government for their service to the Chamber and the public. I thank the Premier, the Deputy Premier, all Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and their executive staff. I thank the Table Office staff and the Hansard team. I hope all have a restful Christmas before we come back next year.

I am extremely proud of a number of projects which we have got off the ground in the Myall Lakes this year, including extra funding for the hospital, the rollout of SMART drumlines, funding many sports and community clubs, Surf Life Saving Facilities, schools, and roads. and I am proud that we end the year with a vaccination rate of more than 95% meaning the Myall Lakes electorate has taken steps forward to protect itself against COVID-19. A central message of Christmas is goodwill. I pass on my goodwill to my colleagues and constituents and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy 2022.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—This is a time of reflection for many of us and I too have been reflecting on how challenging 2021 was. This year has shown us that the measure of a community is not just how it comes together during the enjoyable times, but how it responds during the difficult times. I am especially proud of our community for taking on the challenge not to leave anyone behind. Because of the lockdown laws during the Delta outbreak, I did not have the opportunity to engage with the community in my usual manner. Despite the restrictions, my office remained operational via electronic and telephone support. It is the smallest gesture that

can help others. I am pleased to recognise the many community groups and individuals who have demonstrated generosity, kindness, and willingness to help. This included by sending offers of support to residents or by spreading the message to get tested and vaccinated.

I had the opportunity to witness the amazing difference groups like Lighthouse Community Support, Sydney Community Connect, Addison Road community Organisation, Riverwood Community Centre, Turbans 4 Australia, Foodbank, The Greater Western Sydney Giants, and The Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs made to the many families who were left destitute and in need. It was heart-warming to witness how this community contributed to food hampers whenever there was a call out for support. This community also realised and understood that to be a healthy city the top priority is to get tested and vaccinated. This makes me immensely proud to serve and represent this community. I am grateful to the local vaccination hubs. I want to thank the Lebanese Muslim Association, St Charbel's Monastery in Punchbowl, All Saints Church Belmore, Riverwood Community Centre, Greenacre Community Centre, Morris Iemma Indoor Sports Centre, Acre Club, Bankstown PCYC, Bankstown Sports Club and many other health clinics, pharmacies and hospitals that worked very hard not only to administer vaccines but also educate. Their unwavering commitment to helping our community will never be forgotten.

I am grateful to my family who kept me grounded, kept me fed, kept me sane and kept me loved in a time of great tumult. My second daughter went through the HSC and I hope her hard work and perseverance is rewarded at Christmas. My wife Erin kept the plates spinning and has shown remarkable indulgence in not forcibly shaving my beard. I am grateful to my friends – in the movement and in my community for the laughs, the love and the care. I am grateful to my staff – Taghred, Beryl, Dilan, Liesl, Soumaya, David and James. They worked under enormous pressure and were often the first call for someone in distress. They sat for hours deciphering the ever changing public health orders and trying to find simple answers to complicated questions. They have cried with constituents who saw their loved ones pass away and tried to assist people whose livelihoods have collapsed. They have become accidental counsellors, mentors and advocates and have seen first-hand, the absolute struggle across every aspect of life for my constituents.

This place is a city and a thriving eco-system of interconnected parts. I thank and acknowledge all my colleagues.

- To Colleen Symington and the Opposition Whip's Office - I would not be able to operate without your omnipresent direction.
- To Speaker O'Dea and the Speaker's Office – thank you for your leadership of the Assembly.
- To the Clerks, Helen and the team – your assistance is invaluable.
- To IT, Andrew and the team – thank you for your patience.
- To Building Services, David and the team – thank you for always taking my calls and always lending a hand.
- To the Library – I promise to return my overdue book soon. As a former teacher, believe me, I am appalled at myself.
- To the Special Constables – thank you for keeping us safe always.
- To the cleaners – too often your work goes unacknowledged. Thank you for keeping us safe. Thank you in particular to Urma for her many years of service to this place.

Christmas is a time of year that calls for reflection no matter your faith or background. I am a Muslim MP but I look forward to the renewal, the celebration and most importantly the advent calendars. As the year draws to a close, I thank you for your support and the many messages of appreciation during what has been an enormously stressful time. My team and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Let's hope for a better 2022.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—"We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope." These words of the late Martin Luther King Jr are a fitting marker for 2021 as we find ourselves in the middle of the fight against the pandemic yet with signs of emergence and the success of the vaccine program bringing shafts of light and hope. Businesses have faced the most difficult of times, especially in the areas of hospitality and tourism, as the lockdowns on the border came, went, or stayed and dragged. Government support and public funding have been a help but the wounds are deep and will take time to heal. In most recent days it has been school communities which have, once again, had to deal with shut downs and the agonies of contact tracing through children to families and on to workplaces. I acknowledge what they have been through and appreciate the efforts of our students, parents and the hard work of school principals and staff.

There are many people I would like to thank this year but I will single out those who have been on the frontline – in particular our health teams lead by Jill Ludford and Michael Kalimnios, of Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Albury-Wodonga Health respectively. I thank our stalwarts of accurate covid information and on-the-ground common sense, Superintendent Paul Smith, the Cross-border commissioners James McTavish, Luke Wilson and their teams. I am grateful to NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant for responding to concerns from the Albury community, by travelling to Albury for meetings on 29 October. Dr Chant was generous with her time, running an online forum for P&Cs, briefing school principals and having discussions with local leaders of business. She provided a real boost here when Covid got its claws into Albury.

Community leadership centres on our mayors and council GMs and CEOs, and I acknowledge how they stepped up to the enormous task the pandemic has created. I thank Cr Ruth McCrae and John Scarce at Murrumbidgee, Cr Kevin Mack and Frank Zaknich for Albury, Cr Pat Bourke and Ade Butler for Federation, Cr Heather Wilton and Steve Pinnuck for Greater Hume, and Cr James Hayes and Matt Hyde with Snowy Valleys. And I take this opportunity to thank Kevin for his years of community service and for the commitment behind his promotion of One Community as the reality and way forward for Albury-Wodonga. I thank Premier Dom Perrottet, and Deputy Premier Paul Toole, the Speaker, my parliamentary colleagues, and all who work in Parliament and in electorate offices across New South Wales and along the border in Victoria. In particular, I thank my electorate office staff.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Gladys Berejiklian for her mighty work for the state and indeed her friendship at a personal level. We miss her wisdom and her calm presence in this place. I wish her the happiest of Christmases and a fulfilling year ahead. Once more I give thanks for my family: my wife, Tabitha, and our children, Xavier, Seamus and Natalie. We have much to go through this Christmas and their love and support is precious. While this has been a year of fresh challenges and returning, familiar challenges aligned to the pandemic and its sweep across the nation, I am thankful that our communities are again stretching out from their homes to fill the expanse of social life and work that has been so constrained. I have learned to appreciate the rich idea of community resilience and to work with others to find ways of communicating and getting things done. I thank my community for their kindness to each other, for their strength and indeed their resilience. It is astounding that, after a slow start, my community has reached a double vaccination level of around 95 per cent.

Along the way we have learned a lot about each other and the strengths of our multicultural society that bind us together successfully. Please keep looking out for one another – be a source of comfort and support to each other – and to be a source of renewal. We have been through much. We need to take this Christmas as a time to take stock, regroup and prepare for the new year. The theme of my Christmas cards this year is 'family and friends back together'. I thank all who have made this a reality and a Christmas we will all experience with a degree of relief and gratefulness. Happy Christmas from my family to yours.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I wish all my parliamentary colleagues from both sides of the House a Merry Christmas and a safe return to this parliament in 2022. I hope that you are able to take time to be with your families and loved ones during this festive season. This past year has been difficult and challenging for everyone and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have assisted the Parliament in its work. I thank the Legislative Assembly Clerks office and Table staff, who are always helpful, particularly in relation to procedures and guidance. I thank the Hansard staff, who use their command of the English language to make our speeches look better in print than they sounded when we presented them. I thank the security staff for keeping us safe and informing us about suggested security measures.

I acknowledge the work done by the Opposition Whip and the Whip's Office, in particular, Colleen Symington in keeping us all informed and well-disciplined. I also wish to acknowledge and thank the Parliamentary Library in providing research information in a very timely manner. That service is even more crucial when we are in opposition and without the support of government resources. I acknowledge and thank the facilities staff, the catering staff, the cleaners and the information technology staff for the competent and professional service they provide to all members of Parliament. I acknowledge the parliamentary press gallery for keeping the public informed of the many issues raised in this place.

I take this opportunity to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns MP, the Shadow Cabinet Members and my parliamentary colleagues for their tremendous efforts in keeping the Government accountable during the most difficult of years, thank you all very much for your help and guidance, it is an honour to be your colleague. I say a special thank you to my Labor branch members who tirelessly support our work in the community. I acknowledge and thank the New South Wales Labor Party General Secretary, Bob Nanva, the Assistant Secretary, Dom Ofner and all the staff in the Party Office for their support and assistance. I am fortunate that I have the best office staff any Member of Parliament could wish for. They make my office run smoothly and serve my constituents in a very professional manner. In particular I thank my office manager, Sarah Hatch, and my electorate staff, Phil, Yvonne, Maddie and Norma.

Working during this pandemic has been challenging for all electorate office staff who have not only kept our electorate offices operational but have also been at the forefront with Covid enquiries and often taking the brunt of people's disappointment and anger. Thank you all. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my local community groups, who have continually worked through this pandemic, at risk to themselves, to assist those vulnerable members of my community. Thanks will never be enough for your hard work and dedication. I acknowledge the many people who will be working over the Christmas break to look after our health, safety and wellbeing. In particular, I thank the Mount Druitt Hospital staff for the outstanding work they do for our community and I thank the Mount Druitt police for keeping us safe.

Christmas is often a time marked by extreme weather conditions, particularly heat and wet weather. I acknowledge the efforts of our volunteers from the NSW Rural Fire Service and our Local Emergency Service who work in extreme conditions to keep us safe. I also acknowledge the many volunteering organisations in my electorate who look after the vulnerable in our community, particularly organisations that provide Christmas meals for those who are alone during this festive period. I also take this opportunity to thank our frontline essential workers for their dedication and hard work over the year. I extend my appreciations to all of you, the reality of what could have happened if you had not been there willing to do your job is unthinkable. We cannot ever thank you enough.

Lastly, as members know, our job cannot be done effectively without family support. I thank my family, in particular, my wife, Dimyana; my daughters, Natalie and Eustina; my son-in-law, John; my Grandkids Elise and Nicholas and my mother-in-law, Mary. I thank them for their understanding and tolerance of my regular absences and the late nights. Whilst the lockdown allowed me the pleasure of spending more time with them at home, like so many of us, it was very hard not being able to see my grandkids for such a considerable period of time. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—After what has been a long and challenging year, we have reached the wonderful Christmas season. With the easing of restrictions and regional travel allowed, we can take joy in reuniting and embracing our family and loved ones. Making this time of year more special than ever. Throughout the year, our Western Sydney community has shown strength and resilience. I would like to thank our community for doing the right thing, following the health orders, and stepping up to support one another during this difficult time. I encourage you to continue checking in with your family and friends. Christmas is a time for family and for showing community spirit. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and acknowledge the community groups and charities in the Electorate of Prospect that have worked tirelessly to provide assistance to our community during the COVID-19 lockdown. Your efforts are a testament to the strength of our Western Sydney community. I hope you all enjoy a very safe and joyful Christmas surrounded by your family and loved ones.

It is an immense privilege to stand in this Chamber and represent the wonderful Electorate of Prospect. I'd like to thank my constituents for placing your trust in me as your State Member of Parliament. I am so proud to represent our community and look forward to continue working with you to ensure that Western Sydney is put first. With the myriad of challenges faced in our community this year, my Electorate staff have worked around the clock to ensure the concerns for individuals, families and business in Prospect were met. To my hardworking Electorate staff, David Weston, Annie Wang, Brooke Unsworth, Nick Haughain, Akano Amuda, and Michael Kolokossian – thank you for your dedication to the Prospect Electorate Office and our community. I also thank my parliamentary colleagues, from all sides of politics. Despite political differences, we all care for our communities and have pledged to serve New South Wales. We should be proud of our bipartisan achievements, and must take this energy into 2022 to best serve our community.

To the fantastic team at the Department of Parliamentary Services, including Clerks, Deputy Clerks, Hansard staff, NSW Police Force Special Constables, IT, cleaners, maintenance, cleaners and kitchen team—thank you for providing exceptional service and dedication throughout the year. Parliament sitting days can be lengthy and rigorous, but you have made the process seamless. Finally, I thank my beautiful family—my wife, Bettina, and our three daughters, Geneva, Camille and Olivia. Your support means everything to me. Every action I take in this place I do to ensure you are proud of me. You are my greatest motivation. I pray that everyone has a safe holiday, surrounded by family, friends and loved ones. Merry Christmas and God bless.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—Mr Speaker, the past 12 months has seen the South Coast community face significant challenges. Despite the Black Summer bushfires impacting our region almost 24 months ago, my community is still recovering and feeling the impacts of such significant trauma. The southern suburbs of my electorate have also been impacted by floods and of course our state faced the biggest challenge of our generation with the COVID-19 pandemic. However the South Coast community is resilient. Despite such significant challenges, we have managed to come through the other side and

look to brighter days. I sincerely thank so many on the South Coast who assisted our community come through these challenges.

Whether the wonderful men and women of the Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and other emergency services such as NSW Police, NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Surf Life Saving, Marine Rescue and many, many more, to the Doctors, Nurses and Allied Health professionals who have served on the front line during the pandemic, thank you. To our teachers who faced some of the biggest challenges and parents who became teachers, thank you. I know that as we move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and get back to life as we used to know it, the wonderful South Coast community will remain as resilient as ever, and leaders in times of adversity. Across the South Coast, despite so many challenges, we as a Government have continued to deliver. Upgrades along the Princes Highway are continuing between Berry and Bomaderry and the Nowra Bridge is almost halfway complete.

Planning for a new flyover is close to being finalised at the Jervis Bay Road/Princes Highway intersection and additional planning continues to upgrade the Highway south of Nowra. We have progressed work on the upgrade to Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital and announced a new site for a brand new preschool. We have delivered important funding to complete the boardwalk at Ulladulla Harbour and the new CUC is due to open imminently. The site for new primary school for Worrige/South Nowra has been announced and we saved important educational land from sale at Mollymook. This is just some of the work we continue to do for the South Coast, not mentioning the significant funding we have provided to local businesses and residents to help assist with bushfire, flood and COVID recovery.

I thank my hard working Electorate Office staff, Lynne Arnold, Adam Carney, Matthew Allen and Caitlin Davis, who like many electorate office staff have been faced with new challenges of getting ever evolving information out to our community quickly. I also wish to acknowledge my hard working Ministerial staff led by my Chief of Staff Luke Sikora. Thank you to Jane Boag, Troy Wilkie, Michelle Lane, Clayton Hopper, Tracy Hodgkinson, Damien Bolte, and Allison Balding for your continued hard work in the Local Government portfolio. We have worked extraordinarily hard to support the Local Government sector and our councils through recent challenges and in the lead up to the Local Government Elections next month. We have delivered significant legislative reform, secured financial assistance for all councils across our communities and worked hard with the sector to identify and deliver reform to strengthen our Local Government sector.

I acknowledge the hard working Kiersten Fishburn, Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and her team for their continued work and service to our local councils. To the entire team at the Office of Local Government, particularly Keith Baxter, Melissa Gibbs, Chris Allen and Grant Gleeson as well as Ally Dench and Brett Whitworth who recently joined the team, thank you for your hard work in what was a very challenging and busy year. Can I also thank the team within the DPIE – Environment Energy and Science group, including Dean Knudson and Sharon Molloy and pay particular thanks to Michelle Fletcher for her continued hard work and congratulate her on her appointment to the role of Director. I must also make mention of Dr Phil Watson and thank him for his dedication to our coastal communities.

Coastal Management remains a significant challenge our state faces, however over the past 12 months our team has worked hard to assist local councils plan for the future through their Coastal Management Programs. We continue to work one-on-one with councils and communities to address significant issues up and down our coast, and I remain focused on ensuring we address these issues for the long term. I look forward to continuing to work with councils across New South Wales in order to build on our reforms to date which aim to deliver a strong Local Government sector. There will continue to be challenges which need to be responded to, and there is a substantial amount of work to be done. I look forward to continuing this work.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—Mr Speaker, the end of the year allows us to take the time to thank and acknowledge everyone who has helped and supported the running of our great State. I start by thanking former Premier and friend, Gladys Berejiklian, and former Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, for seeing us through a very stressful and challenging time in our state's history. I would also like to thank the new NSW Leadership team of Premier Perrottet, Deputy Premier Toole, Minister Ayres and Minister Taylor for continuing the good work of their predecessors in seeing us out of COVID-19. While all our Ministers are dedicated, I would particularly like to acknowledge Brad Hazzard and Stuart Ayres; who listened to me and conveyed mine and my community's concerns to the crisis cabinet during this year's Covid lockdowns.

Mr Speaker, so much of the Government would not be able to function without the hardworking and dedicated support of our Ministerial Staff – especially their Parliamentary Advisers. I would like to thank Michael Evangelidis, Jerome Boutelet, Bryce O'Connor, Justin Cordi, Adelaide Cuneo, Patrick Wynne, Dom Bondar, Clayton Hopper, Priya Paggaddinnimath, Charlotte Inwood, Amanda Choularton and Alex Tooth for their assistance to me and the Holsworthy Electorate over the past year. I would also like to especially highlight Ellie Stamatelatos, the Parliamentary Adviser to the Minister for Health and Medical Research, who has been available

to every Member in this place to ensure that they received accurate information in a timely manner during this difficult time. She is someone who has really stood out to me – and many other members – over this past year and who should be congratulated.

I would also like to thank some of our Ministerial Staff who also go above and beyond to assist my office and our community, including Luke Sikora, Jane Boag, Troy Wilkie, James Malin, Jordan Matthews, Tanya Raffoul, Jessica Neale, Cam Dunger, Angus McKenzie–Wills, Asher Miners and Dan Reubenach. Mr Speaker, this place would not run without our Leader of the House, the Hon. Mark Speakman MP and the Whips team including the Member for Terrigal and Government Whip, Adam Crouch MP; Member for Cootamundra and Nationals Whip, Steph Cooke MP; Member for Heathcote and Deputy Government Whip, Lee Evans MP; the Liberal Party Whips Adviser, Ben Sheath; and, the National Party Whips Adviser, Viv Lee. This team ensures that laws continue to be passed efficiently and effectively, in what can be busy and chaotic sitting periods.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank you for your steady and just leadership over this term, and your other members of the Speaker's Panel, including Deputy Speaker, Leslie Williams MP; Assistant Speaker, Mark Coure MP; and, Temporary Speakers – Lee Evans MP, Wendy Tuckerman MP, Greg Piper MP, Gurmeh Singh MP, Sonia Hornery MP and Felicity Wilson MP. Mr Speaker, I would also like to take the time to thank those in the Parliament who enable us to come in to this place and debate legislation including our Clerk, Helen Minnican; Deputy Clerk, Carly Maxwell; Clerk Assistant, Simon Johnston; Sergeant-at-arms, Rohan Tyler; the Security Team (including our Special Constables); Hansard; the LA Attendants Team; the audio visual team, our catering and café staff – including the wonderful Kylie; and, all of the cleaners in this place (who have been more important than ever with COVID).

