



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday 15 February 2022

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 15 February 2022

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AMENDMENT (PRIVATISATION RESTRICTIONS) BILL 2021

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, advising that the Leader of the Opposition 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 the next sitting day.

CLIMATE CHANGE (EMISSIONS TARGETS) BILL 2021 (SHARPE)

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Penny Sharpe, MLC, advising that the member for Lakemba 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 the next sitting day.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS ADMINISTRATION BILL 2021

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. John Graham, MLC, advising that the Leader of the Opposition 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 the next sitting day.

Sessional Orders

SESSIONAL ORDERS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: By leave: I move:

That during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the following sessional order be adopted:

Removal of a Member on Grounds Other than Disorder

249B. The Speaker may direct a Member to leave the Chamber in circumstances where the Member concerned cannot demonstrate that they have cleared temperature and symptom screening that day or where the Member exhibits symptoms of COVID-19. This sessional order may cease to operate on an earlier date advised by the Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Announcements

CHAMBER COVID-SAFE ARRANGEMENTS

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that various arrangements have been taken on expert health advice from NSW Health public health orders and also through the Hibbs report, which is recently updated specialist health advice. The recommendations that were discussed at the Standing Orders and Procedures Committee and were supported unanimously by members of this House are in place. In accordance with the views of that committee, the views of this House and the views of the other House, I will enforce those requirements. They include that members must wear masks in the Chamber, except when they are speaking. I am endeavouring to put a mask on, as you would notice. I ask everyone else to do that in the spirit of compliance and looking after each other.

Arrangements are in place for numbers in the Chamber, but they are being temporarily extended for question time so that 80 members are allowed in. That is on the basis of it being a shorter period than the rest of the day. I want to make all of that clear. Thank you to everyone who has complied with the rapid antigen testing requirements. Let us keep democracy moving with a few sensible measures.

[Notices of motions given]

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2021-2022

Debate resumed from 25 November 2021.

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (12:21): Keeping people safe, boosting the economic recovery, and creating a prosperous future through innovation, continued investment and reform is at the heart of the 2021-22 New South Wales State budget. In the toughest of times, great planning, diligence and hard work deliver results. Last year the COVID-19 pandemic sent our country and the world into economic shock. However, when you can control a budget, you can control your destiny, whether it be managing the family groceries and bills or the New South Wales economy. This decade of discipline has ensured that throughout the pandemic the Liberal-Nationals Government has had the best chance of keeping people in jobs and businesses in business.
[Extension of time]

It should be noted that by the end of November last year the New South Wales Government expected to provide over \$8 billion in direct support to businesses and individuals, including through the JobSaver program and its contribution to Commonwealth disaster payments. The focus of the 2021-22 budget is to continue our COVID-19 recovery plan while delivering reform and relief to help families, support businesses and create jobs across New South Wales. Major initiatives include total infrastructure investment of over \$108 billion to reduce travel times and create jobs as well as \$3.7 billion for more trains, buses and services to reduce travel times; \$9.4 billion in tax relief provided to New South Wales families and businesses; 70,000 jobseekers and school leavers to be trained through our Skilling for Recovery program; and \$1.7 billion to support businesses and the economy, including a \$1,500 small business rebate to be used on items like council rates or licence fees.

Other initiatives include providing world-class health care with \$3.1 billion for new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities, \$109.5 million for mental health crisis teams and 246 intensive care paramedics, \$4 billion to support our COVID and vaccination response, and \$8.6 million for Parkinson's disease and movement disorders. Initiatives also include providing Seniors Card savings on electricity and gas bills so there is more money in people's pockets at the end of the week; delivering 210 new and upgraded schools with a \$7.9 billion school building program, including \$2.1 billion over the next four years to deliver 44 new and upgraded schools across New South Wales; and taking the pressure off families with support to reduce the cost of living by adding \$150 million for the free preschool program to continue until the end of 2022.

I was with the new Premier Dominic Perrottet and education Minister Sarah Mitchell at KU Padstow Preschool to see how well those initiatives have been received by many local families in my electorate of East Hills. The budget has many great initiatives. Some of my favourite programs include the First Lap water babies voucher program, a package for movement disorders, and the Together Home program. In 2020 I chaired a parliamentary inquiry into street sleeping homelessness. The Together Home program helped house 422 people who were sleeping rough. Further funding of \$57 million in this budget will assist more people living on the streets to secure housing and rebuild their lives, with tailored supports, training and employment opportunities.

This budget has allocated \$43.9 million over two years to provide preschool children aged three to six years with a \$100 voucher to develop important water safety and swimming skills. Both my children were water babies and learned how to swim at the C&M Aquatic Centre in Padstow, where Ian Thorpe once did laps. This funding will help many more water babies in my electorate of East Hills become "Thorpedos". Another initiative close to my heart is the \$8.6 million package to improve quality of life for people with movement disorders, such as Parkinson's disease.

I have fought for funding for the Henry Lawson Drive project, which is an ongoing issue in my area in terms of transport times and congestion. My community has made it loud and clear that they strongly support the widening of Henry Lawson Drive between the M5 motorway and the intersection known as the "meccano set" at the Hume Highway. Henry Lawson Drive is a vital north-south connector that carries around 38,000 vehicles during daily peak periods. Many hours of family time are lost for my constituents as they traverse the road due to the increasing congestion along this major corridor. This budget has allocated a further \$22.5 million commitment to it.

The new Minister for Metropolitan Roads, the Hon. Natalie Ward, was in my electorate last week to see firsthand where the project will be undertaken, the area that has recently been reviewed for environment factors and the environmental impact statement for the first stage. The first stage of work will widen Henry Lawson Drive to a dual carriageway between Tower Road and Flower Power. It will deliver additional right-turn lanes from Milperra Road onto Henry Lawson Drive and from Henry Lawson Drive onto Newbridge Road. Work will also begin later this year on a pinch point project to widen Henry Lawson Drive at Georges Hall, bringing early relief to drivers experiencing southbound congestion.

Many a long year ago I was the vice-captain of Picnic Point High School. Schools are the backbone of our communities. I am very pleased that this Government is investing record amounts in our schools and teachers for the benefit of our children and their future. Over 1,000 students who attend Picnic Point High School will benefit from a substantial upgrade to the school infrastructure. As a former Picnic Pointer, it was great to secure this win for our local community and to see the school receiving a substantial upgrade. The multimillion-dollar upgrade will deliver four new general learning spaces, new technological and applied studies workshops and learning spaces, a new visual arts workshop and learning space, a new computer learning space, upgraded and expanded administration and staff facilities, landscaping, and external improvements.

Much to the joy of my former music teacher, Jon Smith, it will deliver new music learning spaces. Jon was a former head teacher but has now retired. He saw my Facebook posts about the upgrade and said he is looking forward to seeing the new music rooms upon their completion, as am I. I look forward to seeing the finished product and enjoyed turning the sod last year with the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, the school captains, principal Sharon Byron and the construction team from Quasar. Thanks to this ongoing investment for schools, funding has also been provided to construct a new hall for Milperra Public School in my electorate of East Hills. A contract has been awarded to construct the new school hall. The site has been established and construction is now underway. I was also there this week to have a look at the ongoing works of that project. It is definitely underway. The school community is very much looking forward to that project being completed as well.

Work has also begun to provide additional car parking spaces at Revesby Station, with a \$16.3 million contract awarded to design and build extensions to the existing multistorey car park. This is another project I am proud to be delivering for our local community, making it easier for locals who need to drive part of their journey to access this important transport hub in my electorate. The investment has created about 60 employment opportunities across engineering, construction and administration. Last week I was very happy to have a firsthand look at the construction with the new Minister for Transport, Mr David Elliott. This project will provide an extra 385 parking spots. It was very interesting to see the site firsthand from the rooftop. There is nothing better than seeing cranes in the sky as a result of all the construction we have going on in my electorate of East Hills to improve the lives of constituents.

Right next door to the Revesby car park is the first 2019 election commitment delivered for the people of East Hills: the new Service NSW centre for Revesby. My local community now has access to hundreds of New South Wales government transactions under the one roof. This new one-stop shop Service NSW centre has made life so much easier for the residents of the East Hills electorate. It was one of the first of 10 new Service NSW centres delivered in some of the fastest growing parts of Sydney. It features a very modern digital platform, which is one of our lovely Minister Dominello's favourite things to talk about, as well as all of the different vouchers that are up for grabs. I encourage all of my residents to go down and book a cost of living service appointment.

A significant upgrade of East Hills train station is also being undertaken. The station is part of the T8 airport line. Again, this week the new Minister for Transport was out in the electorate to have a look at that project. The project includes installing two new lifts connecting from the underpass to the station platforms, an upgrade of the station entrance on Park Road and reconfiguration of the existing bathroom facilities. One of the interesting parts of the project is a mosaic wall featuring actual comments, stories and memories from constituents in my electorate of East Hills about how they live, work and play. It will be a fantastic thing. It should be definitely completed before the end of this year and it is looking great. It was interesting to talk to some of the construction workers about the works they had to do to retrofit part of that project and then build new sections of those platforms.

There is no doubt 2020 and 2021 have been enormously challenging. When our new Premier Dominic Perrottet was Treasurer he kept calm, carried on and delivered a sensible budget for the people of New South Wales. Under the stewardship of great Treasurers in Mike Baird, Gladys Berejiklian and Dominic Perrottet, the Liberal-Nationals Government has seen a decade of delivery. Sound economic planning and management in good times has ensured that we have the best opportunities ahead of the bad times. I commend the budget to the House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:32): I address matters relating to the 2021-22 budget for the electorate of Fairfield. Firstly, I will discuss the factors that made Fairfield the centre of attention during the Delta outbreak and highlight the devastating impacts that has had on the people of my community. I will follow that by very clearly outlining what other funding Fairfield urgently requires in its road map to recovery after months of

gruelling lockdown last year. To begin, I say that the cracks were already there. Year after year I have told the Liberal-Nationals Government exactly what my community needs to thrive and prosper, yet each time it has ignored it. This Coalition Government cannot simply blame the COVID-19 pandemic. It must acknowledge its chronic neglect of my community and its subsequent failure to protect the people of Fairfield against the Delta variant and, later in the year, the Omicron variant.

Since mid-2020 countless studies have shown that communities with a lower socio-economic status have experienced higher levels of COVID-19 infection and mortality. This is not new; this trend was seen across the entire world close to a year ago. And yet, when I asked for more funding for Fairfield Hospital, it fell upon deaf ears. When I asked for more funding for social housing stock, Fairfield was given a measly amount allocated towards maintenance for existing homes. When I asked for more funding for education, schools in Epping and Willoughby were renovated instead.

With the link between socio-economic disadvantage and COVID infection and mortality being abundantly apparent in almost every region of the world, the Coalition Government still did nothing to safeguard my community against the virus. The Government decided it was time to allow priority access to vaccines for south-west Sydney essential workers only after 33 of the 57 total deaths at the time were found to be individuals from south-west Sydney. Through postcode data, the Government was also well aware of the fact that south-west Sydney had some of the lowest vaccination rates in the entire State, and yet it only ramped up its efforts in August. Keep in mind the first case of the Delta strain in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs was recorded on 16 June 2021.

I move on to the issue of translated material for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and the lack of assistance for Fairfield's CALD community throughout the pandemic. Fairfield is an area of rich cultural diversity, which makes my community truly remarkable. However, the New South Wales Government has failed to realise the gravity of translating rapidly changing health advice, rules and restrictions. The 2016 census found that 38,024 overseas-born people reported difficulty speaking English within the Fairfield local government area, and yet the Government continued to ignore the need to effectively and efficiently bridge that language gap to stop the spread of COVID-19.

There have been inconsistencies in selecting which media releases are translated and oftentimes many language groups were left out. The extremely slow generation of new and updated social media graphics, fact sheets and posters exposed many CALD communities to damaging and potentially fatal misinformation. The Government's failure to provide accurate and timely translated health information meant cases in Fairfield rapidly increased for weeks on end, putting my constituents' lives at risk. I now move on to the issue of public housing in Fairfield and how consistent underinvestment and blatant neglect resulted in overcrowded homes and poor housing within my community, all of which exacerbated the risk of COVID-19 and accelerated its spread. A US study published in September 2021 stated:

Overcrowded housing was found to be a major risk factor for COVID-19 mortality and served as a better predictor of number of deaths in a city than the number of people 60+, and even the total number of COVID-19 cases.

From 2011 until the most recent census, in 2016, overcrowding in Fairfield increased by 61 per cent. Multiple other studies have found a higher percentage of households with poor housing had a higher incidence of COVID and associated mortality. Between persistent mould, wind draughts, delays in completing simple repairs and the decades-long wait for a housing transfer, it is safe to say the New South Wales Government has blatantly ignored its responsibility, which essentially resulted in the Fairfield electorate being hit hard by COVID. Do Government members not care that they have subjected real people to those conditions? Do they not see the role they have played in failing to protect some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society from COVID? That is why I call on the Government to urgently inject funds into the State's social housing. Not only will that mean better outcomes for residents but it will also generate jobs, which is exactly what the State needs on its road to recovery.

I move on to support and employment opportunities throughout the Delta outbreak. New South Wales Labor has called for a comprehensive support package for south-west Sydney. One in seven people in Fairfield—the highest number in the State—receives JobSeeker unemployment or government support payments, which do not include disaster payments. The jobs crisis and the economic hardship will not miraculously disappear when a 70 per cent, 80 per cent or even 90 per cent vaccination rate is achieved. Last year the people of Fairfield experienced the harshest lockdown of any place in Australia at any time during the pandemic.

During that time alone, no warrant of additional business or employment support was there. How can the Government blame the individual for not finding work before crisis payments wrap up when job ads were down at 60 per cent and businesses suffered losses in trade of up to 70 per cent? Some hold the belief that many of the individuals are receiving, or had received, crisis payments—not because they needed to but because they would rather sit at home. This is simply a tale the Coalition Government tries to spin to disguise the sheer extent and the

level of damage that stopping crisis payments would cause for both the economy and the people of New South Wales.

In New South Wales 209,706 people lost their jobs due to the outbreak last year. That means there were under 210,000 people who previously chose to work and who could not. My community and the people of New South Wales could not afford to be abandoned by the Federal and State governments. The people of Fairfield needed their fair chance to recover. I am calling on the New South Wales Government to assist the community with its COVID economic support package. Life does not go back to normal with higher vaccination rates. The lives of thousands of my constituents and business owners within the local government areas of my electorate have been changed forever. Assistance is vital and an economic plan is crucial for their livelihood.

Turning to support for small business, I will now discuss the plight of the small businesses in my area. Inevitably retail businesses, restaurants and cafes, leisure activity businesses, et cetera, had to close during the lockdown in an attempt to slow the spread of the Delta strain of COVID-19. Subsequently, during the period between Christmas 2021 and January 2022 businesses were either shut or running on the drop of an oily rag because the Omicron outbreak was occurring when the pseudo lockdown was in place. This caused untold damage to small business industry as businesses have struggled to stay afloat during the entire lockdown from 2020 to the pseudo lockdown in 2022. Businesses struggled to pay rent. They also were unsure of exactly whether they were an essential industry or not, due to the Government's lack of clarity on the issue.

There was little support for small business from the Government during one of the most challenging times in our State's history. The Government promised relief and support packages, but the delays in getting the money from the State's coffers to businesses proved too long for a lot of businesses, which inevitably had to close their doors for good. That is the case to this present day in 2022. Despite freedom day last year coming on Monday 11 October 2021, many businesses to this day still remain shut and were only hammered by the Omicron outbreak in the 2021-22 festive period. This is due to the lack of clarity from the Government regarding the quick response [QR] code and the vaccination record link—something that was promised to businesses but not delivered at the time of freedom day last year in October.

The lack of clarity has caused a loss in confidence among businesses. That is certainly the case. They are reluctant to polarise their customers even more by having to take on the responsibility of turning away unvaccinated clientele when it should have been the responsibility of the Government to set out clear rules as to who should be permitted past the doors. They already have suffered so much financial loss and the risk of them not being able to adequately police vaccinated and unvaccinated clientele with a properly established system has made them reluctant to reopen their doors at that particular time. As I said, for some of them now the doors are shut. This issue must be addressed by the Government as a matter of urgency. We need businesses to be back up and running. We need the economy to recover. We need the Government to step in and make that happen.

The mental health of CALD communities must also be addressed. Making up a large portion of Fairfield's CALD community are the 4,975 refugees who Fairfield City Council welcomed in 2016 and a further 1,705 in the first half of 2017. In 2021 refugees continue to choose Fairfield as a place to establish their lives in this country. Many of my constituents found the COVID-19 lockdown conditions to be increasingly triggering, likening the conditions to those of war-torn countries they fled from. Being forced to stay at home for months on end, the constant sound of low-flying helicopters and the increased police and defence force presence reminded many people who had suffered past traumas of their previous experiences.

For those individuals, the 20 psychologist sessions provided by Medicare simply will not cut it—and neither will the \$130 million recently announced by the New South Wales Government. I am calling on the Government for additional specialist funding for mental health support for refugees and those struggling with the effects of PTSD. Vulnerable members of my community need assistance in order to get back on their feet. They need to be given the opportunity to get back on track and live their most prosperous life.

The lockdown last year and in the previous year have also taken an unprecedented emotional and mental health toll on the general population. The stay-at-home and isolation orders for those who have had COVID-19 have left people feeling overwhelmed and nervous now that almost all freedoms have been restored. I am sure it is not just in my electorate that people have suffered. Indeed, everyone in New South Wales was affected by the lockdown restrictions in 2020 and 2021 at some particular point. The Liberal Party has held government for the past three terms in New South Wales and only now, when things are beyond crisis, has it decided to announce a \$130 million package for mental health funding.

In my electorate and elsewhere, the funding shortfalls have always been there. It has just taken the extremities of COVID-19 to bring them to light. For far too long, more serious mental health cases have not been addressed. Crisis and acute health teams have been grossly underfunded for years on end. Intensive support for people with prolonged and severe mental illness has consistently been placed in the too-hard basket. Will more

serious mental health cases be addressed, or will the Government continue treating the more acute cases because it is an easy way of inflating the statistics for favourable publicity and a great news headline?

Let us also address the fact that a significant part of supporting good mental health comes from ensuring individuals' circumstances are compatible with good mental health. Correcting issues such as poverty, homelessness and abuse are all areas over which the Government is able to exercise authority. However, those root causes have conveniently been left out of the Coalition's shiny new mental health plan. Further to this, research has found that low levels of household income are associated with several lifetime mental disorders and suicide attempts, yet this Government is planning to cut financial support payments to the families and businesses who need it most.

Another decade-long study found that young people from poor families are particularly vulnerable to becoming trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of adverse life circumstances and poor health. This raises the concern that the Coalition Government's lack of economic support will have a lasting impact on not only the mental health but also the overall health of generations to come. What a legacy. The Government cannot address mental health without addressing the financial burden it has put on its people as well as the laundry list of other wicked problems it has simultaneously created and perpetuated. We need to leave this virus behind us, not carry the effects with us into the future.

As a result of the New South Wales Government's harsh restrictions last year and the chronic underfunding of the electorate, a number of not-for-profits [NFPs] courageously stepped up and made up for the Government's shortfalls in 2020 and 2021. For countless years the not-for-profit sector in the Fairfield electorate and district has been battling the Government for funding. The NFPs work hard to address important issues for the community and, despite the shortfalls in funding, they are not deterred. I pay tribute to those wonderful organisations for the stellar job they do in serving our community during tough times.

Helping Hands NSW Sydney is under the direction of Ms Norma Boutoubia and has been distributing fresh food hampers for the entire Sydney Basin from her residence in Canley Vale since November 2020. Helping Hands NSW volunteers drive around Sydney at their own expense, paying tolls and fuel expenses, to ensure no-one goes without. No person is turned away from Helping Hands NSW Sydney. Their inherent dignity is respected by all who volunteer their time to this worthy cause. Helping Hands NSW is an organisation that the New South Wales Government must assist in gaining vital funds to contribute towards the acquisition of a distribution centre to assist vulnerable members of the community. Why has the New South Wales Government not provided this organisation, and many others like it, with the vital funds towards a packing and distribution centre?

Another organisation that I have been fortunate enough to work alongside is Good360 Australia, which distributes corporate product donations into the hands of Australians who need them. The organisation requires urgent funding to continue, yet the Government funding is nowhere to be seen. It is clear the Government must do more to support the NFPs that are working overtime to service our community, and I strongly urge for more funding so that these organisations can continue to do great work. *[Extension of time]*

Turning to Fairfield schools, kindergarten and year 1 students missed some of their most formative years of learning during 2020 and 2021, and I understand this issue has impacted students in all electorates across the State of New South Wales. However, I must draw attention to the fact that my community is made up of a large migrant population who do not speak English within their households. This has had significant implications on these children and their parents. These students have missed almost two developmental years of learning English, putting them at a significant disadvantage in comparison to their classmates. They undoubtedly deserve a fair go, and I am calling on the New South Wales Government for increased funding to be allocated to primary schools within the Fairfield electorate to further equip staff with resources needed to bring these students up to speed, ensuring that they are engaged with the education system from the very beginning of their school lives.

Another area that is severely impacting a lot of people not just in my electorate but right across western and south-western Sydney, and across the Sydney Basin, has to do with tolls—tolls, tolls and more tolls—and, as the Government puts it, "toll mania". During Australia's worst COVID outbreak, the New South Wales Government signed a deal to sign off the rest of WestConnex to Transurban. The \$2.3 billion deal will be taken over the next 12 months for businesses and families from tolls put into the pocket of Transurban—a monopoly fuelled directly by the Premier himself.

This Government has so many revenue sources that already target motorists, including vehicle registration fees, fines and, soon, a tax on electric vehicles, yet it cannot afford to let my constituents use a road free, or at least at a reduced rate. Why are my constituents paying the same taxes as the rest of New South Wales and getting next to nothing in return? The Liberal-Nationals Government wants to make big claims as to how many billions it has invested in infrastructure and the future of New South Wales, but in reality it has successfully passed on a

bill to current and future generations through signing a toll contract that lasts 40 years and increases by 4 per cent per year.

Sydney has proved the inefficiency of tolls. All the Government has done is discouraged the use of new, relatively safe and uncongested roads. This in turn generates air and noise pollution, and creates accident risks for motorists and for other people living in areas through which motorists drive. Untolled roads have also been neglected as a result of the Government pumping funds into roads nobody can afford to use. What tolls have done efficiently, however, is they have successfully shifted Fairfield's income inequality to now extend even further through creating a classist system on Sydney's roads, where those who can afford to use them do so without hesitation and those who cannot are faced with a daily decision to either save money and wait in standstill traffic or spend money to use a road their taxes should have already paid for.

It is clear tolls impact disproportionately on the hardworking people of south-western Sydney. My community uses these roads for opportunity—for the opportunity to study, to work, to achieve better outcomes for themselves and their families. But now my constituents will be forced to pay up to \$6,000 a year in tolls. Considering the Government's underinvestment, public transport is not a viable option for many of my constituents either. What could be a 15- or 20-minute drive is an hour-long journey using multiple train lines and bus routes. The current New South Wales Government's main focus is how things look to the public. This short-sighted attitude is detrimental to the future of New South Wales. Government members know they will not be held to account because of their decisions' inherent lag effect. The New South Wales Government has willingly given Transurban a licence to print money by leading the excessive privatisation of our roads. I congratulate the Coalition Government for successfully making Sydney the most tolled city in the world.

The Fairfield electorate is still waiting for lifts to be built at the Yennora, Villawood and Carramar railway stations. From petitions to speeches, I have made countless calls to the Government urging for easy-access lifts, to allow everyone the opportunity to use our local railway stations. Fairfield is not a backwater suburb. The elderly and disabled and individuals accompanied by large items, such as prams and luggage, should know they can rely on our public transport system, the same public transport system that their tax dollars go towards. It is time for the New South Wales Government to start listening to commuters in south-western Sydney and to put some overdue and much-needed funds towards our train stations and services.

In concluding my speech on behalf of the Fairfield electorate on the budget estimates 2021-22, I make the following remarks. Nearly 60 per cent of the people who died during the New South Wales Delta wave lived in south-western or western Sydney, and 137 of the 403 deaths, which is 34 per cent, during the Delta outbreak occurred in the South Western Sydney Local Health District, which has ranked number one out of all local health districts in the number of COVID-related deaths. The New South Wales Government cannot blame COVID for this one. COVID simply pushed Fairfield over the brink. These were pre-existing wicked problems that were severely aggravated by the Delta outbreak. So much of this information was known to the Government from well before the Delta outbreak and even prior to the first outbreak in 2020. If the Government cared to close this divide, it would have acted upon it. Yet there are no safety nets for my community and no change in budget allocation from the 2020-21 budget's three zeros to the 2021-22 budget, which is handing down close to nothing in true budget dollars.

Sustained social inequality exacerbated by the Coalition Government has run rampant across western and south-western Sydney. It is time for the Coalition Government to take responsibility for the role it has played in allowing the virus to take hold of my electorate. From overcrowded homes to the deficiency of support for refugees, Delta and now Omicron have exposed what was already there: inequity and neglect in almost every single aspect of the State Government's responsibility. Fairfield cannot afford to have another Epping-centric budget this year. We cannot afford to have another three zeros handed down.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (12:57): It is a pleasure to speak on the budget delivered by the then Treasurer and now Premier of New South Wales, Dominic Perrottet. State governments are all about delivering frontline services and infrastructure, particularly for roads, education, police and health. That is what the Coalition has done since 2011 when it was elected to govern. We know that prior to that election in 2011, the Labor Government was focused on Sydney and not on the regions. There was nothing delivered to the regions, certainly not to my electorate. There was also no activity in the greater metropolitan area of Sydney. I think Bob Carr described Sydney as being full.

In those early years since 2011, the Coalition Government had to focus on budget repair, because the budget was in the red. Hard decisions had to be made. There had to be a review of asset recycling so that we could kickstart the State economy. That was done by this Coalition Government. It was a brave move, but it was opposed every step of the way by the Opposition—every step of the way. Since then we have seen cranes in the sky, new roads, new bridges, new hospitals and new ambulance stations right across New South Wales and certainly into my electorate. In those early years of the Coalition Government I certainly felt the strict spending regime and, in

fact, saw the Grafton jail close. It was a difficult time, not just for those people who worked at the jail but for the community who felt that they were being penalised. But that changed and we certainly saw the benefits of the Coalition economic strategy.

We saw that almost immediately with the upgrade to the Pacific Highway, which was a \$5 billion project. The project was funded in a 20-80 proportion, with the State funding 20 per cent of the cost and the Federal Government funding the other 80 per cent. There were 3½ thousand jobs created through construction and training programs with TAFE and local contractors. It has boosted our local economy and has certainly made a difference to the way people travel in New South Wales. It has improved transport options and made transport quicker, easier and safer for travellers and tourists. It has certainly changed the way we live, especially through COVID when so many people have deserted the city and come to our region. Of course, the North Coast region—particularly the Clarence electorate—is a very welcoming and desirable place to live.

Another project that was promised but never funded by the Labor Government was the Grafton Bridge. At \$240 million, that has made an enormous difference to Grafton and the Clarence Valley and the way that people get around. There are no longer bottlenecks and it is attracting new businesses, and that is largely thanks to The Nationals for committing to the project and seeing it through to fruition. I thank Andrew Stoner, the then Deputy Premier, and Duncan Gay, the then roads Minister. They recognised that the regions had been overlooked for decades and that this needed to be rectified, and that is exactly what they did.

I mentioned earlier the closure of the Grafton jail and the impact that had on Grafton and the surrounding community with the loss of jobs, and of course the impact that it had on businesses that provided support to the jail. We saw funding of something to the tune of \$700 million, and investment through a public-private partnership between the New South Wales Government, Serco, John Laing and John Holland. That was a \$700 million investment, which is a massive investment in the community and created over 1,100 jobs during construction. It involved local businesses in procurement and the delivery of subcontract services, and delivered some 600 jobs to Grafton. They are jobs that are most welcome in any regional community, and certainly welcome in the Clarence Valley.

There was funding for the Richmond Valley activation precinct. The Richmond Valley Council area was announced as a regional jobs precinct and funding was also announced for Rappville, which of course suffered severely through the 2019 bushfires. A couple of years ago I joined the Federal member for Page, Kevin Hogan, in announcing \$13.711 million from the New South Wales Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to provide major upgrades to the Casino industrial precinct. Something like \$9.69 million was provided to that precinct, with the village of Rappville also securing funding for a sewerage treatment plan at a cost of \$3 million and a package of \$742,090 to support jobs at the Rappville sawmill.

The Casino Industries Activation Project will establish a strong competitive advantage for businesses, in particular manufacturing businesses, to locate in the Richmond Valley. The \$9.969 million will be spent on road, water, sewer and power infrastructure upgrades to facilitate significant economic, social and environmental outcomes for the Richmond Valley. Funding of \$3 million was allocated for the construction of a new sewage treatment system for the Rappville community, as was identified in council's Rebuilding the Richmond Valley-Community Revitalisation Plan. It will help to encourage more people to make the village their home, after the fires destroyed half the town. The new sewerage system will have the capacity to service the existing, planned and extended population of the village. Because it is such a small village, it does not have an economy of scale. The sewerage treatment plant will enable additional dwellings to be built at low cost, attracting people looking for affordable housing.

Further infrastructure spending was made in the Clarence Valley for the Sportsman's Creek bridge. This \$26 million project was talked about for years but never delivered under the Labor Government. Fortunately, when the Liberal-Nationals came to government, then roads Minister Duncan Gay announced the Bridges for the Bush program and \$26 million was allocated to Sportsman's Creek bridge. It is now completed and provides a safe and effective traffic route from Lawrence to Grafton and is an alternate route from Grafton to the coast.

Funding of \$7 million for the Casino saleyards has made an enormous difference to the financial position of the Richmond Valley. For many years the saleyards were identified as one of the major projects in the Northern Rivers, but there was never an appetite by government to fund the project until the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments partnered with the Richmond Valley Council. The Commonwealth Government contributed approximately \$3.5 million and the New South Wales Government gave the Richmond Valley Council a \$3.5 million low-interest loan, as well as providing the balance of \$7 million to complete the saleyards—making it one of the best saleyard facilities in the country. It is a state-of-the-art facility, there is no doubt about it. It is covered by a massive roof and has soft flooring. Both sellers and buyers appreciate the comfort that it provides them as well as the way in which the cattle are accommodated. The facility, which is a massive boost to Casino

and the broader region, was made possible by the investment of The Nationals, who have a committed focus on regional New South Wales.

Further roads funding was provided for the Big River Way—the old Pacific Highway—which will transfer to the Clarence Valley Council. The Liberal-Nationals will not leave the council to foot the bill to upgrade the road to make it safer. Millions of dollars are being spent to bring the road back to a high standard and to alleviate the impost on Clarence Valley Council. Work has already started and will continue until the road is of a standard where it can be handed over to council without any liability. Of course, when we speak about infrastructure, we have to look at the replacement of the timber bridges on the North Coast.

Thanks to the Liberal-Nationals Government, which established the Fixing Country Bridges Program, the Clarence Valley will receive about \$31 million to replace 33 bridges, 31 of which are in the Clarence Valley and two in the Richmond Valley. There was further funding for roads, with \$10 million for the Woodburn-Coraki Road. That road had been completely destroyed by trucks hauling material for the Pacific Highway upgrade. It is now being fixed as a result of The Nationals investment in the bush. I thank Deputy Premier Paul Toole for his interest in the project when he was roads Minister. The funding is not only for hard infrastructure but also for social infrastructure.

We are fortunate to see funding in the Clarence electorate for 34 brand-new homes to be built in South Grafton and Casino for disadvantaged families. They will be built in partnership with North Coast Community Housing. A \$4.1 million project on Bimble Avenue, South Grafton, will deliver 12 two-bedroom and 12 single-bedroom houses; and, a \$2.4 million project in Callistemon Street, Casino, will result in nine two-bedroom homes.

Housing is the cornerstone of people's lives. Without a roof over your head you do not have an opportunity to enjoy good health, to get an education or to get a job. Housing is fundamental, and everybody has a right to a house. This announcement is a terrific step in the right direction to ensure that we can provide affordable housing to those people who are looking for it. The project will be a mixed tenure development that is aimed at addressing the three issues in the current housing market. It will offer a mix of units for sale, some for rent at affordable prices for key workers and some for those that are most in need of social housing.

We continue to fund education, with record funding for preschools that has led to lower fees and nation-leading participation. The Your Schools, Your Choice policy and increased funding has allowed our schools to be repaired. There has been a massive investment in the maintenance and upgrading of schools throughout New South Wales, and we have not missed out in the Clarence. St Mary's Primary School, Casino, was allocated \$4.88 million under the Start Strong Capital Works Grant Program. The money will be used to demolish obsolete areas, construct nine classrooms, two learning commons, three covered outdoor learning spaces and walkways and refurbish the library and the administration area. The local diocese will also make a considerable contribution to this significant upgrade. Enrolments have increased by well over 100 students in the past couple of years, and the upgrade is certainly warranted. The Gonski Resources Allocation Model has delivered fair funding to schools in disadvantaged areas like those I represent. This is a terrific model and one which specifically benefits regional schools because they have some of the most disadvantaged kids in this State.

Funding was also allocated to police, and we have seen the biggest increase in police numbers in three decades. There has been \$583 million allocated to deliver 1,500 extra cops over four years. I know that the local area commands of Richmond and Coffs/Clarence in my electorate have each received an additional complement of officers, putting more cops on the beat and easing stress in local area commands. We have seen the results, with crime rates trending down. We know that our communities value their safety and our local cops. It is thank you very much to the New South Wales Government for recognising one of our priorities.

Health is the number one priority in regional communities. We saw \$18 million spent on the Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre, which is a terrific state-of-the-art facility that certainly contrasts with the old hospital. The Government has committed to a \$263 million upgrade, which is long overdue. The newly completed ambulatory care centre contrasts with the old hospital at Coraki. We have seen new community health centres at Coraki at a cost of \$6 million; at Evans Head for another \$6 million; and, at Yamba, we partnered with the Commonwealth Government to deliver the community health service at a cost of \$6 million. There was also a commitment of \$4 million towards the ambulance station at Iluka. It is very near completion, and due to be handed over. I thank John and Ann McLean, who led a strong community campaign that attracted over 13,000 signatures in support. That is quite remarkable, because Iluka only has a population of 2,200 people. In a popular holiday spot with an aging population, everybody wanted to sign because they saw the need for it.

Debate interrupted.

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

*Announcements***MEMBER FOR PITTWATER****MEMBER FOR MYALL LAKES****MEMBER FOR MAITLAND****MEMBER FOR DUBBO**

The SPEAKER: I wish happy birthdays to the member for Pittwater, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Maitland and the member for Dubbo, who all celebrated their birthdays since the House last sat.

CHAMBER COVID-SAFE ARRANGEMENTS

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that, during question time, up to 80 members will be permitted on the Chamber floor, which includes the Cooper gallery and the Northern gallery. In line with the health advice provided to Parliament, I ask members to please remain seated at all times and ensure that adequate distancing from others is maintained. It is mandatory under the public health order to wear face masks in all indoor spaces of the parliamentary precinct, including the Chamber. Members may remove their masks in the Chamber when speaking or having a glass of water.

*Announcements***HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE**

The SPEAKER (14:16): On 6 February this year, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to celebrate a platinum jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the Commonwealth. To celebrate that unprecedented milestone, the New South Wales branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held a lunch last week, and I thank those who attended. An exhibition has been installed at the entrance to the Strangers' Restaurant to commemorate this historic occasion, showcasing a range of memorabilia and artefacts from the royal visit to New South Wales in 1954 and celebrating Her Majesty's connection with the New South Wales Parliament. The exhibition will be on display for the month of February. I understand a relevant motion may be moved in the House next week.