Mr Speaker, I would also like to take this time to pay tribute to all of the staff who work within the committees. I am always astounded by the amount of knowledge and information they are able to provide and present across multiple committees and subjects. Our IT Team, particularly Helen Johnston, are always helpful, but acted swiftly during Covid so we could work from home, then later log in to a new virtual Parliament so we could stay with our communities in their time of need. Mark Webb has had an unexpectedly busy year focusing on the safety of everyone in the Parliament building. My team are amazingly helpful. They did not stop for a beat during Covid – we were busier than ever and they rose to the challenge; going out of their way to show care to everyone in our electorate. In March Clayton Hopper went to work with Minister Shelley Hancock and while missed, I know he is making a difference there.

To Daniel Nicholls, Sophie Carlton, Faith Perryman and Marc Landrigan – no member in this place could wish for better and you will always have my gratitude. My mum and dad, Scott and Rhonda Gibbons, and other half Kent Johns, and my girls Audrey and Elizabeth Johns, give me a focus and drive. I thank them for their patience and understanding for this service. Finally, a huge thank you to the Holsworthy community for their support.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, during the last parliamentary sitting week for 2021, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate both sides of the House on an interesting, challenging, but very rewarding year in NSW Parliament. I wish all Members and their families a restful and enjoyable Christmas period before we continue working for the people of New South Wales in 2022. This year we faced unprecedented challenges as we continued to navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to firstly thank every single person across the State who has come forward and got vaccinated. Without our strong vaccination rates, the eased restrictions that we enjoy today would simply not be possible. I would also like to thank all of our frontline staff who have worked tirelessly to keep our community safe and operating smoothly.

In particular, I wish to thank Paul Darcy, Cath Whitehead and Tom Karagiannis from St George Hospital who have worked tirelessly to protect our community from COVID-19 through both testing and vaccinations. On behalf of the people of our community, I want to sincerely thank our Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard, Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant and the entire team at NSW Health for their commitment to supporting our community over the past 18 months. The late nights, early mornings and 11:00am press conferences have been invaluable in keeping our community up to date and informed. I know that the St George community is thankful for all of your dedication and service. I must commend the Premier of New South Wales, Dominic Perrottet, as well as former Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, for their leadership and commitment to our community throughout this difficult period. Without it, I cannot say that our State would be in the strong position that it is in today.

I also want to thank our new Treasurer, Matt Kean, for his commitment to rebuilding our economy and for his work in ensuring that our natural environment can not only survive, but thrive in years to come. Can I also thank my St George and Sutherland Shire colleagues for supporting me as the Member for Oatley. This includes: Eleni Petinos, Mark Speakman, Melanie Gibbons, Wendy Lindsay, Lee Evans, Stephen Kamper and Chris Minns. As Assistant Speaker, I could not do the role that I do without the support of the Speaker, Jonathan O'Dea, the entire Speaker's Panel and our Government Whip, Adam Crouch. I also want to farewell my dear friend and the



Member for Bega, Andrew Constance and I wish him all the best for the future. This year has been a fantastic year for upgrades and improvements to local infrastructure throughout the seat of Oatley including:

- The opening of the brand new Penshurst Public School
- Further progress on the widening of King Georges Road
- More trains and more services throughout the St George area
- The opening of the Brighton Memorial Playing Fields
- Progress on the upgrades to the Princes Highway at Blakehurst

And

- Commencing the final stages of Gannons Park

We have also seen over 550 local residents enrol in a fee-free short course through TAFE NSW and we have welcomed more than 40 new police officers to the St George and Campsie Police Area Commands. There is still more work to be done and I look forward to continuing to deliver for the St George area both in 2022 and beyond. I cannot conclude this speech without thanking my electorate office staff, Team Couré. Thank you again to my right-hand man Shane, for all of the late nights, early phone calls and for keeping my office running smoothly. To Jared, Jayden and Charlotte, thank you for your support and all of your hard work as well. I also want to acknowledge both Laura and Justin who have left my electorate office this year and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Thank you as well to all of the Ministerial and Parliamentary staff for your support and assistance, particularly during the latest COVID-19 outbreak.

In particular, I want to thank Ellie Stamatelatos, Priya Pagaddinnimath, Alexandra Tooth, Clayton Hopper, Adelaide Cuneo and Imogen Posa. To my dear wife Adla, I thank you for all of the support you have given me over the past 10 and a half years and to my children, James and Sam, who always keep me grounded and are growing up far too fast. I could never do the job I do and achieve the things I have for the community without the help and support of each and every one of you. From my family to yours, we wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a blessed start to the New Year.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I send Christmas greetings to all my constituents in The Entrance electorate and wish them and their families a restful holiday. I thank them all for the trust they have placed in me and record again my appreciation for the honour I have been granted to represent them in this place. On behalf of my electorate let me offer my condolences to those who suffered over the year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and those who have lost loved ones. I also want to thank all those workers who could not work from home but kept this state operating during this trying period. I thank my community for their support over the past 12 months. That support manifests itself in the results we have achieved in the electorate, often resisted by the government, from the humble upgrade of a pedestrian crossing brought to my attention by my constituent Pam Slough at Killarney Vale to bigger works like the full upgrade of Lisarow Station championed over many years by Anne Young.

I could not serve The Entrance electorate without my marvellous electorate office staff. Each day they help my constituents represents Labor's commitment to make government serve the needs of the community. I make particular mention of my senior electoral officer, Catherine Wall, who is a perfect fit for the role. I also thank Danielle Atherden, my newest staff member Mollie Reed and Peyton Roberts-Garnsey for the unique contribution each has made to our team and to the work of representing our community. Peyton has decided to move to the office of the Member for Gosford and note I will miss her dearly and hope she goes on to greater things in her new role. I also would like to shout out to Alfat Karnib who is on leave with her new family. We can't wait to have you back. I have noted before, the role of Opposition in a parliamentary democracy is a tough one. The Opposition does not have the resources of the Government and, as Opposition Deputy Whip, I thank my caucus colleagues for their hard work during the year. Personally, I thank them for their support.

The Opposition Whips office would not work at all without the most hardworking member of the Opposition, Colleen Symington. She keeps us focused and on top of things in this place, and I give her my personal thanks and the thanks of the whole Labor caucus. I want to acknowledge Labor's new leadership team and congratulate them for the focus and energy they have brought to our work. It has been an honour working with my Labor colleagues and representing Labor in this place. I want to particularly commend my Central Coast colleagues, Yasmin Catley the Member for Swansea, David Harris, the Member for Wyong and Liesl Tesch the Member for Gosford. Labor's cause is well served on the Coast by the way we work together. I thank the Labor Party members in The Entrance electorate for their support and commitment to a Labor Government in this state.

The staff of Parliament House do a fantastic job. I have said before that, as a socialist, it gives me great heart to see public servants running things as efficiently as this place runs. I recognise the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Helen Minnican, and her staff; the Department of Parliamentary Services staff; and the library and catering staff—particularly Mai Le, who regularly brings meals to my room through the day. I also thank Hansard for turning my mumbles into intelligent speech. It is a job well done. I thank the Speaker and his staff for their work. The Speaker has brought a more measured tone to the house and improved its operation greatly. I thank my family for their patients and support. My partner, Deanne, has helped me through a trying year and built a comfortable home for us and which provides a wonderful sanctuary from the world of politics. I particularly thank her for the work she does when I'm here in caring for Maren, Gram and our smelly dog Gruff.

Over the coming year there is much more to be done to make The Entrance electorate a better and fairer place and I will finish by wishing Government members a merry Christmas. I look forward to both working with and beating you in the not too distant future.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—We are all looking forward to this Christmas and the joy it brings after the challenging couple of years it has been. From droughts, bushfires and floods, through to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all grateful to those who worked so tirelessly to keep us safe. I feel great privilege in representing the people of North Shore; never more so than during these past two years when their community spirit shone through. I thank everyone in my community for their kindness and compassion this year, and I especially thank our frontline workers who continued their work and contributed to keeping our community safe. And through it all the Parliament has continued to operate, albeit with restrictions. This institution exists because of its people: from the front desk to the cafe to Hansard. Our wonderful attendants, all those who work in catering, the security team, our cleaners and maintenance team, and the Clerk and her team. I appreciate everything they do and the support they have provided to me and my colleagues, especially during the new operating environment they have had to adapt to this year.

I am fortunate to serve as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, and I would like to recognise the Treasurer and Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean. It is a great privilege for me to work alongside such a champion to address climate change. I particularly want to thank his staff Ben Coles, Christian Dunk, Ava Hancock, Kaycie Bradford, Anthony Brewster, Dmitry Palmer and Christine Chalker for the support and advice they provide to me in this role. As a team, they are hardworking and driven to deliver on behalf of NSW, today and for the future. We are all better for their contribution. I also acknowledge the Minister for Local Government, Shelley Hancock with whom I have been working on coastal management policy, and her staff, Jane Boag, Caterina Polistina and Luke Sikora. As Deputy Chair of the Committee on Planning and Environment and the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, I want to thank all the committee staff, including Elaine Schofield, who retired as Director of Committees this year, Caroline Hopley, Ze Nan Ma, Stephanie Mulvey, Elspeth Dyer, Dora Oravec, and Bjarne Nordin, and their teams.

Being a member of the Perrottet Government truly is a great honour and privilege. I thank Premier Dominic Perrottet for his leadership over recent months and for guiding NSW through easing public health restrictions and moving forward with our economic recovery. He is supported by an outstanding team, including Chief of Staff, Bran Black. Thanks to the Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard, and Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant and her team, for their continuous work throughout this year. Brad is the type of MP and Minister who works with everyone in a non-partisan way, giving his all and never losing his kindness and spirit – even in a pandemic. I acknowledge two colleagues who are leaving this place. Thank you to Andrew Constance for his support and guidance and his leadership and commitment to serving NSW as the Minister for Transport and Roads, and his legacy on disability policy. I also thank John Barilaro for his leadership as Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade.

Thank you to the Speaker, Jonathan O'Dea, and his staff. I ceased to be a member of his Speaker's panel earlier this year and remain grateful that he gave me the opportunity to fulfill that important role. Thank you also to the Whip, Adam Crouch, and the team, Ben Sheath and Viv Lee. I also acknowledge and thank the former Premier Gladys Berejiklian, who worked tirelessly this year for the people of NSW and navigated NSW through one of our toughest periods with the COVID-19 pandemic, and did so with integrity, compassion and a laser-like focus on the needs of the community. Locally, I am also losing my neighbour as the Member for Willoughby, and we share the lower north shore community, and I while I will miss her I am grateful for the years of her personal friendship and support. Most importantly, I want to acknowledge my electorate office staff who have worked with me this year, Lisa Forrest, Natalie Windle, Declan Stack, Emily Pavey, and Chris McDermott. Thank you for supporting me and working tirelessly for our community, particularly during the COVID-19 stay at home orders.

Challenging times make you focus closer to home. I am most grateful to have the constant support of my family, especially my sisters Alexia and Christiana, who are always there for me and two little ones, Eleanor and

Henry. Thank you all for your continuing love and support. Merry Christmas and all the very best wishes for a relaxing break with your families and friends.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Sadly 2021 will be forever etched in our minds as a year that people in our community become sick from COVID, and I pass my deepest condolences to those who have lost family and friends, and I pay my respects to those we have lost. COVID brought challenges to all of us, and it is only through our collective efforts, caring for others and working together that we will make our way to recovery. 2021 has been a tumultuous year that has seen my amazing electorate office team working so hard, often very late into the night, and over every single day (including weekends), supporting thousands of people in our community to navigate these challenges. So many issues came at us thick and fast, and as a leader in my community, I felt a deep and heavy responsibility to help everyone who came to me for help.

It was impossible to do this alone, of course, but I am so lucky and privileged to work with (in my view) the most dedicated and caring electorate officers in NSW: people who put the community first in everything they do and say. I thank Christine Boyd, Alexandria Carruthers, Luce Andrews, Teha Brazier, Jayden Roberson and Judy Williams for their professionalism and genuine compassion and care under such extraordinary circumstances, and to Garry Blair and Eve Nesmith who left my office to pursue other opportunities during the year. I want to give special thanks to those people who reached out to my team and me, and who were patient, generous, compassionate and understanding. In a time of such uncertainty it is often easy to blame others, but I was humbled and grateful for the grace of people who accepted answers that they didn't want to hear in good faith, for the greater good.

That is true community spirit. And I thank everyone who made sacrifices to keep others safe. If we have learned nothing else from this year, it is the importance of community, of being together, of respect and kindness and dignity. I want to give special thanks to everyone who has gone out and been vaccinated. Today, Maitland's vaccination rate for 1st and 2nd doses is greater than 95% - a fantastic effort from everyone! Of course, thank you to our health workers –doctors, nurses, midwives, cleaners, assistants, pathologists, psychologists, paramedics and others in our health system who have worked so hard to keep us safe and well and strong and vaccinated. I thank those who ensured that the transport workers who kept the buses and trains and point to point vehicles running. Workers who ensured chemists and supermarkets kept trading so people could purchase essential medications and food. Teachers and other education staff who ensured that students continued their learning and their parents who supported their children so well!

Cleaners and the many people who are working in other often invisible roles – please know how much we all value you and thank you for all you do, at your own risk, every day, for our community. You have all proven how strong and united our community is, and what a formidable force we can be when we work together. I thank the members of the Press Gallery who work to keep our community informed, particularly Sarah Navin and Michael Parris who are so important for our regional news. I thank our local media particularly Donna Sharpe and Rick Allen at the Maitland Mercury and Damon Cronshaw and Donna Page at the Newcastle Herald; and Rod Thompson from the Newcastle Weekly, Jessica Rouse from 2HD and New FM, and the teams at 2 NURFM, ABC Newcastle, NBN TV Newcastle who continue to provide important local news to our community.

I thank Hansard, the Clerks at the table and the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Chamber attendants, catering team, cleaners and gardeners for all you do to help us do our work in this place. I thank my two beautiful and loving children, Josh and Jess, who have left this year to go and pursue their tourism dreams – Josh in Adelaide and Jess in Uluru. I miss you greatly but I am so proud of you. I thank our extended family and friends for the love and support they have shown Robert and I through this year. Most of all I thank my wonderful husband, Robert. We have finally emptied our little nest, but we are filling our days in the community and working hard together as always, and learning to garden and cook together which has been fun. I wish you and your loved ones a happy and safe holiday season. Like so many, I am eager to close the book on 2021, and move onto 2022, which I hope, is a better year for all of us.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne)**—It is a pleasure to contribute to the Christmas Felicitations as we reflect on 2021, prepare for the Christmas period and plan for the new year ahead. I would like to pass on my very best wishes for a safe and Merry Christmas. The past two years have been particularly challenging for our state and its people as we have navigated the health, social and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the constituents of the Drummoyne electorate. I have been in awe of the resilience and strength shown by my community. In this past year, I have seen small businesses bounce back with new and innovative ideas following extended restrictions, the class of Year 12 successfully complete their HSC with tenacity after much disruption, and community and religious groups such as the Abbotsford Presbyterian Church answer the call for help by providing groceries and household items to people who were in need. Thank you to those individuals and community groups who went above and beyond to help their neighbours in a time of hardship and need.

I wish to acknowledge my electorate office staff. Last week two of my staff members were awarded 10-year service award. Congratulations to Betty Di Pasqua and Jim Biniaries for this remarkable achievement. Thank you both for all that you do in the Drummoyne electorate office. Betty keeps the wheels running in the office with her strong work ethic, wisdom and kind nature. She approaches every encounter with constituents with empathy and respect. Jim is another valued member of my team who keeps us all in good spirits with his great sense of humour. He has always tried his very best to help constituents and has an ability to relate with them. The level of service offered by my electorate office staff is second to none. All Members of this House know that it is not always easy for staff, but they always do an incredible job and work very hard for their communities. I would like to thank my staff and indeed the staff of each electorate office in NSW.

To the staff of this Parliament who play an instrumental role in ensuring the House runs smoothly on sitting days – thank you. Finally, I wish to acknowledge all Members of this place and. We are given an incredible privilege to serve our community. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a safe, happy and healthy 2022. Let us hope for peace, joy and harmony for the new year and beyond.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research)**—As Minister for Health and Medical Research, I would like to take the opportunity to place a few words on the record after what has been a truly challenging year. Firstly, to our frontline health and other emergency workers, thank you. Thank you for working tirelessly, day after day, putting yourselves at risk to keep the rest of us safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst we are in a positive position today, with what looks to be a wonderful summer and festive season ahead, we are here thanks to you and your dedication to our community. To the outstanding team at NSW Health, to whom we all owe so much, I thank you for working to keep our health system functioning and prepared to respond to the challenges of COVID-19. I would like to thank the Secretary of NSW Health, the brilliant Elizabeth Koff, Deputy Secretaries Phil Minns and Nigel Lyons. The incredible Deputy Secretary Susan Pearce, who over the course of the pandemic served as the State Health Emergency Operations Centre Controller, and was instrumental in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine across New South Wales.

I also want to thank Chief Health Officer and Deputy Secretary, Dr Kerry Chant, who has kept us safe and given so much of herself to the people of New South Wales over the past nearly two years. I also wish to acknowledge Dr Jeremy McAnulty, Dr Marianne Gale, Dr Michelle Cretikos, Dr Richard Broome, Gemma Broderick, Leanne O'Shannessy, Kate Boyd, Kate Pritchett, Conor Cullen, Joanne Edwards, Rebecca Wark, Tracey McCosker, Commissioner Dominic Morgan and so many others that I have not named but never stopped working whether in front of the cameras or behind the scenes of the COVID-19 public health response. I thank the Chief Executives of the Local Health Districts and Specialty Networks, who worked around the clock to combat COVID-19 and rollout vaccination locally. A huge thank you to Dr Teresa Anderson AM, Amanda Larkin, Scott McLachlan, Graeme Loy, Umit Agis, Wayne Jones, Tobi Wilson, Jill Ludford, Deb Willcox, Brad Astill, Michael DiRienzo, Stewart Dowrick, Kay Hyman, Margot Mains, Margaret Bennett, Cathryn Cox and Rajiv Anand.