Bills

PLASTIC REDUCTION AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY BILL 2021
CUSTOMER SERVICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021
ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS AMENDMENT (REMOTE WITNESSING) BILL 2021
ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021
SERVICE NSW (ONE-STOP ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES) AMENDMENT (COVID-19 INFORMATION PRIVACY) BILL 2021
CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LOSS OF FOETUS) BILL 2021
GAMING MACHINE TAX AMENDMENT (PROMOTIONAL PRIZES) BILL 2021
PUBLIC SPACES (UNATTENDED PROPERTY) BILL 2021
MODERN SLAVERY AMENDMENT BILL 2021
LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 2021
TEACHER ACCREDITATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021
ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (COVID-19) BILL 2021
CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SEXUAL CONSENT REFORMS) BILL 2021
GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SUBSTRATUM) BILL 2021
STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILDREN) BILL 2021
CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Assent

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Announcements***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that a media representative has been authorised to take still pool photographs from the side door of the Chamber during question time today.

*Standing Orders***STANDING ORDERS**

The SPEAKER: I report a communication from Her Excellency the Governor, dated 17 January 2022, approving the amended standing orders adopted by the House on 24 November 2021.

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages regarding the administration of the Government.

*Members***ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF BEGA****Vacant Seat**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that on 30 December 2021 I received a letter from Andrew James Constance resigning his seat as member for the electoral district of Bega.

Issue of Writ

The SPEAKER: I further inform the House that, in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017, I issued a writ on 21 January 2022 for the election of a member to serve in place of Andrew James Constance, resigned, with the following particulars:

Nomination day	Thursday 27 January 2022
Polling day	Saturday 12 February 2022
Return of Writ	Tuesday 22 March 2022

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF WILLOUGHBY

Vacant Seat

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that on 30 December 2021 I received a letter from Gladys Berejiklian resigning her seat as member for the electoral district of Willoughby.

Issue of Writ

The SPEAKER: I further inform the House that, in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017, I issued a writ on 21 January 2022 for the election of a member to serve in place of Gladys Berejiklian, resigned, with the following particulars:

Nomination day	Thursday 27 January 2022
Polling day	Saturday 12 February 2022
Return of Writ	Tuesday 22 March 2022

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF MONARO

Vacant Seat

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that on 31 December 2021 I received a letter from Giovanni Domenic Barilaro resigning his seat as member for the electoral district of Monaro.

Issue of Writ

The SPEAKER: I further inform the House that, in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017, I issued a writ on 21 January 2022 for the election of a member to serve in place of Giovanni Domenic Barilaro, resigned, with the following particulars:

Nomination day	Thursday 27 January 2022
Polling day	Saturday 12 February 2022
Return of Writ	Tuesday 22 March 2022

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF STRATHFIELD

Vacant Seat

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that on 31 December 2021 I received a letter from Jodi Leyanne McKay resigning her seat as member for the electoral district of Strathfield.

Issue of Writ

The SPEAKER: I further inform the House that, in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017, I issued a writ on 21 January 2022 for the election of a member to serve in place of Jodi Leyanne McKay, resigned, with the following particulars:

Nomination day	Thursday 27 January 2022
Polling day	Saturday 12 February 2022
Return of Writ	Tuesday 22 March 2022

MINISTRY

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: On behalf of the Hon. Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House that on 21 December 2021, with a view to reconstructing the ministry, the Hon. Dominic Francis Perrottet submitted to Her Excellency the Governor his resignation as Premier, and as a member of the Executive Council, an action which involved the resignation of all Ministers. Her Excellency then commissioned him to form a new ministry. On the same day he was sworn as a member of the Executive Council and as Premier, and 25 other members were appointed by Her Excellency the Governor as members of the Executive Council and to the offices indicated:

The Hon. Paul Lawrence Toole, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police

The Hon. Stuart Laurence Ayres, MP
Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney

The Hon. Bronwyn Taylor, MLC
Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health

The Hon. Matthew John Kean, MP
Treasurer, and Minister for Energy

The Hon. Damien Francis Tudehope, MLC
Minister for Finance, Minister for Employee Relations, and Vice-President of the Executive Council

The Hon. Alister Andrew Henskens, SC, MP
Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology

The Hon. Bradley Ronald Hazzard, MP
Minister for Health

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC
Minister for Education and Early Learning

The Hon. Mark Raymond Speakman, SC, MP
Attorney General

The Hon. Robert Gordon Stokes, MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport

The Hon. Victor Michael Dominello, MP
Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government

The Hon. Anthony John Roberts, MP
Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes

The Hon. David Andrew Elliott, MP
Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans

The Hon. Natalie Peta Ward, MLC
Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Hon. Kevin John Anderson, MP
Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing

The Hon. Dr Geoffrey Lee, MP
Minister for Corrections

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC
Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services

The Hon. Samuel Farraway, MLC
Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

The Hon. Stephanie Anne Cooke, MP
Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience

The Hon. Eleni Marie Petinos, MP
Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading

The Hon. James Henry Griffin, MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage

The Hon. Mark Joseph Coure, MP
Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors

The Hon. Dugald William Saunders, MP
Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales

The Hon. Benjamin Cameron Franklin, MLC
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth

The Hon. Wendy Margaret Tuckerman, MP
Minister for Local Government.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I inform the House of the representation of the Legislative Council Ministers in the Legislative Assembly to the offices indicated:

The Minister for Health representing the Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health.

The Treasurer, and Minister for Energy representing the Minister for Finance, Minister for Employee Relations, and Vice-President of the Executive Council.

The Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology representing the Minister for Education and Early Learning.

The Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans representing the Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence.

The Minister for Corrections representing the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services.

The Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing representing the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

The Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth.

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I inform the House that, on 22 December 2021, 18 members were appointed as Parliamentary Secretaries to the offices indicated:

The Hon. Louis Amato, MLC

Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business

Mr Justin Paul Clancy, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Health

Mr Kevin Francis Conolly, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Education

Mr Adam Sibery Crouch, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast

Mrs Tanya Davies, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Planning

Mr Christopher Gulaptis, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Forestry

Mrs Shelley Elizabeth Hancock, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for the South Coast

The Hon. Maxwell Shayne Mallard, MLC

Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney

Mr Adam John Marshall, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Homes and Infrastructure

The Hon. Taylor Mitchell Martin, MLC

Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter

The Hon. Melinda Jane Pavey, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Stronger Communities and Families, and the North Coast

The Hon. Peter John Poulos, MLC

Parliamentary Secretary for Wollongong and the Illawarra

Ms Robyn Anne Preston, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Innovation and Technology

Mr Geoffrey Keith Provest, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services

Mr Gurmesh Singh, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier, and for Regional Jobs and Investment

Mr Mark Owen Taylor, MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Cities, Transport and Roads

The Hon. Gabrielle Cecelia Upton, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier

Ms Felicity Lesley Wilson, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer and for COVID Recovery.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE AND GOVERNMENT WHIP

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: On behalf of the Hon. Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House of the appointment on 21 December 2021 of myself as Leader of the House and the election on 15 February 2022 of Nathaniel Gerard Smith as Government Whip.

THE NATIONALS WHIP

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: On behalf of the Hon. Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House of the election on 10 February 2022 of Gurmesh Singh as The Nationals Whip.

*Presiding Officers***ASSISTANT SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Election**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that on 2 February 2022 I received a letter from the Hon. Mark Joseph Coure resigning from the office of Assistant Speaker. The House will now proceed to the election of Assistant Speaker. Are there any nominations?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (14:21): I move:

That Gregory Michael Piper be appointed Assistant Speaker.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:21): I second the motion.

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKERS

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 20, I inform the House that I nominated David Robert Layzell and Alexander Hart Greenwich as Temporary Speakers in place of Gurmesh Singh and Wendy Margaret Tuckerman. I congratulate David Layzell and Alex Greenwich.

*Announcements***DEATH OF JOHN DOUGLAS CULL, A FORMER MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH**

The SPEAKER (14:22): It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 10 January 2022 of John Douglas Cull, who served as the member for Tamworth from 8 December 2001 to 2021 March 2003. On behalf of the House I extend to the family of the former member the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly on their loss sustained.

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

DEATH OF STANLEY THOMAS NEILLY, A FORMER MEMBER FOR CESSNOCK

The SPEAKER (14:22): It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 17 January 2022 of Stanley Thomas Neilly, who served as the member for Cessnock from 21 February 1981 to 22 February 1998 and from 25 May 1991 to 5 March 1999. On behalf of the House I extend to the family of the former member the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly on their loss sustained.

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

*Question Time***NURSE STAFFING AND PAY RATES**

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:24): My question is directed to the Premier. Last week the Premier accused nurses of playing politics. These are the same nurses we have heard were working 16-hour shifts in full personal protective equipment [PPE], completely drenched in sweat and unable to get to the bathroom because they were too busy. Will the Premier personally meet with nurse and midwife representatives today and listen to the heroes of the pandemic?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:25): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I agree with the premise that our frontline health workers have been the heroes of the pandemic and have worked incredibly tirelessly for two years right across our State, providing love, care and support for every single person in our health system. For that, we have enormous gratitude. We thank them for everything they have done and will continue to do as we move through this next phase of the pandemic.

I am always happy to sit down with the unions to resolve the issues that are at play. I understand that the health Minister remains in constant dialogue with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association seeking a resolution to those issues. There is no doubt that many of those issues in relation to ratios and pay are complex. We want to make sure that we provide as much support as we can for all our frontline health workers, whether it be our nurses, midwives, doctors, paramedics or 000 call operators. It has been a very difficult time in our health system, as it has around the nation and the world. It has been our frontline health officers who have been there day in, day out providing care and support. I know that the health Minister continues to have constructive discussions. As he said publicly this morning in relation to those matters, where we can provide additional support we will.

Just last week the health Minister and I were out providing encouragement to our 2,800 new graduates in our health system—our midwives and our nurses—who are starting in our hospitals. I believe some 1,300 of those 2,800 graduates are starting in regional and remote New South Wales. In the 10 years since the Government came to office, around 10,000 nurses and midwives have started in our system. That is a significant amount of support to our health system. As we move forward, \$10 billion has been invested in our health capital program here in our State. That increases our hospitalisation capacity and our intensive care unit capacity. We should be very proud of those investments, particularly in the middle of a pandemic. Looking at the pressure on the health systems of every State and Territory around the country, New South Wales can stand tall in respect of where we sit in relation to—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Heffron has taken a point of order. I ask the member for Rockdale to turn around and put his mask on. He will remain silent.

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier has been asked a specific question. He has been speaking for about 3½ minutes now. Will he meet with the nurses' union today?

The SPEAKER: The Premier has answered the question and will continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was with the health Minister and saw the enthusiasm of the nurses and midwives who are about to start in our hospitals. As I have said, the health Minister will continue those discussions. Where we can provide additional support, we will. We hope that we can provide a resolution to those matters as quickly as possible, and I have complete confidence that the Government will work towards that resolution to continue to ensure that our frontline heroes in every single one of our hospitals, right across New South Wales, have the support they need to continue the great work that they have done over the past two years and will continue to do as we move forward.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:30): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is getting on with delivering for the people of New South Wales?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:30): That is a great question from the member for Terrigal, a man who knows all too well the importance of infrastructure investment right across the State and particularly in the Central Coast region. Since coming into office, the Liberal Party and The Nationals continue to invest in record amounts right across the board—whether it is in health, transport, roads or public transport—to make a real difference to people's lives.

The SPEAKER: The member for The Entrance will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As he knows all too well, when it comes to the health system—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was at the John Hunter Hospital over the break with the member for Terrigal and the health Minister looking at the redevelopment, which is part of our \$10.8 billion investment over the next four years. Since the Government has come into office, 170 hospitals and healthcare facilities have been invested in by the Liberal Party and The Nationals, and there are an additional 110 over the next four years. As the member for Terrigal knows all too well, Campbelltown and Nepean—in fact, the health Minister and I were recently at Campbelltown Hospital. In the 2017-18 budget, we announced \$630 million or thereabouts for that staged upgrade and then there we were, seeing that upgrade come to life. I think we doubled the capacity of the pathology laboratory there. In addition to that, the clinical services building opened.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Two towers.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Two towers in Campbelltown—the clinical services building is opening this year, and then next year is the full redevelopment. Those projects do not happen overnight, but they are happening. As the Deputy Premier knows, health infrastructure investment continues right across the regions. We have seen the significant work that has occurred in Dubbo, driving local jobs and ultimately improving health care in regional New South Wales. On 27 December I was with the member for Wagga Wagga at the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, which was promised by Labor in government and never delivered. That upgrade is underway under the Liberal Party and The Nationals.

The hospital in the Tweed, which we know all too well was opposed by Labor when we announced it, is now being delivered by the Liberal Party and The Nationals. In education, \$7.9 billion is being invested right across the board over the next four years. I give a big shout-out to the education Minister for the work that she

has done in getting kids back to school on day one. It was a mammoth operation to procure all those rapid antigen tests from around the world, to bring them here and to deliver them to 3,000 schools and 5,000 childcare centres and early childhood education centres across our State.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. There is too much general conversation. The member for Kiama and the member for Balmain have been talking throughout this answer. The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. She has some discretion as a Whip, but not to remain standing for minutes at a time. The Premier has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Where was I? Education—schools starting on day one. We saw States like Queensland having to defer that but, working with the Victorian Government, we had a great response here. I congratulate the Hon. Sarah Mitchell for the work that she has done, as well as the entire team. I thank our teachers for the preparation they have done for the school term. There will be bumps along the way. But ultimately I believe getting kids back on day one has been an absolute success in our State and a lot of credit must go to the Department of Education and the education Minister for that work. We continue to build 215 new and upgraded schools right across the State, from the cities to the bush, whereas Labor closed 90 schools while in office, which is a stark contrast between the two.

The Minister for Transport and Roads and I have been out numerous times looking at the \$70 billion infrastructure investment right across our State. We know that that creates around 130,000 jobs. Yesterday we were at St Marys with Custom Denning, which is an example of onshore local manufacturing of electric buses that are made not just in Australia but right in the heart of western Sydney. Yesterday representatives of Custom Denning told us that as a result of that \$70 billion investment, they will be able to bring on around 40 new apprentices and will be able to design and construct 79 new electric buses. We were also told that ultimately the company will begin exporting to Victoria. [*Extension of time*]

Sydney has taken over being the manufacturing capital of the country. More manufacturing is being done in New South Wales than in any other State in the country by a country mile. New South Wales has overtaken the rust belt State of Victoria, and New South Wales continues to lead the way, not just by driving economic growth in our State but as a result of the jobs growth off the back of that. We are seeing that right in the heart of western Sydney. We know the Opposition opposed the metros—the Sydney Metro Northwest, which is now complete and is now connecting with the Sydney Metro City and Southwest—but the Sydney Metro West is being constructed as we speak. The underground tunnels are part of creating a better vision with new infrastructure, which will make a real difference to people's lives.

What is really striking when we visit these projects is that we meet so many people who have moved from one project to the next and the next. That is the success of that strong pipeline of infrastructure, which is wiping away the \$30 billion backlog from Labor and building \$110 billion of infrastructure over the next four years. That is driving the economy, increasing jobs but ultimately also driving better hospitals, better schools, better roads and better public transport for the people of our great State.

NURSE STAFFING AND PAY RATES

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:37): My question is directed to the Premier. Today his health Minister called our nurses particularly disappointing, yet the Government has put nurses under extreme and unreasonable pressure. Today we heard of the trauma nurses feel trying to operate despite—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health will remain silent. The member for Londonderry will continue.

Ms PRUE CAR: I will try that again. Premier, today the health Minister called our nurses particularly disappointing, yet the Government has put nurses under extreme and unreasonable pressure. Today we heard of the trauma that nurses feel trying to operate despite the Government's under-resourcing. Does the Premier agree with his Minister?

Dr Hugh McDermott: Hear, hear! Good question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:38): Well, I think it is a terrible question because the member for Londonderry is playing politics in the middle of a pandemic and is completely misquoting what the health Minister actually said. He did not say that. What he did say was that the response of the union in not following the ruling that was made by the Industrial Relations Commission was disappointing. That is what he said. I heard it myself. The member should not mislead the Parliament with questions misquoting what the Minister has said. The Minister has always said, as I have been with him through the entire last two years—and I know from the outset. At the outset of the pandemic, I sat down with the health Minister and we provided an open chequebook to invest in what our health system needed. We put \$4 billion in, which is why in New South

Wales you are not seeing what is happening in other States. You are not seeing hotels being used as hospitals. You are not seeing lockdowns and border closures—the Labor way—because they have not invested in their health systems.

I have been with the health Minister every single day he has been on the front line, meeting our nurses and providing support for our nurses. As he has said numerous times during this period, he will continue to work with the Nurses and Midwives' Association in trying to reach a resolution to these issues. But the Opposition should ask questions based on facts and not misquote the health Minister to play politics when it is incredibly clear what the health Minister said. The support the health Minister has for our frontline health workers is incredibly clear. I have seen that day in, day out during this pandemic as he has worked tirelessly to provide support so that our frontline health workers have the resources available to help people as we move through this pandemic over the next period of time.

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:41): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to support jobs in regional New South Wales?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:41): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. I welcome all members back to the Parliament. I know this year is going to be continuing a very productive year for the people of New South Wales under a Liberal-Nationals Government. It has certainly been a very productive year for the New South Wales Government as we support more jobs and job growth in regional New South Wales. We are building the infrastructure that is needed in our regions and we are investing to deliver jobs that will help our regional towns and our cities prosper well into the future.

I want to talk about our Regional Job Creation Fund, through which \$140 million is being invested by the New South Wales Government and it is going to create around 7,000 jobs. In round one \$100 million was rolled out, which saw 5,000 new jobs created in regional New South Wales. That is helping businesses to expand, relocate or invest in new technology. That is so important in our regions because at the moment we are seeing a resurgence. We are seeing people packing up and moving into regional New South Wales. They are wanting to live there, work, invest and raise a family. They need good quality, high-paying jobs. This program, under the Liberal-Nationals Government, is delivering that.

I announced round two only a few weeks ago—another \$40 million to be rolled out. That will see another 2,000 jobs created. That is important in our communities. In round one, 100 projects were rolled out across the State. One in Coffs Harbour, the member's electorate, was \$840,000 to Buildonix to expand its component-based manufacturing capabilities. The funding is going to fast-track the company's ability to bring that project three years ahead of where they wanted to be. It is going to create 45 new full-time jobs in that local area.

I also had the pleasure of going to Tomago and having a look at their LAVO hydrogen. They are going to produce the world's first solid state hydrogen energy storage device. That is like a hydrogen battery. That means they will be able to power up houses for several days. Who would have thought that that kind of technology would be delivered and manufactured right here in regional New South Wales? And that investment is seeing them contributing \$6 million as well.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This is creating 250 jobs in that local area. It also means that our young people can actually find jobs, they can stay in the regions, they can work in the regions and they can have a highly-paid, highly-skilled job for the future. I encourage other regional MPs to ensure that they talk to businesses, tell them about this particular program and let them know to get their applications in, because we are wanting to grow more jobs in regional New South Wales. What a weekend it was for The Nationals and for the new member for Monaro. I have been down there for the past couple of months in the beautiful Monaro region, and when I was in Monaro I was able to have an opportunity to talk to those communities about the things that actually matter to them.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I will tell you what they did say.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Not once did they say to me—

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —"I wished a Labor Government was in power to be able to deal with the pandemic." Not once when I was down there when I spoke to businesses, families and stakeholders all the time—

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —not once did they say to me they wished they had a Labor health Minister—not once. But I tell you what, those opposite can stand in this place and they can come in here and say that they do not want to play politics. They say that they stand up for our nurses. That is hypocrisy because they do not stand up for our nurses, they do not stand up for our doctors, they do not stand up with our communities. Because do you know what they did? They had the shameful idea of preferencing an anti-vaxxer in the seat of Monaro. So they kicked the guts out of our nurses, they kicked the guts out of our doctors, and what they have done is they have snubbed our frontline health workers. They have basically snubbed our police, our teachers and our firefighters out there. So I say to those opposite: When you come into this place and say you are not playing politics, go and tell those communities you did not care about their safety because what you wanted to do was to go out there and support an anti-vaxxer.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. Where the Labor Party uses its preferences is completely irrelevant to either the question asked or the massive swing against you, Tooley.

The SPEAKER: Time has expired, Deputy Premier. I will ask for the next question, which is from the member for Keira.

COVID-19 AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:46): My question is directed to the Premier. Nurses and midwives have been put through enormous pressure as a result of his decision to remove modest restrictions on 15 December. Nurse representatives told a parliamentary inquiry last week that this decision:

... resulted in mass community spread and a significant demand on hospital services at a time when the public health sector was at its least capable to respond.

Was this the wrong decision?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:47): Once again I reject the premise.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I reject the proposition in the question completely. What we have seen with the Omicron variant, not just in New South Wales but around the country and around the world, is a highly transmissible variant. To make a proposition against that is completely false and misleading, and shows once again that Labor is playing politics in a pandemic. I will tell you what I know about the health system which you may not be aware of: When I look at the health system in National Cabinet, compared to any other health system in this nation New South Wales has the strongest health system by a country mile and it is daylight second. That did not just happen overnight; that has happened because of a decade of investment not just since coming to office but turbocharged by the health Minister at the outset of the pandemic that has built up capacity in our health system.

Labor may want to go into lockdown, as we have seen by other Labor States. That is the Labor way: lock down—

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira rises on a point of order. I will note that the Premier did answer the question very early.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. How is what the Premier is talking about at the moment relevant to a decision that he made on 15 December? That is what I want to know.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Premier answered the question and is now talking about health. He is being relevant. The member for Keira will resume his seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I know you are not used to it. I am just answering the questions at the start and then I have a few minutes to give a commentary in relation to the question. What we have seen in our State for a sustained period of time over a decade is substantial investment in our health system, and we are moving forward. We cannot wish away the virus. New South Wales is leading the nation out of the pandemic. We are not going backwards. We are not going to lock down, which is the Labor way. We have seen the impacts around the world where countries have locked down, only to still have significant increases in the numbers of cases and their health systems under pressure. The New South Wales health system is like all health systems during a once-in-100-year pandemic: It is under pressure. Health workers in New South Wales have done an

amazing job over the past two years, just like health workers around the nation, and they will continue to do so as we move through the next phase of the pandemic.

The difference between the New South Wales health system and other health systems in the country is that we have built up our system and made the investments. We have brought on 10,000 health workers over a decade. The 2,800 graduates who just started in our health system ensure that as we progress through this pandemic we have the capacity to keep New South Wales open, unlike the Labor-led States. That is important because this pandemic has had numerous other impacts: on children and their education; on mental health; and on businesses that were forced to close for many months, some never to open again. There was pain for the 300,000 people who lost their jobs over the past two years.

We made those decisions at a time when we had a highly unvaccinated population. Our pact with our people was that if they became vaccinated, we would open up. That is what we are doing. We are not going backwards. Our people have responded incredibly, with 95 per cent of them having been vaccinated. We continue to ask people to get their booster shots, as the health Minister says every day. More than 50 per cent have done that, but we need to do more. We know that vaccination has been the key to New South Wales' performance on every measure compared to anywhere else in the world: the death rate; intensive care unit presentations; hospitalisations; and keeping the economy open, which means keeping people in work and allowing people the opportunity to provide for their families and put food on the table.

When New South Wales was opening, Ryan Park said that we needed to keep everything open. Finally we have someone breaking ranks and speaking the truth. We have the "open up" shadow health Minister and the "lock down" Labor leader. We are not going to lock down. We are opening up. That was our pact with our people. Opening up provides opportunity and prosperity, and we can do so because of our investment in our health system over the last 11 years.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:52): My question is addressed to the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting the New South Wales economy and whether there are any alternative policies?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:52): Mr Speaker, it is great to see you back in the chair.

The SPEAKER: The member for Cabramatta will be quiet and replace his mask.

Mr MATT KEAN: I thank the member for North Shore for her question. She is the best member for the North Shore and the best member on the North Shore. I can say that as one of them. I congratulate the member for North Shore on being such a passionate advocate for her community and a passionate advocate for workers, businesses and families across New South Wales. It is great to be back here in Parliament. It is great to see that the Leader of the Opposition is picking up where he left off in relation to the mighty Jodi McKay. First he knifed her, then he hung up on her, then he sent his proxy, Jamie Clements, to give her a send-off on the way out the door.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: I take points of order under Standing Orders 129, 73 and 74.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. As to Standing Order 129, the Treasurer was in the first minute of his answer and I was giving him a bit of leeway. As to Standing Orders 73 and 74, I am happy to hear further but it must relate to a current member.

Mr Ron Hoenig: He is making personal reflections about the Opposition leader's conduct. In respect of Standing Order 74, you should intervene to prevent a quarrel, which the Treasurer is deliberately trying to create by talking across the Chamber. He has been asked a very important, relevant question and he can answer it without trying to seek a quarrel. I ask you to intervene in accordance with Standing Order 74.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that in standard practice of the House it has not reached a stage where it is breaching Standing Order 74. It is robust. In terms of Standing Order 129, it was relevant in the first minutes. I was giving him a bit of leeway. In terms of Standing Order 73, I do give a little bit more leeway in terms of the Opposition leader and the Government leader and criticism of them. Having said that, I counsel the Treasurer not to overstep that mark.

Mr MATT KEAN: Another great ruling by you, Mr Speaker. I can see you have been reading up on previous Speaker's rulings over the summer break. That is right, over the weekend Mr Clements tweeted his congratulations to Jason Yat-Sen Li and commented on how impressive a result it was without a seat-wide endorsement from the outgoing member.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: My point of order relates to practice of the House. This is not the first time a senior Minister has reflected with attempted humour on rulings of the Chair. If we on this side would do it—and we would not do it—we would be out of the House on our rear. When you give a ruling, Mr Speaker, sitting in a chair and an office that is hundreds of years old, you are supposed to be there with the support of the government of the day. Reflecting on your rulings by poor attempts at humour is not appropriate for a senior Minister of the Crown. I ask you to ensure the Treasurer conducts himself as you would expect a senior Minister of the Crown in respect of the Chair in this House.

The SPEAKER: I appreciate the support of the Leader of the Opposition in business of the House, but I did smile at the comments made by the Treasurer and I know that they were made in jest and good nature. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am trying to make the point that even in victory the Leader of the Opposition and his stormtroopers cannot show any grace to the trailblazing female former Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition cannot show any grace whatsoever.

Ms Prue Car: Point of order: The Treasurer is now flouting your previous rulings. Maybe he should spend more time answering the question and doing his job than, say, stabbing the Premier and the Prime Minister in the back.

The SPEAKER: The member for Londonderry will take her seat. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am hardly going to take a lecture about stabbing leaders in the back from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. She was wielding the knife on the former Leader of the Opposition. The fish are not meant to jump onto the hook in this place, but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has just done that, because no-one plotted and schemed nearly as much as the Leader of the Opposition than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. She undermined and she leaked against her. No-one destroyed the former Leader of the Opposition, the great integrity fighter Jodi McKay, more than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

But I digress. Whilst those on the opposite side were attacking that trailblazing, great female servant of this Parliament and the Labor Party, the lady that stood up to head office and all the shonks in there—like the former General Secretary of the Labor Party and the best friend of the Leader of the Opposition, Jamie Clements, who organised for cheques that were paid at the Chinese Friends of Labor dinner to go straight into the account of the Leader of the Opposition—what were they doing to her? They were undermining her and working against her.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: Now the Treasurer is completely irrelevant. You have given him sufficient latitude. He has made offensive remarks by referring to us as "stormtroopers", which I personally find to be extremely offensive. Intervene under Standing Order 74 and stop this—

The SPEAKER: I am not going to intervene under Standing Order 74 because it is robust debate. In terms of Standing Order 73, the Treasurer did overstep the mark in his comments about the Leader of the Opposition and the financial payment into his account.

Mr MATT KEAN: I withdraw "stormtroopers". I am a *Star Wars* fan.

The SPEAKER: I am not talking about stormtroopers.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am now on to *The Book of Boba Fett* and *The Mandalorian*.

The SPEAKER: I am talking about the money going into the account of the Leader of the Opposition. Would you withdraw that comment please?

Mr MATT KEAN: What am I being asked to withdraw?

The SPEAKER: The money going straight into the account of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am happy to withdraw the remarks. The point I am making is that while those on the opposite side of the Chamber were attacking the great trailblazer and defender of integrity, Jodi McKay, we have been attacking the issues facing the business of the people of New South Wales. This has been a very difficult summer. After two years of going through hell and back, we have made sure that we have stood by the people of New South Wales, just like we have done the whole way through this pandemic. That is why I was happy to announce a \$1 billion support package for small businesses in New South Wales who have done it so tough through this pandemic. It is a support package that will ensure that for businesses with turnovers of less than \$50 million—

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

Mr MATT KEAN: —that we will pay 20 per cent of their payroll if they are able to demonstrate a downturn of 40 per cent of their turnover in January and for the first two weeks of February. That is right.

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

Mr MATT KEAN: Those businesses that have done it so tough, we have stepped up and supported them. In addition to that, we are also supporting our small businesses by providing up to 50 per cent of the cost of rapid antigen tests because we want to help them to manage their businesses, keep their doors open, keep serving customers and keep supporting workers whilst COVID is spreading in the community.

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

Mr MATT KEAN: That is right, we have expanded the small business fees and charges rebate by \$1,000 to help our small businesses get through to the other side so they come out stronger and can help our economy bounce back better. [*Extension of time*]

This is about helping businesses to stay open, to keep serving customers, to keep employing workers, to keep people safe and to keep our economy going. Just like we have stood by businesses, families and workers when the COVID outbreak started, so too do we continue to stand by those people right now. Applications will open shortly for these programs. Despite the claims by the Opposition, this package was welcomed by affected stakeholders. Business NSW stated:

The Government has done a great job in designing a package that will help a wide variety of business owners who've suffered a downturn ...

The Council of Small Business Organisations Australia, that great champion for small businesses across the country, stated, "This is great news for small business owners and their employees right across New South Wales." Again, the champions for small business are backing in a government that stands by small business. That great champion for restaurants, caterers, hospitality and cafes, Restaurant & Catering Australia Chief Executive Wes Lambert said:

It seems like the NSW Government is listening to the hospitality industry, which will allow us to come out on the other side of this lockdown and go from strength to strength.

The only one not happy about that is the member for Canterbury. She is very unhappy that we are supporting small businesses, cafes and hospitality workers. These are the kinds of policies that a good government develops. I was shocked over summer to learn that it was not just members of the Government developing policy. In fact, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition announced his first policy. In fact, it is 256 days after he announced that he had a 100-day plan that he launched it—yesterday—on Valentine's Day. [*Time expired.*]

NURSES AND MIDWIVES WORKERS COMPENSATION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:03): My question is directed to the Premier. Under his proposed change to workers compensation, nurses and midwives would have the almost impossible task of having to prove they contracted COVID-19 at work to access compensation. This simple protection has meant that nurses and midwives feel supported and are supported at work. Will the Premier consider ditching this terrible legislation?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:04): Those opposite have come in here today and asked question after question completely based on a false premise.

Ms Anna Watson: No, it's not. It is only in the last sittings that you legislated that.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is completely untrue. The change that we are making is completely in line—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members should listen to the response. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —with every other jurisdiction. Those opposite must stop coming into this Chamber and playing politics with workers.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. I remind the member for Shellharbour that interjecting is disorderly at all times. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have complete confidence in the health Minister. He will continue to work through the issues that the union has raised with the New South Wales Government in a constructive way. Just as those opposite continue to instil fear, we will continue to instil confidence. The Treasurer has announced the work that he has done on the business support package. While the Treasurer has been out instilling confidence, those opposite have been instilling fear in businesses across the State. The last time I checked, this Government

is the only one supplying a small business support package during the Omicron variant. We have the financial capacity to do so, unlike the Labor States, which are broke. Those opposite talk about Victoria, and we work very closely with Victoria. The reality is that they have had lockdown after lockdown after lockdown, and not been able to provide the financial support that the New South Wales Government has.

The same has occurred with the Victorian health system. There is a reason why New South Wales did not have to go into lockdown. We do not have to be the Labor State of Western Australia, which has locked itself away from the rest of the country and the rest of the world. Whilst the media may not want to report it, the fact is that Western Australia does not have confidence in its health system. Our focus here in New South Wales will always be to keep people safe, to keep people in work and to keep businesses open so that they can provide for their families. That is the approach that we have taken in New South Wales, that is the approach of the Liberals and The Nationals, and it is not the Labor lockdown approach that New South Wales will ever take or ever support.

COVID-19 AND SMALL BUSINESS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:06): I address my question to the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and the Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Minister—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that they are to remain quiet while a question is asked. I ask the member for East Hills to restate her question.

Ms WENDY LINDSAY: Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to help businesses recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The SPEAKER: I call the Minister for lots of things.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:07): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for East Hills for her question. It is critically important, and it is always about delivering for the people of New South Wales. No-one delivers better for the community of East Hills than the member for East Hills. She has done an amazing job. Recently I went through some of the member's social media feed, which shows that she has been at the Revesby Commuter Car Park. The project is going great guns. The East Hills train station will receive an \$18 million upgrade—yet another great result for the member for East Hills. Picnic Point High School will be upgraded and there is a new hall at Milperra Public School. It is a great example of a local member working inside the Government and delivering for their community. Every single one of those projects creates jobs locally and helps the economy recover from the impact of COVID-19.

Over the course of the summer we have seen the damaging impacts, but the Government has consistently invested billions of dollars into the economy to keep it as strong as it possibly can be. Recently the small business support package has been delivered. As the Premier just said, New South Wales is the only State in the country that is supporting small business to rebound from the impact of the Omicron variant that hit over the summer. This is the only State that has a triple-A credit rating from Moody's and Fitch. We are in a strong position to support businesses to bounce back better. This Government is investing in new enterprises. Last week the science, innovation and technology Minister opened the new National Space Industry Hub at Eveleigh, which will be the home for the SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre. It is building on our tech central objective to create more smart jobs.

We are supporting our tourism business to get back on its feet. We have kept our borders open and we removed quarantine before other States did. We set a new standard to ensure people could come in, and New South Wales continued to be the gateway to the rest of the world when other States were shutting their borders. We have also invested over \$50 million in the CBD revitalisation fund to make sure that we can get people back into our CBDs. Through the recent package of \$85 million announced by the Treasurer, we have supported our creative and performing arts sector, which has been so damaged by COVID, to make sure that it can get back on its feet. How does that stand in contrast to members opposite? They want to continue to talk down the economy and our whole system.

Would people prefer to be in the health system in New South Wales where hospitals are functioning—yes, under stress—or be put up in a hotel like in Victoria because it has run out of hospital space? Or would people rather be disconnected from family in Western Australia because its Premier is too afraid to open the borders because they do not have enough hospital capacity to fight off the Omicron variant? Around the world we have seen that Omicron has acted differently. That has meant that the most important thing to protect our economy and get people back to work are our vaccination rates and making sure people get boosted. But all we have heard from members on the other side of the Chamber is consistent negativity. It is all about driving fear. Everything we saw over the past few weeks was about driving fear into the community. I can tell the Chamber what I think about that

side of the House: They want the Omicron variant to keep going. They want COVID to keep going. That is what they want. They are addicted to the idea of the pandemic continuing because it allows them—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: I ask that the Minister withdraw that comment. It is offensive, it is rude and it shows a degree of arrogance we have not seen in this place for a long time.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been asked to withdraw his comment. Is he willing to withdraw it?

Mr STUART AYRES: We stand up every day and you attack the Government over its attempt to keep people alive, to keep our hospital system going and to get businesses back open. Every single day the Opposition's narrative is to talk down this State.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order—

Mr STUART AYRES: I am calling out your negativity—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: My point of order is that the Minister should withdraw what he said. People have lost relatives. Do you understand? In your electorate and our electorates—

The SPEAKER: The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

Mr STUART AYRES: All we hear from the Opposition is more negativity. On this side of the House we have invested in our businesses and we are not supporting lockdowns. The lockdown leader opposite is supporting lockdown Labor policies that we have seen in every other State and that is exactly what the Opposition wants to do. Every single chance it gets, it wants to lock people in their homes and shut down businesses. Members opposite do not want to invest in our State. There is a clear difference: It is about investing in the future or embracing fear.

KIAMA ELECTORATE HOSPITALS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:12): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on the anticipated start dates of the Shoalhaven hospital upgrade and Shellharbour hospital development projects? Will the Minister rule out the closure of any hospital in my electorate, including the David Berry Hospital?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (15:13): I thank the member for Kiama for his question and his work in his electorate. I have known him for more than a decade—probably about 15 or 16 years—and I know that during his time as a member of this place, which I think started in 2011, he has been an incredible advocate for his local community.

Opposition members: But?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: There are a lot of butts on that side of the House that are not doing very much. Since Opposition members have shown an interest in his activities, I have to say that as the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast, and as Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, he has been an extraordinary contributor to this place, the broader State and his local community. Let that be clearly on the record. I have seen a lot of people on the Labor side come and go and not too many of them have done a fraction of what the member has done.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: In relation to the budget for infrastructure, I am very proud of what our Government has achieved. I could spend considerable time listing all the hospitals that we have built that Labor never built, even though it promised to build a number of them. I will say that in the current period obviously there is, as the Premier said a little earlier, a massive budget for infrastructure: about \$10.8 billion worth of health infrastructure over the four years to 2024-25. There would not be an area of the State—not one corner—that has not been touched by the building of new hospital infrastructure. To address some comments before, I also note that nearly 10,000 additional nurses were employed up until about 12 or 18 months ago. Another 2,800 have been employed and, as the Premier said, have literally just come on to work. They were welcomed last week. But some of them actually started, I think, at the end of December to assist with the COVID pandemic. I thank them for that.

Regarding the specifics, the Shoalhaven Hospital and the Shellharbour Hospital serve the electorate and community of the member for Kiama. The Shoalhaven Hospital is a \$438 million redevelopment. Its early works, to answer the member's question specifically, are commencing in the middle of this year. The intention is that the main works construction will commence early in 2023, subject to planning approvals and the like. The long-term

vision for the redevelopment of the hospital is that it will be the health hub for the Shoalhaven area and will provide the majority of emergency critical care and acute, subacute and non-admitted health services. Of course, that reduces the need for patients to travel up to Wollongong or Sydney in many instances. That is an important step forward. I think we also recognise—certainly from my days as a planning Minister but also just travelling down to that magnificent area—that it is a growing population. We need to make sure that we have the health facilities growing. The Liberal-Nationals Government can do that, which the former Labor Government did not do.

The new and expanded services for the redeveloped hospital include medical imaging, including an MRI; a dedicated cardiology ward; a cardiac catheter lab; a diagnostic centre; a close observation unit; expanded mental health services, including acute inpatient units; expanded rehabilitation and palliative care services; increased surgical capacity; more operating theatres and surgical beds; a larger emergency department; an expanded ambulatory care centre; enhanced intensive care unit capacity; and, of course, the outpatient department. The other hospital is the Shellharbour Hospital, which is another massive redevelopment worth \$700 million. Whilst I thank the member for Kiama and the member for South Coast for all the work they did in that regard, I should also, as a matter of fairness and equity, acknowledge the member for—Ryan, what is your electorate?

Mr Ryan Park: Keira.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I acknowledge the member for Keira and the member for Wollongong because both of them were actively involved with the Government in ensuring that the Shellharbour Hospital redevelopment could occur. I thank the Liberal-Nationals Government, both State and Federal, for the work that has come together to make sure that we can deliver that \$700 million hospital. [*Extension of time*]

I anticipate the early works packages for the new hospital and the integrated service project will commence in this 12-month period. Hopefully, some early works packages on integrated services at Bulli and Wollongong will get going. The member for Keira had particularly raised that with me and it is certainly being addressed. A time line for the main works construction will be confirmed once we get through the planning and design stages, but we had the pleasure of standing on the new development site. It is a magnificent site, not far from the railway. I think it is a beautiful, greenfield site, so I am absolutely delighted about that.

As to the closures, there are no plans to close the David Berry Hospital, but I would say that currently it has, as I understand it—and the member for Kiama would know more because I know he is across every detail of his electorate—17 rehabilitation beds and nine palliative care patient beds. Over the past couple of years, as we tried to develop what we were going to do in that region, there were discussions between the local health district and the staff looking at whether the staff thought that it was appropriate as part of the development of the clinical services plan to go to the new hospital.

At this stage there is no plan to shut it down. Obviously it is a beautiful heritage building. I think it dates back to about 1908 or 1909. As the local member, I know the member for Kiama is very proud of it. I give him an undertaking that if I am suddenly advised by the local health district that it is taking a different view to what it has told me, I will advise him and the whole community. But at the present time there is no intention to close it. As the member for Maitland can inform the member for Kiama, when we opened the new Maitland Hospital the local community wanted to have mental health services in the new hospital rather than where they were. Sometimes once the new hospital is built those things change a little, so we will see how we go once we get the new hospital well and truly underway and have a feeling from the staff and community. I guarantee maximum consultation with the member and the local community.

SKILLS TRAINING

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:20): My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to ensure people receive the training they need for the jobs they want?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (15:20): I thank the member for Hawkesbury for the great work that she does in her electorate, for her question and for her interest in this area. It was a privilege to take on these portfolios because they are all about helping people get the jobs they want and creating a diverse, resilient and globally competitive economy. Students are back on campus and there is a real buzz of excitement about the place. I have seen tradies honing their craft at Wollongong TAFE. I have seen budding chefs cooking up a storm at TAFE in Ultimo. TAFE is helping these students get the skills they need for the jobs they want. A fact that is often ignored by those members opposite is that TAFE is the largest training provider in Australia. This year our Government is providing it with a record budget of \$1.97 billion to operate. On top of that, \$251 million is being invested in upgrading teaching facilities and equipment.

But we are not just focused on the jobs of today; we are also working to ensure that people have the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow. An example of that is the Government's recent announcement of the Driving Digital Skills program to help workers and employers improve their digital readiness amid the rapidly evolving technology landscape. I am starting to sound like the member for Ryde. Automation and big data analytics are transforming the manufacturing industry and we need to ensure that New South Wales is best placed to take advantage of this. We want to support new and existing workers because emerging technologies are altering the way we work, and this program will help do that.

There is no better example of the work we are doing to foster cutting-edge industries than the space industry. As the member for Penrith mentioned, last week I had the pleasure of helping that industry take one giant leap when I opened the new National Space Industry Hub at Tech Central in New South Wales. It brings together industry, universities and researchers to ensure that we continue to have the strongest space capability in Australia. Ensuring that New South Wales has a talent pipeline of highly skilled workers is absolutely critical to ensuring that the State remains competitive in the space race. We have made the space industry a priority growth area in New South Wales and I cannot wait to see the things that will be done at the space hub.

New South Wales has proven it can rival the big tech capitals of the world when it comes to science and innovation. But we do not just want to just rival others; we want to lead the way. There is so much to be positive about when it comes to what the Government is doing. Whether it is helping people get the skills they need for traditional trades or supporting world-leading scientists and innovators to commercialise their research, this Government has a plan.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: One thing I have noticed since taking on this role is that those opposite are not interested in any of that. They are not interested in supporting TAFE and helping young people get the skills and training for the jobs they want. All those opposite want to do is talk down TAFE and, frankly, I am absolutely sick and tired of them constantly berating Australia's largest training provider. The Leader of the Opposition and his shadow Minister are actually undermining TAFE and doing their utmost to turn students away from it.

Where has Mr Positivity gone? He flips and flops on everything, and where is the promised plan? There is no plan. Whether it is skills and training, jobs or the industries of the future, those opposite have no plan. They are all about negativity, division, empty promises and political pointscoring, with a leader who blows backwards and forwards in the wind. By contrast, this Government has a plan for skills, training, industry and jobs—something that Labor never talks about. Government members do not just talk about it; we are actually getting it done. The Leader of the Opposition says he is Mr Positivity, but he is far more negative than Jodi ever was.

Ministerial Statements

TRIBUTE TO ALBERT COLLINS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans) (15:26): This afternoon I join the shadow Minister for Veterans and member for Campbelltown, Mr Greg Warren, to advise the House that on Sunday the people of New South Wales lost a very special veteran of the Second World War in Sergeant Albert "Bert" Collins. It is appropriate that, as Minister for Veterans, I pay tribute to his service. I note that this morning the shadow Minister for Veterans and I honoured those who fought in the Singapore campaign, given it is the eightieth anniversary of the Fall of Singapore. Those gathered at this morning's ceremony honoured Bert Collins, who would also have been there had he not passed on Sunday—and in him a significant figure in Australia's military history. Bert Collins was not only the oldest Australian Labor Party member but also the oldest surviving World War II veteran, having passed at the age of 105. He would have turned 106 next month.

Bert was the youngest child of Maurice and Florence and was born on 11 March 1916. When he was 16 he got a job at Farmers Department Store. With the exception of the Minister for Health, I do not think any members would remember Farmers Department Store, which is now known as Myer. At 15 years of age, he learnt dancing at local studios, as was a common recreational practice back then. He would frequent dance halls and became a top dancer, reaching the New South Wales championships in 1940.

Like many young men during this time, Bert signed up to fight in the Australian Army in the Second World War. He shipped off to Dutch New Guinea, fighting the Japanese army as part of the 52nd Australian Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment. I am sure the member for Campbelltown will make some passing remarks on the gentlemen of the artillery. From 1942 to 1945, Bert was mostly stationed at the Merauke airfield. Those Allied airfields along the archipelago of New Guinea were regular targets for attack by Japanese bombers and, as Bert noted, he stared death in the eye several times. In an interview in 2017 to the *Canterbury Bankstown Express*, he noted:

One day when we were getting bombed ... I dived into my gun pit and all of a sudden I got a whack on my left shoulder blade ... I got a bit of spent shrapnel. I was lucky it was just that.

In those traumatic times, he indeed was one of the lucky ones. This resilience and bravery came to define Bert and his mates, who were heroic in slowing down the heavy number of Japanese troops in advance in the region, particularly in their attempt to invade mainland Australia. On Saturday we will commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the bombing of Darwin, which those brave soldiers were up against. On top of that, he lived and fought against extremely harsh tropical conditions, including mosquitoes and crocodiles. I can say from experience that the Army never sends soldiers to somewhere nice. I know that those in the Parliament who have served in the military are always thinking of the conditions in which our soldiers are serving when they are overseas.

Later Bert moved to my native hometown of Bankstown. I acknowledge the presence of the member for Bankstown in the Chamber. Bert lived there since September 1949. He was an active member of the RSL sub-branch in Bankstown, which is a great club and a great sub-branch. Members of the sub-branch were with the member for Campbelltown and me this morning. Bert had been a member of that club for over 75 years, supporting his fellow veterans and mates. As an aside I mention something that has nothing to do with Bert's military record—except that it is probably how he acquired it—but Bert did not just survive the war after being injured; he survived a heart attack and a stroke. At the age of 101, he beat another enemy in the form of stage four metastatic melanoma, and was the oldest Australian to survive skin cancer. So we are talking about a fighter.

He underwent lifesaving immune therapy at the Melanoma Institute of Australia. He went on to be a passionate advocate raising awareness about melanoma and the importance of being sun safe—probably not something that he lived by in his time in the Army. Last year at his 105th birthday, he dedicated the milestone to urging fellow Australians to join him in raising \$500,000 for research into new lifesaving melanoma treatments. On Anzac Day, which was a significant day for Bert as it is for most veterans, he always said that we lived in a wonderful country and he had a great respect for all men and women who served in our armed forces. He also empathised greatly with the women who were left at home during the war. At the age of 103 in 2019, Bert Collins became the oldest Anzac to march in the commemorations in Sydney.

When asked what kept him going, Bert replied, "Never give in," and later noted, "Everything I do, I do it thoroughly as I was taught in my early years". Bert's service for our nation and his life are an inspiration for all Australians. When times are tough, or when faced with an adverse situation, it is Bert's story and message of "Never give in" that we should remember. His story is one of a hero. He deserves our eternal gratitude for accepting the call when our nation was facing its greatest threat. I acknowledge and thank the Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch for their care of Bert in recent years. Vale, digger. Lest we forget.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:32): I thank the Minister for making this statement of condolence in the House so that we have the opportunity to remember and honour Bert Collins, who sadly died at the age of 105. I acknowledge my colleague the member for Bankstown, who I know is a very dear friend of Bert, and the sub-branch, as well as everyone else on his community. We know that Bert was born in 1916. He was the youngest child of Florence and Maurice, as the Minister stated. Bert worked in retail and got his first job at 16 with Farmers, which later became a department store now known as Myer.

As a younger man Bert had a real passion for ballroom dancing and won many competitions with his late wife, Peggy Harmon. However, his life all changed when World War II came to Australia. He, like many others, answered the call and decided to sign up with the army. Bert was one of the lucky ones who returned home and lived to become one of Australia's longest-surviving World War II veterans. As the Minister stated, he copped a bit of shrapnel but he survived. I had the privilege of meeting Bert a couple of times and hearing some of his stories, which clearly displayed how much of a humble man he was. He rarely spoke of himself. He spoke a lot about what he felt were more important causes in the veterans' community and, as the Minister stated, he also discussed Legacy and the wives and family of the soldiers who served in defence of our nation.

Bert raised to the rank of sergeant in the 52nd Australian Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment (AIF), based in New Guinea. Many members would know that at that time in Australia's history New Guinea was the last line of defence between the invading Japanese Imperial Army and our nation. So Bert, along with his comrades and other serving personnel, knew when they were going over there that this was it. If the Japanese got past them, they were on the shores of Australia. That never left their mind. It was a unique time in Australia's long, proud and rich military history and Bert was at the forefront as one of those who served. He served with distinction and honour and he never forgot about his mates. His Anzac spirit was unwavering and he was admired by many. His age was no barrier, becoming the oldest veteran to march in Sydney's Anzac Day march in 2021.

Bert was a true hero in many respects, extending, as the Minister stated, to beating stage 4 cancer at the age of 101 and becoming one of the world's oldest survivors of melanoma. Prior to that, he had heart and stroke

problems. He was a fighter. He not only fought for our nation, he also fought for things that he felt were right. He loved his community and his community loved him, and he fought for issues on behalf of others who may not have been able to do it themselves.

Bert was also the oldest living member and a life member of the Australian Labor Party—a party that he so dearly loved and a party that dearly loves him. He loved the Labor Party. When I was talking to him at St Patrick's College in Campbelltown when he came out for the display, he said he loved the Labor Party because he felt it was a conduit for a better life for others. It was as simple as that. Bert made a difference for the better in his community and we are indebted to his service to our nation and the legacy that he has left. On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition and the veterans' community, I extend my deepest condolences to Bert's family and loved ones and his community, especially my colleague the member for Bankstown. I know Bert was very dear to her. I will conclude with these wise words to reflect on:

I must remember to never be rude to anyone, to never tell lies and to always show respect towards others ... and I have every day of my life.

That is something that Bert was commonly heard to say. Rest in peace, comrade. I thank him for his service. I thank him for everything that he has contributed to our nation, his community and our society more broadly. May he rest in peace. We will never forget him. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

Documents

OMBUDSMAN

Reports

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

- (1) Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *The new machinery of Government: Using machine technologies in administrative decision-making*, dated 29 November 2021, received out of session on 29 November 2021.
- (2) Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Oversight of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, Annual Report 2020-21*, dated 13 December 2021, received out of session on 13 December 2021.

I order that the reports be printed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 142 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Operation Faro*, dated December 2021, received out of session on 13 December 2021. I order that the report printed.

FORESTRY AGREEMENTS AND INTEGRATED FORESTRY OPERATIONS APPROVALS

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 69H of the Forestry Act 2021, I announce receipt of the *NSW Forestry Snapshot Report 2019-2020: Implementation of NSW Forest Agreements and Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals* for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 20 December 2021. I order that the report printed.

ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 33 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report entitled *NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016 – 2024*, received out of session on 17 December 2021. I order that the report printed.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 68A of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of an erratum to the report of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Reputational impact on an individual being adversely named in the Independent Commission*

Against Corruption's investigations, dated 7 December 2021, received out of session on 7 December 2021, and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 2/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure entitled *Transport Technology Sector*, dated November 2021, received out of session on 10 December 2021, and authorised to be printed on.

Documents

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 234C of the National Energy Retail Law (NSW), I announce receipt of the following reports of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled:

- (1) *Information paper: Monitoring the NSW retail gas market 2020-21*, dated November 2021, received out of session and ordered to be printed.
- (2) *Monitoring the Electricity Retail Market 2020-2021 – Final Report*, dated November 2021, received out of session and ordered to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Education 2021*, dated 13 December 2021, received out of session on 13 December and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Regional NSW 2021*, dated 13 December 2021, received out of session on 13 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (3) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *COVID intensive learning support program*, dated 15 December 2021, received out of session on 15 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (4) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Health 2021*, dated 15 December 2021, received out of session on 15 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (5) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Premier and Cabinet 2021*, dated 15 December 2021, received out of session on 15 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (6) Special Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Members additional entitlements 2021*, dated 16 December 2021, received out of session on 16 December and authorised to be printed.
- (7) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Stronger Communities 2021*, dated 16 December 2021, received out of session on 16 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (8) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Customer Service 2021*, dated 17 December 2021, received out of session on 17 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (9) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Planning, Industry and Environment 2021*, dated 17 December 2021, received out of session on 17 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (10) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Machinery of Government changes*, dated 17 December 2021, received out of session on 17 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (11) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Government Advertising 2020-21*, dated 23 December 2021, received out of session on 23 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (12) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Internal controls and governance 2021*, dated 23 December 2021, received out of session on 23 December 2021 and authorised to be printed.
- (13) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Integrity of grant program administration*, dated 8 February 2022, received out of session on 8 February 2022 and authorised to be printed.
- (14) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *State Finances 2021*, dated 9 February 2022, received out of session on 9 February 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION****Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Further Government Response to report No. 3/57 of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Review of the 2019-2020 Annual Reports of the ICAC and Inspector of the ICAC*, received out of session on 17 December 2021.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COERCIVE CONTROL**Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/57 of the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control entitled *Coercive control in domestic relationships*, received out of session on 17 December and authorised to be printed.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY**Government Response**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 2/57 of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, entitled *Reducing trauma on local roads in NSW*, received out of session on 13 January 2022 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**Government Response**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 2/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on environment and Planning entitled *Sustainability of energy supply and resources in New South Wales*, received out of session on 14 February 2022 and ordered to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY**Government Response**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 2/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety entitled *Physical Health of Police and Emergency Services Workers in NSW*, received out of session on 4 February 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***LAW REFORM COMMISSION****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 13 of the Law Reform Commission Act 1967, I announce receipt of an erratum to the report of the Law Reform Commission entitled *Consent in relation to sexual offences*, dated September 2020, received out of session on 11 February 2022 and ordered to be printed.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION****Government Response**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 2/57 of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission entitled *Review of the Health Care Complaints Commission 2019-20 Annual Report*, received out of session on 11 February 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following electronic petition signed by 20,000 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly withdraw and abandon the review process for rewriting the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, received from **Mr Roy Butler**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

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

Inner West Light Rail Closure

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to acknowledge the disruption caused by the closure of the Inner West Light Rail and provide replacement buses at no cost to consumers, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

School Swimming and Water Safety Program

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly expand the School Swimming and Water Safety Program to include both primary and secondary schoolchildren, received from **Ms Lynda Voltz**.

Daylight Savings

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly end daylight savings in New South Wales, received from **Dr Geoff Lee**.

Engadine Commuter Car Park

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Minister for Transport to immediately withdraw the proposal to relocate the Engadine commuter car park, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Gender Inequality and Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to take action to end gender inequality and sexual, domestic and family violence and harassment, received from **Ms Jodie Harrison**.

The CLERK: I announce that the following electronic petitions signed by 500 or more persons have been lodged for presentation:

Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly provide emergency and annual block funding to Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital so it can recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and continue caring for children with disabilities, received from **Dr Geoff Lee**.

Sport and Gender Equity

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly make gender equity a condition for sporting organisations and clubs that receive government grants, funding and tenders, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Mattress Recycling

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to invest in and improve mattress recycling in New South Wales, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

Central Coast Bus Services

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly ask the Government to prevent Red Bus Services from being stripped of the Region 7 contract, received from **Ms Liesl Tesch**.

Goulburn-Crookwell Rail Trail

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly urge the Government to approve and fund the Goulburn-Crookwell Rail Trail, received from **Mrs Wendy Tuckerman**.

Affordable Housing

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly commit to a Housing First approach to homelessness, significantly increase investment in public and social housing, support local government to mandate affordable housing, protect renters' rights and urge the Federal Government to phase out unfair tax rules, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to electronic petitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Dominic Perrottet—Parliamentary Sitings—lodged 25 November 2021 (Mr Roy Butler)

The Hon. Mark Speakman—Cannabis Legislation—lodged 9 November 2021 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Eurobodalla Healthcare Services—lodged 26 November 2021 (Mr Ryan Park)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Eurobodalla Healthcare Services—lodged 17 November 2021 (Mr Ryan Park)

The Hon. James Griffin—Port Macquarie Koala Habitat—lodged 24 November 2021 (Ms Tamara Smith)

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—COVID-19 and Primary School Ventilation—lodged 9 November 2021 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman—Wamberal and Terrigal Beaches—lodged 16 November 2021 (Ms Liesl Tesch)

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that, in accordance with Standing Order No. 105, general business order of the day (general order) No. 1 [Tamworth Electorate – COVID-19 Vaccinations] and general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 2606 to 2872 have lapsed.

WITHDRAWAL OF BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: In view of the resignation of the member for Strathfield and in accordance with past practice, I order the removal from the *Business Paper* of general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 2921, 2934 and 2953.

Bills

COVID-19 AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REGULATORY REFORMS) BILL 2022

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Felicity Wilson, on behalf of Mr Matt Kean, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:41): On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is now close to two years since New South Wales rapidly introduced emergency measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. A key part of our initial success in managing the pandemic included introducing sensible, temporary regulatory changes which would support businesses and communities to operate flexibly throughout the pandemic. Because of these changes, businesses have been able to adopt alternative delivery models and organisations have been encouraged to adopt modern technology. The community has more flexibility in when and how they access goods and services. The measures were necessary and they were appropriate in order to support people to continue to run businesses, to do their jobs and to access critical goods and services. Now, as we pivot towards living with COVID, the New South Wales Government is looking to the future to leverage opportunities where we can support growth and rebuild the economy in a better, stronger position.

We heard from businesses and communities that many of the temporary measures introduced were practical, sensible and helpful, even outside of pandemic circumstances. For example, allowing documents to be handled digitally instead of through physical paper processes not only supported social distancing during the pandemic but also updated burdensome compliance rules to reflect modern ways of working. Maintaining this increased flexibility will allow businesses to build upon new business models, adapt to changing customer preferences and recover faster. The New South Wales Government is committed to building on the insights and lessons learned during the pandemic as we move towards a new normal.

COVID-19 continues to pose public health risks. We have to be vigilant and we have to continue the flexibilities that will help us to deal with any further disruptions that arise. The recent Omicron outbreak has made retaining these measures all the more important as we continue to deal with the challenges of living with the virus. However, without legislative amendments the measures will sunset, commencing in March 2022. This bill will permanently extend a number of temporary measures that have proven to be both popular and effective and, after consultation and evaluation, have demonstrated real and ongoing benefits for businesses and communities.

The pandemic has spurred new ways of living and working and accelerated the uptake of new technologies. This bill will make sensible changes to modernise legislation and will help businesses and individuals to take

advantage of these positive changes. This is in line with the recommendation in the NSW Productivity Commission's white paper to evaluate the COVID-19 changes and retain them if they deliver net benefits. After thorough evaluation, it is expected that retaining these changes permanently will provide net economic benefits of \$2.4 billion over the next decade through greater flexibility and time savings. Some \$500 million of these net benefits will come from removing barriers to digital processes in areas such as electronic meetings for strata schemes and regulatory interviews. Most significantly, a further \$1.9 billion of net benefits will be delivered by allowing employees to access long service leave more flexibly, with benefits for both employees and employers. The permanence of these measures will help not only with continued management of the pandemic but also with our longer term economic recovery.

This bill will amend the Retail Leases Act 1994. This will preserve protections accrued by tenants during the prescribed period of the Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Regulation 2020. It ensures that landlords cannot take action against eligible tenants for breaches that occurred during the prescribed period unless they have renegotiated rent and attempted mediation. The bill will temporarily extend a procedural COVID-19 provision in the Constitution Act 1902 and makes amendments to the Interpretation Act 1987 to clarify the requirements for tabling documents when a House of Parliament is not sitting.

In addition to the generous stimulus provided by the Government, this bill will assist in our economic recovery after the dramatic impact of the first two years of the pandemic. The Government has already committed around \$45 billion in health, economic and social measures since March 2020, which have continued to assist the community since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 206,000 businesses and employees have benefited from our JobSaver program, which has paid out more than \$7 billion in support. The \$5 billion WestInvest program will build vital infrastructure in south-western and western Sydney. Our \$2.8 billion economic recovery strategy has laid a strong foundation for the economic recovery and the challenges we face from the recent Omicron outbreak. This bill presents an important next step in our economic reform agenda in addition to these commitments. As we continue to deal with the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, we want to ensure our regulatory system is fit for purpose, responsive and flexible.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The following amendments make several temporary measures permanent, as evaluation has shown the net benefits for the community beyond the initial stages of the pandemic. I first turn to the amendments to the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and the Community Land Management Act 2021. The bill will allow voting at general meetings and committee meetings to take place electronically, without the owners corporation or community association having to first adopt a general resolution authorising the use of electronic meeting and voting. The current requirement that a general resolution be adopted before remote forms of meeting and voting can be used may have been suitable when those practices were new, but, as we know, the pandemic has changed everything. What was once a sensible precaution in the laws is now hindering strata and community schemes from taking advantage of more modern and flexible means of governing themselves. Calls to make that increased flexibility permanent have been heard loud and clear, including in feedback to the recent statutory review of the strata laws.

The bill preserves the protections for lot owners and community land associations in the COVID-19 temporary regulations by requiring that, if a way of voting other than in person has been specified in the notice for the meeting, all owners corporations and community land associations must take reasonable steps to ensure that each person entitled to vote can participate in and vote at the meeting. The bill inserts further flexibility into the laws by including regulation-making powers to prescribe how the reforms will work in detail, including procedures for voting using these technologies, and reasonable steps that secretaries or managing agents must take to ensure that each person entitled to vote at the meeting can participate in and vote at the meeting. The Government will consult further with the sector on the development of regulations under these new laws, as we have done throughout the pandemic.

I now turn to the changes to service of documents. The changes ensure that electronic service of records can occur in almost every circumstance under the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and the new Community Land Management Act 2021. The amendments in this bill will mean owners' corporations and community land associations can serve documents electronically on an owner or occupier of a lot even if they are not recorded on the strata or association roll or have not had an email address recorded on the roll.

I now turn to the final set of strata and community land amendments, which concern the common seal. The amendments will allow owners' corporations and community land associations to keep and affix an electronic form of their seal instead of affixing the hard copy seal, as is currently the case. The amendments have been drafted broadly and will allow the Government to respond to changes in technology by prescribing alternatives to affixing the seal electronically or in hard copy in supporting regulations. The amendments also allow regulations to specify safeguards and minimum standards, such as how electronic seals are to be kept and stored and the process and requirements by which electronic seals can be validly affixed. The Government will consult closely

with the sector to ensure that any regulations prepared under these powers are practical and not burdensome to owners' corporations and community land associations.

Rigorous economic evaluation has found that making the changes for strata and community land management associations permanent will lead to net economic benefits of \$213 million over 10 years. These benefits are largely from the time and cost savings of not having to attend meetings in person. For instance, an owner who wishes to attend a strata meeting will save time and transport costs when they attend virtually. They will have the option of dialling in from a location that is convenient for them, and voting electronically. Likewise, a member of a community land management association can attend meetings remotely, saving time and travel costs. If the meeting is held completely online, the association will also save on expenses such as venue hire fees.

The bill also amends the Long Service Leave Act 1955 and proposes making the temporary measures currently contained in sections 15A and 15B of that Act permanent. Prior to the temporary amendments coming into operation in 2020, the Long Service Leave Act was quite prescriptive about how leave could be taken. For example, unless there was an agreement between the employer and worker to split long service leave in a manner specified in the Act, leave had to be taken in one continuous period. The provisions in the bill will allow, by agreement, leave to be taken in multiple periods of no less than one day. This will apply to leave taken in advance and to accrued leave. It will also allow an employer and a worker to reach a mutual agreement about how much notice should be given before taking a period of long service leave.

These amendments will have significant economic benefits, estimated at around \$1.9 billion over 10 years. These benefits will largely accrue to employees from the value they get from taking their long service leave in the form that most suits their own needs. This could involve, for example, an employee taking a day off every fortnight for family commitments, or instituting a phased retirement. Benefits will flow to employers from increased productivity and lower absenteeism associated with employees being able to work more flexibly. Where employees take smaller periods of time off, there will also be fewer disruption costs to business. For instance, employers may otherwise have to spend time and money hiring and training temporary staff to cover for employees who take their long service leave in large blocks.

The bill also contains consequential amendments relating to the keeping of leave records and defining what "a day" is for workers who do not work a fixed number of weekly hours. This will provide more clarity for employers and ensure they are paying their staff correctly under the new flexible arrangements. Amending the Act in this manner will not only help with the continued management of the pandemic and our longer-term economic recovery, but also importantly provides employers and employees with greater flexibility to make arrangements about how best to take long service leave.

The bill amends the Mental Health Act 2007 to facilitate additional alternatives where it is not reasonably practicable for a medical practitioner to conduct an in-person assessment of a person who is in a declared mental health facility to assess whether the person requires detention. The Act currently allows, as an alternative, either a medical practitioner in another location to do the assessment via audiovisual link, or for an "accredited person" as defined in the Act to undertake the assessment in person. The proposed amendment would allow accredited persons to also conduct the assessment via audiovisual link. The amendment would also remove the requirement that the medical practitioner be in a different facility. At the start of the pandemic, these amendments were made to manage risk of viral transmission. Since then, it has become evident that there are benefits for the person, and the system, in facilitating additional alternatives to assess a person, where such an examination can be carried out with sufficient skill and care so as to form the required opinion about the person.

The benefits of the measure are twofold: Most importantly, it reduces the wait time for an assessment. If the person is at a facility where they risk waiting a long time for their assessment due to staffing, they could be seen more quickly if assessed via audiovisual link. This will mean they are either discharged or admitted for inpatient care more quickly. Second, in rural and regional areas, where practitioners with the relevant experience and qualifications are not necessarily available at all times, transportation to another facility that could be hours away could be avoided. Estimated economic net benefits of this measure range between \$2 million and \$4 million over 10 years.

The bill amends section 63 of the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010. This Act entitles a worker to a pro rata payment instead of long service leave if they have permanently left the industry and have at least five years' accredited service. The proposed amendment shortens the waiting period for eligible workers to access a pro rata payment after 10 weeks rather than 20 weeks. Adjusting the waiting period to 10 weeks will support workers who have left the industry due to unforeseen events such as COVID-19. The bill will also insert a new regulation-making power that will provide flexibility for the agency to prescribe a shorter period other than 10 weeks for a worker to access their entitlements. This amendment ensures that minimum changes are made to the legislative instrument if future circumstances change, such as new COVID outbreaks. The time frame will be prescribed following the necessary regulatory impact assessment and stakeholder

consultation. The expected net benefits of the changes are around half a million dollars over 10 years. While the dollar benefit of the changes may seem small, removing the waiting period will allow cleaners faster access to their entitlements without undermining the objectives of the scheme.

The bill also makes amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. These amendments will permanently allow associations to use technology to conduct meetings and for members to vote on resolutions, even if the constitution of the association does not expressly allow such measures to be used. Associations have been temporarily allowed to do so to enable them to continue functioning when face-to-face interaction has not been possible due to unforeseen circumstances like the pandemic. The constitutions of many associations do not make provision for the conduct of meetings or voting using technology. This is because many associations were constituted over the last 25 years and their constitutions were not updated when the capacity to hold meetings and vote remotely was introduced into the Associations Incorporation Act.

For example, these measures will enable association committees to authorise necessary payments to creditors or to comply with their statutory obligations, even if they cannot conduct face-to-face meetings. The proposed amendments will also provide a sensible solution for allowing members to vote via modern technologies such as email or videoconferencing. This will provide long-term flexibility for associations and greater choice. It will save costs that arise from having to meet formally to amend a constitution. This does not mean that an association is forced to adopt modern technologies for their meetings. It merely means that if they wish to use it, then an unnecessary and potentially costly hurdle has been removed. The measure is estimated to deliver \$236 million in net economic benefits over the next 10 years, largely from time and travel costs saved when incorporated association members attend meetings virtually. If the meeting is held completely online, the association will also save on venue hire fees.

This bill makes amendments to the Retirement Villages Act to allow for meetings and votes at meetings to be held electronically. Following a successful trial of online meetings and votes for retirement villages, including annual general meetings, the proposed amendment would make this a permanent option for villages. While the proposed amendment will allow residents to attend and vote at meetings remotely, the amendment will still require meetings to have an in-person option if residents would like one. This recognises that many residents in retirement villages are unable to access online meetings easily and would benefit from an in-person option to ensure their voice is heard. The Government will continue to monitor the rollout of these changes to ensure residents are empowered to be active participants in the running of their village.

The bill amends the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 to permanently enable authorised officers to conduct interviews and other meetings either in person or by audio or audiovisual link, or some hybrid of the two. This change provides flexibility in how these officers undertake their investigation and interview functions under the Act and ensures that they can continue to be conducted safely as we move into the next phase of the pandemic. The bill also makes equivalent changes to a range of other natural resources legislation that contain similar provisions, including the Crown Land Management Act 2016, the Fisheries Management Act 1994, the Mining Act 1992, the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and the Water Management Act 2000.

These measures are estimated to deliver net economic benefits of \$6.5 million over the next 10 years. Both regulators and interviewees stand to gain from the changes, due to travel time and transport costs saved when interviews are conducted online. Depending on the location of the interview, they may also save on other travel expenses like accommodation and meals. These benefits are particularly significant where the interviewee is based in a regional area. In addition, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 is being updated to allow planning bodies, including the Independent Planning Commission and the Sydney district and regional planning panels, to continue to hold their public meetings and hearings either online or by audiovisual means, as well as in person or a hybrid of these arrangements. This change again provides the necessary flexibility to planning bodies in how they conduct their hearings and other meetings.

It also ensures that they can continue to carry out their functions safely as we move forward into the next phase of the pandemic. Retaining this measure is estimated to lead to benefits of \$2 million over the next 10 years, largely due to attendees saving travel time and transport costs when they attend planning body meetings online. Where meetings are held completely online, there will also be venue hire savings for the government agency. Other temporary planning measures that support the State's economic recovery that do not require an amendment to the planning Act will be maintained through other planning means, such as State environmental planning policies. The amendment to the Retail Leases Act 1994 preserves the protections for eligible tenants acquired during the prescribed period of the Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Regulation 2022 beyond its repeal.

The commercial leases regulation is a temporary measure that has provided protections to eligible tenants who have been financially impacted during COVID-19. This amendment will ensure that landlords cannot take action against eligible tenants for circumstances arising during the prescribed period unless they comply with their

obligations under the commercial leases regulation, including their obligation to renegotiate rent and attend mediation. I now deal with the proposed amendments to the Constitution Act 1902 at schedule 1.4 to the bill. Currently, schedule 8 to the Constitution Act provides for the making of regulations prescribing the ways and forms in which a bill may be presented to the Governor for assent and to receive assent, and the ways and forms in which meetings of the Executive Council are to be held during the prescribed period.