To my wonderful, tenacious and loyal team, whom I'm sure all members in this place have had dealings with over the years, thank you for your hard work and support, of not only myself, but of all Members in this Place and their communities. I wish to thank my Chief of Staff Leonie Lamont, Deputy Chief of Staff Ed Clapin, Media Director Julie Garvey, other media staff, Natasha Wallace, Nicolette Kormendy, Policy Director Jasmine Tackman, along with George John, Sandy Fitter, Simon Santow, Abbie Chugg, Amy Hargrave, Ellie Stamatelatos, Ellie Pittorino, Sarah McQuarrie, Peter List, Jo White, Jennifer Gillott, Helen Morrow, Cathy Cotton and Ingrid Pazderski. Every one of my staff know they are here to serve the people of New South Wales and accordingly treat all MPs irrespective of political persuasions with the same grace, energy and commitment, and I thank them for that.

Also I thank my incredible electorate staff, including Toby Williams, Frank Maiuolo, Parry Skene, Luke Sutherland and Robyn Young, and my recently retired drivers Bill Young, Colin Szokolai, and my current driver, Brett Gillard. Each of my electorate staff are committed to the residents of Wakehurst and the broader Northern Beaches community and I thank them for that commitment. For 30 years the local community have supported me and I thank all of you for electing me and allowing me to represent you. To my Liberal, National, Labor and Independent colleagues in this Place, thank you for your support over the past year and a half in the most challenging times, COVID-19 time. You have all done an outstanding job in support of your communities, and should all be proud of your efforts both in and out of this Place. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Gladys Berejiklian, who I worked closely alongside not just through the pandemic, but for nearly 20 years.

The entire New South Wales community owes so much to Gladys and I thank her on behalf of all of us for her outstanding service and contribution to the state. The passage of her leaving this Place will be judged by history but in my view the majority of our community will see it as unreasonable, unfair and unnecessary. Lastly,

a sincere and heartfelt thank you to the people of New South Wales across the state for sticking with us over the course of the pandemic and putting in the work to get to where we are now. Across our state it has been the most challenging of times but together we have withstood COVID's onslaught and are coming through the challenges it has presented. Thank you. Felicitations to all.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—For many, many people across our State, Christmas this year will be more of a blessing than ever. Families will be able to enjoy time together after many months, or even years apart, separated by border closures, both domestic and international. Many people will be looking forward to once again holding their loved ones in their arms, some of the youngest they will not yet have met. I hope that people across the Coogee electorate, the Eastern Suburbs and right across NSW have the opportunity to take a breath, take a break, take stock and find some peace in what has been a year like no other. But this Christmas will also be a hard time for many people across our communities who are out of work or looking for work, and who are worried about putting food on the table, keeping a roof over their heads and being able to look after their families.

It will be a hard time for those who have tragically lost family and friends, whether that be due to the COVID 19 pandemic or any other cause, and who will be spending Christmas without some of their most loved ones. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of our frontline workers who have supported our community right throughout the pandemic, through the darkest days of lockdown and who are still working tirelessly to help us step closer toward normality. To our wonderful health care workers. I wish to thank all of our nurses, doctors, midwives, paramedics, orderlies, cleaners, catering staff, allied health workers and indeed all of our frontline health workers. Our phenomenal public health unit based at the Prince of Wales Hospital, who have served our community and this state so well in their contact tracing work, and their expert advice, delivered on a daily basis.

To our Police, Fire Service and all frontline workers, our State would not have made it through the past year without you. Thank you for keeping us safe. To our amazing teachers! You deserve more than thanks, you deserve a pay rise. I take the opportunity of Christmas felicitations to thank each and every one of you. This past year has also allowed us to broaden our understanding of what a frontline worker is and exactly how many people we rely on day in, day out, to keep our community running. There simply isn't enough space on the page to thank them all, but to make a start I'd like to thank and acknowledge our cleaners, bus drivers, retail workers, logistics workers, truck drivers, taxi drivers, delivery people and so many more. For all of you, working from home during the lockdown was not an option. Thank you for rolling up your sleeves and going to work every day to keep our community running.

This year has also been difficult for our Parliament. With that in mind, I wish to thank all of the parliamentary staff. Ms Helen Minnican, our wonderful Clerk and all of her amazing team for making sure what we do in Parliament every day is indeed, Parliamentary. I also wish to thank the CEO, Mark Webb, for another year of incredible service, potentially the most complex year yet. I thank our wonderful Chamber support staff for all their work in keeping this Chamber running smoothly, including allowing Members to join remotely for the first time in Parliament's history. I extend my deep thanks to our catering and cleaning teams, as well as every member of the library, information services, the Table Office, Hansard, Chamber support and everyone who works here, at Parliament House, for the work they do every day, including our wonderful Special Constables, who still deserve a pay rise.

To the amazing community of the Eastern Suburbs and the Coogee Electorate. I have always been proud to call myself an Eastern Suburbs local, but never more than in the last year. The way that our community has come together to support one another, especially the most vulnerable, has just been truly inspirational. There are too many wonderful local charities to name, but to start I wish to acknowledge the incredible work of Project Kindness. Clem and her team have done it all in the past year. Through my office, we were able to fund a food drive for those in need and Clem and her team worked tirelessly to get support to those who needed it right across the Eastern Suburbs. We were also able to supply a number of local families and school students with the devices they needed to access school remotely. To every single person, and there are hundreds, that donated good to my office – thank you! Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all. May your 2022 be bright.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Mr Speaker, as we prepare for the end of this year I would begin by acknowledging the hardship our state of NSW has faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, has been both challenging and difficult, however, it has reminded us of what is truly important. That is our family, friends and community. The residents and businesses of the Camden electorate have proven that they are resilient and community minded. During the 2021 Delta variant coronavirus lockdown, the Residents of Camden, Liverpool and Wollondilly consistently turned up in large numbers to be tested for COVID-19. And when vaccinations became available these residents turned up again and got vaccinated in large numbers, particularly in the Camden Local Government Area who were one of the top 3 LGAs to reach >95% double vaccinated. All residents should be proud for the commitment they've shown to their communities. In an unprecedented year your efforts have made all the difference.

To the residents of the Camden electorate, I thank you for the opportunity to represent you in this Parliament. Your correspondence and feedback allow me to best represent you and it is an absolute honour and privilege serving you. I would like to thank the Premier who has proven to be an outstanding Treasurer. In the short time you have been Premier you are proving to be a true leader and are already laying the foundation to be an outstanding Premier. I would also like to especially thank the former Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian for your inspirational leadership, support and guidance that you provided me and all residents of NSW. I would also like to thank and acknowledge yourself Mr Speaker. I thank you for not only the work that you do in the Chamber but also for your commitment to professional development for Members. I have thoroughly enjoyed and learnt a lot from the thought leadership breakfasts.

I also thank the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers for the work that they do keeping us in order. I thank the Government whips for the work that you do organising Government Members and ensuring we're all doing what we should be doing. I thank the Ministers for taking the time to listening, considering and regularly actioning my advocacy for more infrastructure and services on behalf of the Camden residents and businesses. I also thank their office staff for the briefings and support you have provided to me. Your expertise and advice is always greatly appreciated not only by me but also the team in the Camden electoral office. I thank my Liberal friends and colleagues whose advice and support are always welcomed. I also take this time to thank the Clerk and her office and the committee secretariats who support the Committee work that we do.

A special and warm thank you to my Electorate Office staff who have supported me and supported the community. They have spent tirelessly hours helping the residents of the Camden electorate and continued to work through the pandemic. Alex, Jo, Ali and Claudia your dedication to serving our residents and businesses is always appreciated. I also thank Caitlin and Josh for the time they spent in the electorate office during the peak of the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic. I wish you all a Merry Christmas, a relaxing break and a Happy New Year with family and friends. To all the front line workers including doctors, nurses, emergency services and teachers for the work that you have done to keep all in the Camden electorate safe. To everyone I have thanked I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas surrounded by family and friends. I hope that you're all able to enjoy a relaxing break over the holiday season and I wish you all the very best for the New Year.

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta)**—I take the opportunity to reflect on this year's parliamentary session. It has been a very busy year for us all, as we serving our communities and making New South Wales a better place for everyone. While debates can get heated, for the most part there are some great friendships and a healthy respect for both sides of the House, I acknowledge those opposite. Despite being fierce competitors in the Chamber, there are many friendships outside. Not only have we kept those opposite in check and accountable for the things they do, but also we have made significant contributions to this place. I would like to recognise the great work of our leaders Jodi McKay and our present Leader Chris Minns and their staff. I acknowledge and thank opposition whip Anna Watson and Deputy whip David Meehan. I am sure they will agree with me that the job of Opposition Whip would be much harder without the help of Colleen Symington, the executive officer of the Opposition Whip's Office. I thank Colleen for all her kindness and hard work. I extend my gratitude to all parliamentary staff, who keep the oldest Parliament in Australia running like a well-oiled machine.

I thank those who work in this Chamber, including the Clerk, Helen Minnican, and the deputy clerks, clerical assistants, parliamentary attendants, Hansard staff—who make us sound much better than we really are—and Chamber staff. They all join us every sitting day, regardless of how late we sit, to ensure that the House continues to run. I acknowledge the hard work of the security staff and special constables who are at Parliament around the clock to ensure we are all safe. I thank the catering and cafeteria staff, who start early and finish late. I acknowledge the hard work of the cleaning and maintenance staff, who do such a great job keeping the oldest Parliament in Australia looking beautiful. I Thank My Partner Del who has supported me throughout my political life in this place, I thank my son Paul, daughter Kerrie, who have been a great support to me during these many years, my three beautiful grandchildren Nicholas (Nicky), granddaughter Claudia and Liam, they are my life and their love for me gets me through the toughest of times.

I thank the Cabramatta constituents who elected me for my fourth term in this place. My constituents look to my Cabramatta electorate staff for assistance, and the kindness and helpfulness they provide makes my electorate office a thriving hub for those in need of help and support. I am thankful to have such an outstanding team, who work together. They are what makes my electorate office succeed. I thank Anne McNamara for her compassion and for always fighting to achieve the best outcome for all constituents. I thank Michelle Odisho for her reliability and hard work. I thank Kelvin Tran for his dedication, talent and friendship. I thank all members and staff of parliament of New South Wales and wish them, their families and loved ones a safe, happy and healthy holiday season. Merry Christmas.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**—2021 was a year like no other, but after a cold COVID-19 winter of discontent with lockdowns, we head towards a more free summer full of optimism. Thank you to all our frontline workers from our child protection workers, disability workers, doctors, housing providers, nurses, ambos, paramedics, police officers, RFS volunteers and teachers, to name a few. We greatly appreciate the sacrifices you have made and without your dedication, commitment and courage our State would not be in the positive position it is in now. New South Wales has experienced some of the most extraordinary times but despite the many challenges we have faced over the last year the electorate of Ku-ring-gai have exhibited outstanding community spirit and resilience.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all volunteering organisations in my electorate, including, Meals on Wheels Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby, KNC, Scouts and Guides, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community Transport, KYDS, StreetWork, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, St John's Ambulance, our sporting and cultural clubs and the Rotary Clubs of Turramurra, Wahroonga and Ku-ring-gai, to name but a brief few of our many volunteering organisations. Volunteering has always been important to me – for every person you help, you gain an enormous amount in return. Despite the pandemic, I am grateful for our local volunteers who continue to make our community stronger, safer and better and I extend my thanks to all who put our community above themselves through volunteering. Your work is the glue that keeps us together.

2021 also marked 100 years of Rotary in Australia and New Zealand. As a local acknowledgement of the centenary, I joined Rotarians, staff and students from Turramurra High School for a tree planting ceremony and plaque unveiling. Our local Rotary Clubs are involved in many projects in our community, however, the most notable event is the Bobbin Head Cycle Class, which raises money each year for Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury and other local not-for-profit organisations. One of the truly satisfying aspects of being a local Member of Parliament is visiting our many schools. In June, I was fortunate enough to host my annual High School Captains' Dinner at Parliament House. Year 12 students have displayed great resilience while undertaking their final year of school during the pandemic and subsequent lockdown. I wish them good luck for the future and thank all students, staff, parents and carers for their tireless effort over this past year and I look forward to attending the end of year presentation days over the coming weeks. We have gone through some trying times but there is still much to celebrate:

- St Lucy's School in Wahroonga opened the Dominic Centre, a state-of-the-art educational facility partly funded by the NSW Government that will allow students to develop their capabilities and independence;
- The completion of stage 1 of the Pacific Highway Pinch Point Program; and
- I presented Mrs Jo Harris OAM as Ku-ring-gai's Local Woman of the Year.

I acknowledge my electorate staff, Deanna, Di, Janet, Emily and Ryan. There is a great deal of shared wisdom in my office and I thank them for their hard work over the year and wish them and their families a very happy Christmas. In May, I was honoured to be asked by the former Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, to join her Ministry. On 27 May I was sworn in as Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. I would like to thank the members of the community that have supported and encouraged me in my public service. It is a great honour to be appointed to a portfolio that is responsible for the vulnerable members of our community. Few portfolios offer the same opportunity to positively impact the lives of people in need.

Since becoming the Minister, I have seen firsthand the enormous effort our social services sector and the role they've played in supporting the most vulnerable members of the community throughout the pandemic. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone in the sector for their work – your dedication and passion has shone bright throughout this incredibly challenging time and I hope you all get some time to relax and enjoy Christmas with your families. Thank you to my outstanding Ministerial staff for all of your great guidance and support since becoming Minister. NSW is leading the world in vaccination rates and we should all feel proud of the way we have worked together and helped one another during this time. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year. Stay safe and I look forward to 2022.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown)**—We thought that 2021 was a difficult year but this year saw Blacktown City facing one of the harshest lockdown conditions faced by anyone in the country. The community pulled together and with high vaccination rates, life is heading back to some normality, we look forward to Christmas, the festive season and 2022. I pay tribute to the people who supported society through the COVID. Whilst many could have worked from home, many western Sydney front line workers had to be at the workplace or their work would not happen. Thanks and our appreciation to the contribution of the emergency workers in health, police, ambulance, fire fighters for working under extraordinary circumstances and constantly exposed to the COVID virus. Front line workers also included transport workers, couriers, delivery drivers, retail, factory, warehouse, childcare, council workers, allied health and everyone else that had to attend work.

Special mention to the teachers and principals that had to work under stressful conditions to ensure students had the resources and means to continue their studies to the best of their abilities. Unfortunately, 1 in 6 students in Australia live in poverty and had difficulty in accessing material or IT support to undertake their studies but our schools rallied to support them as best as they can. Pandemic impacted people in many different ways and the true social cost in regards to health, mental stress and domestic violence is yet to materialise. Our community rallied during COVID and now we need to continue this in the recovery period. We also pause to remember our friends, loved ones and others that are no longer with us. Many people unfortunately lost their lives due to COVID but unfortunately there was at least two community warriors that are no longer with us. Warren Hardy of Doonside gave a lifetime of support to the community and Lina Cabaero synonymous for her efforts for workers' rights and dignity in the workplace with Asian Women at Work. Both will be sadly missed and a massive void is left in the community.

I thank the Clerks of this Chamber, Helen and acknowledge the work over the years of Les Gonye who recently retired, the Speaker of the House, the Hon. Jonathan O'Dea MP and all the Assistant Speakers. I thank the table officers, the Chamber support people—particularly Ian and Danny—the Hansard people and the hundreds of people working throughout Parliament House. I thank my fellow Labor parliamentarians, the shadow Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition's office staff, who have supported me and helped me out throughout the year. I give special thanks to Jodi McKay, for her leadership in difficult times. Chris Minns has become the NSW Labor leader and has demonstrated that is a formidable leader. I thank Anna Watson and all the support Whips and give a special call out to Colleen Symington, who keeps an active eye on all of us to ensure we are doing whatever we are supposed to be doing. I thank James Cullen, Matthew Shaw and everyone else in the Labor Leader's office for their hard work and dedication.

Congratulations to Prue Car to her evaluation to deputy leadership and I know she will excel in this new role. My personal appreciation to the union movement, in particularly Unions NSW leader Mark Morey AWU National Secretary Daniel Walton and NSW AWU Secretary Tony Callinan for your efforts throughout the year in looking after workers interests. ALP NSW office leadership team of Bob Nanva and Dominic Ofner and all the ALP staff for their help throughout the year. I give special thanks to my Blacktown electoral staff. They are a wonderful team who deal passionately with the local challenges that many of our constituents have. Words cannot adequately express my appreciation of the wonderful effort they all put in. Their professionalism, compassion and never give up attitude in supporting our local community is very much appreciated and admired. You are all a credit to our local area.

They are Senior Electorate Officer Elizabeth Banks, supported by Wendy Chen, Justine Ndayi, Zohre (Sabrina) Can and Kimberly Campbell and for leave coverage by Angela Humphries, John Costelloe, Ebony O'Connor, Anthony Carver and Rameez Parker. I thank all the local Labor branch members and executive members for volunteering their time to ensure that Labor remains relevant and respected in our local community. I particularly thank Satish Kumar, Rachael and Rebel Hanlon, Geoff and Cherie Harrison. I wish all the Labor candidates, led by Mayor Tony Bleasdale in the Blacktown local Government elections. I thank my wonderful bride of 27 years, Anne, for all her hard work and volunteering; and my fabulous son, Stephen Jr, for his very important support. I wish everybody in this Chamber across the political divide a wonderful Christmas. May 2022 bring much joy and success.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

##### **MRS ABLA KADOUS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—I am very proud to acknowledge Mrs Abla Kadous, who is President of the Islamic Women's Welfare Association. Abla is a remarkable woman who has volunteered most of her life and contributed so much to the community. I want to congratulate Abla, a very worthy recipient of the 2022 NSW Senior Australia of the Year. I have met Abla Kadous many times in the past, and found her to be a woman of high integrity, honesty and generosity. Abla was an immigrant herself, arriving in Australia with little money. She began volunteering more than 35 years ago. She spent most of her life juggling between housework, bringing up her five children and helped establish Australia's first welfare service for Muslim women. She helped create youth camps, school readiness programs, cooking classes, and providing food and shelter for people in need. Abla Kadous, a woman who has been a true inspiration to others has not stopped working, and no barriers will impede her from continuing her charitable work. On behalf of the Lakemba Electorate I want to congratulate Mrs Abla Kadous for giving so much throughout her life to causes bigger than herself.

##### **TUMUT CYCLE CLASSIC**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—It gives me great pleasure to congratulate a hard-working and dedicated constituent from my electorate – Dr Tarek Sari. A local paediatric chiropractor, Dr Sari has worked for over 5 years with the President of Tumut Cycle Classic, Dr Osman Darwiche, to raise money for new equipment at



Tumut District Hospital. For over 12 years, Dr Sari, has dedicated and served the communities of Tumut and his local community of Greenacre. Tumut Cycle Classic has raised \$165,000 to purchase equipment for the hospital, which gives Tumut District Hospital the capacity to treat patients that would otherwise have to travel to Wagga Wagga or Canberra. This year, Tumut District Hospital took on a new state-of-the-art C-Mac video laryngoscope and an iSimulate training machine thanks to the efforts of Tumut Cycle Classic. Tumut Cycle Classic has worked alongside Sydney Muslim Cyclists and Human Appeal to host charity events to purchase an oxygen saturation machine for the paediatric wards, 8 mobility beds for each general ward, an endoscopy telepack, 5 new bariatric beds and new urology equipment. Thank you and congratulations Tarek. You have done the community, your family and friends very proud.