A regulation made pursuant to schedule 8 to the Constitution Act provides that during the prescribed period a meeting of the Executive Council is to be held in person or by means of a teleconference or videoconference. The prescribed period ends on 26 March 2022. It is proposed to extend the prescribed period, which will continue to enable virtual meetings of the Executive Council, for a further 12 months until 26 March 2023, or a later day prescribed by the regulations, being no later than 26 September 2023. I am advised that Her Excellency the Governor is supportive of the proposed extension, noting that the availability of virtual meetings of the Executive Council provides a valuable contingency for the council. Schedule 1.5 to the bill makes further consequential amendments to the Constitution (COVID-19 Emergency Measures) Regulation 2020 due to the extension of the prescribed period that I have just set out.

Finally, I move to the proposed amendments to the Interpretation Act 1987 at schedule 1.10 to the bill. Legislation may require the tabling in Parliament of a report or other document, for example, a statutory review or report on the use of a statutory power. Some Acts include provisions clarifying that the document may be tabled while a House of Parliament is not sitting by lodging the document with the Clerk, while other Acts are silent on out-of-session tabling. Standing Order 55 in the other place provides that where, under any Act, a report or other document is required to be tabled in the House by a Minister and the House is not sitting, such a report or document may be lodged with the Clerk and, on presentation to the Clerk, the report or other document is deemed to have been laid before the House. Documents may not be lodged with the Clerk when the House has been prorogued.

On 24 March 2020 this House adopted sessional order 266A, which makes equivalent arrangements for the tabling of a report or other document when the House is not sitting for the remainder of this parliamentary session. For the avoidance of doubt, it is proposed to insert new section 18A into the Interpretation Act, providing that in an Act or statutory rule a reference to tabling a document in a House of Parliament includes taking any action allowed or required under the standing rules or orders of the House to table the document when the House is not sitting. That provision will retrospectively cover documents previously tabled out of session if the standing rules or orders of the House as in force at that time allowed the documents to be tabled when the House is not sitting.

Proposed section 18A is similar to section 1 of the Laying of Documents before Parliament (Interpretation) Act 1948 (UK), which makes provision "for the removal of doubt" in the United Kingdom. The proposed amendment will confirm the position set out in Standing Order 55 in the other place and Legislative Assembly sessional order 266A, and put beyond doubt that those orders operate as intended. The bill permanently enacts a number of COVID-19 temporary measures to enhance the regulatory environment in New South Wales for business, councils and communities. Those measures have been rigorously tested and will deliver enduring economic and social benefits. Their permanence will be a sensible next step in light of the positive feedback received from stakeholders and the community. I thank and acknowledge the work of those in Treasury who put together this legislative reform: Lovelle D'Souza; Sarah Fletchett; Georgina Collins; Scott Wheeler; and Jackie Yuan, who is in the advisers' area and now works in the Treasurer's office. I note that this has been a whole-of-government reform process, with significant input from a number of different agencies and Ministers and their offices to reach this conclusion to ensure that we can deliver a bill that will have these types of positive benefits across the community.

As we recover from the pandemic, the New South Wales Government is leveraging the lessons that we have learnt from COVID-19 to bounce back better. We know the virus is unpredictable, but these changes, combined with the resilience, creativity and determination of our people and businesses, mean that our State will be in a better and stronger position to recover and flourish. I thank all of those who provided their input in the drafting of the bill. I thank, once again, all of our frontline services and our healthcare workers in particular, who are keeping us safe. But most importantly, I thank the people of New South Wales for their continued adaptability and resilience during these difficult times. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) AMENDMENT BILL 2022

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Victor Dominello, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government)
(16:11): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I note that an electronic copy of the bill has been provided to the Clerk and I really like that. We are right on top of digital in New South Wales. I am pleased to introduce the Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Amendment Bill 2022. The bill delivers on this Government's commitment to facilitate competition in the electronic conveyancing market. As the legislation is part of a national applied law scheme, the bill will provide the framework for a secure national interoperability regime, reflecting the strong resolve of all State and Territory governments to encourage effective competition in a way that will allow the electronic conveyancing market to develop and mature into the future. To do this, the bill will introduce a requirement for national electronic lodgement network operators, known as ELNOs, to interoperate. Today all parties to a land transaction must use the same ELNO to complete a conveyancing transaction. This restricts a user's choice and stifles competition.

Requiring ELNOs to interoperate will bring certainty to the market and will invite new players to the sector. Ultimately, interoperability will allow consumers to choose an ELNO that best suits their needs with confidence that the electronic conveyancing systems will be able to work together seamlessly. Electronic conveyancing, commonly referred to as eConveyancing, began a decade ago when New South Wales passed the Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012. The Act set up the national framework for eConveyancing, which is now operating in every jurisdiction in Australia, apart from Tasmania and the Northern Territory, which are expected to join in the next few years. The Act also established the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council, or ARNECC, which develops the rules and procedures for electronic conveyancing and assesses requests for approval to operate as an ELNO.

Since then, industry and consumers across Australia have embraced the benefits that eConveyancing provides over the manual paper process. These benefits see home owners receiving their sale money quicker, faster registration for new home owners—allowing them to move into their new homes quicker—and stricter controls to prevent error and fraud. Settlements can now occur remotely, which has proven vital throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The success of eConveyancing led the New South Wales Government, with the support of industry stakeholders, to require all land dealings to be lodged electronically through an ELNO to the land titles office. Last year Parliament passed the Real Property Amendment (Certificates of Title) Act 2021, which removed inefficient and costly paper processes and replaced them with a fully digital system, providing better security and fewer errors. I recognise the time and commitment that all stakeholders have put into this decade-long reform. It has been a truly collaborative process that would not have been achieved without this support.

As eConveyancing has evolved and matured, attention has shifted to focus on the market for new ELNOs. The incumbent ELNO, PEXA, was established in 2013 as a government-owned entity. By 2019 all governments had sold their interests in the company, leaving it wholly privately owned. Today PEXA maintains concentrated power in the ELNO market. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law does not and never has—I repeat: It never has—limited the number of ELNOs that may be approved by the registrars. But PEXA's position as the first ELNO has meant it has secured a near monopoly. This has become a matter of concern for many in the industry and government, including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC]. With a competitor ELNO, Sympli, having entered the market and others also looking at providing alternative electronic lodgement services, the industry is now at a critical point. There is also growing reliance on electronic conveyancing services across our great country, which means now is the time to act. Government and industry must work together to build on the firm eConveyancing foundation to provide an effective, competitive market that benefits all participants.

What is interoperability? Interoperability, in this sense, refers to a connection between ELNOs' back-end systems for the exchange of conveyancing transaction data. The exchange of data allows a customer connected to one ELNO to engage in a conveyancing transaction with a subscriber to a different ELNO of their choosing. Interoperability is used in other industries to manage what is called a "network effect", which is a market where the value of a provider's service increases with the number of users of the service. The electronic conveyancing market currently exhibits strong network effects because all participants—solicitors, conveyancers and financial institutions—must use the same ELNO to complete a conveyancing transaction. Larger established ELNOs have an unfair competitive advantage over new and smaller entrants, since the established ELNO's users can connect with a larger number of other users to complete transactions. This creates an impediment to effective competition between approved ELNOs and a substantial barrier to entry for potential competitors. This challenge with ELNOs is similar to other big tech operators like Amazon, Google and Facebook, all of which have huge economies of scale and scope.

They were expensive to set up, but the cost of serving additional users is low. Established digital platforms re-use data in providing new services, further embedding their positions of dominance. The network effect has seen a growing market dominance of digital platforms around the globe. To remedy this situation, legislators the world over are also calling for an effective policy response to enable competition in digital markets. In Australia's case, Ministers responsible for eConveyancing, Treasurers from each jurisdiction, the ACCC, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of New South Wales [IPART] and the NSW Productivity Commission agree that competition is unlikely to be sustained in the ELNO market without interoperability. On any view, that is a powerful choir singing the virtues of competition and in support of the bill. But every delay in implementing interoperability makes it harder to achieve a vigorously competitive market and pushes off the benefits of competition.

I have talked at length about the benefits of competition in the eConveyancing market, but what does that really mean for the people who use it: the practitioners and their clients? Sustainable competition gives subscribers real choice. It creates pressure on ELNOs to earn their subscribers by having to compete on things like quality of service, price and reputation. Electronic lodgement network operators will have to demonstrate that they are responsive to subscriber inquiries and that their platforms are secure and their systems resilient. Another key benefit is the potential for innovation, well recognised as a major outcome of competition in technology-based industries. Tangible examples of innovation in the eConveyancing sector could include simpler and more efficient interfaces for lawyers and conveyancers. Many lawyers and conveyancers are small business operators. Improved technology in the background can leave more time to focus on the client. Another tangible benefit could be ELNOs broadening their service offering, creating new and innovative services to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

Interoperability means that more than one operator can sustain itself in the market. This would allow ELNOs to gravitate towards a particular sector of the market, perhaps tailoring their user interfaces to the requirements of smaller conveyancing businesses or to other user requirements. Another might focus on financial institutions. Subscribers could choose the ELNO that best caters to their needs. More ELNOs in the market means that if one is not available, we have more options for keeping property transactions moving in this great southern land. It is also important to note that competition in the electronic conveyancing market avoids the pitfalls of a monopoly market model, where much of the incentive to innovate, address stakeholder concerns or improve quality of service is eroded due to the operator retaining the entirety of the market share.

Over the past three years, significant work has been done to identify the optimal ELNO market structure and the right approach to addressing PEXA's concentrated market power. Those reports have unanimously concluded that interoperability between ELNOs is the preferred solution. In November 2019 IPART published a report on pricing that found:

- Although competition is emerging, the lack of interoperability between ELNOs' systems is constraining its development.
- ...
- Interoperability between ELNOs has significant potential to promote competition ...

In December 2019 the ACCC published a report that identified interoperability as the preferred approach to facilitate effective competition in the ELNO market, noting the significant benefits of competition over the alternative of a regulated monopoly. In September 2020 the Centre for International Economics published a cost-benefit analysis that compared three market models—a regulated monopoly, the status quo of multiple non-interoperable ELNOs and interoperability—and found that interoperability delivered the greatest net benefit to the community. To be honest, that came as no surprise. A common theme of these reports and analyses is that effective competition delivers greater benefits at lower cost than a regulated monopoly, which involves high regulatory costs, only partially addresses pricing and provides no incentive for a monopoly provider to innovate or improve its services for the benefit of users. By contrast, effective competition through interoperability will place downward pressure on prices while also driving innovation and greater efficiencies. This reform provides certainty to industry and potential interests in that the regulatory framework does not simply allow for competition; it actively facilitates competition by enabling entrant ELNOs to compete on a level playing field with the dominant incumbent PEXA.

The benefits of interoperability are clear but the complexity involved in achieving it cannot be underestimated. From the outset there has been strong desire for the reform to be industry led, with governments openly collaborating and engaging with all affected—not just those who will use or be impacted by the system but also those with the expertise to contribute to the reform. At a national level consultation is driven through the interoperability industry panel which was convened by New South Wales and South Australian governments in December 2019 and then by ARNECC from October 2020. The panel includes registrars, the Law Council of Australia, the Australian Institute of Conveyancers, the Australian Banking Association, financial institutions, the

current ELNOs, PEXA and Sympli. In addition to panel members, the ACCC, the Digital Transformation Agency, and State Revenue Offices attended or attended as observers.

The progress made to date on all aspects of the interoperability solution could not have been achieved without the efforts of the panel members who have contributed their time and expertise to progress this work over the past three years. I thank them sincerely for their commitment and support. The reform will involve significant technology challenges. These have been reviewed and tackled by a team of experts from both PEXA and Sympli, with support from ARNECC representatives. The considerable progress that has been made to date is a testament to their efforts. For interoperability to succeed, legislation and regulatory change is also required. The Electronic Conveyancing National Law [ECNL] needs amendment to impose an interoperability requirement and to put in place powers for rules that deal with aspects of the reform like security of systems, privacy and the resolution of disputes. In addition, an effective enforcement regime is crucial to ensuring there are effective tools to manage noncompliance.

To support the interoperability reform and the national eConveyancing system more generally, ARNECC is developing a legislative proposal to implement a more robust enforcement regime. Currently, the ECNL provides that if an ELNO or subscriber breaches their regulatory obligations, the registrar can terminate or suspend their provision of or access to eConveyancing services. The proposed enforcement changes will give registrars a broader range of more flexible powers. Rather than progressing all elements at once, regulatory reform will proceed in stages. This will give certainty to the sector and allow further work to continue with the confidence that government supports the process. This multistage approach has been endorsed by key industry bodies. The Law Council of Australia strongly supports competition between ELNOs and considers interoperability to be a non-negotiable feature of the future of the eConveyancing market. I honestly give a shout-out to the Law Council of Australia, which, together with the ACCC, was one of the first to really champion the cause for interoperability. I really appreciate its leadership on this matter. The council has welcomed the introduction of the bill as evidence of the commitment to ensure that interoperability is implemented.

Similar support has been received from the Australian Banking Association—and again I give a shout-out to Anna Bligh, whom I have spoken to on a number of occasions and who has been supportive from day one—which sees this as a pragmatic response to the complexity of the reform and the need to balance certainty of reform with addressing important issues that stakeholders have raised. This strong support from these peak bodies was given on the basis that ARNECC works closely with stakeholders through further development of the reforms and a second round of changes. The Australian Institute of Conveyancers has been and continues to be supportive of interoperability, and again I thank them for their leadership. ARNECC will also consider in detail the important issues they have raised, as part of the second bill, which is required to update the eConveyancing enforcement regime.

Before looking ahead to the next stage of the legislative reform, I look in detail at the bill itself and the intent behind the amendments. The bill makes some small but significant changes to the electronic conveyancing ecosystem that will shift the emphasis away from a single ELNO and make way for a multi-ELNO environment. In its current form, the ECNL provides the high-level framework for electronic conveyancing nationally. The detail is found in the operating requirements and participation rules, which are determined by the registrars of each State and Territory based on model provisions developed by ARNECC. The model requirements, known as Model Operating Requirements [MORs] and Model Participation Rules [MPRs], are reviewed regularly by ARNECC to make sure that they remain current and meet the needs of users.

Consultation and stakeholder input inform changes to the MORs and MPRs. This arrangement allows the detailed requirements for electronic conveyancing to be considered nationally in a responsive and timely manner. The Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Amendment Bill retains this regulatory design, with much of the detail of interoperability to be fleshed out in the registrar's requirements. The focus of the bill is new section 18A and the requirement to interoperate. The section provides that any person approved as an ELNO must establish and maintain interoperability between all other ELNOs. Interoperability will be established and maintained in the manner required by the operating requirements, allowing the MORs to set out the steps to implementation and a timetable for introduction. Although the detail will be in the MORs, putting the obligation to interoperate in the legislation gives industry a clear message of the Government's intention.

The requirement to interoperate includes a power for the registrar to waive compliance if satisfied that granting the waiver is reasonably necessary in all the circumstances. Allowing a waiver to be granted in this limited circumstance will futureproof the legislation to accommodate potential technology changes or innovations in ELNO models. Interoperability itself is defined in a new change to section 3. In essence, it is the interworking of electronic lodgement networks in a way that enables a subscriber using one ELNO to complete a conveyancing transaction with a subscriber using another ELNO without the parties having to subscribe to the same ELNO. The interworking must also allow the preparation of electronic registry instruments and other documents using data

from different ELNOs. The definition puts the experience of subscribers and users at the forefront. The design of the system should mean that, in any conveyancing transaction, subscribers can confidently engage in a conveyancing transaction without ever knowing which ELNO other participants will use. Interworking of the systems in the background should happen seamlessly, without impact on the transaction.

To support the interoperability requirement, section 22 will be amended to expand the matters that operating requirements can cover. This list is not exhaustive, but it provides a clear expectation of the things seen as important to the success of a secure, competitive ELNO market.

Central to the proposed model are the agreements that ELNOs will need to enter into with each other to establish their interconnections. Although these agreements will be negotiated between the ELNOs, the MORs will play an important role in their development. The bill will allow the MORs to require ELNOs to enter into agreements and to prescribe the types of matters that must be included within them. If it becomes necessary, the MORs could include standard provisions that must be included. Stakeholders have different views on how closely regulated the interoperability agreements should be. Some want the entire agreement prescribed and standardised; others see them as purely commercial contracts that government has no role in. The approach taken by the bill finds a balance between these two views, focusing on the key issues—like security, privacy and claims management—but leaving the rest to be negotiated by the parties.

Section 22 includes further amendments that put beyond doubt other matters that the MORs can address. One area that has been identified is fees. Now that many of the States and Territories require land dealings to be lodged through an ELNO, it is important that registrars can step in to make requirements around fees. This is particularly so as the ELNO market develops, and until effective communication is achieved the power to make requirements about fees will allow registrars to set out principles for setting and publishing fees for apportioning liability for them. As with all changes to the MORs, any provisions applying to fees will be consulted on with stakeholders before being introduced.

An integral part of most electronic conveyancing transactions is the financial settlement. Although the expertise of registrars is in the preparation and lodgement of land dealings, for industry participants and consumers the financial components of a transaction are critical. Without requiring registrars to regulate financial settlements, the ECNL will be amended to allow registrars to require ELNOs to meet conditions that relate to the financial component. This will include specifying data standards for interoperability that include the associated financial transaction. Importantly, amendments to section 22 will support the development of, and compliance with, an industry code designed to ensure that the payment functions within eConveyancing are performed in an efficient and secure way.

Mr Temporary Speaker, I am pleased to report that industry participants are working together to develop such a code under the direction of AusPayNet. I thought you would be interested in that. The bill will allow the MORs to require ELNOs to participate and comply with an industry code, ensuring that there is appropriate regulation of the payment system that has been designed and agreed by industry. One element essential to the success of electronic conveyancing has been the use of digital signatures—I recently did a LinkedIn post on that—which are applied by subscribers on behalf of their clients with the client's authority. Section 12 of the ECNL allows the parties to a transaction to assume that a digital signature is correct and has been properly authorised. I am happy to talk for an hour to pad out my view about a digital signature versus a wet signature, but I will move on.

In an interoperable environment, registry instruments and signed documents, like the financial settlement statement, may go through an intermediary before reaching their destination. To address this, section 12 has been amended to extend the list of parties able to rely on a digital signature to include ELNOs and, in the case of a direction for payment of money, the financial institutions that pay or receive money as part of the conveyancing transaction. The bill makes a number of further amendments relating to delegation, compliance examination and information sharing between registrars designed to strengthen oversight in recognition of the national nature of this legislation.

The introduction of this bill marks a major milestone in the reform but not its conclusion. There is still considerable work to be done before the first interoperable transaction is achieved. This bill keeps all participants focused. It provides confidence to industry to plan ahead. This is particularly helpful for financial institutions, land registries and other bodies, who can commit with confidence to the changes they need to make to support this reform. Critically, governments are legislating now with the commitment to conduct further consultation. The two steps are inextricably linked. Both are important and both will be in place before interoperability commences. This allows for more detailed consultation with peak bodies in the coming months.

I would like also to thank all registrars of title, including the New South Wales Registrar General, Jeremy Cox, who has been an absolute titan in this whole process, and his team and the many experts who have

worked tirelessly on this complex reform in the past three years. We will continue to support them as we move toward interoperability commencing, which is a substantial national achievement. I also thank my ministerial colleagues in other jurisdictions for working together to bring this bill forward. They are the Hon. Josh Teague, MP, of South Australia; Mr Shane Rattenbury, MLA, of the Australian Capital Territory; the Hon. Selena Uiho, MLA, of the Northern Territory; the Hon. Scott Stewart, MP, of Queensland; the Hon. Jacquie Petrusma, MP, of Tasmania; the Hon. Richard Wynne, MP, of Victoria; and the Hon. John Carey, MLA, of Western Australia.

I hasten to add Rod Sims, Chair of the ACCC. If it were not for him, we would not be here today. I remember issuing an SOS to the ACCC when we were facing choppy waters ahead and there was no certainty of getting to this point. Rod, to his eternal credit in leadership, realised the importance of interoperability and stepped up to the plate. So I am very grateful for the ACCC and Rod, in particular. Every government in Australia supports this reform. This first stage of the legislation change is a testament to the contributions and effort that all stakeholders have committed to the process so far. It is a clear indication of government commitment to the interoperability reform and demonstrates the resolve to see interoperability implemented without further delay. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is a shame the Minister does not listen to Rod Sims when he talks about competition at the Port of Newcastle.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I listen to Rod Sims all the time. If he had a podcast, I would listen to that as well.

Debate adjourned.

Community Recognition Statements

MITCHELL STRUYVE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:43): I acknowledge Mitchell Struyve for and congratulate him on his 38 years of dedicated service to the New South Wales Department of Education. At the end of last year Mitchell retired from serving the local area of Seven Hills, which he had done since 2009 as principal of The Hills Sports High School. Mitchell attended the sports high school as a student, when it was known as Grantham High School. Mitchell began his career as a teacher at Seven Hills High in 1984, before becoming head teacher at Bonnyrigg High School in 1991. He then served as head teacher at Quakers Hill High School from 1993. He kept that post while establishing Wyndham College at Nirimba Fields in 1999 and then was selected in the same year to be the deputy principal back at Quakers Hill High. He has given many years of service in education to local students and demonstrated a passion for high-quality public education and supporting community-minded learning environments for all Blacktown students and those right across western Sydney.

COLIN ARNOLD PHIPPS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:44): I congratulate Mr Colin Arnold Phipps, who was awarded the honour of 2022 Fairfield City Citizen of the Year at the Australia Day Community Awards and Citizenship Ceremony. Colin has been a member of the State Emergency Service since 2010. In this time he has dedicated his time to serving the community through the many important roles he has undertaken. He has worked with asset control and the purchase and maintenance of equipment. He is also on call 24 hours a day in his position as duty officer, a role that also requires him to investigate sites to see if they are safe and call for assistance if they are deemed unsafe. Colin's role also includes involvement in police open days, traffic control and recruitment. I congratulate Colin once again on his award and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

VICKI DUNLEAVY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:45): I recognise Vicki Dunleavy of Moree District Hospital for her 50-year career in health. Vicki commenced in Moree in 1988 and has been the chief radiographer since 1994 until her recent retirement. In 1970 Vicki was accepted for a radiography traineeship at the Royal Newcastle Hospital. Vicki also worked at Wallsend District Hospital, Royal Free Hospital in Europe and Raymond Terrace radiology clinic before deciding to return to Bellata in country New South Wales in 1987.

When asked why she stayed in Moree and the public health sector for so long, Vicki said:

I really loved my career, the opportunity to make such a meaningful difference in people's lives and the interaction with other health professionals and working in rural health has meant being a part of an incredibly welcoming team and supportive culture ...

I congratulate Vicki on her incredible and rewarding career of 50 years, supporting patients with compassion, kindness and genuine concern. I also commend Vicki on continuing to provide weekly radiography services to the remote sites of Warialda and Bingara as a volunteer.

DR PAUL THIERING

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:46): After 30 years of service to the Blue Mountains community, local psychiatrist Dr Paul Thiering begins his well-deserved retirement at the end of the year. Dr Thiering's compassionate care of his patients has been described as remarkable, and is attributed to saving the lives of many. One patient wrote a moving description of the impact of Dr Thiering's treatment. It stated:

He built me back from a shell of a human being who had endured horrendous abuse and was choosing to end my life, to someone who is a functioning human again and my story would not be the only one.

Dr Thiering and his wife, Bernadette, run a busy family practice in Leura with thousands of patients coming and going over three decades and Bernadette at the front desk welcoming them. Dr Thiering is described as a quiet, humble, hardworking man who is well liked and respected by all. He loves his work, and that dedication is felt by his grateful patients. I pay tribute to the life-changing legacy of Dr Thiering's career, thank him on behalf of those he has helped and wish him the best for his retirement.

DUDLEY FOORD HOUSE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:47): I acknowledge the wonderful work being done by the caring staff at Dudley Foord House, a residential aged-care facility in The Ponds, co-located adjacent to Anglicare's retirement living village. Since opening in 2017, it has been home to 104 residents. The innovative building design incorporates a village main street with shopfronts for services including a hairdresser and cafe. I have visited Dudley Foord on a number of occasions to present an Australian flag, to acknowledge the 100th birthday of a resident and to show then Premier Gladys Berejiklian around the impressive residential setting. In each case, the staff have been welcoming and very supportive of the residents. In my conversations with residents, I have been heartened to hear that they hold the staff in high regard and feel well cared for. I came away feeling uplifted by the experience. I know how tough the past two years have been for everyone at Dudley Foord, and in aged-care facilities generally. I hope these few comments made in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly will reassure the staff at Dudley Foord and at other aged-care residences that they are appreciated by our community.

CANTERBURY DISTRICT SOCCER FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:48): I acknowledge and congratulate the Canterbury District Soccer Football Association [CDSFA] for their incredible work in building community cohesion and enhancing social wellbeing through the art of football. Over 16,500 participants, including my own children, are involved in the association, with players competing in a range of age levels from under-6s through to over-45s—which I do not participate in. Since its establishment in 1922, the organisation has aimed to improve health outcomes in youth and other age groups through participation in sport. The century-old organisation furthermore aims to increase participation in football for lower socio-economic groups by working with other organisations to remove economic and social barriers. I especially acknowledge their work involving girls, women and recently arrived refugees. On Monday 24 January I attended CDSFA's launch of this centenary season. I also acknowledge the wonderful players, the thousands of volunteers over the years, chairman Armando Gardiman and CEO Ian Holmes for their excellent work with the CDSFA and the community. Have a great year ahead.

ROYAL HOTEL, GRONG GRONG

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience) (16:49): I congratulate residents of the Grong Grong community who have rallied together to save their local pub. With little interest from potential buyers, this small community passed the hat around raising more than \$1 million to buy the Royal Hotel for themselves. Now boasting 169 shareholders, their collective efforts have allowed the pub to be bought, renovated and reopened for all to enjoy. In doing so, I understand a great number of locals have contributed to the project in one way or another, whether it was buying into the pub, attending working bees or donating something towards the initiative. This community-wide effort makes for a great story and I commend the founding board members: A. J. Gillespie, Adam Ferguson, Gemma Purcell, Reiner Meier, Cain Gawne and Adam Conway, amongst all those who got involved along the way. Having recently enjoyed Australia Day at Grong Grong, I very much look forward to visiting this fantastic community again soon.

LOUISE WALKER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:50): I recognise Louise Walker, a proud and longstanding member of the Mosman Football Club who was awarded the Manly Warringah Football Association Meritorious Service Award for 2021. I congratulate Louise on this deserved achievement and also recognise her extensive work in our North Shore community. Louise has been a member of the Mosman Football Club since 2010. She served as president of the club for six years and her commitment to the club has been felt on the field as well as through her work as a dedicated leader in the club's administration. Louise is also president of Active

Opportunities, a program that supports children with disabilities by introducing them to soccer and the benefits of team sport in an inclusive and accessible environment. Louise continues to do volunteer work with the association to review and develop new football programs to provide wider community involvement. I thank the sporting clubs in my area, including Mosman Football Club. It is a vital part of our local community. I thank Louise for her significant impact in keeping the club running, thriving and spreading the reach of this excellent organisation.

SUPERINTENDENT ANDREW HOLLAND

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:51): I congratulate South Sydney Police Area Command Superintendent Andrew Holland on his exceptional devotion to the community, for which he was recognised in 2022 with an Australian Police Medal for 35 years of exemplary policing. Superintendent Holland joined the NSW Police Force in 1986. In 2010 he was promoted to the rank of inspector before being promoted to superintendent in 2018. In 2019 he became the first commander of the newly formed South Sydney Police Area Command. His wonderful work with our First Nation community, particularly youth, is one of his greatest achievements. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Superintendent Luke Freudenstein, he has mentored Indigenous youth through the Tribal Warrior program and by doing so has built trust in the police and encouraged marginalised Indigenous youth to stay in school. The House should pay tribute to Superintendent Andrew Holland for his outstanding service to the South Sydney community.

COFFS HARBOUR AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:52): Coffs Harbour Australia Day award winners are community champions and outstanding ambassadors for our city. They were recognised for their achievements and community spirit at a ceremony at the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden, where 80 new Australians also received their citizenship. We are extremely fortunate to have people on the Coffs Coast who strive to make a positive difference every day. They deserve the recognition and to be honoured in this way. Coffs Harbour Citizen of the Year was won by David Law, the chief scientific officer at the Coronary Angio Unit at the Coffs Harbour Health Campus. Winners in other categories were: Senior Citizen of the Year, Kath Puddey; Young Citizen of the Year, Riley Saban; Sport and Recreation Award, Hannah Legge; and the Arts and Cultural Award, David Horsley. I congratulate everyone who was nominated for an award this year. Our whole community benefits when people strive to achieve great things.

SUE LAWRENCE

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:53): Sue Lawrence was awarded 2022 Blacktown Citizen of the Year at the recent Australia Day awards. This is a worthy honour, given that there are 405,000 citizens in the Blacktown City Council area. There are a number of reasons for Sue receiving the award, including that she vehemently advocates and clearly articulates the needs of Riverstone and the north-west growth area, and she is president of the Riverstone, Schofields and Districts Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Under Sue's leadership, new activities and support have been initiated for local businesses. Sue's community involvement includes serving as Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre and Community Aid Service director, supporting local schools, promoting the Riverstone show and working with various agencies to deliver health care or other supporting services for the community. Sue is also a wonderful mother, who is passionate about her family, and an all-round good person. Congratulations Sue Lawrence on becoming the 2022 Blacktown Citizen of the Year.

DOVER HEIGHTS SHULE COMMUNITY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:54): On 29 January I joined the Dover Heights Shule community to share their monthly lunch. It was an opportunity to thank Rabbi Motti Feldman for his leadership, as well as president Robin Lax, Avron Newstadt, Dani Sher and Dan Kramer. It was also a chance to present a certificate to the community congratulating them on a recent \$27,336 Government Community Building Partnership grant. Last December I visited Kesser Torah College [KTC], next door to the Shule, to open the primary school playground that had recently been upgraded with a \$35,000 Government grant. The opening was attended by school and foundation board members, including president Shaul Shapiro, Meir Moss, Tania Cohen, and the school leadership including principal Roy Steinman, chief operating officer Darrel Godin and Rabbi Milecki. I watched the students test out the new playground, and they clearly loved it. I want to thank KTC and the Shule for hosting me for the visits. I look forward to visiting again soon.

CALISTA BOWDLER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:55): Towards the end of last year I met an incredibly inspiring young woman, Calista Bowdler. At the time she was in year 8 at Hunter Sports High and learning through the Big Picture program. Calista wanted to talk to me about the issue of child labour. Calista's long-term goal is to start a charity aimed at tackling child labour around the world. Across the globe an estimated 85 million children are working in a hazardous form of labour, so it is certainly going to be a big job for Calista. Calista and I discussed

how we in New South Wales can help address the issue through legislation like the Modern Slavery Act and the work of organisations such as Be Slavery Free. I am looking forward to seeing what is next from Calista. I wish her all the very best in the establishment in the future of her charity to combat child labour. I acknowledge the fantastic work done by the teachers in the Big Picture Program, which has helped Calista and many other students flourish through individual learning programs.

WAYNE MASON, OAM

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (16:56): I congratulate OAM recipient Wayne Mason, who was recently recognised for his service to the local mid North Coast community. A Stuarts Point resident, Mr Mason said he was overjoyed and humbled to receive the OAM honour, which is in keeping with a man who has constantly striven to do rather than to be seen. I can attest that he is a gentle giant, a kind and generous-spirited man. Mr Mason has been heavily involved in the RSL, serving in many leadership positions at both the local and State levels. He also has been an active member of Legacy and was the founding member of the Nambucca/Macleay Pensions and Welfare Officers' Network. As a Vietnam veteran, Mr Mason knows these organisations and the work they do in the community are very important for other veterans and their families who need support. Mr Mason has also been a leading figure of sporting associations in the region, especially cricket. He believes local volunteers are of great value and he is proud to be one of them. In addition, I want to mention two other award recipients: Jeffery Minute for service to the community of Nambucca Valley and John Kent for service to the community of Nambucca Heads.

CLAIRE WILLIAMS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:57): After four years at the helm, Claire Williams' time as president of the Newcastle Theatre Company has come to an end. During her tenure Claire has faced challenges that no other Newcastle Theatre Company president has. She was initially thrown a curveball in 2019 when fire regulations changed, rendering the theatre's building noncompliant. It would have taken a six-figure sum to rectify the situation. Claire led the drive that enabled the cost to be covered and the theatre's doors to remain open. Then the pandemic arrived. Like countless not-for-profits and art organisations, the Newcastle Theatre Company was not immune to the pressure of lockdowns and government restrictions on its operations. But they held strong and have come out the other side. These challenges may cause other people to throw up their hands, but Claire's passion and tenacity have been formidable. Claire, I am sure you will be missed in the top job but your efforts have left the Newcastle Theatre Company in an excellent position to shine long into the future.

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:58): I recognise the outstanding work of surf lifesaving clubs in my electorate through the summer months. The work of volunteers for our community is extraordinary. Clubs like Garie Surf Life Saving Club, Era Surf Life Saving Club, Burning Palms Surf Life Saving Club, Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Life Saving Club, Coalcliff Surf Lifesaving Club and Scarborough Wombarra Surf Lifesaving Club train relentlessly to make sure the public are confident when swimming between the flags. An important aspect of the support that the New South Wales Government has given surf lifesaving since coming to government is that surf lifesaving is now recognised as an emergency service. The budget reflects the fantastic work all surf lifesaving clubs do across New South Wales. I congratulate them on another great year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It being 5.00 p.m., business is interrupted for the public interest debate.

Public Interest Debate

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:00): I move:

That this House acknowledges the Coalition Government's ongoing delivery for New South Wales of the best schools, hospitals, roads and transport.

Today we acknowledge the Coalition Government's ongoing delivery for New South Wales of the best schools, hospitals, roads and transport. This Government and the people of this State have been confronted by a once-in-a-century pandemic that has swept the globe, on the back of drought, bushfires and now floods. In New South Wales we have met this pandemic and other challenges with the backing of a strong economy, which has allowed us to support our citizens and continue to deliver for them. Contributions from Government members to this debate will clearly demonstrate how our investment makes a real difference in people's lives. Whilst that can only be acknowledged by members opposite, those on this side of the House will demonstrate that the Government has the commitment, the energy and the passion to continue delivering for the people of New South Wales. Much more petrol is in the tank and, furthermore, we have the leadership and the vision. Much has been achieved but there is much more to achieve.

In health, we have completed more than 170 health capital projects since 2011, with more than 110 currently underway across the State. We have a \$10.8 billion health infrastructure investment over four years to 2024-25, with \$3.2 billion in 2021-22. That record investment will ensure that the 29 new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities announced prior to the 2019 State election will commence before March 2023. We have hospital upgrades and redevelopments in progress, including Bankstown and Lidcombe, Nepean, John Hunter, Royal Prince Alfred, Liverpool, Prince of Wales at Randwick, new Shellharbour, Campbelltown, Sydney Children's Hospitals Network at Randwick and Westmead, new Maitland, Wagga Wagga, St George, Concorde, Lismore, Griffith and Dubbo. There is also investment across our health system, such as the \$34 million over four years to convert 246 paramedics to intensive care paramedics, of which 203 will be in regional areas; \$45 million to the Muswellbrook Hospital stage three redevelopment; and an additional \$50 million for the children's network. The list goes on.

In Albury a new acute inpatient mental health unit will be delivered for the community as part of the New South Wales Government's \$700 million Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program. In education, the Government has made it a priority to get students back into the classroom, understanding that being in the classroom is the best way for students to learn—something that our Queensland colleagues are yet to identify. The Department of Education and NSW Health have worked tirelessly to get rapid antigen tests out to our school communities across the State. That has provided our school communities with confidence in their return to school. We are looking to invest \$7.9 billion over the next four years in school infrastructure, continuing our program to deliver 215 new and upgraded schools to support communities across New South Wales. That is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. Additionally, the Government's \$365.8 million Rural Access Gap investment will give rural and regional schools access to the best digital teaching and learning tools.

The package will support over 1,000 regional and rural schools in New South Wales, providing new devices in the classroom for students, laptops for teachers and training for staff to close the digital divide. The New South Wales Government has committed to providing an additional year of free preschool for our youngest of learners. We are looking at how to better support our families. In particular, there is the \$500 before and after school care voucher for every parent in New South Wales who has a child at school, which is news all of us can take back to our communities.

In transport, Fixing Local Roads is a \$500 million New South Wales Government program that supports shovel-ready projects to repair, maintain and seal priority local roads across New South Wales. I can see the need for that across my electorate and it is important to note the investment being made by the State Government. To date, the program has provided funding to 499 projects across the State, improving the day-to-day lives of locals and supporting vital jobs in regional New South Wales. The New South Wales Government also continues to ease the burden of travel costs by investing \$246.3 million to extend the regional seniors travel card for a further two years, providing more than 300,000 eligible regional seniors with a \$250 pre-paid Visa card. In the Albury electorate, the \$16.5 million Davey Road interchange project was completed in November 2021. This is unlocking Albury's booming industrial precinct and boosting freight access to the area. Of particular note for me as a regional MP is that the projects I have spoken about are regional projects.

The investment that is being delivered is not just in Sydney but right across New South Wales. We see special activation precincts, the Regional Job Creation Fund and projects throughout our communities, such as the installation of grandstand seating and stadium lighting at PCYC Albury. We see investment in our youth through things like the Australian national youth circus—the Flying Fruit Fly Circus—and the investment in the Albury skate park. This Government will continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales throughout this pandemic to keep them safe, to keep them in work and to keep business open. From what base will the Opposition try to mount its case? It is a flimsy base. It could speak of what it was able to deliver during its last term of government, which delivered very little except a baked-in increase of 4 per cent per annum to tolls.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:07): Again, we get to the public interest debate and Government members are using superlatives and the member for Albury or "Gunna Clancy", as we know him on this side of the Chamber, because he is gonna do this and gonna do that—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: For those on this side of the Chamber, the reality is that this Government is big on superlatives and very small on delivery. I have the second largest electorate in the State. I think the member for Heffron has a bigger population than I have in Auburn. The reason I have the second biggest population is because this Government has put 10,000 apartments in Wentworth Point, 11,000 apartments in Sydney Olympic Park and 6,200 apartments in Carter Street—all in one small area. So we have ended up with 23,500 residents in Sydney Olympic Park and 24,000 in Wentworth Point. Originally it was 5,500 apartments in Carter Street, but now it is 6,200 apartments.

The Government made lots of promises about delivering infrastructure. It was going to deliver the M4 off ramp at Hill Road. In fact, it spent \$26 million saying, "We are going to design it and we are going to deliver it." What happened? It was dumped, quick as a wink. It was offering lots of policies, "We are gonna do this", "We are gonna do that", like its mate "Gunna Clancy", but as soon as it had to deliver them in this electorate where everybody is going, it was dumped. It is just like stage two of the Parramatta Light Rail. Some \$50 million was spent on planning, but when we try to get one Minister on that side to say they are actually going to deliver it—we hear crickets. No-one is getting up to say, "Yes, we will deliver that." It is always "I am going to do something" but they never actually do it.

People in Wentworth Point know about this because it took them years to even get a public school. The Department of Education said that school should have 1,000 kids in it—and it is going to. Government members only have to look at their own planning figures that say how many children are going in there. What did this Government do? It built a school for 400 kids. It said, "Oh, we will do a school for 1,000 kids later." The school was full on day one. It now has 15 demountables on the site, including some two storeys high, when it cannot fit them. Now the Government is saying to those people, "We'll build you Sydney Olympic Park High School", after a decade of people saying their kids have got nowhere to go. In fact, the catchment area has 48 students per learning space, compared with 28 students per learning space anywhere else in the State, which indicates where the investment should be.

What does this Government do? It does not say, "We'll put the school where it is most accessible." It does not say, "We'll put the school where there is space for it." It says, "We'll chuck it down on the foreshore park that we promised." Remember, this is the mob that talks in this Chamber about building a garden city. The Government promised this park in 2016 as part of the master plan for the 20,000 apartments built down there. The site is still sitting there with a big fence around it, and now the Government is going to put the high school on it—but not the whole high school. It is only going to build half a high school. It says, "We'll do what we did in Wentworth Point. We'll build a school for 800 now, and trust us—because you have seen us before—that we will do the other 1,500 later on. Don't you worry about that! We'll do it in stages." It does not matter that there are going to be 800 kids in it.

All the flats in these thousands and thousands of high-rise developments are built, by the way. It is not like these flats are going to appear at some later stage; they are all up. However, the promised infrastructure—these schools—has not been delivered. Not only have they not been delivered but also the space they have chosen for the school is the parkland. It is government land, even though it promised it as parkland. To pay for it, the residents have to take increased development right next to the park. That is the Government's idea of ongoing delivery of services to people in my electorate—and that is only at that school. Let us not even start on the subject of Carter Street, where there is meant to be a public school. Let us not even start on the subject of Newington Public School, which has got 20 demountables. They actually had to take them off the land because they were sinking into the marshland. This Government does not deliver to western Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hawkesbury will have her turn to speak in this debate.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:12): I speak in the public interest debate moved by my colleague the member for Albury. I think it is very important that members acknowledge the ongoing delivery of the best schools, hospitals, roads and transport for New South Wales. Like only a few members in this House, I sat in opposition for four years. I saw a lack of expenditure by the Labor Government. There was failure after failure and scandal after scandal. In particular, from the point of view of members for electorates like Albury and Tweed, in my electorate we saw a lack of everything. We had things promised that were never delivered, such as hospitals, schools and even police stations.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Oatley that members need to be seated in the Chamber and distanced 1.5 metres apart. The member for Tweed has the call.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I appreciate the support from my fellow members. The Coalition is delivering for New South Wales by ensuring that our economy is recovering and that workers and businesses are supported. It has been a tough two years for our State, but at every step of the way this Government has been taking measures to ensure that the people of New South Wales are supported, and we have taken action to protect lives and livelihoods. The Government sought to balance the critical health response with keeping our economy going and ensuring that we are able to come out stronger on the other side. Since March 2020 the New South Wales Government, along with the Commonwealth contributions, has made over \$47 billion available in COVID-19 health, economic and social responses. That includes \$2.8 million for the Government's recovery strategy, providing a range of support measures to address the social impacts of the lockdown. The latest investment was \$1 billion in the Omicron response package. That included the creation of the Small Business Support Program, the increase of the Small Business Fees and Charges Rebate, the extension of the commercial landlord hardship grants and the extension of the performing arts package.

Since December 2021 jobs figures have shown 32,000 more people were employed compared to pre-COVID levels in February 2020. The unemployment rate fell to 4 per cent in December, the second lowest rate on record, which means unemployment in New South Wales is 0.2 per cent lower than the national unemployment rate of 4.2 per cent. On another pleasing note, in December 2021 overall female employment was 42,000 above pre-pandemic levels. The female unemployment rate currently sits at 3.7 per cent. The Treasurer recently announced the Women's Economic Opportunities Review, which will consider how to improve women's economic participation and security over the next five to 10 years and identify support that will allow women to enter, re-enter and remain in the workforce. This is important work, and it shows the Government is looking to ensure it continues to deliver for New South Wales.

On a local level in the Tweed, we are well on the way to finishing the brand new \$700 million Tweed Valley Hospital—which I must admit those opposite wanted to stop, delay and put on the developer's mate's property. Currently, that property has had no development on it whatsoever. I had the pleasure of going to schools where we are spending \$120 million, which are coming out of the ground and will be ready by the middle of this year. That is the largest input into our local schools in our local regions. We have a new fire station at Kingscliff—another \$5 million—a new ambulance station, and the list goes on. I am so proud that the member for Albury has moved this public interest motion, because I believe the Government is really delivering.

As I said earlier in my contribution, I was here when Labor was in government and I saw nothing but disasters. I saw the lack of investment, particularly in the regions. I know you, Madam Deputy Speaker, would have suffered in Port Macquarie as well. This is all about spending money. It has been a while since I have been here in Sydney. Any which way one looks, there are cranes building things and people going to work. There are jobs out there; there is buoyancy out there. Sure, the Omicron variant has really put a handbrake on a lot of people's lifestyle, but people have jobs. We are investing for their lifestyle, not just now but into the future. We should be extraordinarily proud. Undoubtedly, those opposite will seek an amendment to change things, and this could be a history-making day a bit later. But I am proud to be part of this Government, which is looking after not its own self-interest but the interests of the good people of New South Wales. I commend the motion to the House.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:17): I contribute to debate on the arrogant, self-aggrandising public interest motion that the Government has moved—the lies that those opposite continue to tell themselves and our communities, hoping that no-one will notice the dire state of our schools, hospitals and transport. Just this morning thousands of nurses struck and rallied outside the oldest Parliament in Australia, and tens of thousands more did so across the State. We are in the middle of a healthcare crisis. I have three public hospitals in my electorate, and not a week goes by where a doctor, a nurse or an allied health worker does not contact my office, talking to me about the dire state of our public hospitals. In one month alone, Prince of Wales had 328 hours of unfilled nursing shifts. At Sydney Children's Hospital the wait time for non-emergency MRIs is months. Ultrasounds for kids are non-existent, and kids are being sent out to private practice to get them done.

This year alone, because of staffing issues caused by the Government, there will be 18 weeks with no after-hours radiologists for kids at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. There are near misses and unnecessary risks being taken because the Government has removed paediatric cardiac services from Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, and seriously ill children have to be transferred from Randwick to Westmead—all because the Government wants to centralise services and cut money. The Royal Hospital for Women, which is the only female hospital in all of New South Wales, did not have a mammogram machine. The foundation had to raise the money because this Government would not fork out the cash. Charity had to raise some money so women could get mammograms. Nurses are leaving New South Wales at an alarming rate. I have lost count of my personal friends who are moving to Queensland and Victoria for higher wages and better conditions.

Transport in the eastern suburbs is worse today than what it was when this Government was elected over 10 years ago. Since this Government was elected, my electorate has had 30 bus routes and close to 60 bus stops removed. Why? It is because the Government has streamlined services and abolished the public service element to sell it off to a private provider and to jam people onto its failed light rail. Since the last cuts came into effect on 5 December, my office has been inundated by people who are no longer able to get where they need to go, including seniors groups. I get called by seniors groups who tell me that members are no longer able to turn up because the bus stop outside their house has been removed and the old lady cannot now walk over a kilometre to the nearest bus stop. Just in the past two weeks a school bus stop was removed. I have had parents contacting me to say that kids are being left behind because there are not enough buses.

In regard to education, every single public primary school but one is at or over capacity in the Eastern Suburbs. Teachers are overworked and stressed out. The wait time for counsellors in public schools in my electorate is more than three months, and we are in a healthcare crisis and a youth mental health crisis. There is a growing reliance on Community Building Partnerships [CBPs]. In the past 12 months I signed off on a CBP grant to get a disability bathroom put into one of my schools because School Infrastructure would not sign off on it.

How is that fair? The Government promised upgrades to Randwick Girls High School and Randwick Boys High School but there is not a cent to be seen. We know that the Eastern Suburbs want a co-education public high school, but the Government refuses to listen. We cannot have the best schools if our teachers are on stress leave. We cannot have the best transport network if people are stuck at home and are isolated.

This Government is dysfunctional and deceitful. We have known that for a while, but we see today in this public interest debate the Government has brought forward that the Government is also delusional. A government that calls our hospitals "the best" on the same day that tens of thousands of people are rallying is absolutely and utterly delusional. If this Government thinks it is doing a good job, it is not only delusional; it is done.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Hawkesbury, I remind members that masks must be worn in the Chamber at all times unless a member is speaking.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:22): The New South Wales Government's strong economic management has enabled it to continue its track record of investment in infrastructure to drive economic growth, boost production capacity and enable innovation. Labor could not manage a budget in the best of times whereas our Coalition Government got through the challenges of the pandemic and continues to deliver. The State's record \$110.4 billion infrastructure commitment includes \$70.2 billion for public transport and roads, including Sydney Metro West and the Coffs Harbour bypass, \$10.4 billion for hospitals and health facilities, and \$8.4 billion for schools, TAFE and skills infrastructure. I am not making this up; it is actual fact.

The Government is continuing to invest heavily across New South Wales, with new infrastructure to support jobs growth, the delivery of vital public services and the ability to manage and respond to natural disasters and events. This significant infrastructure investment will ensure that New South Wales is well positioned to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic and can respond with agility to the challenges of today and tomorrow. Over the next four years the total infrastructure spend for Transport is over \$70 billion. This will deliver city-changing and city-making infrastructure—public transport services will be increased, road congestion will be reduced and jobs will be created. The Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport Project will become the transport spine for Greater Western Sydney. My local community will benefit from not only the influx of jobs and workers—the Hawkesbury is the land of the tradies—but also stronger transport connections through the Richmond rail line and future connections to Schofields metro.

Since 2011 more than \$22.2 billion has been committed in the Transport Access Program for public transport infrastructure improvements. The improvement to the accessibility of Clarendon railway station and its facilities has been welcomed, particularly when the Hawkesbury Show is coming up and that is the point of destination. Motorists are also pleased with the March and Bosworth streets intersection upgrade. I also mention the new Richmond bridge, which will become a reality thanks to the joint half-a-billion-dollar funding by the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments—the Commonwealth kicking in \$400 million and New South Wales committing to \$100 million.

Over the next four years Health will invest \$10.8 billion on capital infrastructure, with a program of \$3.2 billion in 2021-22. This record investment will ensure that the 29 new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities announced prior to the 2019 State election will commence before March 2023. I was pleased to recently welcome four new medical interns to the Hawkesbury District Health Service. They are part of 1,073 new medical interns who are joining the NSW Health system—a record number of new starters and the most of any State or Territory in Australia. In the largest ever health workforce boost in the State, the New South Wales Government has invested a record \$2.8 billion to recruit an additional 1,060 doctors, 5,000 nurses, 880 allied health staff and 1,360 hospital support staff over a four-year period.

Let us look at education infrastructure as well. Since late 2017 the New South Wales Government has invested more than \$7 billion to deliver 119 new and upgraded schools. The additional funds in the 2021-22 budget will grow the pipeline by \$7.9 billion worth of investment in new and upgraded schools over the next four years, and make this a \$15 billion school-building program. I do not know why members opposite are saying nothing is being spent on education. In 2021 some 21 new and upgraded schools were delivered, and seven were completed in time for day one, term one this year. A number of Hawkesbury schools benefited from the New South Wales Government's \$240 million Regional and Metro Renewal Program. Windsor Public School got new playground upgrades. Kurrajong East Public School got toilet facilities. There were canteens and kitchen facility upgrades in Glossodia. I do not want to be back in the Bob Carr build-nothing days. I am very glad I am here and now in the New South Wales Government.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:28): Delivering for New South Wales—the member for Albury has to be kidding. Is he competing for Banjo Paterson's fictional bush poem *Clancy of the Overflow*? Last Saturday there was a by-election in four electorates in this State and the Tories got flogged. There were massive swings against them in every seat—even in Strathfield.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: They went backwards.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: They are just completely tone-deaf.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Tweed will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: Ever since Gladys has gone and the extreme right wing has taken control of their party they have been lost. Today *The Sydney Morning Herald* wrote about a data breach for 500,000 organisations, including Defence sites, domestic violence shelters and missile sites in this State, because somebody made an upload error. That is delivering for New South Wales—

Mr Mark Coure: Missile sites? What missile sites?

Mr RON HOENIG: —disclosing the secret material that has been entrusted to the Government.

Mr Mark Coure: Name the missile sites.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: Listen to them talk about schools. According to today's *Sydney Morning Herald*, schools built just two years ago are already overcrowded because these guys are hopeless when it comes to planning.

Mr Mark Coure: Let's look at your track record.

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

Mr RON HOENIG: Does somebody want to tell the member for Oatley that he is a Minister now? He wants to behave himself and show the dignity of his office. Is the Government's public transport debacle delivering for New South Wales? The ferries that it bought from China do not fit at Manly Wharf at low tide. They took them out into Sydney Harbour and the rudders fell off and the windows broke. The RiverCats that the Government got to go up the Parramatta River do not fit under the bridges, do not go into reverse, cannot be used at night and are full of asbestos. Then there are the rail cars that the Government bought from Spain for the Inner West Light Rail that have huge cracks in them and have had to be taken off the tracks. The absolute classic is the \$2.3 billion spent on the inner-city light rail fleet—the 512 rail cars that are sitting up at Kangy Angy that do not fit the tracks and do not fit the tunnels.

But it is worse than that. Over Christmas I went up and had a look, because the member for Wyong told me about it and I did not believe him. They are actually housing these things in a building that these guys opposite built on a swamp. Not only did they build it on a swamp and had to build it up but also they have had to spend \$50 million on a bridge and grade separation simply for cars and trucks to get to where they are housing the inner-city light rail fleet. You would not believe it; you have to see it to believe it. These guys opposite say they are delivering for New South Wales; they should be hanging their heads in shame. The CBD and South East Light Rail project, which the Government initially announced would cost \$1.2 billion, rose to \$1.6 billion. It has now spent \$3 billion on a lemon that it got from Spain that nobody uses, and it had to pay \$536 million in compensation to the owners because it could not get the contract right.

Government members come in here and say they are terrific at delivering for New South Wales. They should hang their heads in shame. That did not come to their attention before they contributed to this debate because it was written for them by someone in some Minister's office. They did not hear the exhausted nurses outside the Parliament who are on strike for the first time in 10 years because they are absolutely exhausted. All they want is to be heard but at the last minute the Government applied for an injunction to stop the strike and protest meeting. You have to treat people with respect. The people of New South Wales have sent the Government a message in the past four by-elections. They want the Government to listen, but three days later it is still not listening. I move:

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

"this House calls on the Coalition Government to guarantee that the ongoing delivery for New South Wales of the best schools, hospitals, roads and transport will not be funded by selling public assets."

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:33): By leave: I start by acknowledging that we have in the Chamber a new Minister, who is my very good friend the member for Oatley. I congratulate him on his appointment. He

was recently described at a public event as a senior Minister. I had to quickly point out that he is the seniors Minister.

Mr Mark Coure: That was my joke last week.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will come to order. The member for Kiama has the call.

Mr GARETH WARD: I wouldn't talk about jokes if I were the member for Oatley. I acknowledge also my very good friend the member for Albury for moving this motion. I thank him as well as the member for Tweed and the member for Hawkesbury, who could be argued to be three cross-border MPs if you include the people's republic of the Central Coast with the member for Hawkesbury. I acknowledge also the very passionate speeches given by two great women of the labour movement, who are the member for Auburn and the member for Coogee. I thank the member for Auburn in particular for being a very strong advocate for homeless people. It is something in which she believes deeply. We share the views in relation to what more needs to be done. I congratulate her in particular. I thank my friend the member for Heffron for his characteristically effervescent and positive speech, which he delivered in this Chamber moments ago.

This is an opportunity to talk not only about what governments have done but also about what they are yet to do. In this Chamber today I asked the Minister for Health about three very important issues affecting the hospitals of my electorate. I thank the Minister for his genuine answer and hard work. I have never seen a health Minister work in so bipartisan and genuine a fashion through what has been an incredible time. I thank him for his answers on Shellharbour Hospital and the Shoalhaven hospital and for those investments. I acknowledge all of my South Coast and Illawarra colleagues who have worked with us on that project. I thank the Minister for ruling out the closure of David Berry Hospital, as he did in the Chamber today. That is now in *Hansard*. I appreciate that he did that. Delivering for New South Wales means delivering for one's electorate. I am very pleased to have secured that commitment in this Chamber today.

But I take the Government up on an issue that continues to be a source of frustration to me, not only as the local member and a resident of Bomaderry but also as a former student of Bomaderry High School. I am a proud product of public education and someone with a disability who went through the public system and came out the other end. I am very grateful for every single one of my teachers. Right now, because of a flood in a school that is more than 50 years old, there are numerous demountables on site. Every time it rains, there are classrooms and staffrooms that continue to be flooded even though they have been upgraded. That is not an appropriate environment for students to learn in and for teachers to inspire our next generation in.

I was able to secure \$2 million of planning money in the last budget, for which I am very grateful to the Minister's office. I have been advised that the Minister wants to deliver an upgrade over the forward estimates. I want to see that brought forward because those public school students, who deserve the best, are presently not getting it. We talk about delivering for New South Wales. I cannot imagine any group more important and deserving than the next generation, which needs that support. I encourage the Government to do that.

I call on the Government to make very clear its plans in relation to the upgrade of the South Coast rail line. I know that there is work going on in relation to the duplication of the South Coast line and the delivery of hybrid—diesel and electric—trains. I thank the former transport Minister, the former member for Bega, for his commitment in relation to that, but no information has been provided to the public on when that will be completed. I encourage the Minister in the other place to do that. I will seek to make sure that occurs.

When we talk about delivering for New South Wales, what is terribly sad is that often the most vulnerable are not delivered for. I encourage the Government, as I said at the start when I acknowledged the work of the member for Auburn, to continue to invest funds into those who are homeless or seeking housing, because, as we see this pandemic develop, we see also that one of the greatest pressures being experienced in regional New South Wales in particular is stress from housing and mortgages, as people are having trouble not only with finding housing but also with paying their rents. This is going to be an intergenerational challenge.

If the Government wants to deliver for people, delivering for people who are struggling with home ownership and with even entering the housing market is incredibly important. I commend to the Government the Together Home initiative I started as Minister, which has had extraordinary success in halving the rate of rough sleepers. But, as the member for Auburn would rightly point out, it is not just rough sleepers. It is also people who are in dilapidated housing and overcrowded housing, as well as people who cannot get housing. So, whilst I think this debate has been incredibly good for highlighting the number of great things that have been done in this State, there is still much to do, and I will be holding the Government to account every step of the way.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind members that when they are in the Chamber they should be seated 1.5 metres apart and be wearing masks at all times.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:39): By leave: I acknowledge the member for Albury for moving the motion, which speaks to the Government's ongoing delivery of the best schools, hospitals, roads and transport for New South Wales. In my electorate there is a strong story to tell. As the local member for the past 11 years, I have seen my community benefit from increased spending in infrastructure. In the past 11 years the following projects have been delivered, amongst many others: the \$341 million redevelopment of Concord Hospital; the total knockdown and rebuild of Lucas Gardens School; a new primary school at Victoria Avenue in Concord West; the total knockdown and rebuild of Russell Lea Public School; the WestConnex project is delivering faster travel times in my electorate; the upgrade of every ferry wharf, including Drummoyne, Cockatoo Island, Chiswick, Abbotsford and Cabarita; and the upgrade of every railway station, including Concord West and North Strathfield, with easy access ramps. These are just a handful of projects, but the list goes on. The Metro West project continues. My electorate is the only electorate in New South Wales with three metro stops.

However, in acknowledging all of the Government's achievements so far, it is important to look to the future. I hope this Government will keep delivering for the people of my community. I am passionate about my electorate. At the heart of the Government's decisions to deliver key public benefits should be a core principle to improve amenities and facilities that are important to communities. I will fight hard to hold the Government to account to deliver many projects for my community. Concord High School is much in need of an upgrade because it is the only public high school in my electorate. With 16 demountables there is a litany of maintenance issues, including leaky roofs. The Government should upgrade Concord High School as a matter of urgency and priority.

The 439 bus service was a much-loved and well-utilised service that is gone; it should be restored. We need investment in a second Bay Run project for the City of Canada Bay Council. We need to provide upgraded transport services to residents, particularly in the growing community of Rhodes. We need to deliver the promised new car park for Concord hospital. I have spoken numerous times in the House about Concord High School and the need to make a significant investment in that school. As it stands, Concord High School is currently over capacity, with aging infrastructure that needs to be renewed. The Government must address the matter of student numbers and invest in a vision or master plan for the school so that there is an adequate and timed plan to upgrade the school amenities and facilities.

Since I last spoke about Concord High School in the House, I am pleased to advise that funding has been provided to upgrade some of the bathroom facilities at the school, and works are in place to upgrade the oval and seating areas. I congratulate the P&C of Concord High School for working so hard for their school community. I have been impressed by its dedication, and it has been a pleasure working with parents to bring about positive change and improvements. I acknowledge the principal, Mr Victor Newby, and the hardworking staff who make a difference every day by coming to work and educating our youth.

Furthermore, I stress that the Government must prioritise the health and wellbeing of my community by helping the City of Canada Bay Council to deliver a second Bay Run. There are some 35 kilometres of foreshore and we want to link those paths to create a continuous 15-kilometre walk. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of viable open spaces and the benefits of exercise to a person's physical and mental health. Promoting access to the foreshore and ensuring that the foreshore is accessible for all should be a priority, to encourage active transport and healthy lifestyles. I am supportive of this project and am working closely with City of Canada Bay Council Mayor Angelo Tsirekas in delivering the project. We call on this Government to invest in improving public amenities and facilities for my community. The project is in its infancy stages. We anticipate that it will cost approximately \$20 million and are hoping that the Government will provide funding as soon as possible. I will work closely with the Government so that it funds this vital community project in my electorate.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:44): In reply: I thank the members on both sides of the House who engaged in this public interest debate. I mention the member for Heffron and his comments about the material written by this side of the House. I hope that he did not write his own material—talk about the Happy Endings Comedy Club, with the start to his routine. I go back to the last words in my speech where I spoke about what the Opposition would say and the basis on which they would try to mount their case. I said they could speak about what they were able to deliver during their last term of government, but we knew they would have very little to say on that. I did not mention that they could use the other tactic of speaking about their counterparts in other Labor States, which they did.

The member for Coogee spoke of how so many of her friends are flocking to Victoria—where they can join in code brown in Victoria's hospital system. In Queensland there has been the conversion of maternity services to COVID facilities, meaning women have to travel up to an hour more to access maternity facilities. Better still, we could be like the member for Auburn and talk about the hermit kingdom, where the response to the COVID pandemic is to put your fingers in your ears and pretend it is not happening. The member for Auburn clearly has her hands over her eyes because she cannot see the projects that are happening throughout the State. I thank the

members for the electorates of Tweed, Hawkesbury, Kiama and Drummoyne and acknowledge their comments, particularly those of the member for Kiama that there is much that has been achieved and there is much to be achieved. I thank him for those words.

Also as the member for Kiama said, there is the sense of investing in the next generation. As has been outlined today, in health and particularly education the focus is on the next generation. Government members have listed projects such as the Bradfield project, the Sydney Metro West, the Metro North West, the Regional Job Creation Fund, LED lighting upgrades in schools, and \$280.2 million in IT projects in health. As the member for Drummoyne said, the list goes on. The New South Wales Government will continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales, as it has throughout this pandemic, to keep people safe and in work and businesses open. Those opposite, with their lack of vision and agenda, know in their heart of hearts that they are thankful they are sitting in the bleachers where they can make noise but not have to carry the responsibility of government—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coogee will remain silent.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: —through such challenging times.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Albury has moved a motion, to which the member for Heffron has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment moved by the member for Heffron be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes41
Noes43
Majority.....2

AYES

Aitchison, J	Doyle, T	O'Neill, M
Atalla, E	Finn, J	Park, R
Bali, S	Harris, D	Parker, J
Barr, C	Harrison, J	Piper, G
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Saffin, J
Car, P	Hoenig, R	Scully, P
Catley, Y	Hornery, S	Smith, T
Chanthivong, A	Kamper, S	Tesch, L
Cotsis, S	Lalich, N	Voltz, L
Crakanthorp, T	Leong, J	Warren, G
Daley, M	McDermott, H	Washington, K
Dalton, H	McGirr, J	Watson, A (teller)
Dib, J	Mehan, D (teller)	Zangari, G
Donato, P	Mihailuk, T	

NOES

Anderson, K	Hancock, S	Saunders, D
Ayres, S	Hazzard, B	Sidgreaves, P
Clancy, J	Henskens, A	Sidoti, J
Conolly, K	Kean, M	Singh, G (teller)
Cooke, S	Layzell, D	Smith, N (teller)
Coure, M	Lee, G	Speakman, M
Crouch, A	Lindsay, W	Stokes, R
Davies, T	Marshall, A	Taylor, M
Dominello, V	O'Dea, J	Toole, P
Elliott, D	Pavey, M	Tuckerman, W
Evans, L	Petinos, E	Upton, G
Gibbons, M	Preston, R	Ward, G
Greenwich, A	Provest, G	Williams, R
Griffin, J	Roberts, A	Wilson, F
Gulaptis, C		

PAIRS

Lynch, P
Minns, C

Bromhead, S
Perrottet, D

Amendment negatived.

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

The House divided.

Ayes47
Noes36
Majority.....11

AYES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Crouch, A
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Donato, P
Elliott, D
Evans, L
Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J

Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Henskens, A
Kean, M
Layzell, D
Lee, G
Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
McGirr, J
O'Dea, J
Pavey, M
Petinos, E
Piper, G
Preston, R
Provest, G

Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Sidoti, J
Singh, G (teller)
Smith, N (teller)
Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Ward, G
Williams, R
Wilson, F

NOES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dib, J
Doyle, T

Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
McDermott, H
Mehan, D (teller)
Mihailuk, T

O'Neill, M
Park, R
Parker, J
Saffin, J
Scully, P
Smith, T
Tesch, L
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A (teller)
Zangari, G

PAIRS

Bromhead, S
Perrottet, D

Lynch, P
Minns, C

Motion agreed to.

Community Recognition Statements

ROBYN DOWNHAM

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:05): I congratulate Robyn Downham, who has been awarded Citizen of the Year in the Central Coast Council Australia Day awards. Robyn started the River Cares Group Inc., which has worked tirelessly over many years to initiate a number of ideas to support communities right along the Hawkesbury River, such as raising funds for defibrillators to be positioned along the river and the creation of a

community information day to bring together people and local organisations across the river. It is important to mention that Robyn was crucial in the development of the Spencer community-led emergency management plan, which serves to protect the Spencer community and aid its recovery from several disasters, including bushfires and floods. I also note that Robyn was fantastic in getting a Peter Rush sculpture on the edge of the river at Spencer. She has been instrumental in working on improving communications for emergency services and communities across Spencer and the mountains district. Thank you, Robyn, for your wonderful work in our community and congratulations on everything you do.

ERIN PERROT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:06): I congratulate Erin Perrot, who was recognised as Central Coast Local Health District's 2021 Emerging Leader. The award was part of the Caring for the Coast awards, which celebrated the hard work and dedication of team members in a tough year for healthcare workers. Erin works as a clinical nurse educator at Wyong and has been recognised for her innovative ideas, such as Falls Friday, where staff and patients wear orange to draw attention to inpatient falls. Since the introduction of this initiative, falls in the ward M3 have decreased from 7.93 to 2.8 per 1,000 bed days. I also recognise the finalists in the category: Dr Rebecca Richardson, who is the acting clinical director – women, children and families and engages and mentors the junior workforce; and Rani Goodacre, who is a psychologist working as a clinical lead in the Connected Recovery Program. The Caring for the Coast awards recognise excellence in the core values of collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment. I congratulate Erin on this fantastic recognition.

GREEK FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:07): This year the Greek Festival of Sydney celebrates 40 years. It has become the Sydney Greek community's most prestigious event and one of the largest cultural events in Australia. The event started as a *parelasi*—a march—in the early eighties at suburban Addison Road in Marrickville, moving to Campbell Oval in Canterbury. As its popularity grew, the festival moved to Brighton-Le-Sands in the nineties before cementing itself as a key Sydney event on the stage at Darling Harbour. The festival celebrates the Greek-Australian lifestyle, culture and heritage through a wide program of events including theatre, film, literature, exhibitions, lectures, music, dance, cross-cultural activities and a two-day outdoor event. The festival includes many artists from Australia and around the world. I urge everybody, no matter where they come from, to attend this year's cultural event. I acknowledge festival chair Nia Karteris, Harry Danalis and everybody involved over the past 40 years. I thank the House.

PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:08): Today I am excited to acknowledge in the House the 2022 Port Macquarie-Hastings Environmental Citizen of the Year, Susan Baker, who was recognised for her instrumental work in bush regeneration activities in the Camden Haven. A passionate warrior for environmental sustainability and weed eradication projects, Sue Baker was recognised for her tireless and ongoing work in bush regeneration programs, including work at Diamond Head and Kylie's Beach, and facilitating relationships with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to plan and complete large-scale restoration of Crowdy Bay National Park. Sue is the founder of Dunbogan Bushcare group, an organisation that aims to restore native plant species, remove noxious weeds and undertake erosion control. Her committed team of volunteers has restored a number of local habitats since the group formed in 1999, with their work appreciated and assisted through various environmental grants. Sue has also coordinated Clean Up Australia Day in Laurieton for the past 17 years, and in 2018 established a koala food tree corridor at Pilot Beach-Gogleys Lagoon. Thank you, Sue, for your incredible efforts and for encouraging the community to care for our natural environment.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE BLACKTOWN AWARDS CEREMONY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:09): On Saturday 11 December 2021 I was pleased to attend the 2021 awards ceremony night for St John Ambulance NSW Blacktown Division adults. The awards ceremony recognises the brave and tireless work of selfless volunteers throughout the preceding year. The awards included the National Emergency Medal for the 2020 bushfire crisis, the Distinguished Membership Award which recognises 25 years of service, the Distinguished Membership Service Medal for 50 years and the Certificate of Appreciation in light of the New South Wales flood crisis of 2021. Clinical educator Mr David Lam and member of the Order of St John Mr Danny Fox addressed the awards ceremony. I also had the pleasure of addressing the ceremony to present St John Ambulance Blacktown with a new ambulance vehicle, funded by the 2020 Prospect Community Building Partnership grant, and the replacement of fencing, funded by the 2021 Prospect Community Building Partnership grant. I thank superintendent Mr Keith Avery and all the St John Ambulance Blacktown volunteers for their fantastic efforts during the past year in protecting our community. They deserve to be recognised for delivering outstanding health and community services during times of need.

LEADING AGE SERVICES AUSTRALIA

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:10): The Leading Age Services Australia [LASA] presents annual National Excellence in Age Services awards, recognising the outstanding achievements and contributions by LASA members. I congratulate Emily Skeen, care service manager at Grasmere Terrace of Carrington Care, on winning LASA's Rising Star award. Emily began in age services as a casual registered nurse in 2017. Since then, Emily has shown a passion for delivering exceptional clinical care. From day one of her time at Carrington Care, Emily has improved consumer care, service outcomes and staff engagement and motivation. Emily has also taken on a role as a clinical mentor and resource staff member for the improvement of wound management across the organisation. I again congratulate Emily on winning the Rising Star award, a well-deserved award, and for her commitment to community service in the aged-care sector in Camden.

NORM ROWLAND

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:11): I wish a very happy birthday to Warrigal aged-care founder Norm Rowland, who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 25 January. In 1967 Norm was president of the Shellharbour Lions Club. He rallied the local community and became the driving force behind Warrigal's first aged-care facility, which opened its doors in 1968 in Mount Warrigal. It started as a 10-bed residence staffed entirely by volunteers and has now grown to provide 27 services to more than 3,000 older Australians across 14 locations in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Warrigal remains supported by its many dedicated volunteers. Norm's involvement at Warrigal continued as chair of the board, and he remains a company member to this day. Norm has been awarded an OAM for his services to the community and the aged-care sector. To celebrate Norm's birthday, a small afternoon tea was held in his home, where a new portrait of Norm was unveiled for the first time. Warrigal commissioned 2021 Archibald Prize winner Peter Wegner to complete the portrait for the occasion, ensuring that future generations remember Norm's critical contribution to Warrigal and to aged-care services in the Illawarra.