#### **CELEBRATING CHANUKAH 2021**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)**—I send my best wishes to the Jewish Community in NSW as you prepare to celebrate the eight day festival of Chanukah. Chanukah represents the universal triumph of light over darkness – and speaks to the deep resilience of the Jewish people. Yesterday, Multicultural NSW hosted parliamentarians and Jewish communal leaders for the annual Pre-Chanukah celebration. I had the pleasure again to Emcee and I acknowledge The Great Synagogue Chief Minister Rabbi Dr Ben Elton and Rabbi Nochun Schapiro who participated in the formal proceedings. On Sunday, Dover Heights Shule in my electorate will host Chanukah in the Park at Dudley Page Reserve. And next Wednesday, Chabad Double Bay will host Chanukah in the Bay at Steyne Park. They are always both joyful events when all my community come together to celebrate. To the NSW Jewish Community and the many amazing Jewish organisations in my electorate, Chag sameach!

#### **ROBBIE MORTIMER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Robbie Mortimer, of Orange. Robbie is a singer-songwriter, with two studio albums. Robbie is a natural storyteller and his life experiences have influenced his music, writing about love, travel, life, and heartbreak. Robbie's recently released album, titled 200 Years Too Late, peaked at number 10 on the Australian pop music charts. Robbie is a talented performer, having been the opening act for The Beach Boys and The Temptations on their Australian Surf & Soul tour in 2017, and continues to promote his music through touring with fellow musicians. Robbie has worked with various musicians, such as three-time Grammy-winning award artist Coy Bowles from the Zac Brown Band to create a unique sound. Robbie continues to create new sounds that he is passionate about. As well as being a well-known solo artist, Robbie is the lead singer of his band The Robbie Mortimer Band, who have played at countless functions and events, and they continue to perform nationally and internationally. I congratulate Robbie on his successful second album, and I wish him ongoing success in his career as a performer and an artist.

#### **NOWRA PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the students from Nowra Public School for showing that they can think outside the box and how their creative young minds have successfully earned a place in the state finals of the Game Changer Challenge. The schools Eco Minions team challenge was to transform throw away items into something useful and they came up with the idea of turning used clothes into feeding bibs for the elderly and people with disabilities, they could use these bibs and not spill food or drink on their clothes so they don't get ruined. Fantastic job done by the team of five students at Nowra Public School and congratulations on being crowned champions and all the best in the Game Changer Ultimate Final.

#### **BERNADETTE GODDARD – KC**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Michelle Beets, a highly respected nurse who tragically passed away in 2010, has been honoured annually through the Humpty Dumpty Foundation since 2012. The Foundation recognises the commitment and achievements of people who demonstrably go above and beyond to improve health outcomes, by awarding them the Michelle Beets Award for Inspirational Paediatric Care. Winners of the Memorial Award receive \$25,000 worth of medical equipment through the Humpty Dumpty Foundation for their hospital, and a \$5,000 bursary for professional development, training or research. This year's award was presented by the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, Minister for Health and Medical Research, to Bernadette Goddard, a clinical nurse consultant in paediatric asthma at John Hunter Children's Hospital. Bernadette has been helping Hunter children for 26 years, and for the last 14 of those years she has been focusing on asthma research and treatment. Bernadette acknowledged that to receive this award was incredible, but she was focused on how \$25,000 of medical equipment for respiratory illnesses would benefit the children of the Hunter. Thank you, Bernadette, for the dedication and passion you have for improving health outcomes for children with respiratory problems. You are making a wonderful difference.

**CALLAGHAN COLLEGE WARATAH – PARLI-FLICKS BEST REGIONAL AWARD**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—2021 marked the advent of the International Democracy Day Short Film Award, Parli-Flicks. Students all across the state were encouraged to participate by making a short film that explored their understanding of Australian democracy. Four students from the Waratah Technology Campus of Callaghan College worked together to produce an entry. Joshua Sutton, Francesca McRae, Finlay Keegan, and Samuel Williams were nominated as the finalists in the Best Regional Short Film category but sadly were unable to attend the planned awards night in Parliament on September 15 due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Engaging with all members of the public, even those who cannot yet vote, is essential to the workings of democracy. This competition is an excellent way to engage young people and the students of Callaghan College will hopefully in turn have engaged others through their production. I would like to congratulate Joshua, Francesca, Finlay, and Samuel on their achievement, and look forward to seeing this competition continue in future years.

**DEBORAH MOORE – HEART FOUNDATION**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Working for one organisation for more than 20 years is a good sign that you love what you do. For Deborah Moore, that is the case. Deborah began her career with the Heart Foundation in 1998, working on the Heartmoves program. She continued in the role until 2012, even while continuing to work in the fitness industry and even opening and managing her own gym. Deborah moved into her current role as Senior Co-ordinator for Heart Health NSW and worked in that role up until her last day today. Over the last 5 years the Heart Foundation has undergone some important transformations by bringing the organisation under the one national umbrella with a new strategic plan devised and a fresh look at addressing heart health in Australia. Despite this, the last two years of COVID has exacerbated the issues facing the not-for-profit sector and, as such, the National Board of the Heart Foundation has had to make the unenviable decision to change the way the organisation will deliver on its strategic priorities. Thank you Deborah for your commitment to the Heart Foundation and the people of NSW.

**RELAY FOR LIFE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Relay For Life is a community fundraising challenge for Cancer Council NSW. Teams of friends, families, schools and colleagues raise money in the lead up to an overnight event, where team members take turns walking around a track to signify that cancer never rests. Organised by passionate, local volunteers, the Relay is an experience that will stay with you forever. There are a host of activities designed to celebrate Survivors and recognise their Carers. Those we have lost are honoured during a candlelight ceremony. This year, due to COVID-19, the event was held virtually. 15 teams, 35 participants, 20 Survivors and Carers, 1 movement fighting back against cancer all took part in a virtual event to turn Newcastle and Lake Macquarie purple. Congratulations Monica Halliday, Jordan Mcshane, Georgia Scott, Trudy Weedon, Amy Bland, Narelle Tarrant, Xavier Lovett, Ruth Nicoll, Chris Horne, Elizabeth McGovern, Linda Mee, Rebecca Pfennigwerth, Sarah Nixon, Toni Jalany, Jasmyne Tessier, John Tessier, Georgia McCudden, Libby Coughlan, Theresa Glover, Courtney Bilson, Natalie Seddon, Danielle C. Foster, Anita Gray, Samantha Evans, Steve Arnold, John Price, Michael Christian, Robert Main, Rahul Chhillar, Brendan Lovett, Jack Foster, Emma Nicol, Danielle C. Foster, Tim Papasavva and Renae Brock.

**HORNSBY HEIGHTS NETBALL CLUB**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Hornsby Heights Netball Club who this year celebrated their 60th Anniversary. The club began when two local mums Louise Reynell and Helen Ryan wanted to give their daughters a place to play sport. Originally playing in Meadowbank they joined the Ku-ring-gai Netball Association in 1969, where they still play today. While many things may have changed the club still plays under the colours of green and orange with the hornet emblem. They can also stake claim to one of the biggest names in netball, Giants Coach Julie Fitzgerald first played netball in the Under 11s for Hornsby Heights. Thank you to the countless volunteers whose hard work and dedication has ensured the success of the club. From 2 junior teams to 33 teams in 2021, the club just keeps going from strength to strength. In the most recent season, 21 teams were placed in the top 4, 6 teams lead their competition and 4 teams were undefeated. They also had 15 umpiring badges awarded over the season. Congratulations Hornsby Heights on reaching this impressive milestone and I wish you all the best as you take the court in 2022.

**GONGLUG**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)**—I take this opportunity to formally thank Gonglug a small group of adult fans of Lego that enjoy putting on exhibitions around NSW to raise funds for local charities. Most recently Graham and Joshua from Gonglug made a very generous donation of Lego to my annual Christmas Toy Drive. This Lego will be received by SAHSSI, who are supporting women and their children who have fled unstable housing or

family violence and will spend Christmas in crisis accommodation. I am advised the Gonglug group were able to hold three events in 2021, where money raised from hosting the exhibitions was donated to local charities including \$42,000 going to Kidzwish Foundation. Due to COVID lockdown period the group was unable to host exhibitions and events, however are making plans for early next year. I would like to wish Gonglug all the very best at their next event being held at Berkeley Sports Stadium in March, again the fundraising will be donated to Kidzwish Foundation. They are hoping this will be their biggest event to date. Thank you Gonglug.

#### **ABBIE SMITH – AUSTRALIAN BREAKAWAY ROPING RECORD BREAKER**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Congratulations to Singleton's Abbie Smith on rewriting the Australian Professional Rodeo Association's [APRA] record for breakaway roping. Abbie was competing at the Capella Rodeo on the Queensland Central Highlands in late-August when she stunned the crowd and the pro rodeo fraternity. Riding husband Brady's all-round horse, 15-year-old gelding Roany, Abbie roped her beast in a lightning quick 1.6 seconds. The previous APRA Breakaway Roping record of 1.7 seconds stood since 2019 when Queenslander Bridie Davison posted a 1.7 second time at the Hughenden Rodeo in outback Queensland. Abbie Smith's previous best was 1.9 seconds and she had commented to her sister, Lauren, that she would be happy to do 2.1 seconds at Capella and finish in second place behind Lauren. Abbie's record was acknowledged by the organisers, Capella Rodeo Club, which posted on its Facebook page that it was very privileged to have the record set at their event. The record was achieved against the backdrop of COVID-19 state border closures with the Smiths leaving NSW to head north just prior to Queensland closing its border to interstate visitors. Again, congratulations Abbie and long may your record stand.

#### **ZOE TURNER'S 12-HOUR TENNIS FUNDRAISER**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I want to acknowledge Zoe Turner and the community of Stroud in the Upper Hunter electorate for last weekend's fundraiser to assist Make-A-Wish Australia. Zoe has been keen to do a charity event and set admirable criteria to challenge herself. She didn't want it to be easy, Zoe was prepared to put herself to some hardship, it had to be the right charity and something for sick kids. Stories from children on the Make-A-Wish website got her emotionally attached to the organisation which has now been making wishes come true for Australian kids for 35 years. With the recipient decided, Zoe challenged herself to play tennis for 12 hours. So, with support from Stroud Tennis Club, Zoe Turner took to the court on Saturday 20 November 2021 and despite some rain, played until the Stroud community gave her a big cheer at 7.30pm when her objective was achieved. Congratulations Zoe on your tenacity to put the smile on the face of critically ill children. The initial goal to raise \$1,400 was doubled with \$2,966 coming from barbecues as well as donations by local businesses, groups and individuals. An ace result for charity, Zoe!

#### **MAITLAND PARK BOWLING AND SPORTING COMPLEX GRANT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Today I congratulate the Maitland Park Bowling and Sporting Complex who were successful in gaining a grant within the 2021 Community Building Partnership Program. This not-for-profit club was created in 1902, and for well over a century it has supported countless sporting teams, churches, schools and charities. The Club is the only remaining Club in the Maitland CBD. The Club was awarded a grant of \$15,743 to fully fund the purchase of a new variable speed Bowling Green mower to replace an older unreliable one. The grant will also fully fund the replacement of the fridge/freezer in the bistro with a more energy efficient model. These resources will allow the Club to improve the amenity for members and guests, as well as the many community organisations that utilise their spaces. I commend the members and the Board of the Maitland Park Bowling and Sporting Complex for the impressive longevity of their service, and their ongoing support of other local organisations, and the people of Maitland.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF EAST MAITLAND GRANTS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—East Maitland Rotary describes itself as an active, service group undertaking community projects and fund raising to make a difference locally and globally. I can attest to the veracity of this statement. Our Rotary Club have remained an important and intrinsic part of the Maitland community for many decades providing not only support and service, but also opportunities for members to develop as individuals, to build expansive social connections and to become change makers. Today I congratulate the Rotary Club of East Maitland on their success in being awarded two grants within the 2021 Community Building Partnership Program. The first grant of \$62,000 will support the purchase of a new, compliant and efficient catering trailer to enable the Club to service the local community needs and demands. The second grant will fund the renewal and maintenance of the Cinders Track shared public walkway by creating a community mural on part of the noise-wall and removing graffiti along entire length of the structure. I congratulate the Rotary Club of East Maitland on attaining these two grants that also serve as recognition of the significant ongoing contributions that the Club makes to the broader Maitland community.

### **MILLERS FOREST PROGRESS ASSOCIATION GRANT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Today I congratulate the Millers Forest Progress Association on their success in being awarded a grant within the 2021 Community Building Partnership Program. This grant of \$10,803 will partly fund the purchase and installation of a 13.09kw Solar Energy System comprising of panels and inverter for the Hall at Millers Forest. The project will ensure the Hall continues to be operational and sustainable for the community in an environmentally responsible way. The Hall has operated for over 110 years and provides a connection and meeting place for the community. This project modernises the Hall and enhances its ongoing sustainability both financially and environmentally. The project will also ensure the Hall has uninterrupted power supply which can be problematic in country areas. This certainty of supply will encourage the community to further utilise the Hall for functions/activities. I congratulate the Miller Forest Progress Association and thank them for the contribution they make to our community via their ongoing work to provide a sustainable resource for our citizens.

### **THE HUNTER COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE GRANT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—The pandemic and the continuing population growth in Maitland and surrounding regions has impacted on our community focused services by greatly increasing demand across the board. The Hunter Community Legal Centre in Maitland want to better address both this increased demand and also improve access to their free legal advice services. Today I congratulate them on their success in being award a grant within the 2021 Community Building Partnership Program. This grant of \$8,011 will fund the purchase of a telepresence robot for use by the Centre to better support flexibility of service delivery and increase overall capacity. I commend the team at the Hunter Community Legal Centre for the ongoing professionalism and community focused work that support our citizens through many kinds of legal matters and associated life changes. This grant will allow for even more people to benefit from their much appreciated efforts.

### **ST GREGORY'S STUDENTS CDF SPORTS AWARD WINNERS**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—The Catholic Development Fund [CDF] Sports Awards recognise students who embrace the ethos of their school, demonstrate high levels of sporting achievements and who contribute as team members. I congratulate St Gregory's College, Junior School Students who were recognised at the 2021 CDF Sports Award Winners. Congratulations to Connor Potts, Benjamin Lawrence, Seth Obereigner and Marcus Desira who were Primary Sports Council Medallion Winners. I also congratulate Leonardo Valdmanis who was a Red Award Winner and Denham Tsagalas who was both a Red Award Winner and a John Gamble Trophy Winner. The John Gamble Trophy recognises the most outstanding Sportsperson of the Year. These are incredible achievements by the young men of St Gregory's College and I thank the CDF for recognising these recipients. I wish these students all the very best in their future sporting and academic endeavours.

### **WILLIAM MCCORMACK**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I recognise William McCormack who has personally driven a COVID-19 wellbeing campaign which has been done in partnership with Lifeline Macarthur, Big Yellow Umbrella and in collaboration with a number of small business and other organisations. The campaign was established to help our community come together and support each other during these unprecedented times. A number of banners and small signs were printed with positive messages and installed around Camden including the Camden electorate office. The overwhelming response and support for the campaign reinforced the positive impact it had on the local community. William is a huge advocate for the importance of building and empowering strong communities and has a fierce passion for proactively destigmatising mental health. I thank William, Big Yellow Umbrella, Lifeline Macarthur for the support and inspirational work you do for our community.

### **CAMDEN 2021**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I take this opportunity as my last day in NSW Parliament for 2021 to highlight the wonderful team effort of the Camden community. I'm proud to represent the Camden electorate who came together during the challenges of the 2021 Coronavirus Delta variant lockdown. During the lockdown, the residents of the Camden, Liverpool and Wollondilly Local Government Areas [LGA] in the Camden electorate consistently turned up in large numbers to be tested for COVID-19. When vaccinations became available these residents turned up again and got vaccinated in large numbers, particularly in the Camden LGA who were one of the top 3 LGAs achieving >95 per cent double vaccinated proving that the Camden electorate always rise to the occasion as a community and for the community. While some businesses sadly closed in the Camden electorate, many struggled but managed their way through. This is testament to the resilience of our local businesses. I sincerely hope that as we come to the end of 2021 and we enter the New Year that all businesses in

our community continue to flourish. I wish all the residents in the Camden electorate a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a safe and relaxing holiday season.

#### **CAMDEN SHOW YOUNG WOMAN OF 2022**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I am proud to congratulate Brooke Baker who was awarded Camden Show Young Woman of 2022. I also congratulate Annalise Thurstan who was awarded the Carmel Foti Encouragement Award. The Camden Show Young Woman competition aims to find a young female Ambassador for rural NSW and the agricultural show movement. Entrants must have a genuine interest in, and knowledge of, rural NSW. The entrants are judged on personality, confidence, ambition and life goals. Over the next year, Brooke will have many official and informal duties within Camden, such as opening the local shows, public speaking throughout the year and presenting prizes for winners in agricultural events. Over 500 young women enter the competition annually throughout NSW, with the competitions run by over 100 Show Societies. Brooke is going to be an excellent Ambassador for Camden and I wish her and Annalise all the best in their future endeavours.

#### **STEVE MORTLOCK**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Steve Mortlock for his services to the State Emergency Services. For 22 years, Steve held the position of Commander of the Griffith SES Unit. Before joining the organisation, he was firefighter for almost 15 years, and this experience no doubt played a role in his promotion to Regional Controller within just 12 months of joining up. One of his great successes has been growing the number of SES members from four when he first joined, to 45 today. Over his two decades in the role, Steve has helped countless people, including many at their most vulnerable. During the 2012 floods, Steve and his team of volunteers played a critical role in preserving both lives and property. Steve is held in high esteem by his fellow SES members, and is so deeply committed to his team that he will remain a member and take on an advisory role to the crew. Steve's long years of service and commitment to the SES are to be commended and celebrated.

#### **AMANPREET KANG - LEETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I recognise Ms Amanpreet Kang, until recently of Leeton, who recently begun a PhD programme at the University of Cambridge after being awarded the Cambridge Australia Newnham scholarship. Ms Kang was born in Leeton to parents from India's Punjab region, who owned and worked a vineyard outside the town. After graduating from St Francis de Sales Regional College in 2012, Ms Kang studied Archaeology at the University of Sydney, and gained practical experience of excavation in Czechia. She then broadened her studies by undertaking a Master of Archaeological and Evolutionary Science degree at the Australian National University in Canberra. Ms Kang's talents and achievements have now been recognised by a scholarship to one of the world's most prestigious universities. This is a testament above all to her dedication to her studies, but also to her parents' hard work in establishing themselves and their family in Leeton. Together they are a shining example of the fruit of our region's opportunities. I congratulate Aman on her success so far, and wish her all the best for her future career.