HAWKESBURY RIDING CLUB ARENA

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:12): I update the House on my attendance on Sunday 13 February 2022 to celebrate and cut the ribbon at the opening of the new multipurpose indoor arena for the Hawkesbury Riding Club at Clarendon. Back in 2014 president Wendy Pike had a vision to build an indoor arena on the grounds. The club started fundraising, secured some great local sponsors and managed to raise around 60 per cent of the funds. The COVID crisis shut down the club, which made it tough to fundraise further. But with a \$100,000 grant from the New South Wales Government through the Greater Cities Sport Facility Fund, the Hawkesbury Riding Club was able to employ local tradies to get the project built. Riders and horses paraded in the arena, and we all felt so proud to showcase this fantastic project, which I think is one of the best facilities for equestrian lovers in New South Wales. I congratulate and commend president Wendy Pike and everyone at the Hawkesbury Riding Club for working towards this successful achievement.

TRIBUTE TO WENDY MIDDLETON

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:13): I pay tribute to Wendy Middleton, former CEO of Argyle Housing, who sadly passed away in January this year. I met Wendy shortly after I was first elected. She had come to tell me about her vision for redeveloping the suburb of Tolland in Wagga Wagga. She was a passionate advocate, whose concern was the wellbeing of those she was trying to help. With her wonderful purple hair, her quiet, assured manner and her strong determination, she was like a breath of fresh air in the world of government and public policy. Wendy would advocate to anyone about her project, winning the confidence of Ministers and administrators alike. In September 2021 the Uranquinty Country Women's Association held an online seminar to highlight the issue of homelessness for older women. Wendy was a key presenter, and I will never forget the courage and commitment she showed when she addressed us from the hospital where she was being treated. Wendy gave us a vision and the inspiration to achieve it. Wendy's sudden death will be a blow to her colleagues, her friends and especially her family. They have my deepest sympathies.

VOYAGER POINT ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEER GROUP

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:15): I congratulate the Voyager Point Environment Volunteer Group for receiving this year's Fraser Environment Award at Liverpool City Council's Australia Day awards. The group has remained consistent and active for over 18 years and has remained committed to improving, protecting and maintaining the natural environment in Voyager Point. Once a month the group members meet and volunteer their time to regenerate the bushland around the area. Previously, the group carried out restoration of the bushland at the entrance to Voyager Point. However, it mainly focuses on weeding and revegetation with local native plant species. The group's enthusiasm continues to grow every year, keeping members nice and active. Congratulations to the Voyager Point Environment Volunteer Group for being recognised through this award. It

is well deserved and it shows that the group's work does not go unnoticed by the local community. I look forward to hearing more of its achievements in the future.

NEW SOUTH WALES NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:15): I recognise the nurses and midwives and the many community members who are taking strike action today. That nurses and midwives—heroes on the front line of our State's fight against COVID-19—have to take to the streets to be heard is frankly an embarrassment. Over the course of the pandemic, our local nurses and midwives have faced long hours, understaffing and overwork, literally putting their lives and those of their families on the line to keep our community safe. I thank them for their work but acknowledge they deserve much more than thanks. They deserve a government that listens to their concerns, respects their work and is in their corner.

I too acknowledge the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the extraordinary work of nurses, midwives and all other workers in our health system, as well as everything they have done to protect us from COVID-19, particularly those at the Canterbury Hospital and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and across the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. To every nurse, midwife and health worker in the inner west, please know that I stand with you.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL KALIMNIOS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:17): I am deeply saddened as our community mourns the unexpected passing of Albury Wodonga Health chief executive Michael Kalimnios. Only halfway through his five-year contract, Michael's aim was to improve clinical leadership and to make significant changes in the culture of the large organisation that is Albury Wodonga Health. Michael was a gentle and humble man. His role took him to both sides of the border, steering the community through its most challenging times, from bushfires to pandemics to border restrictions. A well-respected individual, with a genuine ability to navigate through difficult issues, he demonstrated real leadership through his vision for the future of Albury Wodonga Health. My thoughts are with Michael's family in Queensland, his work colleagues and his friends. He loved a life of service and will be remembered fondly for his substantial contribution to the betterment of the health services provided to the border community.

ISIS-RAE RONAN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:17): Today I recognise Isis-Rae Ronan of Griffith. Born in a refugee camp in Thailand, Isis-Rae completed her studies through TAFE and is now a well-known and highly regarded local artist. When Isis-Rae was asked to design a mural for Griffith TAFE, she eagerly accepted. After some consideration, she decided that involving TAFE students that have been learning to speak English would be an excellent way to promote togetherness and multiculturalism. Isis-Rae, along with excited TAFE students, came together to design a colourful mural that displayed doves, hands, flowers, rainbows and universal symbols. The goal was to create a piece that everyone, no matter where they have come from, could relate to visually. I commend Isis-Rae on her dedication to uniting her community and thank her for designing a beautiful mural for the TAFE centre.

MICHELLE BOUNDY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:18): Michelle Boundy is quickly becoming a very familiar name around Newcastle. As the local face of the Stay Kind movement, Michelle has driven initiatives that promote harm reduction through kindness. These have included the 50 Walks Project, which saw Michelle take 50 walks with members of the community, and the Bathers Way 50 where she walked a phenomenal 50 kilometres in one day to promote World Kindness Day. The concepts are simple, but Michelle embraces them wholeheartedly and always with a smile. Michelle's passion and energy are endless and contagious. Our community is all the better for her contributions.

Private Members' Statements

CAPSTONE KIDS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (18:19): I recognise the extraordinary accomplishments of Capstone Kids, a student-led STEM club at Lane Cove Public School within my electorate. The group was established in 2017 by two eager students, Grace Patterson and Ryley Nolan, who wanted to spend more time learning about outer space. The group has grown from an idea from two eager students to now having 20 students who undertake science-based activities outside of school hours. Since the establishment of the group, the students have undertaken experiments in a DNA research lab, competed in the Spectra, Eureka and Young Scientist awards, established their own YouTube channel and been published in both the New South Wales science teacher journal and the *Australian Science Teachers Journal*. The group has also

established relationships with some fairly prominent bodies, including the Australian Space Agency, the CSIRO, the Australian Museum, the Japanese Space Agency, Texas A&M University and even NASA.

Not even COVID could slow down this extraordinary group of students. When COVID first hit, the group turned the school's frog pond and surrounding area into a makeshift STEM classroom for incursions. The students stocked the area with native fish and frogs, established a small garden and installed a hydroponics and aquaponics system, powered by their very own solar panels. Additionally, during this period the group also lodged a submission with the One Giant Leap Australia Foundation to participate in a two-year program where the students will be conducting a number of experiments on Australian wattleseeds that have spent six months on the International Space Station. Not only was the group's submission successful but also Capstone Kids was selected by the foundation to be first of the 200 participating schools to receive their seeds.

The group has also received international recognition for its work. Just recently Grace Patterson and Ryley Nolan were selected to serve as the youth co-chairs of the World Automation Congress of 2021, one of the world's leading science and engineering conferences. A presentation to this congress by Ryley and Flynn, two of the group's members, even caught the attention of Microsoft after the boys used the Minecraft program to demonstrate what a smart city on Mars could look like.

I am in utter awe of all that Capstone Kids has achieved during its four short years. Despite being an extracurricular club, it has had a significant impact on its broader school community. It is a testament to what our children can accomplish when we support their interests and their learning, and it truly demonstrates to these young students of space that the sky is the limit. The club would not have been possible if it were not for the support of parents Anthony Nolan and Emily Patterson, who have been there since the very beginning and have worked tirelessly to support the vision of the students. It would be remiss of me not to mention the support that the school executive has provided the group, especially principals Terry McKinnon and Talia Morgan, whose devotion to the growth and development of all the students at Lane Cove Public School is second to none. I once again congratulate all parents, teachers and students who are involved in Capstone Kids on their astounding achievements.

TRIBUTE TO FRED MOORE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:23): On 21 January 2022 the Illawarra lost a true legend with the sad passing of union stalwart Fred Moore at the age of 99. Fred, a Dapto local, honorary Indigenous Elder and long-time union activist, was a well-known and much-loved identity of the Illawarra region and beyond. My heart is heavy. We have so much to thank Fred for. He was a hero of the working class and somebody I was proud to call a mate. Fred paved the way for workers, dedicating his life to the labour movement and fighting to improve workers' rights.

Fred was born in Cobar in New South Wales on 5 September 1922. At the age of 14 Fred started working at the mines in western New South Wales and moved to Dapto in 1952 with his wife, May, and their three children. In Dapto, Fred worked at the Nebo Colliery and later for Australian Iron and Steel, a subsidiary of BHP, which at that time also owned 16 of the 27 coalmines in the Illawarra. Fred dedicated his life to the union movement and was an active member of the New South Wales Miners' Federation—which later became the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union—for more than 30 years. During this time Fred witnessed many mine deaths, had a few close calls himself and even lost a finger.

The Miners' Federation made safety its key focus because back then the individual was solely responsible for their own safety. At Wongawilli, miners had to walk to the top of the escarpment and their workday started only when they reached the actual mine face. Fred and the Miners' Federation fought not only for the right to transport but also for the workday to begin at the bottom of the hill, when the miners were ready to work. Fred always prioritised supporting women and families impacted by incidents in the mines. Each and every day they never knew whether the miners were going to come home. Members of the Miners' Women's Auxiliary played an important role. They supported the striking miners and also organised community support. In the 1980s Fred did not hesitate to step forward to support the jobs for women campaign. He attended their tent embassy and brought coal to keep them warm. This campaign gave the political momentum for women to later work in the open cut coalmines and in the maritime industry.

Fred played an integral part in the unions' push for equality and rights for First Nations people. He was at the big Sydney Town Hall meeting on 29 April 1957 where a petition was launched to recognise Aboriginal people in the Constitution. Fred brought this petition back to the Illawarra mines and gathered thousands of signatures. In 1961, together with emerging First Nations leaders, Fred set up the South Coast Aboriginal Advancement League. Regarded as a formidable action-based movement, its founding predated the 1967 referendum and the Wave Hill walk-off. Fred was one of the very few non-Indigenous Australians to have ever been made an honorary Elder of the Aboriginal community in the region. He was initiated as an Aboriginal tribal Elder in the Illawarra

and a blood brother to the Jerrinja people. Fred was known locally in the community as "Uncle Fred", "Dad" or "Pop".

Fred was also known for his internationalism. He was active in anti-apartheid groups such as the Free Nelson Mandela group. He was also a member of the Cuba Friendship Society, Chile Solidarity Committee, and Committee in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean. At various times he was also the president of these groups. Those who knew Fred will know well that he never missed a May Day march in Wollongong. In fact, in 2020 when May Day activities were cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we brought May Day to Fred's Dapto home, planting flags on his front lawn. That is what you do in a union town. I will miss seeing his smiling face leading the annual May Day march in Wollongong.

In his fight for equality for all, Fred stood proudly for what he believed in, and we will continue to reap the rewards of his dedication towards and activism in improving the lives of our communities. He was, and always will be, a champion of the working class. My thoughts are with Fred's family and loved ones at this sad time, but particularly his daughter, Sue, who meticulously looked after and cared for him until the very end. I am sure many will agree that Fred's passing leaves a huge void in the hearts of so many people who knew and loved him. I will leave you with these final words, one of Fred's most prolific and memorable quotes, "When the workers take to the streets, the streets belong to the workers." Rest in peace, Fred; you will be missed.

TRIBUTE TO THE HON. GEORGE BRENNER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience) (18:27): It is with great sadness that I advise the House of the death of the Hon. George Brenner, MLC. Mr Brenner was a well-respected and well-known man in regional New South Wales, making major contributions to the communities of Murrumburrah, Harden, Jugiong, Cootamundra and Gundagai. Mr Brenner came from humble beginnings. Born in Marko, Hungary, in 1929, he was educated in his home country from 1940 to 1947 before migrating to Australia, where he settled in the riverside village of Jugiong. He was quick to become a man of the land, with stints in the agriculture and trucking industries. Mr Brenner also had strong interests in golf and horseracing, which he was heavily involved in as a member of multiple organisations throughout his life.

Joining the Australian Labor Party in 1964 as a member of the Jugiong branch, Mr Brenner had a lengthy career in politics spanning almost three decades. Over this time he held numerous positions, including being a member of the Legislative Council from 1981 to 1991 and a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety from 1984 to 1991. He was president of Hume Federal Executive Council from 1962 to 1970, deputy president of Murrumburrah Central from 1970 to 1975, candidate for the Federal seat of Hume in 1975 and 1977, and treasurer of Hume Federal Executive Council and Burrinjuck State Electoral Council. With Mr Brenner's passion for politics came his passion for the community, whom he served on several councils and boards, including as a councillor on the Demondrille Shire Council from 1971 to 1974, and as a councillor on the Harden Shire Council from 1974 to 1975 and from 1977 to 1983. He was a member of Gundagai District Services Club, Cootamundra Ex-Servicemen's & Citizens Memorial Club, Harden Country Club, Cootamundra Turf Club, the Gundagai racing club, Jugiong Golf Club and Gundagai Returned Servicemen's Leagues Club.

Mr Brenner was particularly proud of his time and duties on the Staysafe Committee. Through his work in the trucking industry, he understood the importance of keeping our roads safe for all, especially in rural areas. He was a true gentleman and always stuck to his word. He fought hard for the communities he represented to make sure no town, village or organisation was left behind. Our region will forever be in debt to Mr Brenner for his services. Throughout his time on numerous councils, committees and boards, he made changes for the better, which are still being felt among our communities today. Mr Brenner leaves a legacy of knowledge and achievements in his wake. The wider communities of Jugiong, Harden, Murrumburrah, Cootamundra and Gundagai will forever cherish and thank Mr Brenner for his years of service to the area. His accomplishments will continue to live on for many generations to come. I extend my sincere condolences to Mr Brenner's family and friends, including his wife, Betty, and daughters Kerry, Louise and Jocelyn. May he rest in peace.

WOLLONDILLY SHIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:31): The residents of Wollondilly recently had a chance to make their voices heard at the local government elections. That election brought some new faces but it also saw some experienced and long-serving councillors re-elected. I pay tribute to my local sparring partner, and a 17-year veteran, Councillor Judy Hannan, and also local Liberal Party members Councillor Michael Banasik and Councillor Blair Briggs. I know from my conversation with residents that they want community-minded councillors who wish to preserve the local character of Wollondilly. They also want a council that will run efficiently, address critical issues and get things, such as the local roads, done in a timely manner. On some of the local roads you need a Bigfoot four-wheel drive to get over the potholes.

A number of new councillors were elected. I hope that they will each bring a fresh perspective and energy to Wollondilly council. Councillor Beverley Spearpoint, who resides in the north ward, has been heavily involved in the community. She plays an integral part in the founding and running of various community groups, such as the Warragamba and Silverdale playgroup and swim club, and is a brownie leader. Importantly, Councillor Spearpoint is committed to remaining an independent voice and also to improving transport around the shire. Hilton Gibbs, from the shire's north ward, is another community leader and a member of the Liberal Party. He was previously a Wollondilly Shire councillor, and served as deputy mayor in 2015 and 2016. Hilton has lived in The Oaks for 26 years. In that time he has been involved in local sporting clubs and committees. He has played an integral part in the Light Up The Oaks events at Christmastime and has served as president of The Oaks' local chamber of commerce. Hilton promises to be an advocate to upgrade the sporting facilities and bring a commonsense approach to council. His particular focus is on roads and supporting rural industry.

Suzu Brandstater, from the shire's east ward, is a mum, a former teacher at Picton High School and an active member of her community. I do not doubt that she will be a true voice for the people and ensure that their issues and concerns are heard with care and an open mind. Councillor Brandstater has a strong interest in any changes to the shire, having lived there for more than three decades. She is determined to see that lifestyle and environment remain important considerations for the council, especially as they relate to planning and development within Wollondilly.

Also from the shire's east ward is Paul Rogers, who is a true local, having lived in Bargo for 35 years and been educated at local schools such as Bargo Public School and Picton High School. He has also worked as a local motor mechanic for many years and won Mechanic of the Year at NRMA. He knows a lot about the motor industry. Paul also served at the Bargo Rural Fire Brigade for 20 years. During the bad fires in 2019, I was on the phone to him every day getting updates on what was happening on the ground. He served there as a deputy captain. Councillor Rogers has well and truly served the Wollondilly community for many years, and is passionate about improving the council's communication and engagement with its community as well as advocating for the strategic maintenance of community infrastructure to meet community needs. His experience of working in road safety since 2004 and his current role with Transport for NSW in road safety operations management will be invaluable to the council, especially as we work towards improving road safety in the shire.

Matthew Deeth has been elected deputy mayor and will no doubt be a great support to our new mayor. He has been a Wollondilly Shire councillor since 2016, and served as mayor from December 2018 to September 2020. He has lived in Wollondilly all his life and is proud to be raising two young children with his wife in Menangle. Matt recognises that Wollondilly is on the cusp of the biggest growth it has ever seen and that the shire needs urgent attention to improve existing infrastructure.

Last but not least, I congratulate our newly elected mayor, Matt Gould, otherwise known as "the Hatman"—Gotham City has Batman and Warragamba and Silverdale have the Hatman, and that is Mayor Gould. Matt and I have a lot in common: We are fathers, we wear big hats and we work hard to get things done for the people of Wollondilly. I have been getting to know Wollondilly's first popularly elected mayor for the past few months; he is excellent to work with. We will work hard to update infrastructure for the area. I congratulate each of the newly elected councillors and popularly elected Mayor Gould. I look forward to working alongside council this year to serve the needs of the Wollondilly Shire community.

COVID-19 AND WALLSEND ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (18:36): Small businesses in the Wallsend electorate struggled through two years of the pandemic, and many are at tipping point. They need support and clarity from the Government now more than ever. The current business downturn due to COVID-19 is shattering local small business owners. The Government fails to provide appropriate access to financial support for small business operators and owners who have a turnover of less than \$75,000, and there are quite a few of them.

Recently I was contacted by a number of local businesses in desperate need of support from the New South Wales Government—support that they are not receiving and is denied to them. I spoke to Troy Clarke, who is a foundation member of the Newcastle Knights and a successful businessman. He is the owner of a ZoRiley's, a local Waratah cafe. His business is experiencing such a downturn that he is very concerned that he will not survive without government support. His downturn in trade over the past two years has been so severe that his yearly turnover has dropped below the \$75,000 threshold, making him ineligible for any assistance. When I asked Troy if his business would survive he said:

I can't see us lasting another 12 months. I do this all on my own. It is stressful enough running a business day by day without worrying about the future. But what can you do?

It is the small corner shops that keep the economy alive, not the big-end restaurants. The amount that the Government throws to the top end is unbelievable. The Government should be looking after everyone, not just the

rich, and that is what this package is set up for. Troy is one of many small business owners facing a bleak future. I also spoke to Murray, who owns a local catering business. Murray told me:

I am a small business owner occasionally employing local subcontractors. I turned over less than \$75,000 last financial year and so miss out on the new assistance but my bills, fees and charges continue. I have to take a part-time job to avoid losing my home. This is not very easy for me at all. The small amount of money that was available in the last assistance package would really have helped save my business. If I don't get some assistance I won't be able to continue.

Everyone I spoke to is damaged and dismayed by the Government's lack of care for their struggles. These are incredibly trying times and we must make sure that nobody is left behind. The Government must ensure that businesses who have a turnover of less than \$75,000 per annum—and we all have many of them in our electorates—receive support payments similar to those that were previously provided. These payments are no longer there, leaving the small businesses most in need with no support.

I have written to the Treasurer and the Minister for Small Business in the hope that they will come to the table and ensure small business owners are also looked after and given the assistance they require. I again urge the Minister to do the right thing by the people of New South Wales and allow the most vulnerable small business owners to participate in the 2022 support program by easing its restrictive requirements—and they are restrictive. You do not build a strong economy by neglecting your small business community. We need to make sure that nobody is left behind during this incredibly difficult time.

COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:41): I am privileged to give my first speech before the new Assistant Speaker.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for Tweed.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: The New South Wales Government offers financial investment to each of our electorates through the Community Building Partnership program. As members know, this program began around 2009 and offers its current rate of \$400,000 to each electorate to support projects that deliver positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes, while promoting community participation, inclusion and cohesion. Since its inception the Community Building Partnership Program has awarded more than \$362 million to over 16,600 projects across the State. I am delighted that over the years I have been able to assist many local organisations that would not normally have access to funding other than through small raffles or barbecues—the famous sausage sizzle.

Projects funded over the years have included replacing a bathroom for the Tweed Coast Rural Fire Brigade; replacing an old, damaged roof for the Tweed Valley Early Childhood Intervention Service; and replacing a clay court at the Pottsville Tennis Club, which was recently opened. This round of funding has allowed 14 projects to be completed in the Tweed electorate. Funding has been allocated to the following organisations: Fred's Place for the homeless at Tweed Heads, run by St Vincent de Paul, for bathroom renovations; Pottsville Community Hall, for the installation of solar panels and repairs to the roof—the kitchen and dance floor have previously been repaired; and Pottsville Community Preschool, for its second stage of construction, which will offer two new classrooms. Currently there are well over 120 kids waiting on the list. This is very important indeed.

Cudgen Headland Surf Life Saving Club will be able to create a multipurpose space. It has been nominated and awarded country surf life saving club of the year for a number of years now. I am very proud of the club. The Tweed Coast junior AFL club will be able to returf its playing grounds. St John Ambulance in Kingscliff will be supplied with a health service vehicle to assist in patient transfer and local medical services. Sunnyfield Community Service Hub will be provided sensory equipment to further enhance its sensory rooms for autistic children. The Tweed Heads Croquet Club will refinish its lawns and Kingscliff Mini School will be able to rebuild a double sandpit and build a new bike track, which is very important. The Scouts at Chinderah will be able to replace—believe it or not—their stolen gas hot water system. Yes, somebody stole their gas hot water system. This time part of the funding will go to installing a cage around the hot water system to prevent further theft.

Crabbies Creek Public School will install new playground equipment and seating. Burringbar District Sports Club will upgrade its shower and toilet facilities and purchase a new backup generator. As the only place that sells alcohol in that area, it is very important for the community when there is a blackout. The great Twin Towns swimming club will be able to purchase a new portable electronic scoreboard and the Tweed Valley Sailing Club will be able to purchase a new club safety and rescue boat. All these organisations should be congratulated on their successful applications. I have seen time and again that when smaller clubs get these grants, it means a terrible lot to them. As small clubs, they have no capacity to raise that amount of funding. It is important to note that every time there is an upgrade or new equipment, it generates new interest in the community and membership soars.

I was at the Pottsville Tennis Club recently, in the middle of a massive storm, to open a tennis court. The club attracted close to 100 people and we were all huddled under cover. I have supported a lot of these organisations over a number of years. The grants are done in stages. It is great to see little ones, big ones and ones in the middle all participating in the community. The grants were started by a Labor Government, and I think it is one of the best things it has ever done. I applaud Labor for starting the program and this Government for continuing it. I am fully supportive of the Community Building Partnership grants.

ZERO EMISSIONS BUS FLEET

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (18:46):

Firstly, I will congratulate you, Mr Assistant Speaker, on your election to the position. Some would say you have small shoes to fill, but you have some big, big shoes to fill. No doubt you will do an outstanding job.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Absolutely. I thank you, Minister.

Mr MARK COURE: Today I acknowledge the fantastic news that the Punchbowl Bus Company has received new zero emissions electric buses that will enter service throughout my electorate and that of the member for Lakemba. As many in this House would know, the future is electric, and the introduction of these locally built electric buses around the State is an important step towards achieving an all-electric future. The rollout of these buses will see customers benefit from quieter, cleaner journeys and provide the residents of my electorate with an emissions-friendly method of travel. The buses go up and down Waitara Parade, Hurstville Grove, and my folks love them. These electric buses have been rolled out in places like Victoria, the United Kingdom and of course Denmark.

Now New South Wales, and my electorate in particular, has joined the club, paving the way for the Government to transition all 8,000 of the State's diesel buses to zero emissions technology by 2030. The new buses provide not only environmental benefits but also save money in terms of their fuel and maintenance costs. This exciting technology is a great win for my local area, as it brings the twenty-first century to suburbs like Riverwood, Peakhurst, Mortdale and many others, such as Hurstville Grove, while helping to reduce the noise pollution created by the diesel buses. It will contribute to making my local area an even more wonderful place to live and work, to run a business and to raise a family.

Punchbowl Bus Company recently outlined to me its plan to create a strategic green corridor from Mortdale to Hurstville Grove, where my folks are. The electric buses currently operate on routes 953, 954, my bus route, and 955, and there are plans to extend the corridor into even more local suburbs.

In future, the company is hoping to transition to a 100 per cent zero emissions bus fleet, which will reduce pollution, improve passenger experience and reduce the overall cost of bus services in New South Wales. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the importance of reviving and supporting the domestic manufacturing industry, as we cannot always rely on international supply chains to meet our community's needs. That is why I commend the Government for ensuring that the electric buses are built locally by companies such as Custom Denning, which is located in St Marys. Its factory employs over 200 people, which is helping to ensure that skilled manufacturing jobs remain firmly in Australia.

The Element e-bus can run for around 16 hours when fully charged, or up to 450 kilometres, providing the high-quality service and reliability our local residents deserve. Additionally, every kilometre travelled by those buses is completely emissions free, which is great news. That means that everyone who rides them will be contributing to our overall emissions reduction. It is a great step in the right direction, making sure that we are doing everything we can to make our local community a greener, more environmentally friendly place. Another example of domestic manufacturing is the Nexport company, which plans to set up an electric bus factory in New South Wales, creating a massive 2,000 jobs, which is an absolutely fantastic achievement and investment for our State.

I am proud that this Government is leading the way in developing our manufacturing capability and providing more jobs to help us out of the pandemic. That fantastic news is combined with the announcement that TAFE NSW will provide up to three different levels of service as well as maintenance training for those who are going to maintain the new fleet of buses, helping to upskill our local workers. People in my local community expect and deserve the best when it comes to providing them with affordable, easy, safe and climate-friendly ways of getting around our local area. These buses provide that option for them. I thank the Punchbowl Bus Company, which will be operating the first five of many new electric buses coming to my local area. I am excited about these new buses and the clean, green future that is ahead of us.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the Minister and ask the member for Cessnock to curtail his enthusiasm.

COVID-19 AND LAKEMBA ELECTORATE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:52): Mr Assistant Speaker, I congratulate you on your new role. I also congratulate my electorate neighbour, the member for Oatley, on his new ministerial appointment as well as the member for Miranda. The member for Oatley and I do a lot of work together and he has a lot of respect from members of my local community. I look forward to continuing working with him. I also thank the member for South Coast—

Mrs Shelley Hancock: For losing her job?

Mr JIHAD DIB: No, for her service and the work she did with local government.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Thank you.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Once again my community has faced a trying summer. Once again I pay tribute to the resilience and generosity on constant display—door to door, family to family. I understand the frustrations felt by so many that this summer did not provide the respite that was so desperately needed and promised to us by a number of leaders. No-one could have predicted the precise impact or nature of the Omicron wave that caused skyrocketing case numbers, a strain on hospitals and the tragic loss of life. Family gatherings were cancelled or massively pared back, especially on important days. An ever-mutating virus challenges our resolve and we become ever-hardened to its random cruelty.

However, while no-one could have predicted the Omicron wave, it does not mean that we cannot expect our governments to be better prepared to respond quickly, compassionately and effectively as circumstances change. For most, this summer will not be defined by reuniting with loved ones or much-needed respite. For the lucky ones, those moments were important and beautiful. Instead, this summer will be defined by scenes of people waiting in queues longer than the eye can see, for hours in the heat, for PCR tests. Parents with kids packed snacks and entertainment for a day-long ordeal. Even the elderly were forced to queue. Rapid antigen tests [RATs] became the only feasible alternative, but when the rules changed there were no RATs to be found. The Federal Government was caught out again for bad planning and the people of New South Wales were the victims of supply chain shortages. First it was the vaccine and now it is the RATs.

What I found staggering was the ideological reticence to make a necessary good free and accessible. If RATs were the answer to free movement around New South Wales and Australia, as well as ensuring we were keeping our friends and family safe, it seemed incomprehensible that they should not be freely available. What is the value of community safety or ensuring a visiting relative does not get sick? Governments subsidise all things at all times for the greater good and yet making RATs freely available became a bridge too far. Countless times a day I was contacted by individuals or community groups who were desperate for RATs. I know that other members would have been in the same boat. Sadly, I could not positively resolve a single one of those calls.

Exemptions and ever-changing rules seldom made sense or relied on access to testing that was not available. This led to mass confusion and understandable frustration. Masks were out; masks were in. QR codes were out; QR codes were in. Certain restrictions were eased and then imposed again. On 30 January *The Guardian* revealed that the New South Wales Government was warned that Omicron could lead to more hospitalisations days before restrictions were lifted in December last year. I do not pretend to know or understand the motivations of certain decision-makers at a State or a Federal level, but let me make this point: Society is more than just an economy. Yet many recent decisions by both Federal and State governments have been viewed through an economic lens to the exclusion of all other social implications. A society is not data; it is people. However much this virus tries us, we must never become so hardened to its human impact that we stop cherishing life as we still do.

On 30 January I awoke to news that 52 people in New South Wales had lost their lives to COVID in the previous 24 hours. What frightened me was the numbness that was felt collectively. Surely, as a society, we must place more value on human life than simply accepting the growing number of fatalities as a side effect of living with the virus. The impact on grieving families and communities is enormous. Simply making this observation that day was viewed through a starkly political and polarised lens—as I discovered—as if by speaking truth to the virus' human toll, I was in favour of the worst restrictions the imagination can conjure. That is simply not the case. Finding the middle ground should always be the approach that we take in everything in life. This is not conducive to or productive for our healing and our mourning.

My community knows that when restrictions last year represented a double standard and ceased to follow the health advice, I spoke out and spoke loud. My community was hit hard by the different strains of COVID and the accompanying restrictions. Businesses tried to start up and were shut down. They dusted themselves off and then they were shut down once more. Yet restaurants and other small businesses in the electorate of Lakemba are still rising to the challenge of everything that life throws at them. My office has assisted countless people to get

access to grants to help them through the crisis. The spirit of my community rises again and again. It is this dynamism that inspires me to walk amongst it. I hope that lessons have been learnt from this summer about the need to plan, to prepare, to act quickly and to adapt to new circumstances. If members are looking for inspiration, I direct them to look no further than my community.

MIRANDA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)
(18:57): Mr Assistant Speaker, I start by acknowledging your appointment this afternoon as the new Assistant Speaker and welcome you to that position. I acknowledge the recipients of the 2022 Australia Day Honours across the Miranda electorate. Australia Day provides an opportunity to unite and celebrate the values, stories and contributions of every Australian who makes our nation great. Many of those individuals call the Miranda electorate home, and I am proud to acknowledge their service to our community and respective honours awarded in this place.

First, I extend my congratulations to the 2022 Young Australian of the Year, Dr Daniel Nour. Dr Nour, whom I have spoken about previously in this place, was awarded with this incredible honour for founding Street Side Medics, a not-for-profit, GP-led mobile medical service for people experiencing homelessness. This incredible initiative has changed the lives of more than 300 vulnerable patients, so it is little wonder that Dr Nour has been recognised with this honour. I take this opportunity to acknowledge his achievement and to thank him for his work supporting our vulnerable communities.

I also recognise Kimberlee Green of GyMEA, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to netball. Kim's sporting history spans many years. At eight years old, Kim began playing for the GyMEA Netball Club at Seymour Shaw Park, where her passion for the sport began to grow. Testament to her incomparable skill, Kim quickly advanced to play for the Sydney Swifts between 2003 and 2006, where she captained the team for four years. Soon after Kim became the inaugural captain of the Giants, in 2017. Kim's incredible career also led her to play 74 games with the Australian Diamonds, where she was vice-captain between 2013 and 2015. I congratulate Kim on receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia and commend her for her significant contribution to our sporting community.

I also acknowledge Professor Ross Jeffree of Alford's Point, who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to conservation, the environment, nuclear science and education. Professor Jeffree's amazing career has seen him take on major international research roles at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO], work with the Australian Atomic Energy Commission and contribute to the Paris Agreement through his research. From researching copper and uranium mine sites 100 kilometres south of Darwin to radio-nuclear Aboriginal foods, and heading up teams of scientists at the Marine Radioecology Laboratory in Monaco and publishing over 160 scientific publications, it is no surprise that Professor Jeffree is deeply respected in our scientific community. Since retiring, Professor Jeffree volunteers for the National Parks Association of NSW's orangutan project. I congratulate Professor Jeffree on his deserving receipt of an Australia Day honour.

I also recognise Sharlene McKenzie of Caringbah, who received the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to Indigenous communities in south-east Sydney. By way of background, Sharlene's passion for Indigenous communities has led to her involvement in Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation and her role as a board director of the Sydney Health Community Network of Health, along with contributing to justice, health and disability projects. Sharlene's passionate advocacy for Aboriginal people continues to make a significant impact in our community and makes her an incredibly deserving recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia.

I also commend Dr Brian Draper of Sylvania, who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his service as a psychiatrist to our elderly community, tertiary education and medicine. During his career Dr Draper pioneered psychiatric assessment services for older people, establishing the first dementia assessment service during his time at St George Hospital. Later moving to Prince Henry and Prince of Wales hospitals, Dr Draper developed psychiatrist training in elderly psychiatry through the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, where he was awarded the RANZCP College Medal of Honour. Dr Draper has also been involved in suicide research for older people since 1993 and is a scientific adviser for the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention while running professorial conferences for psychiatrists on suicide prevention. I commend Dr Draper for his important work and his deserved receipt of an Australia Day honour.

Finally, I acknowledge Dr Graeme Batley of Miranda, who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to environmental toxicology and chemical science. Across Dr Batley's incredible career he has served as a chief research scientist at CSIRO Land and Water, helped to establish the Centre for Environmental Contaminants Research, worked at ANSTO and the CSIRO Division of Energy Chemistry, and authored over 450 research papers, books and reports. Dr Batley's important work has contributed significantly to

our scientific community, including the development of regulations that stop the pollution of streams, rivers and the ocean. I commend Dr Batley on his deserved receipt of an Australia Day honour. I congratulate all the recipients of Australia Day honours and wish them well in their future endeavours.

WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:02): On more than one occasion I have spoken in this place about the New South Wales Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. With the release late last year of the environmental impact statement [EIS] I must speak up again. I know I am far from a lone voice in my opposition to this ill-conceived plan. There are many others—experts in the field of science and the environment—who continue to express profound concern about the potential impacts of raising the dam wall. I am sure most members are aware of the resignation of one of the ecologists involved in the assessment and analysis processes for the EIS. Along with other ecologists working on the project, she claims that threats to endangered species have been either ignored or diluted in the EIS. It has since come to light that the New South Wales Government has been told by official assessors of the project that it is time to go back to the drawing board.

I am furious with this Government's track record of dishonesty and manipulation, all too often at the cost of our environment and under the guise of so-called necessary progress. My idea of progress is not the destruction of ancient Indigenous cultural sites or precious and vulnerable plant and animal species. When is this Government going to be held accountable for dangerous, destructive and irresponsible decision-making? Let us not forget that the traditional owners do not give their consent for the dam wall to be raised—a far from trivial aspect of this proposal. This country has a shameful history of ignoring the wishes and the wisdom of our First Nations peoples. Is that what will to happen again this time—more desecration of recognised Aboriginal heritage sites, more irreparable damage, more loss of country and more prioritising of development over this land's priceless and irreplaceable cultural history?