#### **NORMAN BOOKER**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to record the many years of dedicated community service of local resident Norman Booker. Norman has made an extraordinary contribution to the Surry Hills community through his commitment to empowering individuals and fostering community support. Within multiple organisations and community led initiatives Norman has been a valued leader and advocate, ensuring that vulnerable members of the community are represented and have access to support and resources. Norman chaired the Surry Hills Community Drug Action Team for nine years, raising awareness on the impact of alcohol and drug use and fostering a safer, healthier community. For many years Norman chaired the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Advisory Board as an independent volunteer, giving social housing tenants a voice and a forum to address community concerns. He was a board member and chaired The Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre's Board of Governors and contributed to the centre's community events. As Member for Sydney, I commend Norman's passion and efforts, making a positive difference and creating a stronger, more inclusive community. I thank Norman Booker for his support, advocacy, community building and service for the people of Surry Hills.

#### **WESTERN DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION OF CAMERA CLUBS COMPETITION.**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate the winners of the Western Districts Association of Camera Clubs 2021 Interclub Competition. Tim White from the Cudgegong Camera Club won first place in the Photojournalism/Social Documentary, and Mono/B&W People categories. He also received second place in the Mono/B&W Landscape/Seascape/Streetscape category. Col Boyd of the Cudgegong Camera Club won first place in the Mono/B&W Landscape/Seascape/Streetscape, and Sport categories. He also received

second place in the Photojournalism/Social Documentary and People categories. Simone Kurtz from the Cudgegong Camera Club who won first place in the Nature and Open categories, second place in the Sport category, and special mentions in the People and Sport categories. Lorraine Gratton of the Cudgegong Camera Club received a special mention in the Landscape/Seascape/Streetscape category. Amber Hooper from the Cudgegong Camera Club won first place in the Mono/B&W Landscape/Seascape/Streetscape category. Nick Pearce of the Cudgegong Camera Club who won first place in the Creative category. Helen Ackerstrom of the Dubbo Camera Club won second place in the Mono/B&W People category. Congratulations to all the winners and entrants, your photos are spectacular!

### **FASTSTREAM**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I want to congratulate Mudgee teacher Tamara Hargraves on her selection for the Department of Education's exclusive FASTstream program. The program accepts a small number of outstanding candidates each year and provides an intensive mentoring and accelerated leadership pathway, which includes placement at leading public schools across NSW. Tamara has been a teacher in NSW for 21 years – Mudgee for 10 – and was selected for the program from a field of more than 200 applicants! Unfortunately Tamara will be leaving Mudgee Public School, but she's not going far – only up the road to Cudgegong Valley Public School! Tamara says she's 'flattered' and 'excited' to have been chosen for a program that will deliver 'quality leaders for the regions', saying 'going forward into the future that's what we need – and it benefits everybody: the community, the staff and the kids'. At the end of the day that's what we're all here for! Congratulations Tamara. The fact a Mudgee teacher has been chosen is a real testament to the region, and I know the Cudgegong Valley school community will welcome you with open arms! Best of luck for the future!

### **SKILLSET AWARDS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Three Dubbo women have been recognised for their "phenomenal commitment" at the 2021 Skillset awards. Jasmin Daley received the Skillset Trainee of the Year, the School2Trade award went to Bronte Gibson, and Renae Justice got the Skillset TradeUP Award. Jasmin was acknowledged for her passion for her community work and professional development. She completed a Certificate III in Community Services while being hosted with Orana Support Service. Jasmin has also completed extra training during her traineeship in Family Group Conferencing and Domestic Violence Alert Training. Bronte is currently studying a Certificate III in Business with REDI.E, under a community program funded by UGL. The School2Trade award celebrates outstanding achievement for school students who also undertake on-the-job training one day a week with a local business. Renae works at Dubbo College Delroy Campus. Her award was designed to celebrate achievement and partnership in supporting Skillset's school-based programs TradeUp and Schools2Trade. Congratulations Jasmin, Bronte and Renae, and all the best for the future!

### **JANE FERRIS**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads)**—I rise to acknowledge the long and proud service of Jane Ferris, an amazing school leader in Public Education who recently retired as Principal of Pittwater High School. Jane has a long and distinguished career as an educator and leader, and it was a privilege to work with her, and witness the results of her hard work in the school and wider community. Jane led an inclusive and compassionate school community, and displayed real commitment to meeting the needs of all students, regardless of their level of ability, or the challenges they faced. I will always remember Jane's bravery when confronted with obstacles and frustrations, and the way in which she always put the needs of her students and staff before her own. Jane was a true servant leader and I wish her and her family all the best for their future.

### **1ST OYSTER BAY SCOUT GROUP**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the wonderful 1st Oyster Bay Scout Group for their resilience during COVID-19. Scouts are known for their love of the great outdoors, so when our community needed to stay home, the 1st Oyster Bay Scouts got creative. To keep young people connected, the incredible leaders developed online initiatives including a photo scavenger hunt, cooking challenges, building campfires and lava lamps, virtual mapping, camping at home with an Olympic twist, and first-aid education. The 1st Oyster Bay Scouts also invited other local Scout groups to participate in these activities and connected with over 50 families from our community. It is the Scout motto to 'Be Prepared', and the 1st Oyster Bay Scouts have truly demonstrated this by taking the challenges of COVID-19 in their stride. I take this opportunity to recognise the outstanding efforts of the volunteers including Cub Leaders Bryan O'Hanlon, Blanka De Oliveira and Kris Dempsey, Scout Leaders Aaron Tomlins, Jane Hall, Natasha Mallam, Bruce Lilley and Helen Reigman, and Venturers Leaders Lyn Comyns and Adam Buckle. I commend the 1st Oyster Bay Scout Group for overcoming obstacles through this challenging period.

### THE JANNALI HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the outstanding team at The Jannali High School for their incredible dedication to keeping students excited about learning during COVID-19. During the remote learning period, the teachers provided online activities to keep students connected and engaged. This included encouraging video messages from the leadership teams and teachers, a virtual Creative and Performing Arts Show, care hampers with food and digital resources to support families in need led by Amy Abraham, science week activities and Thrive Thursdays. Additionally, the students were welcomed back to school with balloons and celebrations after many challenging months at home. I recognise the immensely dedicated leadership team of Principal Rick Coleman, Deputy Principals Dave Stewart and Nicole Waser and Head Teachers Kate Flower, Simone McKay, Fiona MacPherson, Sam Cavallaro, Amanda Peard, Carole Smith, Graeme Edgar, Kate Mulheron, Jarrod Martin, Violet Van Luyt, Kath Hayward and Scott Carpenter for their guidance during this difficult time. Additionally, I acknowledge the entire teaching and support staff for their ongoing efforts, noting in particular Year Advisors Rachel McKendrick, Hannah Ingram, Shannon Powell, Sarah Dinh, Samantha Heagney and Damien Warwick. I commend everyone at The Jannali High School for their resilience and dedication to learning.

### DR DANIEL NOUR

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Dr Daniel Nour of Sylvania on being named the 2022 NSW Young Australian of the Year. Daniel is a truly community minded individual. Noticing that vulnerable people in our community were not accessing the care they needed, Daniel founded Street Side Medics in August 2020 as a not-for-profit GP-led mobile medical service for people experiencing homelessness. Daniel's vision quickly grew, and the Street Side Medics team is now a family of over 145 volunteers with four clinics across NSW. The Street Side Medics service has been especially crucial during COVID-19 as many individuals are anxious about accessing healthcare. Daniel and his incredible team have treated neglected medical needs and detected conditions that would have otherwise gone unnoticed such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Despite working full time at Royal North Shore Hospital, Daniel has always given freely of his time to assist at Street Side Medics and provide care to those in need. I commend Dr Nour on his important work with our vulnerable community members and on receiving this significant honour.

### COUNCILLOR STEVE SIMPSON

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Sutherland Shire Council's outgoing Mayor, Councillor Steve Simpson, who is retiring from public life at the upcoming election. Steve has had an extensive career in public service, having served on the Sutherland Shire Council for 27 years. During his time on Council, Steve has championed many local projects and has been an incredibly active member of our community and a familiar face to those who call the Sutherland Shire home. Some of Steve's achievements during his time on Council include his involvement in the development of The Ridge, Menai Skate Park and the Menai Indoor Sports Centre. As a resident of Alford's Point, Steve has a deep love for the Sutherland Shire and I trust that he will continue to be a strong advocate for our community in his future endeavours. I thank Steve for dedicating so much of his life to serving our community and wish him well in his retirement as travels with his wife Rhonda.

### SCHOOL LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST 2021

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—It was again an honour to host the Coogee School Leadership Breakfast on Friday, 26 November. I was joined by student leaders from St Clare's, Waverley College, St Catherine's, Marcellin College Randwick Boys' High School and Randwick Girls' High School, as we discussed some of the biggest issues facing young people in 2021. We were also joined by Associate Professor Simon Rosenbaum. Professor Rosenbaum is an academic with the School of Psychiatry at UNSW and an honorary fellow at the Black Dog Institute. His research focuses on physical activity, mental illness, sport for development and global mental health. Simon has worked with a variety of groups including youth, veterans, emergency service workers and refugees. This fantastic group of up and coming leaders took on topics including youth mental health, drugs and alcohol, consent education, climate change and sustainability just to name a few. The students also shared tips on how they were rebuilding the culture of their schools after so long in lockdown. Once again, I am heartened about the future of our local schools and our community after meeting the 2022 school leaders. I wish them all the best of luck in their roles next year.

### EVERLEARN PRESCHOOL 5TH BIRTHDAY

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—Happy 5th Birthday to Everlearn Preschool! Everlearn is a fantastic preschool in Clovelly that works collaboratively with parents and the community in the care and education of children. We know that the early stages of development are the most important and Everlearn do an amazing job of giving each child the best start possible. The past two years have been extremely tough for

preschools and early childhood educators have had to work overtime to ensure that their schools are COVID-safe and that their kids can maintain the continuity of their education. I hope all of the staff, parents and kids in the Everlearn community enjoy the preschool's 5th birthday. Happy Birthday!

#### **FAREWELL PROFESSOR IAN JACOBS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I wish to acknowledge the wonderful contribution of the outgoing Vice-Chancellor of UNSW, Professor Ian Jacobs. Professor Jacobs has lead the university with wonderful distinction through some of the most challenging years in tertiary education in living memory. Professor Jacobs has led the university to continue to invest in ground breaking research, across all disciplines but in particular, the work he has done I to invest in health and medical research is not only brilliant but it will have a real impact on people's lives for generations to come. Happily, students are returning to campus and university life is getting back on track. I congratulate Professor Jacobs for steering the university so well during his tenure and wish him all the best for the future.

#### **ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN GIVING DAY**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—It was wonderful to visit The Royal Hospital for Women recently for their Giving Day. The Royal Hospital for Women is only female specific hospital in NSW. The Royal cares for women from across this entire State and I am proud to support their foundation and the great work this hospital does. 2021 has been the busiest in the more than 150 year history of The Royal - helping deliver more than 4,200 babies and responding to the urgent health needs of more than 10,000 women across gynaecology, maternity, fertility, genetics, maternal fetal medicine and oncology. Every day, this wonderful hospital gives incredible, women's specific treatment to women from across the state. The hospital and all of the staff have done an amazing job throughout the pandemic and I would encourage everyone who is able to, to donate to the Royal Hospital for Women Foundation, so that they can continue delivering hope.

#### **TIANI HOGAN**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the dedication and talent of Mullumbimby High School student Tiani Hogan, an all-round athlete who is Australia's number one javelin thrower in the under 18s age group – and 10th in the world in her age category. Sixteen-year-old Tiani threw a personal best of 48.56m in March this year and also competed at the National Athletic Championships in Sydney, coming second overall. Denied training opportunities by border restrictions, Tiani showed remarkable grit and determination this year training solo, using equipment borrowed from her high school. Tiani grew up playing competition tennis and softball and her "very fast arm" has uniquely equipped her for javelin throwing. Tiana is also a highly ranked heptathlete and expects to compete in heptathlon championships next month, and in javelin events at the Queensland State Championships early next year. Tiana is in the Queensland Target Talent Program, a high-performance pathway for promising young athletes. We are very proud to call Tiana one of our own and we look forward to seeing more from her in the future. It is exciting to witness a local young woman committing herself to such a discipline and excelling in it.

#### **SOCIAL FUTURES BALLINA**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the outstanding contributions made to our community by the Northern Rivers' not-for-profit organisation Social Futures, and celebrate their recent achievement of winning the National Disability Insurance Agency [NDIA] Performance Partnership Award. Social Futures Local Area Coordinator [LAC] teams, including the Ballina LAC team, collectively won the NDIA Performance Partnership award for a medium partner organisation. LAC teams are a critical link in helping people with disability to understand and access NDIS, empowering individuals by maximising their choice and control over the services they use. Winning this national award recognises commitment to deliver a quality experience, exceptional service and improved outcomes for National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] participants. Social Futures have recently partnered with the Northern NSW Local Health District to provide a free mobile vaccination hub to disadvantaged groups. Converting a Social Futures 'outreach van' into a mobile vaccination hub, volunteers travelled to local neighbourhoods which haven't had easy access to vaccination clinics, to provide equitable vaccination access to our community. I commend Social Futures on creating positive social change through strengthening communities and supporting individuals to thrive.

#### **LENNOX HEAD COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the Lennox Head Community Preschool for addressing community and conservation issues through creative initiatives. The pre-school recently held 'Talk like a Pirate week' to acknowledge and raise awareness of childhood cancer. All groups at the Preschool dressed up in pirate themed costumes, ate pirate food and played pirate games – which included walking teachers 'off the plank'. The Lennox Head Community Preschool also supports local organisation, Australian Seabird Rescue. Teachers



and children from the preschool recently attended the organisation's educational facility and learnt how to help care for our country's land and animals. The day's excursion was concluded with a walk along Seven Mile Beach, with demonstrations on how to collect rubbish safely, ensuring the rubbish stays out of the oceans. I congratulate the school on its environmental values and the practical activities employed to instil in our children a love and respect for the natural world and raising awareness of childhood illnesses.

#### **LUGARNO PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—There is nothing more powerful than young members of our community joining together to commemorate and celebrate the ANZAC legacy. It was my privilege to attend an incredible ANZAC Day ceremony in 2021, hosted by Lugarno Public School amongst students, staff and teachers. As I entered the school hall, it was moving to see the passion and sense of national pride on the faces of all students. It was my privilege to lay a wreath on behalf of both the Lugarno community and the NSW Government. I believe that ANZAC Day is one of the most important days on the calendar because it allows us to pause and reflect on the sacrifices of our service men and women. I want to thank the Principal of Lugarno Public School, Justine Williams, her excellent team of staff and all of the students for putting on this fantastic event. In particular, I want to thank the school's leadership team and everyone who spoke at the ceremony. I look forward to attending this event again in 2022.

#### **PEAKHURST UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I rise to recognise the Peakhurst United Football Club who has received an essential funding investment from the NSW Government so that their organisation can continue to grow. Thanks to the Local Sports Grant program, our community has received almost \$40,000 to fund nine projects across our local sporting districts. For the Peakhurst United Football Club, this investment will mean that more Club members can participate in coaching courses. It was an honour to drop in to a training night with the Club to announce the funding, while discussing how the entire Club will benefit from having more qualified coaching personnel. The Peakhurst United Football Club has a number of highly successful teams across multiple age groups. By enabling more individuals to undertake coaching courses, even greater success is on the horizon. I want to thank Club President Mathew Papas, Club Secretary Tania Saify and the entire team for continuing to champion improvements to their facilities, organisation and the wider football community. I look forward to seeing the benefits from these additional coaching courses throughout their future seasons.

#### **39TH GREEK FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—It was an honour to be hosted by the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW at a suite of events to commemorate the 39th Greek Festival of Sydney. This year's festivities were dedicated to the celebration of 200 years of Greek Independence, commemorating those who stood firm against the Ottoman Empire's oppression to establish freedom and democracy. I was particularly moved by the launch event for the festival and I want to thank everyone who came together to mark the occasion including: Harry Danalis – President of the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW, The Hon. Christos Karras – Consulate General of Greece in Sydney, The Hon. Alex Hawke MP – Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, Sophie Cotsis – Member for Canterbury, Stephen Kamper – Member for Rockdale, Eleni Petinos – Member for Miranda and Nia Karteris – Festival Chair of the Greek Festival of Sydney. It was also fantastic to be a part of the lighting of the Sydney Opera House event to showcase our Government's support for all Greek Australians. I look forward to supporting our local Greek community well into the future.

#### **ST ABRAAM AND ST MIKHAIL AL-BEHEIRY CHURCH**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, at the end of last year I had the privilege of visiting the St Abraam and St Mikhail Al-Beheiry Coptic Orthodox Church to deliver some outstanding news. Thanks to the NSW Government, the Church has received \$25,000 to upgrade their kitchen facilities in Peakhurst. This is incredible news and it means that the team will be able to improve their catering opportunities whilst also modernising the precinct. I want to thank Father Moussa Soliman, Father Stefanous El'Antony, Father Luke Malek, Father Markos Tadros and the entire team for continuing to encourage our community to get active and involved through faith. Whether it is their bible study, their Deacons Club, or their scheduled church services, the team is always looking for new ways to connect with others and provide an inclusive space for local families. I look forward to seeing the kitchen upgrades completed in the near future and I am excited to see how this funding initiative will improve the lives of our local church community.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL SES**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—NSW State Emergency Service [SES] provide emergency assistance to the people in NSW 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Approximately 9000 volunteers across the state make it possible. I have the upmost appreciation for all the volunteers who assist our community during

emergencies and wish to thank them for their service. I commend all volunteers in the NSW SES Sutherland Shire, particularly those in the following units of the Heathcote Electorate: Heathcote, Sutherland, Menai.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL BASEBALL CLUBS**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—It's been an incredibly challenging year as we've navigated through the pandemic and the community's patience and cooperation is greatly appreciated. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Baseball Clubs in my community including their volunteers, committee members, coaches, parents and participants and thank them for the contribution to our sporting community. I join these clubs in looking forward to a better 2022 and wish them every success in their competitions. St John Bosco Braves Baseball Club, St Pats Baseball Club.

#### **CHIEF INSPECTOR ADEL ATALLA**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I wish to congratulate Chief Inspector, Adel Atalla on his retirement following 34 years of service to the NSW Police Force. Chief Inspector Atalla is a member of my electorate. He began his police career in January 1988 as a probationary constable and quickly rose through the ranks to become Chief Inspector of the DNA Management Unit. Throughout his years, Chief Inspector Atalla has been the recipient of numerous Police Service Medals, Citations and Awards. Some of his most notable achievements during his career, include his involvement as a Key Representative of the NSWPF driving the DNA and Forensic Procedure Legislation. Chief Inspector Atalla was a Key Advisor regarding the Forensic Procedure Legislation. He led significant changes to the Familial DNA Searching Policy. He was appointed the NSWPF Liaison and Field Commander for the Papal Visit of the Coptic Orthodox Pope during his visit to Sydney in 2017. Chief Inspector Atalla was also involved with the Operation Pendennis, a major Australian Terrorist Operation in 2005. On behalf of the Mount Druitt Electorate I thank Chief Inspector Atalla for his dedication and commitment to excellence in Policing and wish him well on his retirement.