The raising of the dam wall crosses a few different portfolios, so to each of the Ministers concerned—Ministers Anderson, Roberts, Griffin and Ayres—I say this: You all have a role to play in how things unfold from here. If the Blue Mountains is negatively impacted because this project has gone ahead, each of you has blood on your hands. For the person amongst you who has made no secret of his pro-development agenda and his blatant disregard of anything that stands in the way, here is his chance to do better. Minister Ayres needs to do better.

Since I was elected in 2015 to represent the Blue Mountains community, I have had to remind the New South Wales Government many times what a precious place our region is. It would seem that I need to do that again. In the year 2000 the Blue Mountains was inscribed on the World Heritage List. For members who may not understand the significance of that, let me quote a few words from the UNESCO website that outline the essential criteria for a place to be deemed so important and so special that it is worthy of inclusion on that list. A site must "bear unique or exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition". It must "be an outstanding example of ... land use which is representative of a culture ... especially when it has become vulnerable". It must "contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance".

We know the gist of the lies about raising the dam wall: the claim that it will be a silver-bullet solution for western Sydney flood mitigation. That rationale has been debunked, though, because there is mounting evidence that raising the dam wall will not offer adequate protection to those living on the flood plains. Those who hold the Blue Mountains dear have had the same concerns about this proposal for years. Just one or two flood events will see the biodiversity and ecological, cultural and World Heritage values of the Blue Mountains totally lost. But what has changed, or intensified, is Minister Ayres' spin around the necessity of this project—the false narrative that raising the dam wall is the only way to keep western Sydneysiders safe from flooding events.

Government members have not explored other options. They are not listening to the expert voices and they are disrespecting the traditional owners of the land, whilst hiding behind dangerously flawed "reasoning". How is this for a stark reminder? As much as 45 per cent of flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley comes from rivers not controlled by Warragamba Dam. When Minister Ayres stood up in this place last November and spoke as if he were some messiah for the people of western Sydney, he was once again withholding his true motivations for the project. Shamefully, he was happy to bargain with the safety not only of the existing population of western Sydney but also of the additional 130,000 or so people that will settle on the flood plains if his dreams of overdevelopment are ever realised. Minister, just do not build on the flood plains. What a disgraceful legacy for him to leave behind. The Minister needs to follow the advice of *The Guardian* and reassess. Go to it.

TAXI LICENCES

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:07): In a democracy, trust between people and their government is fundamental, but the owners of taxi licences in New South Wales have had their trust obliterated by this Coalition Government. Like many of my parliamentary colleagues, I am sure, I have had quite a few taxidriv

to me during the past couple of weeks, angry about the Government's abuse of trust. One elderly Rosebery couple serves as a particularly poignant example of the gross breach of trust perpetrated by the Government. The husband, an elderly man in his late 70s, was diagnosed with a terminal illness. With the returns on their taxi plate investment literally evaporating, they applied for JobSaver and COVID-19-related business grants. However, they were refused. On the face of it, their income was too low because the husband was unable to work due to his illness. Had I not intervened and made representations on his behalf, the family—already struggling with the declining health of their patriarch—would have also continued to suffer financially with no reprieve in sight. I am advised that their applications for assistance are now undergoing a review.

There is no disputing that the entry of rideshare services such as Uber into the point to point transport industry has made it a rider's market. However, it has been devastating for taxi plate owners not only because of increased competition but also because the Government itself created an artificially inflated market, which was then manipulated for the worst kind of pump and dump in New South Wales history. Over many decades the New South Wales Government issued taxi plates and limited their supply, ensuring that the value of the plates could not drop too significantly. In this environment, most people bought taxi plates like people buy houses—as safe investments that would accrue in value over many years and eventually be rented or sold to fund their retirement.

The regulation of plates led taxi owners to believe their investments were protected and controlled by the Government. This sense of trust and safety allowed the value of taxi plates to explode. Even when problems arose in the artificial market created by the Government, the Government left the taxi owners to be trampled by the bears and bulls of the market. In 2012 a taxi plate cost around \$400,000. Today taxidriviers tell me they cannot even sell them. For retired people who own a taxi plate or are renting their cars out, they are lucky to get \$8 a week or \$35 a month.

Many taxi plate owners who come to me speak English as their second language and many stopped going to school in their teens, or were recent immigrants when they put up the money to buy a taxi plate. That does not mean that these people are any less intelligent than the Cambridge or Oxford educated members of this House. What it means is that they have had less money and time to pore over financial advice and read the latest trends in markets because they were working around the clock to service their mortgages and put their kids through school. Warren Buffet, who is a great value investor, urges people who are time poor to find safe investments like indexed funds and government bonds. That is exactly what so many taxi plate owners did. They chose a safe investment because it was tacitly controlled by the Government. The Government broke this trust. The Government pumped up the price of taxi plates, controlled the supply of licences and created significant barriers to entry.

The Government made a fortune from the sale of the licences. It then legalised ridesharing operators, which resulted in the earnings, and thereby the value, of each taxi plate tumbling—and by doing so slashed the retirement nest egg of hardworking Australians. Just like the frog and the scorpion, the Government piggybacked on taxi plate owners, made a fortune from them and, when the water became a little turbulent, stung them in the back—except in this situation the scorpion swam safely to shore but the taxi owners drowned. They remain drowning now. There seems to be some kind of neo-Darwinian rationale at the heart of the Liberal Government's refusal to properly compensate taxi plate owners. We know the maxim of the neo-Darwinian philosophy: Competition is king, kill or be killed, survival of the fittest. All of these idioms may appropriately describe the relationship between private competitors but they ought not to apply to the relationship between people and their Government.

COFFS COAST AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:12): Mr Assistant Speaker, I begin by congratulating you on your election to the position of Assistant Speaker today. I am sure you will do a wonderful job, as you have done in the last three years that I have seen you preside. On the Coffs Coast we are extremely fortunate to have people from all walks of life who are dedicated to making our community an even better place in which to live and work. They are the shining stars—the selfless individuals who pour their heart and soul into a cause with no thought of reward. Every day they strive to bring positivity to those around them and to serve our towns and cities with distinction.

In the 2022 Australia Day honours the Coffs Coast had several community members recognised for their efforts. Terence Michael O'Grady from Coffs Harbour—"Tex" to those who know him—was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for his service to the community through charitable organisations. His work is through his involvement with the Tex & Bundy Charity Fundraisers duo, which is a role that has seen him involved in the Delta Society Therapy Dog Program with the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation and the Sailing Vessels Wellness Program with Coffs Coast Legacy. Mr O'Grady has previously received an Australian Defence Medal, Defence Force Service Medal and Australian Service Medal with Special Operations Clasp.

For Tex O'Grady, being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his tireless charity work was tinged with sadness. The former Navy officer rode his motorcycle more than 900,000 kilometres around the country, along with his cattle dog, Bundy, to help prostate cancer and mental health charities raise awareness, and he helped them raise more than \$6 million in the process. Tex was heartbroken not to be able to share the Australia Day honour with Bundy, who died last year aged 13. Mr O'Grady told the ABC, "I only wish she was here."

He said Bundy and his other dogs, Cash, also deceased, and Sheila, had been vital to his work, particularly when he visited people in hospitals. When he would go and talk to them, Tex said, "The lights are on but no-one is home, and then all of a sudden their eyes light up because the dog is there. To see the calming effect that my dogs in the past and the dog I have now have on veterans and emergency service personnel with post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] is quite amazing." Bundy and Cash's ashes now have a special place on his motorbike and on his yacht, *Mystic*. The Coffs Harbour resident started a sailing program last year to support veterans and those with PTSD. "As much as an animal has a calming effect on people, I think the sea does as well, not in rough conditions, of course, but on a nice day", Mr O'Grady told the ABC.

Leonard Thomas Leete of Sapphire Beach was recognised with an OAM for his service to the community through various emergency service organisations. As a member of the mid North Coast branch of the NSW Rural Fire Service, he has been an equipment officer, deputy captain and general brigade member over many, many years. Dr Laurence Eames Budd, a paediatrician based in Coffs Harbour, was recognised with an OAM for his service to medicine. Dr Budd has been a paediatrician at a private practice in Coffs Harbour since 1981. He has also held the position of visiting medical officer for the Coffs Harbour Health Campus department of paediatrics. He was a general paediatric and rural supervisor from 2013 to 2020 with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Dr Budd has also been a fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians since 1981. I congratulate everyone who featured in the Australia Day honours list this year and commend these wonderful Australians for their contributions to the fabric of our society.

LINDFIELD VILLAGE GREEN

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:16): Mr Assistant Speaker, I add my congratulations to you personally on your election to the position. I congratulate Ku-ring-gai Council on the newly completed Lindfield Village Green on Tryon Road, which recently opened to the public. After some preliminary delays, the project commenced officially with a sod-turning in June 2020 and, despite challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, it has opened not long after its rescheduled completion date. The Lindfield Village Green has transformed a drab council car park into a vibrant, all-weather green space, with two performance pavilions, a cafe, public toilets and three levels of underground car parking with two lifts. The planting of a wide variety of flowering trees and ground cover plants will also add seasonal colour to the space. It will be a much-needed recreational amenity for the local community in my electorate of Davidson, particularly in the suburb of Lindfield.

As well as congratulating Ku-ring-gai Council on the implementation of this complex project, I commend the local community, including those local businesses surrounding the village green, for their consultative input, patience, understanding and cooperation regarding the project. There was considerable disruption to businesses, a number of residents and local street parking throughout the construction process. Happily, more normal conditions have now returned. My electorate office is located only metres from the village green and my observation is that traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, was directed safely and efficiently around the construction work. While issues have to be managed in the community in an ongoing sense, particularly some traffic issues, the end result has certainly been worth any inconvenience. It is a great asset to the local community.

The Lindfield Village Green is a wonderful example of how a cooperative effort between local and State governments can enhance a project to the benefit of a local community. Whilst the green was initiated by council, the State Government contributed substantially by funding one of the three levels of underground parking, thus providing 105 commuter car spaces, which will alleviate commuter parking on the North Shore and help to ease congestion on the roads. The completion of the village green will now facilitate various infrastructure enhancements in the surrounding streets, including some long-planned traffic changes. I urge council to implement those improvements promptly to improve safety and traffic flow in the precinct.

The successful outcome, however, does provide a template for future projects, including the planned but delayed Lindfield Village Hub development on the western side of the Pacific Highway. The successful project also highlights the value of green space being combined with parking facilities to service growing communities. I know the Minister at the table, both as transport Minister and planning Minister in the past, has championed those types of initiatives. The official opening was conducted only yesterday morning, Monday 14 February—some might say there was love in the air—and was officiated by the current mayor, Jeff Pettett, with numerous councillors in attendance. I applaud both Ku-ring-gai Council and the New South Wales Government for their collaborative efforts in bringing this exciting project to fruition for the benefit of the local community.

BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:21): Mr Assistant Speaker, congratulations on your elevation today to the role of Assistant Speaker. Well done and well deserved.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Tonight I acknowledge some major gift-giving in the Blacktown city area. The Community Foundation of North Western Sydney, headed by President Rajiv Chaudhri, has kindly provided back-to-school kits for students whose families may be struggling financially to provide some of the basic essential items to get a good start in their schooling career. Unfortunately, one in six children is living in poverty. That is almost 1.2 million children and youth across Australia under the age of 24 living in poverty. If that is translated to western Sydney, it averages at around 20 per cent. To give a child a fair start in their education changes lives. Rajiv and Community Foundation of North Western Sydney provided over half a million dollars of equipment, from folders, binders, pens, calculators, exercise books, notebooks and whiteboard markers through to book shelves and even bookends—a range of items. We were able to distribute them across dozens of schools in the Penrith area, Blacktown and Londonderry. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Labor Party, Prue Car, and I went out there to see the goods distributed amongst the schools. Domestic violence assistance centres and youth support groups have also benefited.

The gift-giving does not end there. CEO of Signature Projects Atul Kumar runs a family business as a property developer. He lives by the philosophy that giving and supporting the local community is the best way to serve the community. Over the past three years he has donated over a quarter of a million dollars to various groups, including in 2019 to the Sanctuary, which provides shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence; to the MonSTaR Foundation, which serves people, especially children, who are affected by motor neurone disease; and to the Aboriginal church of Riverstone, operating in the Vineyard area. In 2020 donations went to NSW Police Legacy and the Blacktown Youth Services Association, known as BYSA, which works with disadvantaged youth in our local area. Last Christmas at his Christmas party Mr Kumar donated money to the Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre—which is a leading organisation providing advocacy, health and support for women, as well as those suffering from domestic violence—and the Community Foundation of North Western Sydney. Part of the programs I have just talked about is the gift-giving to local schools, but they also provide wonderful local community initiatives, such as hospitality training for people with various abilities and disabilities. The Lisa Harnum Foundation provides domestic violence support, education and safe spaces. Rough Tracks provides opportunities for youth who are going through hard times by offering holistic, flexible and long-term support. Atul and his family also gave to local projects. Not only do they give money, but they also help out with their expertise in building. They helped with the development application for Nurragingy Miniature Railway, which was delivered by North Western Model Engineers, Inc., a not-for-profit organisation. If Signatures Homes did not support this project, it would not have happened.

In conclusion, today we saw the nurses on strike and blocking off Macquarie Street. I pay tribute to all of the frontline health workers, especially those in my local area, the Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals, where the nurses, doctors, allied health and support staff have worked under immense pressure to support COVID-affected patients. I am disappointed with the health Minister's ill-informed comments, saying that he was disappointed by the strike action and warning that those participating could face disciplinary action. I hope that the Minister understands that this is a democracy and that people have the right to strike and show their concerns. Having blocked not only Macquarie Street but 40 locations simultaneously across the State shows the amount of passion in the community. I hope the Minister does not go through with his threat. This is not a fascist state. We are here to support health workers, not to discipline them.

REGIONAL AND RURAL HEALTH

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:26): It is with a profound sense of sadness and desperation on behalf of my community that I stand in this place tonight and appeal for immediate action to avoid our primary healthcare system in rural New South Wales, particularly in the Northern Tablelands, completely and irrevocably imploding. The lack of a sufficient medical workforce of general practitioners, without whom we cannot run rural hospitals—a situation that has been progressively deteriorating for the past two decades—is now at crisis point in many parts of rural New South Wales, particularly in my electorate. Additionally, today's NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association statewide day of action is the last-gasp plea of that workforce, which is also, in some parts, on the brink of collapse. I stand here tonight in full support of our region's amazing medical staff—doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and the people who support them—and fully back their efforts to secure better pay and conditions and increased numbers of colleagues to join them on the front line in our rural public hospitals.

In communities like Glen Innes in the Northern Tablelands, nurses providing treatment in hospital emergency departments are forced to cover rosters for days and weeks—and, unfortunately, it is looking like being a month or more—without a single general practitioner or visiting medical officer on duty, because the local health district has been unable to supply or contract even locum doctors to fill that roster. In the past week alone, the Glen Innes, Armidale—a not insignificant city in regional New South Wales—and Inverell hospitals have all experienced multiple shifts without a general practitioner covering their emergency departments. This is absolutely unacceptable in my view and the community's view. This is negligent and downright dangerous and it is not good enough in this day and age.

I have made urgent representations to the health Minister, to the Minister for Regional Health and to the Hunter New England local health district, seeking immediate confirmation and clarity about the availability of GPs, whether they be locums or locals, in particular at Glen Innes Hospital, where the staff of the local health district are scrambling to fill shifts with locum doctors. Hopefully, they can find them for the next month. I have grave fears that the failure of the health service to properly resource or find locums for our hospitals is placing unreasonable expectations and pressures on nursing and allied health staff and that it could result in a tragic and preventable misfortune to a patient or a member of the community. I certainly hope this never happens. I insist that urgent short-term action be taken to ensure appropriate and safe medical coverage, not telehealth and overworking the existing overburdened nursing staff. That is simply not good enough. The community and staff deserve much better.

The current reliance on locum doctors to fill vacancies at hospitals has never been an acceptable way of rostering but it is fast becoming the rule, not the exception. The system we have created has made health about wealth. We have been paying locums exorbitant fees to fill in gaps. In the process we have created a whole industry of locum doctors and rewarded people for becoming part-time professionals. Meanwhile, nurses in our local hospitals are pulling double and triple shifts to try to cover the gaps. The fickle nature of some locums has, on more than one occasion in the Northern Tablelands, left our hospitals high and dry at short notice without a doctor, even if they have committed to fulfilling a shift. I am not talking about small communities; I am talking about hospitals that service populations of between 15,000 and 25,000 people each. They are significant populations.

NSW Health cannot honestly believe the current system is adequate or working. It simply is not. Today's system might have worked several decades ago, but it is not fit for purpose today. If it was not for the commitment of our local nurses, many of my towns would be without all medical coverage after hours—full stop. I recognise the incredible steps that have been taken, including the millions of dollars that have been invested in my electorate alone in new hospitals and facilities in Moree, Glen Innes, Inverell and Armidale, to name a few. It is magnificent. But my constituents keep asking me "What is the point of these shiny new facilities when there is no-one to work in them?" And they are right. Never before has our health system and the people who work within it faced more extreme challenges than in the past two years. Our nurses and medical staff are on the front line. It is time NSW Health stops the bandaid fixes and finds a cure for this medical staff shortage. Be bold, be innovative and work with the Commonwealth to find the cure because the consequences of not doing so are frankly unthinkable.

REGIONAL BANK BRANCH CLOSURES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:31): The big banks have abandoned regional Australia and our governments are doing nothing about it. In small towns, banks are becoming as rare and as trustworthy as national MPs. According to research from freelance writer Dale Webster, 61 per cent of all regional bank branches have closed since 1975. In the past five years in the Murray electorate we have lost one-third of our banks. Late last year the town of Tocumwal lost its Bendigo Bank agency. Finley, Hay, Griffith, Wakool, Coleambally, Hillston, Dareton, Whitton, Barham, Leeton, Wentworth, Mathoura, Moama, Darlington Point, Goolgowi, Yenda, Moulamein and Berrigan have also lost banks, according to Ms Webster's research. That has had a devastating impact on the local residents.

A number of rural pensioners have never used a computer, a smartphone or a bank card. They would bring their passbooks into the agency and talk with the friendly staff, who would help them with their loans, deposits and finances. If their partners died, a staff member would make them a cup of tea and help them with the probate arrangements. That does not happen anymore. The Government has forced our people to fend for themselves. Many Tocumwal residents now have to cross the State border to Victoria to do their banking in the town of Cobram. While they do their banking they also do their shopping and groceries, meaning the town of Tocumwal loses investment.

Many small towns that have lost their last bank are dying slowly. Private businesses will always put profits first. It is up to government to properly regulate banks to force them to look after rural New South Wales. They could easily do that, but they have chosen not to. In the early 1970s, regional banking was thriving. Banks were actually opening new branches in small towns. There was a time when we had the Commonwealth Bank—a government-owned operation—and we also had State Government banks. The Government kept the private banks

honest, but then the Government decided to privatise the Commonwealth Bank and the State Government sold off its banks too. Private banks are now closing their doors all over regional Australia.

"There are now 573 towns that have no bank at all", says Ms Webster. Just before the election the Federal Government set up the Regional Banking Taskforce to make people think it cares. This task force, led by Nationals MP Perin Davey, is a complete and utter scam. The big banks are part of the task force, but the community is not. The terms of reference do not consider how to keep banks open. The task force is just looking at what they do after the banks close. One suggestion is to set up smart automatic teller machines in country towns to facilitate banking, using a phone or tablet. Can you imagine your 90-year-old grandmother doing that?

If the National Party were really serious about saving regional banks, it would implement the recommendations of countless previous inquiries. A 2004 inquiry recommended that the Government impose a community service obligation on banks. The Government could also look at bringing back public banking options. Our leaders could address this crisis in many ways. The Liberal Party and Labor Party have threatened to bring the banks in line, but they have never followed through. This Federal election is our big chance. Every rural MP and candidate should be asked what they will do to stop the mass closures of banks in our small towns. Banks will not regulate themselves. It is time for the Government to step in and save our small towns.

COVID-19 AND FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:35): It is great to be back in Parliament advocating for the people of Fairfield off the back of yet another outbreak of COVID-19, this time the Omicron variant. What a different response the State Government has had to this outbreak compared to the last one when Delta was making its rounds. Last time Fairfield was declared an area of concern with the strictest restrictions in the State right from the beginning of the lockdown. While the case numbers in Fairfield started off high in the beginning of the outbreak, we managed to bring that number down in the end with a high uptake of people being vaccinated once supplies were available. I acknowledge Fairfield citizens for doing their due diligence in this respect and for getting vaccinated as soon as possible.

The Omicron variant outbreak tells a similar story with Fairfield residents not hesitating to line up for their booster shots, only this time the barrier was the fact that too many people caught COVID and are now in a situation where they have to wait. The magical date for the State Government was 15 December. That was the day that all vaccinated residents across Greater Sydney were free, with almost all restrictions lifted. Unfortunately for this Government the virus was also set free. Case numbers rose swiftly and dramatically. The number of hospitalisations and deaths from COVID also rose this time around, and I offer my heartfelt condolences to those who lost a loved one during this time.

The Premier and his Government insisted there was no need for a lockdown, despite the strain on the health system, the economy and the wider community. I can tell members that while there was no official lockdown declared, there was and still is a pseudo lockdown for businesses across Greater Sydney. The fact of the matter is that this recent outbreak was poorly managed by the State Government with all areas being affected. Without the Government support that individuals and businesses received during the last outbreak, the impact of this outbreak has been far-reaching and much more brutal. The rapidly rising case numbers put immense pressure on the testing clinics, which struggled to cope with the demand for polymerase chain reaction [PCR] testing. Many of them were shut over the Christmas and New Year period, which was an appalling move, considering that by this time we were well into 10,000 cases per day.

I could not get a PCR test in Fairfield on 2 and 3 January. It was advertised that Fairfield testing sites were shut until 3 January, but they were actually shut longer than that. On the day that I felt ill, the queue at Fairfield Hospital stretched down the street so I made the decision not to wait in line and infect others. I went home and, thus, was not officially PCR tested. Sadly, I am but one of many who could not get a PCR test over the Christmas and New Year period.

Rapid antigen testing was the next step for the Government to try to sort out the mess that was PCR testing—yet these tests were in short supply too. Trying to get a rapid antigen test over the Christmas period was like being in *The Hunger Games*. You would hear of a supply being available at a certain pharmacy and you would rush over, only to find that they had sold out by the time you got there. This sad state of affairs in New South Wales ruined the Christmas and New Year period for families, for businesses and for the tourism industry. Families were separated because odds on someone in the family had COVID and had to isolate. While businesses technically remained open with few restrictions, they had no customers. People were either sick at home with COVID or they were too afraid to leave the house due to the rising case numbers and deaths.

Businesses also struggled to retain workers who were either infected or isolating, irrespective of where they lived. Rising case numbers and people contracting the virus laid waste to the tourism industry, which should

have flourished at this time of year. The State Government's recklessness on 15 December 2021 in lifting restrictions in the manner it did and the lack of planning for such a bold move, in the light of its own predictions of case numbers of over 20,000 per day, is appalling. This is why the people of New South Wales are now watching the State Government catching up to itself again in yet another episode of the pandemic.

REGIONAL HOUSING

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:40): Mr Assistant Speaker, I add my congratulations to those expressed by other members of the House at your elevation to the role of Assistant Speaker. We all need a home, yet in regional New South Wales many of our most vulnerable are struggling to meet this need. Housing supply has become a major issue in regional New South Wales. It is an issue that affects not just our economy but our community, not just our prosperity but our humanity. In July 2021 the Government established the Regional Housing Taskforce in response to increasing pressures on housing in regional New South Wales. In its October 2021 report the task force found:

Regional NSW faces significant housing supply and affordability pressures... over the past year housing pressures have grown more acute across the regions, with rents growing at a faster rate than in Greater Sydney,... and relatively high house price growth.

This has had a profound impact on housing availability for low-income households and renters, in particular, as well as moderate-income households and those seeking to buy a home. The recommendations of the task force include increasing the availability of affordable and diverse housing across regional New South Wales and providing more certainty about where, when and what types of homes will be built. In February 2021 Infrastructure Australia identified New South Wales' social housing deficit as a priority project and found that across New South Wales demand for social and crisis housing was growing faster than supply. It also noted, "The past decade has seen a 37 per cent increase in unmet priority social housing demand and a 70 per cent increase in homelessness across New South Wales."

In Wagga Wagga the waiting list for social housing as at 30 June 2021 was 496 in the general category, with 19 listed as priority, while wait times remain between two and five years for all dwelling types. In January in the Wagga Wagga postcode area the residential vacancy rate was just 0.6 per cent. Currently in Wagga Wagga I believe the construction of new social housing properties is not increasing overall housing stock; it is just at replacement levels. Ms Carolyn Doherty from Argyle Housing spoke to the Wagga Wagga *Daily Advertiser* newspaper recently. She said:

People that previously were able to afford a home in the private market are either being pushed out of housing or placed under serious housing stress, paying more than 50 per cent of their total household income in rent. As private market housing becomes more and more expensive, greater numbers of households are being pushed towards social housing purely for financial reasons.

There is our challenge. But we have solutions. One such solution is the proposal for renewal of the Tolland Estate in Wagga Wagga. The original Tolland Estate was developed and built between the 1970s and 1990s along the lines of the Radburn model, which has been recognised to have many problems for those living in suburbs with that design.

Tolland does experience significant social challenges. Furthermore, many of the properties are in need of significant repair and renovation, and the types of homes also no longer reflect the needs of the community. For example, there are many standalone homes with three bedrooms and a backyard which are not always suitable for elderly tenants or those with mobility issues, who do not want to navigate steps or to be burdened with a backyard that needs maintenance. Often they are not suitable for young single people either. It is good news that Argyle Housing was successful in its expression of interest with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation to partner on the Tolland precinct renewal. Argyle is working on it with the Aboriginal Housing Office and consortium partners BlueCHP and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council.

The project aims to see the renewal and sustainability of social housing in Tolland as well as the provision of more than 300 new private dwellings and more than 200 affordable housing dwellings. It is a solution for the housing situation in general and for social and affordable housing in particular. The proposal will have special facilities for young people, families and seniors and will provide wraparound services to support members of that community to drive intergenerational social change with a focus on education, employment, health outcomes, crime reduction, community engagement and substantial reductions in domestic and family violence. The driving force for the redevelopment was Wendy Middleton, who sadly passed away in January this year. Wendy's vision lives on though and we must make sure that it becomes a reality because the benefits are not just better housing but better lives. I call on the Government to do what it can to make this renewal project a reality.

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE BEARPIT COMPETITION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:46): Mr Assistant Speaker, I congratulate you on your election today to Assistant Speaker. I had the great privilege of sharing a Temporary Speaker role with you on the

Speaker's panel and I know we are in good hands with you presiding over this House. I congratulate you on that elevation and we are all grateful to have your service and leadership in the Chamber. Today I acknowledge some of the amazing students in the North Shore community, especially in light of the year that they all had, who were participants in my 2021 bearpit competition, which was held late last year. We usually hold the competition in this bearpit, and it is one of my favourite events of the year that I host. It brings together local students with a passion for public speaking from primary schools across the North Shore electorate. They go through rounds of public speaking competitions within their schools and then come together and experience the magic, which we all experience on a daily basis, of speaking in this House.

I always enjoy watching the faces of our future leaders light up as they express themselves and their opinions freely in this Chamber in which we govern. I gain inspiration from them and hearing their ideas, their values and their drive gives me faith and hope in our future. Unfortunately, 2021 was another extraordinary year and we were not able to hold the event in Parliament House, but I hope to bring them to this place in the future. It did not stop us from bringing the wonderful event to fruition and we organised for it to be held remotely, with students recording themselves presenting their speeches. I met with all the judges to review the contributions, and we recorded the feedback for our students and collated it into one final video. It was a lot of work for my team, the students, parents and our judges—more work than turning up in this place after practising at home—but we finally got there.

It would not have been possible without the extensive help and support from all the parents and staff at the schools involved. Before I congratulate the students, I thank Sandra Flower and Katherine White from Beauty Point Public School; Carmel Doherty from Middle Harbour Public School; Andy Sewell from Mosman Public School; Beverly Coffey from St Mary's at Marist Catholic College, which I congratulate on its first year joining in as a combined kindergarten to year 12 school; Nick Brierley from Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Mosman; Daniel O'Brien from Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School, Michelle Reay from St Aloysius' College; Christopher Pykto from North Sydney Demonstration School; and Carmen Merrick from Queenwood. The incredible support of those staff made sure the event could go ahead. The real stars of the show were the students. Every finalist in the bearpit deserves to be commended for their excellent presentations. They were inspiring, and they demonstrated passion and eloquence. We had two stages based on age groups with 16 students in total in the final across both stages.

We had Poppy Grispo, Angus Mansfield, Freddie Atkinson, Mitch Ward, Abby Abrahams, Oliver Lee, Alessandra McWilliam, Alexander Christian-Hare, Sienna Placanica, Monty Douglas, Banjo Lieutenant, Lily Watson, Mia Guillergan, Soraya Christian-Hare and Frederick Kyngdon. The judging panel included Liz Henry, who is the president of Neutral Bay Public School P&C and who is very active in the wider community; Chris Davitt from Mosman Toastmasters, a non-profit organisation teaching public speaking skills, who also runs his own public speaking training company; and Tim McIntyre from News Corp, who is the editor of the *Mosman Daily*, the *North Shore Times*, and the *Wentworth Courier*. I thank them all for their time judging. It was incredibly tough for them to come to a final decision of a winner and a runner-up in each stage. I congratulate the stage two winner, Alessandra McWilliam, and runner-up, Mitch Ward, who both spoke to the topic "When I grow up".

The stage three winner was Sienna Placanica and the runner-up was Banjo Lieutenant. They both spoke on the topic "You can't judge a book by its cover". I congratulate these students on their enthusiasm, articulation and effort. They are deserved winners. I acknowledge all the students who participated in the bearpit but did not make the final round. Hundreds of students were involved. They all deserve to be proud for getting up and having a go, especially during lockdown and learning from home. Only one student can go through from each school into the final so it was an excellent competition. I have no doubt the skills they have learned this year and their new confidence and resilience will ensure that they try again in future public speaking opportunities. Sometimes in this place we can forget, because we are so used to speaking and debating, how crucial it is to foster and develop those skills in our children at the youngest age. I am so excited that I get to participate in the development of those skills every year in my community of North Shore and with the fabulous teachers and schools I represent.

TAXI INDUSTRY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:51): Earlier this week I met with Loretta and Warren Hall. Loretta and Warren are hardworking, salt of the earth people in their seventies. They did not want to rely on Government support in retirement and they wanted to leave a bit of a financial legacy for their children, so they purchased taxi licences, thinking they would be a good investment to carry them through. They bought their first plate in 1980 for \$44,500. That is roughly \$201,000 in today's dollars. Their second plate cost \$45,800 in 1981, or \$189,000 today. Their third plate cost \$60,000 in 1984. That is \$195,000 in today's dollars. Their fourth plate cost \$140,000 in 1989. That is \$312,000 in today's dollars. Their fifth and final plate was purchased in 1993 for \$180,000, or the equivalent of \$353,000 today.

That was just the plates. It did not include the vehicle and all of the purchases associated with setting up a taxi. They have paid more than \$1.2 million in today's dollars just for the licences. In fact, they bought their first taxi licence for the same amount as the Adamstown Heights home they bought at the time. Loretta, Warren and their family scrimped and saved their whole lives to give their children a brighter future. They went without holidays while their children were still at home. They were certainly not living the high life. Unfortunately, the changes made to the taxi industry by this Government have badly damaged the value of what they had hoped was going to be their retirement investment and modest income.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Shame!

Ms JODIE HARRISON: It is absolutely a shame. In 2012 they were getting about \$375 per week per lease. Now that return is down to \$70 per week per lease. When the Government introduced the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act in 2016, taxi licence owners like Loretta and Warren saw the value of their investment evaporate. Overnight the security of their retirement disappeared. The numbers speak for themselves. In December 2015 Sydney taxi licences were worth around \$220,000. By February 2020 the value had plummeted to around \$100,000. There is no question that the point to point travel industry changed enormously with the introduction of rideshare services like Uber. What had been a stable and—for Loretta and Warren—modest income stream was disrupted by the emergence of these new players.

There has been nowhere near enough done by this Government to ensure the protection of people like Loretta and Warren who have seen their hard-won retirement security disappear. Although the choices Loretta and Warren made through their working life were to ensure that their children were well set up financially when they passed, now their own daughter is supporting them financially. Even worse, reforms introduced in June last year, which were aimed at further deregulating the industry and introducing higher levels of flexibility, have prevented people like Loretta and Warren from selling these assets.

After meeting with Loretta and Warren and hearing their story, I signed the NSW Taxi Industry Pledge, which seeks fair and proper compensation for all taxi licence owners who have lost the value of their New South Wales taxi licences. The pledge calls for continuation of the passenger service levy to make sure that those owners receive their due compensation. It also calls for a viable, affordable, regulated and reliable taxi industry that is available to all. The Liberal-Nationals Government needs to do right by people like Loretta and Warren. When they were sitting in my office, I was struck by how honest and hardworking they were, and what amazing decisions they have made throughout their lives to do the right thing. They were the words they used: "the right thing". After all they have done throughout their lives to support themselves and be self-sufficient, it is time this Government stopped pulling the rug out from under them.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:56): Mr Assistant Speaker, I echo the congratulations on your appointment to the role. The health and safety of the Hawkesbury community is of extreme importance to me. For that reason, I am grateful to be a part of a government that has provided strong economic management to be able to fund the infrastructure and other expenses required to protect the health and safety of my community. I am also proud to represent a community comprised of many individuals and organisations who work towards the health and safety of their fellow community members, either by virtue of employment or volunteering.

The Black Summer bushfires of December 2019 to January 2020 highlighted for me the amazing leadership, team effort and resilience of our RFS volunteers, which kicked in during this catastrophic period. There was great support, too, from emergency services: Fire and Rescue NSW, paramedics, police, RAAF personnel and ambulance crews. My electorate of Hawkesbury was ravaged in what was one of numerous disasters that we had to face. Although we have had bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, the fighting spirit of the Hawkesbury was on display through the worst of times.

During that catastrophic bushfire period, I attended the Hawkesbury RFS fire control centre daily. Whenever I welcomed the then Premier, commissioners, Ministers from State and Federal governments and the New South Wales Governor, I would also talk about the run-down condition of the premises and the need for urgent funding. It seems that my comments were not ignored, and recommendations in the NSW Bushfire Inquiry identified the substandard existing facilities. I was, therefore, pleased with the recent announcement by the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, Steph Cooke, that the New South Wales Government is providing \$8 million for the construction of a new fire control centre in Hawkesbury. Moruya, Tumut and Hawkesbury were identified as three priority projects, with an investment by the New South Wales Government totalling \$31 million to ensure that our emergency services have purpose-built infrastructure in place to respond to future major emergencies.

I am also pleased that our community will benefit from the New South Wales Government's investment in the health system. Last Monday I had the honour of welcoming the appointment of four new interns to the Hawkesbury District Health Service. Jasveen, Meghna, Queenie and Meena began their internship at the hospital and I wish them the very best in this chapter of their careers. I know our new interns are in good hands and amongst hardworking colleagues, led by CEO Stephon Billingham. They have the opportunity to learn from world-class doctors and, having met the interns, I have no doubt of their desire to excel and serve our community. I wish them all the very best success and thank them for their service and commitment to the health of the good people of Hawkesbury and visitors from beyond the electorate.