#### **DAVID MULLEN**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I pay tribute to the late David Mullen, who passed away on September 10 2021. David was a well-known and well respected community member in both Goulburn and Crookwell. Known for a strong sense of steady justice and fairness in society, Mr Mullen was a community member who made a great deal of purposeful change. Mr Mullen was a tremendously passionate man, with many legacies left to Goulburn and the region, particularly in regards to the land, conservation and environment. Mr Speaker today I recognise the Service to the Community of Mr Mullen, especially in regards to the Goulburn Rail Trail. I thank Mr Mullen, for his formation of the concept as well as his dedication, labour and advocacy for the project since 2014. David is survived by his family, David's wife Pauline, his sons Jack and Jesse, granddaughter and sister - whom I pay my respects to today.

#### **YASS HIGH SCHOOL 2021 YEAR 12**

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

#### **BABETTE SMITH (1942- 2021)**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I mourn the passing of Babette Smith, OAM, an Australian colonial historian, author of six books and a regular speaker at historical forums and community group gatherings. Babette's passion for history earned her a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community, her impact on people and contributions as an author and historian. Her book "The Luck of the Irish" won the 2015 NSW Premier's Prize for Regional and Community History. Babette was a staunch supporter of the Parramatta Female Factory. This site is in close proximity to the area I represent. Her advocacy for the Female Factory was important for its success. Babette was committed to the creation of a museum of Australian convict history, a place to access stories and photographs rather than the current scattering of convict information. This would have been of huge benefit for cultural tourism and education. Her great intellect, ground-breaking research and commitment to family history and female convict history will be missed. Her willingness to share her ideas and research, passion for history and her great books made her unique in our Australian history community and the wider Australian community. Vale Babette Smith.

**SHARELLE LEWIS AND TANYA ATKINS, WINGHAM TIGERS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I recognise Sharelle Lewis and Tanya Atkins who have recently both been made Life Members of Wingham Rugby League Club. As well as helping in the canteen on game days, Sharelle and Tanya can be found on the side-lines taking action shots of the Wingham games, helping to record the highlights and history of the Tigers. They have dedicated much time to the smooth running of the family club and I congratulate them on being honoured with Life Membership. Tanya has been a Wingham Tiger ever since her dad, Ron 'Rocka' Humphries switched from Taree Old Bar to the Tigers. Since then her children Tyler, Brooke, Josh and Nash have played for Wingham - on one occasion all four represented the Tigers on the one afternoon. While Sharelle's husband, Paul, is also a long serving Tiger as a player, captain-coach, coach and committee member. Their three sons, Cooper, Fletcher and Harry have also all donned the black and gold jumper. Once again, I congratulate Sharelle and Tanya and thank them for their dedication to the Tigers and more widely to the community.

**GEORGE GREAVES AND DUNDALOO**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I recognise George Greaves. George worked at disability service, Dundaloo for 15 years having joined the team in 2006 and is farewelling his team. Prior to this, George spent time in the Airforce with stints in Malaysia and Vietnam. A publican, a shopkeeper in far remote WA, and a radio host, taxi driver, he eventually studied and became an Assistant in Nursing. George is known for his great sense of Aussie humour and his kindness and ability to engage with everyone and anyone. I am told George spoke about how happy he was to see participants who used to live in the hostel move into beautiful, supported group homes over his time, seeing much change in the scope of disability services. I would like to thank George for the goodness he brought to Dundaloo and for the countless people he helped in his 15 years there, it is people like George who make the Myall Lakes an outstanding community and place to live.

**HANNAH DARLINGTON**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to acknowledge talented cricketer Hannah Darlington, from Erskine Park in my electorate of Mulgoa, on being nominated for Young Athlete of the Year for the prestigious NSW Sport Awards. The St Clair Hawks junior is a contender for the award for one of her outstanding achievements of becoming the Sydney Thunder captain, in the absence of regular skipper Rachael Haynes. Being only 19 years old, this makes her the youngest captain in the history of the Women's Big Bash League [WBBL]. Hannah also became the youngest ever NSW captain last summer in two Women's National Cricket League matches. She has been part of the club for five years now and has been a massive supporter. Coach Trevor Griffin said Hannah was the natural choice for a replacement as she has exhibited leadership qualities over the last two seasons. She is a player that goes out onto the field with real passion in her heart and lives and breathes the culture of the sport. A very big congratulations Hannah on this incredible achievement, I look forward to seeing and hearing of your future success and I wish you all the best!

**AGNES BORG**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to acknowledge an incredible woman in my local community, Agnes Borg from St Clair who is celebrating her 103rd birthday today, on the 26th of November. Agnes is the last surviving sibling of eighteen children and enjoys the simple things in life, like being outdoors. She very much enjoys having a good laugh and joke from time to time which brightens her days and brings her lots of joy. Happy birthday Agnes on reaching this amazing milestone, I wish you another happy and healthy year in 2022!

**SEAN O'SULLIVAN**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to acknowledge local junior, Sean O'Sullivan, on returning to Penrith Panthers club on a one-year deal following stints with the Sydney Roosters, Brisbane Broncos and New Zealand Warriors between 2018 and 2021. The 23-year-old Glenmore Park Brumbies junior last wore Panthers colours in 2016, where he captained a Penrith SG Ball side to the premiership and national title. He has always dreamed of playing for the Panthers and now this becomes a reality. A former Australian Schoolboys and NSW Under 18s representative, Sean made his first grade debut in 2018 and has played 22 NRL games thus far. He is extremely grateful for the opportunity to learn from the great coaches and quality halves at the club was one he simply couldn't pass up. Congratulations Sean on this amazing achievement, I look forward to seeing you play and help Panthers to achieve success again in 2022!

**RONNIE PATEA**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I wish to acknowledge local St Clair father and former New Zealand rugby player, Ronnie Patea, on being the latest person to tackle one of the toughest coaching gigs in Australian sport. Ronnie was officially unveiled as the new head coach of the Penrith Emus Rugby Club which comes after

a huge few weeks for the Emus. After being thrown a lifeline by the ACT & SNSW Rugby Union in October to join the prestigious John Dent Cup in 2022. Ronnie said he is not afraid of the big challenge that comes with being in charge of one of the most talked about franchises in Australian rugby. He knows this requires a lot of work to be done but he believes he has the support of the club and management to do so. His mission is to nurture the talent at his disposal and hopefully guide them to a berth with Super Rugby's Brumbies. Ronnie believes the juniors just need a good pathway to come out stronger together as a team and he sees some talented players coming through. Congratulations Ronnie on this exciting achievement, I look forward to seeing the team's future success!

#### **BASS HILL PLAZA 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 Bass Hill Plaza Medical Centre for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Peter Alexakis, Dr Hala El Naouchi, Dr Sughandthi Ravi Prabahan, Dr V. R. Nagamma, Dr Anantha Prakash and Dr Ronald Chu 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 Bass Hill Plaza Medical Centre on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **CHESO FAMILY 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 Cheso Family Medical Centre for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Nabil Shnoudi and Dr Aftab Alam 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 Cheso Family Medical Centre on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **PAUL'S PHARMACY PLUS 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 Paul's Pharmacy Plus Bass Hill for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Taqwa Al-Khafaji for her 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 Paul's Pharmacy Plus Bass Hill on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **EXCEL 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 Excel Medical Centre in Chester Hill for providing access to health resources and vaccines to our local community during this challenging time. I thank Dr Thien Quang Nguyen, Dr Giang Hoang and Dr John Vu 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 Excel Medical Centre on this exemplary display of community service. Our community is grateful for their hard work and commitment.

#### **VALE THE VENERABLE LONG SAKHONE**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the recent passing of The Venerable Long Sakhone, the abbot of Wat Khemarangsaram in Bonnyrigg. He was the longest serving

Cambodian monk in Australia, arriving in Fairfield in 1985. The Cambodian community established a temple in a rented house in Fairfield and began searching for a monk who could provide spiritual leadership. The Venerable Sakhone was deemed the perfect person for the job, being well known for his work with refugees in Thailand. Immediately The Venerable Sakhone formulated a schedule of morning prayers at the temple and a program of home visits that provided pastoral care to Cambodian refugees who had settled in the area. I extend my condolences to the Cambodian community on the loss of The Venerable Long Sakhone, and I express my gratitude for his great contribution to the Cambodian Community, showing kindness and care to refugees across the globe.

#### **ALISON COVINGTON**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I take this opportunity to offer congratulations to Ms Alison Covington founder and managing director and founder of Good360 Australia for winning the CEO of the Year award at the national 2021 Third Sector Awards. These awards recognise the work of Not For Profit organisations like Good 360 and this award is a tremendous achievement for Ms Covington. During the pandemic, the distribution centre at Smithfield was a hive of activity. Volunteers, including myself, members of the NSW Police and the Australian Defence Force were matching items such as face masks, hand sanitiser and cleaning supplies, to get them out to community members in need. No person in need escaped Alison's attention and she worked tirelessly to service the community with basic essentials. Good 360 even assisted with the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program, and I am grateful to Alison and the team for their assistance. Alison is also a finalist for the Community Woman of the Year Award at the upcoming Western Sydney Women Awards and I wish her the very best of luck.

#### **JACKSON ISAKKA**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I wish to congratulate former Westfields Sports High School student Mr Jackson Isakka for receiving Darwin Cricket's most prestigious award, the Ralph Weis medal. Jackson has had a stellar season for Southern Districts, yielding four 100's, two 50's and ending the season with 17 wickets. He also received the Premier Grade Club Cricketer of the Year Award as well as titles for batting average (83.1) and batting aggregate (739 runs). Congratulations to Jackson on a great season and for all the accolades that he has received as a sign of his commitment to the sport.

#### **MOUNTIES CARE CAREFLIGHT HELICOPTER RAPID RESPONSE SERVICE**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I commend the efforts of the Mounties Group who have recently signed a five-year commitment as the naming rights sponsor of the CareFlight Rapid Response Helicopter through their pioneering health service Mounties Care. This is the biggest sponsorship and community support package in the history of Mounties, who already have a longstanding relationship with CareFlight providing assistance through local community and ClubGrants. The helicopter is equipped with state of the art technology in aerodynamics and will be used to assist in saving lives in Greater Sydney, the Central Coast and the Blue Mountains. I acknowledge the efforts of Mounties Chief Executive Mr Dale Hunt in working with CareFlight to make this partnership happen, and commend Mounties for their ongoing service to community members in need through Mounties Care.

#### **GREEN CONNECT**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong)**—I would like to congratulate Green Connect, a social enterprise located in Warrawong, on receiving the Commonwealth Secretary- General's 2021 Innovation For Sustainable Development Award. This is an incredible achievement from this eleven year old organisation. Green Connect was the only Australian recipient of the award. The Green Connect farm is located on previously unused Department of Education land behind Warrawong High School – better known for illegal dumping than a farm. On announcing their success the Green Connect team said: The Green Connect farm was built by the community for the community to create jobs, reduce waste and grow fair food, and is now being highlighted at a global level as an example of best practice in sustainable development. The Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, who grew up nearby congratulated the team on the award and noting that they have built an 'impressive, innovative model that reduces waste, improves sustainability and increases connection in the community.' Knowing the organisation is to know that this was a team effort but I would like to acknowledge the current leadership of Kylie Flament and the leadership of Jess Moore who started the initiative several years ago.

#### **ILLAWARRA BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong)**—After a tough year in business with lockdowns, supply chain disruption and skilled labour shortages last Friday night the Illawarra was able to recognise the innovation and resilience of local businesses at the Illawarra Business Awards. I would like to congratulate the award recipients: Port Authority of NSW - Business of the Year and Excellence in Business; All Care Health Services Group - Excellence in Customer Service; Easy Agile – Excellence in Import and Export; Business Valuations Online – Excellence in Innovation; Tiny Tins – Excellence in Micro Business; His Boy Elroy – Excellence in

Small Business; Green Connect – Excellence in Sustainability; Cupitt's Estate – Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality; Silos Estate - Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality; Multicultural Communities Council of the Illawarra – Excellence in Workplace Culture; Michele Adair – Outstanding Business Leader; Warrigal – Outstanding Community Organisation; Susan Finn – Outstanding Employee; Wollongong Foot and Ankle Centre – Outstanding Start-up; Kylie Flament – Outstanding Young Business Leader. In an incredibly tough trading environment each of these businesses should be proud of their achievements as should all of the businesses who were award finalists. I also acknowledge the sponsors of the event and look forward to other opportunities to recognise impressive Wollongong businesses in the future.

#### **LIONS CLUB OF FRENCHS FOREST 60TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—The Lions Club of Frenchs Forest is believed to be the first service club in the area established in the days when the area was changing from an allotment area with small farms on a high sandstone plateau to a suburban part of Sydney. The Club will be celebrating the 60th Anniversary celebration on Sunday, 9 January 2022. Although I am unfortunately unable to join the breakfast celebrations, I congratulate the Club on reaching this wonderful 60 years' milestone. I hope the Lions Club of Frenchs Forest continues to service the community for many decades to come.

#### **WYONG LIONS CLUB ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)**—I wish the Wyong Lions Club Inc a Happy 52th Anniversary. I thank the Wyong Lions Club members of all the contributions to our community. For the past five decades the club has been involved in many projects that have helped shape the face of the community of Wyong. The club counts its role in the construction of the Don Small Wyong Lions Retirement Village and its continued support of local families with special needs children amongst its highest achievements. The Wyong Lions have also assisted local schools and worked with the Central Coast Volunteer Rescue Squad to provide needed equipment, as well as contributing to international aid too. The Lions have also been involved with the provision of equipment for the Cancer Care Unit at Wyong Hospital as well as the Dialysis Units at Lake Haven and Long Jetty. Happy 52nd Anniversary and Merry Christmas to everyone at the Wyong Lions Club.

#### **TIM BOOKER**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—Today I send my best wishes to my friend Rev Tim Booker who is leaving Guildford St Marys Anglican Church after 15 years. Prior to arriving at Guildford Anglican Church, Tim was the Chaplain of the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment where he was deployed to Iraq, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. At Guildford his congregation included people from many different cultural backgrounds. He spent considerable time spreading messages of peace and goodwill. I had the pleasure of hosting Tim at my annual Iftar dinner and hearing him speak about the importance of interfaith dialogue. Tim held Community Christmas Carols every year in the church carpark and invited the entire Guildford community to join them. It was not at all unusual to see Muslim and Hindu families joining for the evening. Tim also organised an after school kids club. It was amusing to see the stream of kids walking from Guildford Public School to the church. Some thought he was particularly brave to continue with this 90-year tradition - especially on Friday afternoons. Tim is now going to St Luke's Anglican Church in Liverpool. He will be sorely missed, but our loss is Liverpool's gain.

#### **ARIAH PARK COMMUNITY CATERERS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the team at the Arianh Park Community Caterers for having their final get together. On Friday 13 November 2021, Pauline and Lynden Walker opened up their home (and garden) to host the farewell for the Arianh Park Community Caterers. The Arianh Park Community Caterers was a group made up of volunteer home cooks who supported many functions and milestone events in the wider Arianh Park Community. The incredible team of the Arianh Park Community Cooks met together regularly to create good food, but lifelong friendship, laughs and memories came from their meetings as well. Everyone who was a part of the team was valued and supported in whatever capacity they could to assist. I must also acknowledge the tremendous support the Arianh Park Community Caterers provided to the wider community by donating their funds raised to local organisations. This support will be greatly missed. Well done to everyone who was a part of the Arianh Park Community Caterers over the years. I am so proud that groups like this have arisen in my local communities.

#### **QUANDIALLA PUBLIC SCHOOL REMEMBRANCE SERVICE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I extend a huge shout out to the teachers and students at Quandialla Public School for their beautiful remembrance service recently. The Quandialla Public School joined the hundreds of thousands of other Australians on Thursday 11 November 2021 in remembering the soldiers who lost their lives fighting for our country. Mr Ken McAlister joined in on the commemorative service and activities at the school providing a very important insight into what life was like for the soldiers who

fought in the wars. Mr McAlister involved the students and teachers in activities that showed them how the soldiers ate, their living conditions and was to stay alive in the bush. Remembrance Day is a memorial day observed in the Commonwealth countries since the end of World War 1 remembering the members of the armed forces who have died in the line of duty. Thank you once again to Quandialla Public School for taking the time to stop and remember those who lost their battle fighting for our great country.

#### **JUNEE GOLF DAY FUNDRAISER**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate Can Assist Junee on their recent Golf Day raising \$3000 for people and families affected by cancer. The Charity golf day was held on October 22, 2021 and saw support from Junee Police, Junee Fire and the Junee Golf Club. In addition to the golf tournament, there were raffles and a barbeque held on the day in aim to increase the funds raised by Can Assist Junee. The fundraising Can Assist Junee provides crucial financial support for families in the Junee area that have faced increased expenses for travel, accommodation and medical costs. It is great to see the continued local community support for Can Assist Junee, as it is a vital charity for many people in the area. Well done to Can Assist Junee for their continued efforts to raise funds for those in the local community who are directly impacted by cancer. I hope that 2022 allows for further fundraising events.

#### **TEMORA LADIES HELPING AFGHANI ORPHANS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the ladies from Temora who have been busy sewing patchwork quilts for a group of Afghani Orphans over the past month. The team of ladies from Temora include Ann Gunn, Marlene Locell, Nita McIntyre and Lindel Roxburgh. These ladies have recently created 8 quilts between them to donate to children who have recently arrived in Australia from Afghanistan. The quilts will soon be sent to Sydney to be given to the Orphans. This immense generosity and thoughtfulness from the ladies who have created these quilts is a great reminder of who the people are I represent. The ladies have donated their time and effort into children they don't know in aim to provide them some relief in a new, unknown, stressful environment. Well done to the ladies who have created these quilts. I am thankful to know there are so many individuals in my electorate with such big hearts.

#### **SHARON JACKA FEELS RIGHT AT HOME**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Real Estate Agent Sharon Jacka from Ray White's Albury for her accomplishment in receiving the company's lifelong membership award. This is fit recognition of her dedication to assisting families find their home on the border over so many years. Sharon purchased her business in 2007, and has now passed it onto her daughter Andrea Lever, who will be carrying on the family tradition. The business has gone through many changes during the years, especially with the introduction of digital technologies that have improved the ways real estate transactions are undertaken. I know Sharon has enjoyed working with families and individuals as they search for their future home, making friends along the way. I wish her all the best for the future.

#### **THE GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY GIANTS (ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS)**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—In hard times it is important to remember there is much goodness in the world. I am pleased to recognise the many community groups and individuals from across the electorate of Lakemba who stepped up to offer their support for those in need. During the recent statewide lockdown, I had the opportunity to witness the amazing difference groups like The Greater Western Sydney Giants made to the many families who were left destitute and in need. These organisation helped to feed and support entire families affected by COVID-19. I had the opportunity to meet volunteers from all walks of life packing and distributing meals or providing other essential supports. Knowing that people had at least one meal or some other essential support made me realise just how much these organisations are needed. It is an absolute privilege to be a part of this caring and supportive community. The Greater Western Sydney Giants does an amazing job, volunteering their time and resources to help those in our community who need it the most. On behalf of my community I offer my deep thanks.

#### **CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN BULLDOGS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—In hard times, it is important to remember there is much goodness in the world. I am pleased to recognise the many community groups and individuals from across the electorate of Lakemba who stepped up to offer their support for those in need. During the recent statewide lockdown, I had the opportunity to witness the work that the amazing and different groups like the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs made to the many families who were left destitute and in need. These organisation helped to feed and support entire families affected by COVID-19. I had the opportunity to meet volunteers from all walks of life packing and distributing meals or providing other essential supports. Knowing that people had at least one meal or some other

essential support made me realise just how much these organisations are needed. It is an absolute privilege to be a part of this caring and supportive community. The Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs does an amazing job, volunteering their time and resources to help those in our community who need it the most. On behalf of my community, I offer my deep thanks.

#### **SPOTLIGHT ON ALIVE 90.5**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Wednesday 3rd November 2021, I had the pleasure of attending the 90.5 FM studio to speak with Jim Taggart and Darryn Capes-David on the radio series, Spotlight. The radio series aims to cast a spotlight on important people and issues in Western Sydney, and can be heard throughout the Hills, Parramatta and Cumberland Local Government Areas. Alive 90.5 FM reaches an excess of 250,000 listeners every week. It was great to speak with Jim and Darryn and to offer my insight on the recent announcement by the Western Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive that the Westmead Hospital Palliative Care Ward will be reopened. Spotlight also welcomed Dr Andrew Montague, General Manager, Health and Palliative Care, Hammond Care, and Dr Yvonne McMaster, advocate for Palliative Care, to discuss the importance of dedicated palliative care services in Western Sydney. Jim and Darryn do a wonderful job in highlighting important issues and sharing contemporary ideas relevant to listeners across Western Sydney. Thank you to the team at Spotlight for the interview and shedding light on an important issue. I look forward to working with you in the future.

#### **LINDA DUCKSBURY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I would like to offer my personal congratulations and thanks to Ms Linda Ducksbury, who will be stepping down from her position as Principal of St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween, at the end of the year. Over the past 8 years, as an Educator, Assistant Principal and Principal, Ms Ducksbury has made outstanding contributions to the school community. Ms Ducksbury has championed numerous initiatives that have supported our students, staff, and wider school community, many who come from diverse and lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Ms Ducksbury has led the school community with compassion and authenticity, ensuring that her students had access to a wide range of educational opportunities and support. Ms Ducksbury has also worked closely with St Anthony of Padua Church, Toongabbie, to provide an enriching faith experience for the school community. I join with the entire school community of St Anthony's Primary Girraween in thanking Ms Ducksbury for her contributions to the school and I wish her all the best in the future and in her professional career. Thank you Linda for all the love and care you have shown our children. May God Bless and the Holy Mother smile on you and your family.

#### **INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—International Justice Mission (IJM) is a fantastic global organisation with a solution to end modern slavery. IJM partner with local authorities in 24 program offices in 14 countries to combat slavery, violence against women and children, and police abuse of power against people who are poor and marginalised. Members of IJM work tirelessly to rescue and restore victims by finding the children and families who are victims of violence, forced labour, or sex trafficking and supports local police in their rescue operations. IJM also work with local law enforcement to ensure that criminals are brought to justice. Conversely, IJM provides training and mentoring to local law enforcement to stop the cycle of violence. Recently, representatives of IJM have worked with Members of the NSW Parliament to ensure issues of modern slavery are addressed. I would like to thank Marcus Foord, Senior Lead, Government and Corporate Affairs, IJM Australia, for meeting with me and working with me to raise issues of modern slavery. I would also like to thank Steve Baird, CEO, for running an impactful organisation that works to free those trapped in slavery. Together we will end the scourge of slavery in our society.

#### **TERRIGAL SLSC 24-HOUR ROW**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—In October, members of Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club took part in the Gotcha4Life 24-hour row to raise money for mental health. The event required two rowing machines going continuously over the 24 hours and was live streamed on Facebook so everyone could keep up to date with the progress. Over the 24-hour period participants from Terrigal SLSC rowed over 504 kilometres! It was fantastic to be able to join Team Terrigal in their 23rd hour of the row. The club well and truly exceeded their goal of \$1,000 raising over \$2,000. These funds contributed to the event's total of \$125,000 raised. The money will go towards educating and supporting individuals who may be struggling, bringing community members together to show solidarity and support suicide prevention across Australia. I would also like to acknowledge Harris Farm Erina, Di Jones Central Coast and Eastcoast Beverages for providing refreshments to participants on the day. Congratulations to Terrigal SLSC President Kevin Porter and all the participants in this year's event on a job well done.



**ROSLYN ENGLISH**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the fantastic achievement of Roslyn English who was honoured as Volunteer of the Year in the 2021 Cancer Council NSW CEO Awards. These awards recognise the outstanding contributions of volunteers to the Cancer Council and wider community. The Cancer Council has around 1,715 volunteers across the State and of the 18 finalists in this year's awards, I am delighted to inform the House that three were volunteers from the Central Coast! In addition to Roslyn, The Cancer Action Network Group and Maureen Saggus, Lead Wyong Hospital Volunteer, were announced as finalists. This is a fantastic achievement, Mister Speaker. In addition to volunteering for the Cancer Council, Roslyn is the Chair of the Central Coast Cancer Action Network. Roslyn frequently liaises with me and tirelessly campaigns for change, helping people reduce their cancer risk and organises fundraising events. Congratulations Ros on this well-deserved recognition. I am so proud to count you as a friend and strong supporter.

**SPRINGFIELD POND WETLANDS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to thank three of my constituents Glenys and Peter Ray and Luke Gemmill from Springfield for their fantastic contribution to their local community. Glenys, Peter and Luke have led the charge for removal of salvinia and other invasive aquatic weeds in the Springfield Wetlands. They have spent many hundreds of hours scooping out the salvinia that was continuing to grow after being left behind from Council's initial clean up. The Wetlands play a critical ecological role, providing a habitat for local flora and fauna including nine species of frog, turtles, other reptiles, wallabies, microbats and more than 70 species of native birds. I am proud that the NSW Government has been able to provide funding to support the great work of the 'Followers of Springfield Wetland' group. Mister Speaker, I would like to extend a big thank you to Glenys, Peter and Luke who have dedicated their time to not only do the manual labour required to manage the salvinia infestation and work closely with myself and Council to organise an ongoing management solution.

**AUSSIE ARK**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to congratulate Aussie Ark who were recently recognised at the Hunter Business Awards. Aussie Ark took home the win in the Excellence in Small Business category and in addition to this, the Aussie Ark Supervisor Kelly Davis was recognised as 2021's Outstanding Employee. Aussie Ark was founded in 2011 Mister Speaker and is based within the Central Coast's iconic Australian Reptile Park. They operate multiple wildlife sanctuaries across our State including Barrington Tops, Upper Mongogarie and the Turtle Ark. Mister Speaker, Aussie Ark was additionally nominated for Contribution to the Region, President Tim Faulkner was nominated for Business Leader of the Year and Brodie Meney was nominated for the Young Business Leader award. All of these nominations are fantastic recognition and so well deserved and I hope that these will help to support Aussie Ark's vision of creating a future for a range of Australia's threatened wildlife species. Finally I want to extend my congratulations to the entire team at Aussie Ark and wish them the best of luck at the upcoming State-wide Business Awards.

**MR ARMOGAM MURGAN**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Mr Armogam Murgan for receiving an Order of Liverpool Award. Mr Murgan has served the Indian and Hindu community within Liverpool for decades, and continues to do so. He founded one of the first Hindu organisations in Australia back in 1975, The Shree Sanatan Dharmam Sabha of NSW. Within the organisation he has held various positions such as General Secretary and Chairperson of the Board of Governors. He also founded the Satyam Shivam Sundaram Cultural Society in 2001. This is a charitable organisation that provides support and assistance to disaster-stricken communities in Fiji. He was also their first President. Mr Murgan earned himself an Order of Australia medal in 2018 for his creation of the sacred spot in Haigh Park, named 'Satyam Ghat'. I commend Mr Murgan for his contribution to the Indian and Hindu community both locally, and across Sydney, and congratulate him for receiving this award.

**CASULA LAKERS BASEBALL CLUB**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Casula Lakers Baseball Club and wish them the best of luck for their upcoming season. It is fantastic to see the local sporting community back up and running, with the Macarthur Baseball competition commencing on 1 December 2021. Casula Lakers formed over 15 years ago, with the aim to recruit more players from more areas and expand the local Baseball competition. Since the Club's formation, it has been gaining more and more members each year and welcomes all ages. The Club competes in both junior and senior competitions and is encouraging people from the area to register to play this season. This is a great opportunity for families to use their Active Kids Vouchers and get their children involved in community sport. I wish the Casula Lakers teams the best of luck this season and encourage residents from the Holsworthy electorate to get involved in sport this summer.

**LUCAS HEIGHTS COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Lucas Heights Community School for their White Ribbon Day event. White Ribbon Day is an annual event which raises awareness for violence against women. The campaign encourages communities across the country to hold a lunch, meeting or any type of event to start the conversation and spread awareness. Lucas Heights Community School did activities such as processing statistics, discussing evidence-based strategies and held lessons on gendered-based stereotyping. The school community has had a longstanding commitment to supporting White Ribbon Day activities and initiatives. Holding an annual event is important so that students and staff are able to keep updated with relevant information. The school is also planning to run educational and support programs so that students gain a better understanding of how to prevent domestic violence. I commend Lucas Heights Community School for getting involved in White Ribbon Day and ensuring the topic of domestic violence is understood by the school community.

**JOHN AND JENNY REID**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads)**—I rise to congratulate and thank John and Jenni Reid for their incredible contribution to the Mona Vale community in their role as leaders of St John's Mona Vale Anglican Church. As rector for more than 20 years, John has guided and led the congregation through to its 150 year anniversary, which was marked this year. Jenni has also provided profound support and compassion to the community, and as a couple, they have supported local families through the highs and lows of life. They have also been actively involved in the broader social mission of the church, supporting programs like kids hope at Mona Vale Public School, and other World Vision programs with the Pittwater RSL Football Club, to name but two. John and Jenni have also supported the work of the Nungalinga College in Darwin, which trains and supports Indigenous churches and communities. On behalf of the Pittwater community I thank John and Jenni for their outstanding service and contribution.

**COUNCILLOR KYLIE FERGUSON**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads)**—I rise to congratulate Cr Kylie Ferguson for her incredible service to the Pittwater community. Kylie as a long-time campaigner and advocate for Newport, in particular, and the whole Pittwater peninsula in general. Kylie has served as an independent councillor on Pittwater Council, and was re-elected as a Liberal councillor on the Northern Beaches Council post-amalgamation, although she could have easily won as an independent, such was the level of trust and admiration felt for Kylie in the community. Kylie also serves on the Mona Vale Hospital auxiliary, and played a huge role in securing and shaping the new inpatient palliative care unit at the hospital. Cr Ferguson is the epitome of an effective and compassionate Local Government Councillor. Approachable, efficient, thoughtful, open-minded, standing firm on important local issues. She is one of those Councillors who will always answer their phone. During her tenure, Cr Ferguson helped make our community an even better place to live, with important and lasting contributions in community safety, accessibility, the environment, and local arts and culture. Thank you Councillor, on behalf of our community.

**DORA EISENBERG**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House Dora Eisenberg who sadly passed away at the incredible age of 106 on the 16 June 2021. Dora was born on the 31 January 1915 in Poland and tragically lost her entire family during the Holocaust. After escaping Poland, she moved to Palestine and eventually settled in Sydney in 1956 with her husband and two children Masha and Joseph. After retiring, Dora dedicated her time to volunteering including at the Smith Family, Matthew Talbot Homeless Hostel and the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. Dora has described herself as 'hooked on volunteering' and continued volunteering until 99 years of age. I had the pleasure of meeting Dora and her late husband Joshua and she has been a supporter of our community campaigns and petitions right until her passing. It goes without saying that most people who have known Dora have been deeply moved by her enduring commitment to volunteering and social justice. I would like to express my sincere condolences to her family and friends. Vale Dora Eisenberg, thank you for a centenary of giving.

**SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS 2021**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—Today is the last day of the 2021 New South Wales Higher School Certificates. Many local students have had their studies impacted by COVID-19, but I know our terrific local teachers have assisted them every day throughout Year 12 to ensure they could achieve their best. I congratulate students in the Seven Hills electorate that attend local and surrounding schools for finishing their final exams. These schools include Blacktown Boys High School, Blacktown Girls High School, Catherine McAuley Westmead, Crestwood High School, Gilroy Catholic College, Girraween High School, Glenwood High School,

Model Farms High School, Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School, Oakhill College, Parramatta Marist High School, Pendle Hill High School, The Hills Sports High School, Toongabbie Christian College and Wyndham College. I also note our local TAFEs and their role in providing HSC courses for students. I want to thank the dedication of all local teachers and parents and carers for their role in the lives of this year's Year 12 students. Everyone has come together for each student to make sure they were supported and cared for in this period and I thank the school communities for their efforts.

### **TOONGABBIE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C REPORT 2021**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I acknowledge the work of Toongabbie East Public School's Parents and Citizens Committee for their outstanding work this year. The schooling year has had its challenges, however the Toongabbie East Public School community has risen above these at every turn. I know the P&C's terrific support of principal Kirsty Haggett, her staff and all pupils during 2021. I thank the P&C's president Sarah Irani, vice president Pauline Brier, treasurer Adam Macic, secretary Coralie Hulley and fundraising committee lead Hayley Macic. The P&C has worked on funding for projects at the school and now has new equipment for the canteen, sports and the sensory room. It has been terrific to visit the school and speak with the P&C multiple times this year. Congratulations to the P&C Committee for a great 2021! I know each member is looking forward to a big 2022 at Toongabbie East Public School.

### **2ND NORTHMEAD SCOUT GROUP FACILITIES UPGRADE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I would like to recognise the 2nd Northmead Scout Group for doing such a terrific job throughout the COVID-19 outbreak to keep their community active. The 2nd Northmead Scout Group teach their scouts life-long skills which help them grow up to be good citizens within our community. It was great to hear that the 2nd Northmead Scout Group received \$49,000, as part of the Community Building Partnership program, which will help them upgrade their facilities. The Scouting Hall's bathroom will have renovations to remove the out-dated bricks and concrete, which will make them more appealing for users. I would like to thank the scout group leader, Louise Gale, for doing such a fantastic job to lead this scouting group in recent times. I look forward to catching up with the 2nd Northmead Scouting Group soon, and hear all the wonderful things they have been doing.

### **BLACKTOWN SES UNIT**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I would like to recognise the Blacktown SES unit for helping out Forbes during the recent Floods. It is always great to see the local SES Units carrying out their work throughout the State when it is needed most. The Blacktown SES Unit always do a terrific job in responding to calls for help around the local area including many suburbs within the Seven Hills Electorate such as Blacktown, Lalor Park, Kings Langley, Seven Hills and Toongabbie. I would also like to acknowledge the Blacktown SES Unit for their work during the heavy storms in Moree, where four members were deployed to help the local communities there. Many of the individuals from the Blacktown SES Unit are Seven Hills locals and members of nearby communities. It always brings me great pride to see the local members of the Seven Hills community helping their neighbours and families throughout New South Wales. I would like to thank all the SES members who have been part of the Forbes flood rescue team for being great members of our local communities and serving our State in such a great way.

### **SID HANDSAKER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Charlestown electorate local Sid Handsaker will celebrate his hundredth birthday on 29 November. By any measure, he has lived an extraordinary life. Born in Jesmond, he joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1942. Originally, he was a wireless air gunner—but he was recommended by an officer for flight training. In the closing months of the war, Sid was posted to Britain. As part of the RAAF's No. 451 Squadron, he flew Spitfires escorting bombers on raids of Occupied Europe and the German heartland. On 18 April 1945, just days before the end of the war, a burst of anti-aircraft fire tipped his Spitfire upside down. His engine stalled. Sid managed to get his propeller blades turning again and pulled out of his headlong dive towards the sea. Sid was recently visited by Sir Peter Cosgrove, who of course served as chief of the Australian Defence Force and as our Governor-General—a fitting acknowledgment of his wartime service and extraordinary life. Happy birthday, Sid!

### **16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM NEWCASTLE**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—25 November marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which starts off the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence. This year, 2021, marks the 30th anniversary of the 16 Days of Activism. It is a clarion call for individuals, institutions and organisations around the world to act for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. Unfortunately, due to Parliamentary commitments I was unable to attend the 2021 Vigil and Launch hosted by

the 16 Days of Activism Newcastle, an initiative of Gender Research Network at the University of Newcastle. I would like to acknowledge the long-standing activism of those involved in the Gender Research Network, as well as the members of the local Domestic Violence Committee. I want to thank them, and the countless activists and workers who tirelessly work for an end to gender-based violence. It is through their work, and the work of victim survivors who are speaking up during the 16 Days of Activism, that we can have hope that violence of all types against women and girls will end. I say a heartfelt "thankyou"

#### **LAKE MACQUARIE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AWARDS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Congratulations to the Charlestown electorate schools recognised by at the Lake Macquarie School Environment Awards. Dudley Public School took out the 'Waste' category for introducing recycling pods, with separate bins for food waste, soft plastics, comingled recycling and general waste. Year 6 students have formed a 'Green Team' to deliver new sustainability initiatives across the school, and they've seen significant reduction in the school's contribution to landfill. Hillsborough Public School took out the overall primary school category, being recognised for its gardening club. Those dedicated students have created water-efficient gardens, and the school has introduced water and energy-saving practices. St Mary's Catholic College at Gateshead took out the overall high school category, with the creation of an aquaponics system using fish waste to fertilise herb and vegetable gardens. St Mary's helped tend four native beehives and worked with a local Landcare group to plant native trees, shrubs and grasses in the local area. I've visited St Mary's in the past and I was incredibly impressed by the passion for the environment exhibited by the teachers, staff and the students. These schools and their students show that our future will be in good hands.

#### **SCOUT LEADER CHRIS STANLEY**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—One of the many exceptional people in my electorate of Davidson is Scout Leader Chris Stanley from Gordon. Chris has been involved with 2nd Gordon Scout Group for over 35 years, starting as an Assistant Scout Leader, before moving to the Venturer Section. For 30 years he has run a successful Venturer unit ensuring the youth had the opportunity to lead and participate in an adventurous program. Many of them went on to win a Queen's Scout Award. When the group couldn't find a parent to take on the role of Group Leader, Chris took the role so the group could continue to operate. Chris has invested significant time in running and managing weekend activities, white water kayaking, bushwalking, canyoning, canoeing, running training courses, and much more. I recently nominated Chris for a NSW Government Community Service Award for his long-standing service to Scouts and the community more generally, as well as his vision, enthusiasm and dedication. I commend and congratulate Chris on attaining this award.

#### **KELLY FORAN – FRIENDLY FACES, HELPING HANDS FOUNDATION**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Kelly Foran, founder of the Friendly Faces, Helping Hands Foundation [FFHH] which addresses the need of country people facing the confusion of Sydney medical visits and hospitalisation. Kelly has faced all the horrors of her own near fatality, her daughter's, and ongoing medical needs in metropolitan hospitals, having little knowledge or experience away from the bush. Only someone with such familiarity of the hardship could put together her unique website of information, provide a hotline, and help individuals connect with the services they need through her extensive networking. Kelly never stops promoting FFHH which brought the Foundation to the attention of another service provider, the Agency of Clinical Innovation who have made possible more services available for people from the bush and improved the FFHH website, increasing hits by 66 per cent. Kelly has made a real difference for country people. I congratulate Kelly on her most recent recognition, a nomination for the NSW Health Awards which she sees as another opportunity to promote Friendly Faces Helping Hands. I commend Kelly on maintaining her enthusiasm and commitment to this very worthy endeavour.

#### **ABIGAIL SPARKS – VISUAL ARTS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Ms Abigail Sparks, a teacher at Glen Innes High School for offering high-quality visual arts teaching for over 15 years. Ms Sparks has developed her teaching methods through her own work in drawing, painting, printing, photography, and ceramics which currently is her focus. Recently Abigail was awarded a \$2000 grant at the New England Regional Art Museum as the 2021 recipient of the Helen Dangar Memorial Art Bursary by director, Rachael Parsons which will go towards the cost of attending the Australian Ceramics Triennale. Here the masterclasses, lectures and workshops offer an opportunity to understand a range of practices, adding to Abigail's artistic breadth. With a thirst for creative experience, Abigail works to expand her expertise and use it in developing as a teacher, a ceramicist and community artist. I congratulate Abigail on her successful teaching career and receiving the Helen Dangar Memorial Art Bursary which will enable her to expand her talent. I commend Abigail for her dedication to art and the obvious love and enthusiasm for it which she shares with the wider community.

**ROBYN SHANAHAN – QUIET ACHIEVER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Robyn Shanahan for her commitment to the Armidale community as Armidale City Band musical director and through her many years of service beginning as early as 1972 with the Dumaresq Council which developed into the Armidale Regional Council. As a small rural council in 1972 Robyn worked across many of the Dumaresq Council's functions. As the District grew, Robyn's responsibilities grew with it she experienced the many changes from increased population to technological advances, always maintaining her high work standards. As the Armidale City Band musical director Robyn was involved in a mentoring project to bring the region's young band musicians together, supporting and encouraging their musical efforts. She has served the Armidale community through her popular baked goods and contributed them to many fundraising events over the years including the Cancer Council and the Armidale City Band. I congratulate Robyn on the commencement of her 50th year of local government service with Armidale Regional Council. I commend Robyn for her significant contribution in her esteemed position at Armidale Regional Council and her contribution to community events and fundraisers.

**GUYRA'S CAN ASSIST HONORARY LIFE MEMBER JUDY WICKS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Guyra's Can Assist committee member Judy Wicks who has been awarded an 'Honorary Life Membership' for her thirty years of dedicated service she has provided supporting local community members. Can Assist are committed to the people of NSW, regardless of where they live by having access to cancer treatment and care. This is done by providing financial assistance, practical support and ensure that country people are given the same opportunities and treatment choices as those who live in city centres. Today, Can Assist have more than 2700 volunteers and over 50 branches that are committed in making the journey with Cancer easier for rural and regional NSW communities. I congratulate Judy for her many years of commitment to the Guyra Branch who exist to help cancer sufferers and their families and react to people that approach them. I commend Judy for selflessly giving her time to assist those in need, volunteers such as Judy are the heart and soul of these organisations.

**MICHAEL PARSONS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—A big congratulations to Brisbane Water (NSW) Legacy welfare officer, Michael Parsons, who has just notched twenty-one years' service to the organisation on the Central Coast. Legacy is an organisation providing emotional, social and financial support to the widows and children of servicemen who lost their lives in battle or following battle from injuries sustained. There are forty-four Legacy Clubs in Australia supporting and assisting forty-three thousand individuals and direct family relatives of fallen servicemen, underpinned by three-thousand six-hundred volunteers or Legatees. The Central Coast community is fortunate to have Brisbane Water Legacy and the support of the Legatees is so appreciated and cherished. Thank you Michael and I look forward to another two decades of your conscientious service to Brisbane Water Legacy.

**AUSTRALASIAN PROBLEM SOLVING MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD, JUNIOR DIVISION**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise in the House today to acknowledge the Year 5 and 6 students at St Columba Anglican School who shone brightly in the Junior Division of the Australasian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiad. The superior mathematical abilities were showcased by our students earlier this year at the Junior Division Olympiad with awards presented for demonstrating major problem-solving strategies. I congratulate Year 6 students Lucy King and Charlie Finnecy who performed brilliantly achieving a top 10 per cent ranking amongst the contenders while Ryan Partridge and Arielle Reid of Year 6 and Theodore Dalzell from Year 5 at St Columba scored exceptionally well and finished within the top 20 per cent. The Australasian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiads [APSMO] started in 1987 and expanded in 2003 inviting high schools to participate in a competition that is now open to students from Australia, New Zealand and internationally. The Junior Division Olympiad is designed to stimulate and challenge students at primary school level. Offered to students from 8-14 the unique program focuses on student's abilities to solve mathematical problems in creative ways. Congratulations to all participating students for their academic achievements at the Competition.

**NEAL AUPY-POLLOCK**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate Year 12 student Neal Aupy-Pollock from St Joseph's Regional College Port Macquarie for successfully gaining admission into Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art [NIDA]. Neal is another positive story from St Joseph's Regional College achieving academic excellence through his studies and tuition and now accepted into Australia's elite dramatic arts school in 2022. A natural born talent with a flair for performing on stage, Neal was one of 800 prospective students submitting a written application to attend NIDA next year. Neal was shortlisted within 200 applicants who were

required to showcase their theatrical dexterities in an audition. The last phase of the interviews saw the field narrow to twenty prospective students interviewed via zoom, with Neal securing a place. NIDA was founded in 1958 and is widely known as Australia's preeminent performing arts educator and globally respected within the industry. On completion of the Diploma of Stage and Screen, a Bachelor Degree or employment opportunity awaits in the arts sector for our rising star. A young man with a bright future ahead, I applaud Neal's tenacity and commitment towards his schooling to achieve his career aspirations.

#### **MID NORTH COAST FIRE MUSEUM GRAND OPENING**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I'm excited to inform the House today of the official opening of the Mid North Coast Fire Museum scheduled for Saturday 27 November. History buffs and enthusiasts of fire memorabilia and equipment will have a place to visit following the Mid North Coast Fire Restoration Group transforming the former fire station in Port Macquarie into a one-of-a-kind museum. Group President Don Davidson and his members have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to restore and preserve Port Macquarie's first fire brigade which back then was made up of a Captain, ten men, an engine keeper and eight volunteers. The Museum has captured the history the 1958 station and the Mid North Coast fire department in a community totalling less than 5000. The fire station supported the people of the Hastings for nearly 60 years before the Central Road regional hub was built and opened by Station Officer Derek Alford in 2015, boasting of 21 permanent firefighters. The purpose-built museum will showcase a 100-year-old firefighting pump, a 1935 Dennis fire truck and replica of the original truck among hoses, standpipes and hydrants. Congratulations.

#### **MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT MACQUARIE UNIT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise the outstanding work of the volunteers of NSW Marine Rescue Port Macquarie. Under the leadership of Unit Commander Greg Davies the 209 wonderful men and women provide an essential service 24 hours per day offering advice, protection and expertise for those people using our magnificent local waterways. During the past year they have responded to more than 100 incidents. Recently I had the pleasure of joining with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott to commission a new 6.8 metre vessel 'PM 21' valued at \$290,000. The vessel was named in honour of the late Jim Bruce, a pioneering local businessman who started Birdon Marine which is now under the leadership of his son Jamie and daughter Tammy. From small beginnings, Birdon has become an international player in maritime and defence industries. Jim's wife Dawn and family were present for the commissioning along with 55 Marine Rescue volunteers and another 111 watching via zoom. Congratulations to all Unit members and the Bruce family for this magnificent achievement and I wish you all well for the future.

#### **MELISSA MEADOWCROFT, BARWON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Melissa has worked with team Barwon as a Senior Advisor, Policy and Media since May of 2019. Over this period Melissa has been a tireless advocate for the bush, working alongside me as the Member for Barwon. The long days, the many miles, the work outside normal hours, she has taken in her stride. Melissa's dedication to her role and the people of Barwon and all of Regional NSW has made a major contribution to the good work of my whole team. Melissa grew up in Deniliquin. This rural upbringing combined with relevant undergraduate and post graduate qualifications gave her a set of skills that matched the role exceptionally well. Her intelligence, diligence and accuracy always delivered the right information or advice at the right time. Melissa has been a great support to me as the Local Member, sacrificing many family events and social engagements to serve the people of Barwon. There have been many friendships made, countless meetings attended and much seen and experienced. I wish Melissa all the best in her new role, and with the most sincere thanks for the great work she has done over the last 30 months.

#### **PHILLIP O'CONNOR, MAYOR OF BREWARRINA**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Phil has been Mayor of Brewarrina Shire since 2012. He's a born and bred local and Brewarrina Shire is his second greatest passion, the first of course being wife Roz, their children Daniel, Sarah, Clinton and their grandchildren. I have only known Phil for a short while, but I can say he's a generous person, honest, loyal and willing to go out of his way to help anyone. It is fair to say that Phil is most proud of Brewarrina Shire, the river and that dust of the Shire that flows through his veins. He loves the community and the people who live there with a passion and his term on Council both as a Councillor and now, soon to be retired Mayor, reflects this. As far as politicians go Phil is a legend, he has the ear and respect of members of Parliament from all sides. He is a true statesman, someone who you listen to when he speaks and is prepared to stand up for his principles. I wish Phil the very best in his retirement, it has indeed been an honour to have worked with him.

**ECLASS ELECTRIC OUTBOARDS, KIAMA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of NSW acknowledges Eclass Electric Outboards. Eclassboats have just opened a showroom workshop in 15/2 Brown Street, Kiama. The start of a new green industry for Kiama! All products by EClassboats are designed, and tested in Kiama. These electric outboards are Australian Made. Director Lynelle Johnson is a businesswoman who has previously founded several successful businesses. She loves the outdoors and is happiest when she is on or by the water. Lynelle is also on the industry leaders list for the Net Zero fund, and decarbonisation hub. I also acknowledge innovator Ron Kelly who has been working on the development of powerful and portable electric outboards for the past 10 years. They have a diverse range of products to cater for all forms of rescue crafts and clients who want to sustainably cruise and fish whilst enjoying the outdoors with family and friends. I look forward to visiting the new Kiama showroom in the coming weeks.

**MARK BARTLETT**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of NSW acknowledges Matt Bartlett. Mark Bartlett is being recognised with a Community emergency services volunteering Award at the annual Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards next Monday 29th November 2021 at The Pavilion Kiama for his outstanding contribution as an Intensive Care Paramedic stationed at Oak Flats. Mark is a very passionate paramedic who is always available to assist other officers where necessary. Mark is a leader, mentor and part of the Special Operations Unit which takes him locally or interstate when required. A valued member at the Shellharbour Surf Club and actively involved in surf lifesaving. He is also a passionate boatie who enjoys volunteering and gives back to our local community. Congratulations and well done Mark!

**RACHEL MARTIN OF BERRY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of NSW acknowledges Rachel Martin. Rachel Martin of Berry is being recognised with an Outstanding Sports Administrator Award at the annual Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards next Monday 29th November 2021 at The Pavilion Kiama for her outstanding contribution as a participant, player, official and senior office bearer of the Shoalhaven Basketball Association for over 20 years as the current Chairperson since 2000. She organised the transfer of the SBA Office from Bomaderry Basketball Stadium to Shoalhaven Indoor Sports Centre office and storage. Also a Team Manager for a variety of Junior Girls Representative Teams (Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18) in Barrengarry Conferences, Basketball NSW Southern Junior Leagues over several years. Congratulations and well done Rachel!

**ROSS DOUGLAS OF JERRARA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of NSW acknowledges Ross Douglass. Ross Douglas of Jerrara is being recognised with an Outstanding Sports Administrator Award at the annual Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards next Monday 29th November 2021 at The Pavilion Kiama for his outstanding contribution as President of the Jamberoo Tennis Club for the last 13 years and being responsible for initiating, coordinating and implementing over \$150,000 worth of improvements for club members at Jamberoo Tennis Club and courts over the past decade. Ross is also being recognised for his contribution as a leading member of the Kiama and Shellharbour District Tennis Association Management Committee. Congratulations and well done Ross!

**CROWS NEST CENTRE CHRISTMAS HAMPER APPEAL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, I recognise the Crows Nest Centre for harnessing the goodwill and generosity of the people of my local community for this year's Christmas Hamper Appeal. The Christmas hamper appeal is all about giving Christmas cheer to those who are isolated, unwell, ageing, or living with a disability. The last two years have been particularly tough on the vulnerable in our community. Organisations like Crows Nest Centre undertake caring and compassionate work and provide a place of safety and security for people experiencing difficulties. The community have been dropping off various items, including jams, jars of honey, chocolates, and biscuits. The donations are just another example of the generosity of my local North Shore community. Thank you to all the organisers and volunteers for running this appeal to bring light and joy to people's lives. The work of Crows Nest Centre is remarkable and reflects their vision of a connected community. Congratulations to Denise Ward, Chair Dr Christopher Scarf, and the board for this successful Christmas Hamper Appeal.

**ST LUKE'S CHURCH ROOF REPAIR FUNDING**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, I recognise St Luke's Church in Mosman for securing funding through the Community Building Partnership program 2021. The successful application through

the Anglican Church Property Trust of Sydney will assist in repairing the St Luke's Church roof, downpipes, and guttering. St Luke's Church Mosman has a long and rich history, serving the community for over 120 years. The Church holds regular Sunday services, which bring people from the community together to participate in the services while meeting new people. St Luke's Church is a significantly older building that suffered through a storm in February 2020, which saw severe water damage to the Fincham pipe organ. The repairs to the roof, downpipes, and guttering will help to prevent future damages during weather events. Congratulations to the Rector, Reverend Dr Max Wood, the Rector's Warden Paula Turner, and the St Luke's community for securing this well-deserved funding. I wish the Church community all the best with the repairs and a peaceful and joyous festive season and New Year.

#### **CREMORNE SYNAGOGUE FIXED SEATING FUNDING**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, I congratulate the Cremorne Synagogue for their successful application to secure funds through the Community Building Partnership program 2021. The funding will assist the club in the replacement of dated fixed seating. Cremorne Synagogue has been a part of the North Shore community since 1959. It is an important place for people to come together and participate in their energy, community, and chevra. The Synagogue is an established orthodox shul with long-lasting traditions while also offering one of Sydney's most vibrant modern Jewish communities. The Synagogue is continuously growing, and the funding will help replace badly worn, discoloured, and uncomfortable fixed wooden seating with brand new upholstered benches in all sections of the Synagogue to meet the demands of the growing community. Congratulations again to Co-Presidents Harold Marshbaum and Garry Hyman, Rabbi Chaim Konceptolski, and the rest of the Cremorne Synagogue community for the work and advocacy that went into securing this well-deserved funding.

#### **VALE JOHN MCGREGOR**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—This year we lost our friend John McGregor. There is no more accurate description of John than a man of kindness. It permeated his existence. He gave of himself, his time, his energy, and his commitment, without question. We lost John well before we should have to mental illness. His daughter Kinsey and wife Kerry have lost their father and friend. I re-commit myself to working in this place in John's name as we seek to prevent future suicides. John was President of the Waverton-Wollstonecraft branch of the Liberal Party when I was a member and encouraged me to succeed him as President. The branch, and the entire North Shore State Conference, mourn and miss him. We recently found his words on "Why am I a Liberal", and I quote: Part of the answer to that is that "evil flourishes when good people stay silent." I am conscious that the relatively well ordered society we enjoy in Australia currently did not come about by accident... Our laws and institutions have come into being as a result of engaged, purposeful people deciding to create them. Thank you, John, for always being a good person who made a difference.

#### **ALBY ROBERTS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I wish one of Lake Macquarie's most beloved sailors, Alby Roberts, a very happy 92nd birthday. I have known Alby for many years and have always been impressed with his passion, dedication and true love of sailing. In particular his enthusiasm and championing of the Teralba Amateur Sailing Club. Alby is a long serving and life member of the Club, and has committed decades to the sport, mentoring and teaching generations of locals along the way. He is always quick to help those new to the sport and greatly enjoys the friendships and camaraderie of the Club. Members of the Club describe Alby as an absolute legend both on and off the water and a true gentleman. Two years ago, Alby's unwavering dedication to the Club was officially recognised, when its new rescue boat was christened the "Alby Roberts". It must also be noted that Alby's late wife, Jean, was also a beloved life member, and similarly, the start boat, "Lady Jean", was named in her honour. Happy Birthday Alby, I wish you the very best.

#### **KEITH ERIC HILL**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to offer my very best wishes to Keith Eric Hill from Cooranbong on his recent 100th birthday. Becoming a centenarian is an incredible milestone and one very few of us will reach. Keith was named after Sir Keith Macpherson Smith, an Australian aviator who was one of the first people to fly from England to Australia. It is perhaps fitting, given his namesake, that Keith himself then became an airman. During World War II Keith was posted to a squadron at the Amberley Air Force base in Queensland where he logged 600 hours as a co-pilot in a Lancaster Bomber. Keith loved his time with these huge four engine craft, but it came at a cost, as the noise generated from the aircraft had a permanent impact on his hearing. During his time with the RAAF he met and fell in love with an airframe technician. They married in 1946 and went on to have four beautiful daughters. Keith now lives at Adventist Senior Living in Cooranbong where he is a valued member of the community. Happy Birthday Keith and congratulations on a wonderful 100 years.



**The House adjourned pursuant to resolution at 15:03 until  
Tuesday 15 February 2022 at 12:00.**