Our new recruits are among 1,073 new medical interns joining the New South Wales health system, which is a record number of new starters and the most of any State or Territory in Australia. I am incredibly grateful to our local health teams for all the work they do around the clock in Hawkesbury to keep us healthy and safe, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud to be part of a New South Wales Government that is providing the largest ever health workforce boost in the State, with the investment of a record \$2.8 billion to recruit—as I said in my earlier speeches—an additional 1,060 doctors, 5,000 nurses, 880 allied health staff and 1,360 hospital support staff over a four-year period.

PORT OF NEWCASTLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:00): "Relentless" is one word to describe the Government's determination to stop the Port of Newcastle from diversifying its trade and investing \$2 billion in the Hunter and creating 19,000 jobs. Here are some more words: disgraceful, malicious, spiteful, pernicious, malevolent and pig-headed. The latest move is opening up expressions of interest for the 52-hectare Intertrade site at Mayfield North, which was formerly occupied by BHP. Normally this kind of process would not even raise eyebrows. I am sure a few companies out there would be very interested in the site. Do members know who else is interested and has already tried to purchase the site? It is the Port of Newcastle.

Here are a few characteristics of the site. It has great road access and abuts a rail line. It is part of the last 100 contiguous hectares of land in a port on the east coast of this country. It also happens to be right next to where the Port of Newcastle will develop its multipurpose deepwater terminal. We all know the terminal I am talking about: It is the container terminal those opposite do not want Newcastle to have because they do not want it competing with Port Kembla or Port Botany. The terminal would be subject to the anti-competitive clause those opposite wrote into the contract when they flogged off our port, which punishes it to the tune of around \$1 million per ship for moving too many containers through the terminal.

That is right—the political party of free market enterprise is trying to interfere in free market enterprise. A free market is great, right up until it has a negative impact on its interests or its mates' interests—because that was the reason the anti-competitive clause was written into the deed of sale. When all three ports were privatised, one of the bidders needed an assurance that Port Botany would keep the monopoly on container traffic. Free market, huh? This deal was so rotten that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission smelled a rat and took it to the Federal Court. In fact, there is another hearing listed for this very Thursday. Three days before that hearing, at the crack of dawn, the Government put out a media release calling for expressions of interest for the Intertrade site. Timing, huh?

In the hands of the Port of Newcastle—and do not forget it has already tried to buy it—the Intertrade site would provide purpose-built access and egress to the future terminal, which would see \$2 billion of private investment injected into the Hunter, provide 19,000 direct and indirect jobs, futureproof the world's biggest coal port and bring the workforce into the transition economy. What kind of fool would stand in the way of that? The Federal Government, the Labor Party, The Nationals, Business Hunter, the Committee for the Hunter and the people of the Hunter region all back this project. The New South Wales Government is the only thing standing in the way.

And now, because the contract clause is apparently not enough, they want to rub salt in the wound of the rejection they already doled the Port of Newcastle and use that free market process to sell the Intertrade site. Oh, there is another word—hypocritical! It sure does say a lot about this Government's attitude towards Newcastle and the Hunter that it would prioritise a \$20 million-odd land sale over \$2 billion in private investment and 19,000 jobs. But hey, if there are two things that this Government loves it is helping their mates and selling off everything it can.

The Intertrade site is a once-in-a-generation opportunity that could go down the drain. The expression of interest is a malicious campaign from a government that wants to protect its own interests. This container terminal is being built, whether the New South Wales Government likes it or not. The Government has two options: get out of the way, or sell out Newcastle and the Hunter once again.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Conveniently, the Minister, who would like to contribute, is in the Chamber.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (20:05): Mr Assistant Speaker, I will not comment on the personal invective delivered by the member for Newcastle but suffice it to say that I think it is ironic that the member for Newcastle has delivered a near passionate defence of the merits of competition but then argued against an open expression of interests for a crucially important site for the people of Newcastle. I think that is a valid point to make.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I thank the Minister. I call the member for Gosford.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:06): Congratulations on your appointment, Mr Assistant Speaker. It is fabulous to have you here and I hope you are not too rude to me from the chair.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: It has never happened.

Ms LIESL TESCH: As a former Novocastrian, I acknowledge the comments made by the member for Newcastle and recognise it is such a shame that this investment in the future of Newcastle post-coal is not a consideration for this Liberal-Nationals Government. Tonight I commend and thank all the nurses who were out there today for really trying to prove and show to this Government how absolutely exhausted they are. Mr Assistant Speaker, as a former nurse, I am sure it is very clear to you that this let it rip philosophy by the Liberal Government has not worked for our health system. Dominic Perrottet very clearly knew the risk that Omicron posed, yet before Christmas he announced that the Liberal policy was to let it rip. That has had absolutely dire consequences for our health staff, who knew that that was not going to work.

We heard today and we have been hearing from the staff of the Gosford and Wyong hospitals that there has been no room in emergency departments. The hospitals are so short-staffed that critical care staff have had to leave patients on their own to the point that patients have been left lying in their own urine as there were too many patients and not enough staff. At the Gosford Hospital we had ambulances waiting for four or four and a half hours with ambulance staff caring for those patients because we have not had staff in the hospital to care for them. As a result of that we had a catastrophic event in our community. A young 13-year-old boy was murdered by another 13-year-old boy. The victim was stabbed and the first to arrive on the scene were the police rather than the ambulance. The police had to deal with that horrible situation because the ambulances were blocked up at our hospital. That is a disgrace.

Today we heard that nurses are breaking down crying in the bathroom and in their tearooms—and that is when they have the opportunity. Often they do not have the time to even take their breaks. I get really scared for our new graduates. There were so many young nurses outside Parliament today—fresh faced and passionate. In 10 years, it is the first strike that nurses have had; yet staff who have not been in the system very long were striking today because they are close to broken. They are the ones we need to keep in the profession and they are the ones that we need to see have time. Our older nurses are so stressed out because historically they had time to care and support and mentor young nurses in the system but older staff are trying to get out. They are trying to get into non-clinical roles because it is so stressful being a nurse. We are seeing our new graduate staff come into the profession possibly too early because of this crisis. They are dealing with an incredible cross-section of patients. They are being abused by non-vaccinated patients in hospital. They have been so under stress that often it is difficult to separate COVID and non-COVID positive patients.

Our nurses and midwives need a break. They need a bathroom break. They need a chance to do their training. They need the chance to go home on time and not to have to come back and do shift after shift. They are exhausted. The Premier says he is not making it political, but then he says we have a first-class health system and it is okay. It is absolutely not okay—not when we are telling patients in cars or in the emergency department [ED] that there are no doctors. Not when we are telling people they need to go home and come back in the morning or stay and wait for 10 hours. I have heard that a lot of people have gone to the ED and then left. I have heard staff say that before they can even get into the ED they are treating patients with COVID and sending them home. This is not what our staff should be dealing with, two years into an Omicron crisis that we knew was coming. The Premier let it rip, and it did not work.

I note that the disrespect to our frontline staff also extends to our ambulance staff at Ettalong. They were not informed that their station is being shut down. Their neighbours were letterbox dropped and they informed the ambulance staff that the station is being shut down. These paramedics are at the front line every day, shapeshifting their workplace to deal with our community. What sort of respect is that for the health system? Once again the Liberal Government is going to flog off—privatise—the good block of land on which the Ettalong ambulance station sits and move it to Ocean Beach Road. Not everyone here knows this but Ocean Beach Road

is a traffic disaster, even with traffic lights. The bureaucrats may have done their research but it was not done now that we have all of these people working from home. People across the other side of The Rip Bridge are dealt with by this ambulance station. It is not going to be a good solution. It is time that this Premier looked after and paid our frontline staff appropriately.

Community Recognition Notices

MR AND MRS BOURNE'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Gregory and Mrs Michele Bourne of Helensburgh on their 50th Wedding Anniversary which was celebrated on the 28th December 2021. 50 years of marriage is a wonderful milestone and I hope they enjoyed their gold anniversary. I wish them many more years of fun, enjoyment, happiness and good health.

AIDAN CAHILL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—At just eighteen years of age, Wallsend electorate local Aidan Cahill is making a name for himself in international cricket. A former Lambton High School student, Aidan has taken to the Caribbean for the under-19 cricket World Cup. The Newcastle City all-rounder took 2-33 in a match against Scotland at the Conaree Sports Club in beautiful St. Kitts and Nevis. Aidan's performance helped keep the Scots to 8-236 for their 50 overs. Then he turned in an admirable number 3 batting performance, hammering 72 from 45 balls—managing seven fours and four sixes. This is just the latest in an impressive early career for Aidan. At the beginning of 2021, Aidan had already been away twice for the under-18 NSW Country Championships, got named in the Cricket Australia under-17 squad in the 2019-2020 season and made his senior debut for Newcastle at the T20 Regional Bash in October 2020. I can't wait to see what comes next for this extraordinary young athlete—good on you, Aidan, you've done Wallsend proud and I'm sure you will continue to do so.

BERESFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Beresfield Public School on their appointment. Beresfield Public School is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. Led by Principal Jonathan Ridgway, the outstanding staff at Beresfield Public School work alongside the parent and student body to uphold their motto "Live And Learn" by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind hearted students at Beresfield Public School never fail to approach every opportunity with positivity and diligence, helping uphold the wonderful culture that the school community shares. The 2022 leadership team is a group of amazing students who demonstrate the Beresfield Public School's values. I congratulate the 2022 Student Leaders, School Captain Georgia, Vice-Captain Charlotte and Prefects Belle, Axle, Harley and Tane on their successful appointment. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement. I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities. I extend my best wishes to the new student leaders at Beresfield Public School.

CARDIFF NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Cardiff North Public School on their appointment. Cardiff North Public School is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. Led by Principal Allyson Corrigan, the outstanding staff at Cardiff North Public School work alongside the parent and student body to uphold their motto "Care, Respect, Responsibility, Co-operation" by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind hearted students at Cardiff North Public School never fail to approach every opportunity with positivity and diligence, helping uphold the wonderful culture that the school community shares. The 2022 leadership team is a group of amazing students who demonstrate the Cardiff North Public School's values. I congratulate the 2022 Student Leaders, Jonathan, Thomas, Harriet, Ella, Erin, Ryder, Sienna, Xavia, Braith and Caleb on their successful appointment. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement. I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities. I extend my best wishes to the new student leaders at Cardiff North Public School.

CRAIG MCGREGOR

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the extraordinary contribution made to the intellectual and cultural life of Australia by Byron Bay writer, academic and journalist Craig McGregor, who passed away in January aged 88. I offer my sincere condolences to Craig's family and loved ones. Craig's writing covered most genres, from poetry to political profiles: multi-skilled and endlessly curious, he was an outstanding social commentator, a two-time Walkley Award-winner and a 'lighthouse' to budding journalists and his family.

Craig wrote more than 19 non-fiction books, two novels and two collections of short stories; he contributed to film scripts and a rock opera, was a walking encyclopaedia on American R&B and jazz and edited a book on Bob Dylan. A keen board-rider, he co-wrote two books on surfing. His writing on the class system in Australia helped to explode the myth of egalitarianism. A self-described "perpetual outsider", Craig inhabited most of the country's class groupings – from bush farming to scholarship-funded elite schooling to a middle-class professional career. Craig spent the past 22 years in Byron Bay, where earlier visits had seen him planting native trees at Wategos Beach – just one example of his commitment to improving the planet.

AUSTRALIAN-SOUTH EAST ASIAN NETWORK

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—I had the honour of attending the recent launch of the Australian-South East Asian Network on behalf of NSW Labor. Members of the Lao, Cambodian and Khmer Krom communities have come together to form the network and advocate on behalf of multicultural groups in Australia, as well as citizens in their homelands. I was joined by my federal Parliamentary colleagues McMahon MP Chris Bowen, Werriwa MP Anne Stanley and Senator Kristina Keneally at the launch to discuss important issues such as democracy, human rights and foreign interference. The commitment to advocacy by Lao, Cambodian and Khmer Krom communities in south-west is a strong reminder that despite our differences, we have much in common. There is strength in our diversity and we must all continue to work together to foster harmony and embrace our shared democratic values. I congratulate all members of the Australian-South East Asian Network for using their voices to engage with governments and Parliamentarians at all levels for the betterment of citizens both in Australia and in their homelands.

SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—South West Community Transport [SWCT] continues to lead the way in accessible transport. The not-for-profit was named Best Specialist Business for 2021 at the Campbelltown Local Business Awards and Disability Services Australia's Employer of the Year 2021. An outstanding achievement. SWCT operate a fleet of 52 vehicles, including a new wheelchair-accessible vehicle thanks to \$50,000 in funding from the Community Building Partnership grants program. SWCT services the following Local Government Areas: Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly. Excitingly, SWCT is expanding into Wingecarribee Shire with the acquisition of Southern Highlands Community Transport. SWCT's depot is located in Minto, within my electorate. Driving SWCT's growth is Executive Officer Darrin Wilson and his team of 60 paid staff and around 50 volunteers who keep the wheels turning for around 6000 clients. SWCT helps connect people who are transport disadvantaged including the elderly, the frail and people with disability or mobility issues. SWCT's service assists people getting to medical appointments, to the local shopping centre and to social activities. I commend SWCT's commitment to helping our most vulnerable stay connected, retain their independence and stay active.

MR & MRS GAWTHORNE'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Today I wish to congratulate two of my Bundeena constituents, John and his wife Marilyn as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 29 January 2022. I hope they had a wonderful day accompanied by their closest family and friends as they marked this wonderful milestone of their golden anniversary. I wish John and Marilyn many more years of love and good health together.

TIM CARROLL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I congratulate one of Bankstown's dearest and most respected locals, Tim Carroll, who was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the community of Bankstown. In Tim's twenty eight year tenure as the Director of Outloud [BYDS], Tim initiated over 8000 arts projects, supporting the growth of many young artists in the local community and transforming Bankstown and South West Sydney's cultural landscape. Amongst his many accomplishments, Tim was instrumental in drawing in the necessary funds to establish the Bankstown Arts Centre in 2011. The Arts Centre has been the base for Outloud and many other community organisations in mentoring young people from the local region, and in providing an opportunity for many talented artists to showcase their skills. In 2013, Mr Carroll received the Bankstown Citizen of the Year Award for his extraordinary services to the community with respect to domestic violence awareness and the arts. As the State Member for Bankstown and the former Mayor of Bankstown City Council, I have seen first-hand Tim's ability to inspire and develop opportunities for young people from all different walks of life. Once again, I congratulate Tim on this well-deserved honour.

PROFESSOR TUAN VAN NGUYEN

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Tuan Van Nguyen for being recognised in the recent Order of Australia honours. Professor Nguyen received an AM in the General Division of the Order of Australia for outstanding service to medical research, to osteoporosis and fracture

prevention, and to tertiary education. Professor Nguyen received this incredible honour on the same day as his arrival in Australia from Vietnam 40 years ago. Professor Nguyen's contribution to the medical field of osteoporosis has made a significant impact to genetic and epidemiological research. Discovering the first Vitamin D receptor gene and developing a model for assessing the risk of fractures for individuals, Professor Nguyen's contribution to medicine is now cited across the globe in preventing osteoporosis. I am very delighted that such an accomplished professional is a resident of our community. Once again, I congratulate Professor Nguyen on this well-deserved and esteemed recognition.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE BUDDHIST SOCIETY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I would like to recognise the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and their marking of Chinese New Year. I had the pleasure of joining the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for their Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations on 6 February at the Mingyue Lay Buddhist Temple in Bonnyrigg. The commencement of the Blessing Ceremony was marked by the issuing of red envelopes by Cai Shen Dao, the chanting of Master Wong Fei Hung, and the Feng Yang Flower Drums display. The Lion Dance Group performances were a vibrant demonstration of the diverse talents in our community, and it was a pleasure being part of the festivities. I thank Chairman James Chan OAM, President Vincent Kong OAM, Vice Chairman Sen Huynh, and the board members of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for their kind invitation and warm hospitality. I wish everyone a happy Lunar New Year, in this Year of the Tiger.

BARRY THOMPSON'S 50TH MONARCH ACHIEVEMENT

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—Today I would like to recognize an outstanding contributor to the local community in my area. Barry Thompson recently enjoyed his 50th "Monarch" celebration with the Lions Club of Hornsby, an organization for which I am an Honorary Member. Barry Thompson joined the Lions Club of Hornsby in February 1972 and, despite a heart attack two weeks later, he has become one of the Club's longest serving and most active members. During Barry's fifty consecutive years with Hornsby Lions he has held various positions. This includes serving a term as President, which was a very active year for the Club. Throughout his time as a Lion he has firmly believed in the Lions Ethics and Objectives and has mentored an impressive number of new Lions. Barry Thompson was honoured with a Melvin Jones Fellowship award in April 2016, for his extensive community work. He is also a life member of the Lions Club of Hornsby and is currently serving the Club as a Director. I sincerely thank Barry Thompson for his invaluable work in our community, as a committed member of the Lions Club of Hornsby for an incredible fifty years.

GLENORIE RSL SUB-BRANCH'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—I would like to acknowledge Glenorie RSL sub-Branch which recently celebrated its 70th anniversary. They were registered with their charter on 13th February 1952, and their first President was Ted Schwebel. The Glenorie sub-Branch's early meetings were held at the Glenorie Memorial Hall before land was purchased at 926 Old Northern Road, Glenorie, where their first purpose-built Club House was constructed. By 1965, they had outgrown the facility and a new Club building was built nearby, which is the current site of the Glenorie RSL Club. The original Club premises was later used as a youth club. The Glenorie RSL sub-Branch has always carefully followed the RSL's core values of camaraderie, concern and mateship, which were fostered and experienced amongst the Australian troops at war. Recently I was honoured to attend the event to mark the Club's 70th anniversary. I congratulate the Glenorie RSL sub-Branch President, Andy Pellizo, Secretary, Graham Bruce, Reverend Bill Rosier and members, both past and present, for achieving this significant milestone and for your service to the community, Veterans and their families.

INDIA DALTON, GALSTON HIGH SCHOOL VICE CAPTAIN

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—I would like to acknowledge India Dalton, the Galston High School Vice-Captain for 2022. Along with being the Matt Kean Award winner in 2021 she was also the recipient of the Premiers ANZAC Memorial Scholarship. The Premiers ANZAC Memorial Scholarship funds a study program for young people. The Scholars learn about the causes and effects of world conflicts and visit the battle fields where ANZACS have fought. In 2021 they focused on significant places in NSW and ACT the defence of the home-front during the Second World War and the role of NSW in Australian military history. India, who was selected to represent Galston High School on the tour, also presented a short talk on Dame Alice Chisholm at the Goulburn War Memorial. I would like to congratulate India on being chosen for this scholarship and along with receiving the Matt Kean Award for Leadership. I have no doubt India's star will continue to rise and I wish her all the best in her final year in high school.

45TH ANNIVERSARY - GRANVILLE TRAIN DISASTER

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—18 January 2022 marked the 45th anniversary of Australia's worst rail disaster, an event that is forever seared into the memory of Granville residents and families of the victims and

survivors. On 18 January 1997 at 8:10 am, a crowded commuter train derailed when it ran into the Bold Street Road bridge supports and subsequently collapsed onto the third and fourth carriages. 84 people died, and another 213 were injured. The names of the victims are memorialised at a commemorative wall near the station.

I thank Barry Gobbe OAM, MJA, ANZFSS, the first ambulance officer on the scene and Chairperson of the Granville Train Disaster Association, for his bravery and continued dedication to commemorating the disaster. I also thank Gary Raymond APM, OAM, and Tina Morgan BSN, and all other Association members for honouring the memory of victims and survivors.

This year's commemoration was different to previous years due to COVID-19 arrangements and we were met with rain rather than one of the year's hottest days. 18 January 1997 is a day which should never be forgotten, and Parliament should work to ensure we never see a similar disaster like it ever again.

MS TALIA EID

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 7 December I was delighted to visit Cerdon College in Merrylands, in my electorate.

Talia had recently been selected as a NSW representative to attend the 2022 National Schools Constitutional Convention in Canberra. About 120 students from public, Catholic and independent schools from across the country attend the annual convention. The Convention seeks to promote understanding and informed discussion amongst young Australians about the Constitution and Australia's system of government. Talia's application included a submission on "Upholding human rights in the time of COVID-19 is the most important constitutional issue facing Australians in 2021."

During the school holidays Talia volunteered to do work experience in my electorate office and saw first-hand the sorts of issues that arise in Granville. Thank you to Talia for your brief time in the office and best wishes for the convention in late March. Thank you also to Ms Tina Tasioulas, Year 11 Assistant Coordinator for her help in arranging my visit to the school.

2021 SENIORS STORIES WRITING COMPETITION - BETH ROBERTSON

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Introduced by the NSW Government in 2013 and now in its seventh edition, Seniors Stories is a collection of 100 stories contributed by Seniors from across the state. The competition recognises the contribution and experiences of older members of our community and provides a valuable connection between the young and older members of our society. Over 300 submissions were received for this edition, from which 100 were chosen for inclusion. Davidson constituent Elizabeth (Beth) Robertson was one of the final 100, with her short story "Sempiternity" included in the publication. Told through the eyes of a doll, it is the story of the life of an old woman, near the end of her years, and the hope of the doll that it will be passed on to younger generations of the family and not discarded. I commend Beth Robertson on her contribution in this volume of stories. Beth is an energetic member of her community, especially through her activities with the Manly, Warringah & Pittwater Historical Society. I also commend the State Government for its active encouragement of the senior community through the ongoing publication of Seniors Stories.

BILL BORG

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to acknowledge local Erskine park resident, Bill Borg, on his amazing 32 years of service to the local community being the Secretary of St Clair Comets JRLC. Bill has overseen an astonishing growth in a new Club which began with one playing field, 13 teams and 170 players. Bill's story began with his parents and eight children all born in Malta, immigrating to Australia where they celebrated the birth of one more child. Bill attended St Simon Stock in Greystanes, then Marist Bros in Westmead, before opening his own packing manufacturing company United Box Co in Guildford with his brothers Tony and Joe, which later changed to UBEECO Packaging Solutions in 1996. Bill met wife, Karyn, at a Good Friday get-together called "An Afternoon with Christ." They were married in 1975 at Glenbrook and have 4 children, Joshua, Katryna, Sarah and Jacintha, 10 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. The best of memories Bill has are the Club's phenomenal growth and the achievements of the various committees over the past 32 years. Thank you for your hard work and dedication, Legend of the Nepean, Bill Borg.

HAYLEY SHEPARD

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge the young and talented, Hayley Shepard, from Surveyors Creek Public School in my electorate of Mulgoa, on being chosen as the winner of the 2021 Minister's Christmas Card Competition. Hayley received a framed copy of her artwork and a package of books and stationery after she was selected out of 1,100 students from more than 100 public schools who submitted drawings. Hayley had the privilege of being congratulated by Minister for Education, Sarah Mitchell, describing Hayley's drawing or getting a puppy as a present as classic and one that would bring a smile to the faces of everyone who received

it. I was thrilled to hear of a student in my electorate was recognised with her design printed on the Minister's Christmas cards. A big congratulations to Hayley on this exciting achievement!

MICQUELLA GRIMA

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge local Orchard Hills resident, Micquella Grima on being presented with the Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association [HDAA] 2022 Young Woman of the Year award. Micquella is from a farming background and attended Montgrove College from K – Year 6, then Caroline Chisholm College from Years 7 – 12, before commencing a double degree (through distance education) at the University of New England [UNE], Armidale. She is studying for her Bachelor of Agriculture and Bachelor of Business while majoring in Agribusiness. In 2021, Micquella received an abundant number of scholarships supported by UNE, as well as the Rural Foundation Scholarship funded by the Royal Agricultural Society. Micquella works for both Llandilo Produce and Stockfeeds and Supercheap Automotive Australia. She is also the owner of Hope Hill Cattle Company, a commercial and stud beef production. Micquella is also currently a committee member and the NSW Young Representative for the NSW branch of Angus Australia, after having received the 2021 Norman Lethbridge Agriculture Award. Once Micquella completes her studies she aspires to enter a career in either Agronomy or Livestock Nutrition & Genetics. Congratulations to Micquella on her extraordinary achievements!

EASTPOINT TOWER RESIDENTS' COMPOST INITIATIVE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate I commend the residents of Eastpoint Tower in Edgecliff for their engagement in Woollahra Municipal Council's 'Kitchen to Compost' service. In 2021, the Eastpoint Tower's owners' corporation embarked on a campaign to educate and engage residents in the Kitchen to Compost food waste service, reduce waste and increase recycling within the ninety-nine apartment complex. Following a successful trial on one floor, half of the residents now compost their food scraps, significantly reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. With many people in the Sydney electorate living in apartments, council composting programs offer residents an easy, practical way to reduce their personal impacts on greenhouse gas emissions while also helping produce high quality compost that help with food security. I congratulate the residents and owner's corporation of Eastpoint Tower for their commitment to environmental conservation, sustainability and waste reduction.

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE'S EMPLOYMENT LAW PRACTICE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I commend the Redfern Legal Centre's employment law practice for the extensive support for workers during the pandemic. The Redfern Legal Centre helps vulnerable workers who have been bullied, underpaid, discriminated against or treated unfairly to assert their rights and to achieve fair and just outcomes. Through COVID-19 the practice has supported groups disproportionately affected by pandemic restrictions such as migrant workers, international students and temporary visa holders already impacted by a lack of affordable housing, food security and adequate federal income support. Through education programs, advocacy and legal help, the practice has helped many people learn and understand their rights, resolve problems, recover wages and ensure fair treatment. In the Sydney electorate, I regularly refer people to the Redfern Legal Centre and I am thankful for the dedication of the staff and volunteers who continue to help disadvantaged and marginalised people in our community. I congratulate and thank the Redfern Legal Centre's employment law practice for their commitment to support and empower vulnerable workers especially throughout the pandemic.

BELMONT NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2022

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Speaker, today I acknowledge Seth Pangas, Brayden Baker, Logan Granato and Kelsey Dargan on being named as the 2022 Belmont North Public School captains and vice captains. These students always demonstrate a consistent work ethic and are proud to be members of the Belmont North Public School community. Each of these students have been involved in a variety of school activities and events over the years. They continuously strive to do their best in their studies and act as role models for their peers. Being named as the 2022 Belmont North Public School leadership team is a testament to each of these students. I am sure they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride and develop skills that they will find useful in the future. I congratulate Seth, Brayden, Logan and Kelsey on their achievement and wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPTAINS 2022

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Speaker, today I acknowledge Sunni Johnson, Isla Milton, Evie Scheerer-Carman and Tyrese Vaipulu who have been elected as the 2022 school captains and vice captains of Belmont Public School. I also acknowledge Lennox Barone and Matthew Connolly who are this year's Belmont Public School prefects. Sunni, Isla, Evie, Tyrese, Lennox and Matthew are all hard working students that are

dedicated to the Belmont Public School community. Each of these students have been involved in many school activities over the years and continuously strive to do their best and act as role models for their peers. Being elected as the 2022 Belmont Public School leaders is a testament to each of these students. I am sure they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride and develop skills that they will find beneficial in the future. I congratulate Sunni, Isla, Evie, Tyrese, Lennox and Matthew on their achievement and wish them all the best for the year ahead.

BLACKSMITHS PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2022

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Speaker, today I acknowledge Maddison Bailey, Asha Hoetzer, Maili Parker, Luke Leadbeatter and Lily Miller on being named as the 2022 Blacksmiths Public School leadership team. These students always demonstrate a consistent work ethic and are proud to be members of the Blacksmiths Public School community. Each of these students have been involved in a variety of school activities and events over the years. They continuously strive to do their best in their studies and act as role models for their peers. Being named as the 2022 Blacksmiths Public School leadership team is a testament to each of these students. I am sure they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride and develop skills that they will find useful in the future. I congratulate Maddison, Asha, Maili, Luke and Lily on their achievement and wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

ATA KIVILCIM - SES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience)—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise the hard work and dedication of Cootamundra SES unit member Ata Kivilcim. Since late last year, Mr Kivilcim has been assisting SES teams in the Menindee and Wilcannia areas west of the state as they experienced damaging storms and floods. I had the pleasure of meeting him and thanking him for his services whilst visiting Wilcannia earlier this year in my role as the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience. Volunteers like Mr Kivilcim are crucial in keeping communities safe from disaster and assisting in the recovery phase in the immediate aftermath of an event. He sets a great example of what a volunteer represents – selflessness and a deep passion for helping those in need. Once again I would like to thank Mr Kivilcim for his ongoing service to the SES and the community.

COOLAMON LIONS CLUB CHRISTMAS LIGHT COMPETITION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience)—Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to recognise Coolamon Lions Club on another successful Christmas Light Competition. Over the month of December, Coolamon Lions Club 'Light Up the Shire' Christmas Lights Competition took place which I understand had over 30 local entries. It is certainly no easy feat to wrangle the Christmas lights each year, so I thank all locals who shared in the festive spirit of the competition - I am told the effort put in by all entries was outstanding and the judges definitely had their work cut out for them. Well done to the winners, including: Greg and Narelle Guthrie of Coolamon Newsagency on Best Business House Display, Amanda and Andrew Viegel on Best Residential Display, and Paul and Tanya Hackney on Best Farm Gate Display. A special thank you also must go to Coolamon Shire Council and Coolamon Chaser Bins on their sponsorship and support of this festive event. Congratulations once again to all involved.

WOODSTOCK RFS BRIGADE - LONG SERVICE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience)—Mr Speaker I wish to highlight a combined 221 years of service from six volunteers of the Woodstock Rural Fire Service Brigade in my electorate. At a small ceremony held recently: Rob Moodie received the Long Service Medal for 15 years of service, Max Morris received the Long Service Medal for 18 years of service, Peter Holmes received the Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 22 years of service, Dan Oxley received the Long Service Medal 1st, 2nd and 3rd Clasps for 43 years of service, Paul 'Spud' Bennett received the Long Service Medal 1st, 2nd and 3rd Clasps for 48 years of service, and finally Jack Mallon, who first joined the Holmwood Brigade on his 19th Birthday, received the Long Service Medal 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th 6th Clasps for 75 years of service. The contribution of these gentlemen to their local RFS is outstanding and I offer them my gratitude and congratulations on behalf of the broader community.

LILLIAN HOWELL PROJECT

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate and thank the Lillian Howell Project for its outstanding work in providing a safe refuge for young women at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and complex trauma. Lillian's was a recipient of a Community Building Partnership Grant for the Liveability & Sustainability Upgrade Programme for Lillian Howell Refuge project. Lillian's does critical work providing medium and transitional accommodation and individual case support to assist vulnerable

young women. It is wonderful to have this service in our community and I thank the Lillian's team for all their work and care.

LOU'S PLACE

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate Lou's Place in Redfern for their successful Community Building Partnership Grant. Lou's Place is a daytime refuge to help and support women in crisis. This grant will be used for the construction of four private meeting rooms at Lou's Place. Lou's Place works with all women for as long as they need their help. Lou's Place has helped over 175,000 women and continues to do so, helping those who have often experienced multiple traumas in their life and facing homelessness, domestic violence, issues of mental health or addiction. I wholeheartedly thank the team at Lou's Place for the incredible and important work that they do every day. It is critical that women are able to access the kind of help and support offered by this wonderful service in our local community.

POCKET CITY FARMS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate Pocket City Farms for their successful Community Building Partnership Grant and thank them for their outstanding work in growing local sustainable food, providing education and connecting the community. This grant will be used for the Community Education and Training Centre Upgrades project. Pocket City Farms promotes sustainability and encourages fair access to food for communities, schools and businesses, helping protect the environment and tackling the disastrous effects of climate change. The Camperdown Farm will be the first of hopefully many similar city pocket farms, as the organisation seeks to establish several projects throughout Australia's major cities - and strives to see urban farming integrated into our urban fabric. We thank you for all your important work in helping to advance a more healthy future for our community.

PARKS FOR PEOPLE – FRENCHS FOREST & BELROSE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Spectacular, multi-million dollar upgrades for two parks servicing my electorate of Davidson, will be funded through the NSW Government's \$50 million Parks for People program. A combined \$9 million will be spent at Nandi Reserve in Frenchs Forest - in the Wakehurst electorate - and County Road Reserve in Belrose in the Davidson electorate. Nature trails in the native bushland at Nandi Reserve will be upgraded, while ensuring local flora and fauna continues to thrive. At Belrose, Country Road Reserve will be transformed into a modern, multi-use community hub, featuring an upgraded sports field, new community facilities such as change rooms and toilets, and inclusive play spaces. The design of the revamped spaces is the result of extensive community engagement. That public involvement will help deliver great spaces that locals will use and enjoy. The two projects are being undertaken as a collaborative project between the Northern Beaches Council and the NSW Government. Construction is expected to begin by mid-2022 and be complete at the end of the year. Congratulations to the local community for championing these upgraded community facilities for everyone's enjoyment.

PERI ROBERTS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Lake Macquarie has a proud history of producing world champions and I'd like to congratulate 22-year-old Peri Roberts from Coal Point after winning the Kite Surfing World Tour in Morocco. Becoming a world champion has been a life-long goal of Peri's and I'm thrilled she's achieved it. Peri has been kite surfing since she was 14 and has always had a passion for water sports, including sailing and wake boarding on Lake Macquarie, and beach surfing. Since a young age Peri has made a name for herself as the only junior female kite surfer in the wave riding competition scene. Peri's talent, thirst for adventure and fearless nature have seen her travel around the world after selling her car to compete at her own expense, without sponsorship until recently, overcoming serious injury and adversity along the way. Peri has a long list of achievements, securing podium finishes in the Merimbula Classic, NSW Surf Titles, National Wave Championships, Open Women's Lancelin Ocean Wave Classic and GKA World Cup over the years. Peri's stand-out performance at the GKA Kite-Surf World Cup must be commended and I congratulate her on never stopping chasing her dream.

REPAIR IT LAKE MAC

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—In an age where so many things are disposable and we tend to throw away old possessions rather than repair them, it's heartening to see one Lake Macquarie group working hard to buck this environmentally unfriendly trend. Toronto Sustainable Neighbourhood Group joined forces with Warners Bay Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group to create the aptly named "Repair It Lake Mac". Sam Doove and Gabrielle Clappison lead a team of 30 volunteers in the group. Collectively they run regular 'repair cafes' and hold events in the Toronto and Warners Bay area where people are invited to bring in items such as old furniture, bikes, toys, tools and clothes to be repaired. The end result, of course, is that those items are saved from going to

landfill. Volunteers say that teaching people how to repair items, sharing their skills and showing them how to be sustainable brings a real sense of joy and purpose to the team. They are working to change the mentality of our disposable society and I think that deserves genuine praise and recognition. I thank them for their excellent work and encourage them to keep up their amazing efforts.

HAYDEN PERKS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I want to commend and acknowledge the heroic actions of Hayden Perks from Morisset Park after he saved a family of nine from drowning on Boxing Day 2021. Hayden was jet skiing on Lake Macquarie just before dusk when he noticed a small boat overloaded with passengers heading offshore in extremely choppy conditions. Recognising the potential for disaster, he kept a close eye on the vessel. When the boat was 300 metres out from Trinity Point Marina, it capsized and began to sink. Hayden immediately sprang into action and was at their side within seconds. He first rescued a six-month-old baby and a man before alerting authorities to the incident and returning to rescue an 89-year-old grandmother who was slipping into unconsciousness. With the help of friend James Ryan, Hayden was able to ensure all family members were rescued from the water. Due to hazardous conditions at the time, the boat was not visible from the shore, prompting authorities to say that without Hayden's help there was a real chance the entire family may have drowned. I commend and thank Hayden for his heroic actions and quick thinking.

DIGNITY HAMPERS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I am very proud to acknowledge the charity, Dignity, for their work in empowering people experiencing homelessness. Established in 2015, Dignity provides temporary accommodation and long-term stable housing for hundreds of people every night of the year and operates multiple programs to prevent homelessness including food relief and education. I was delighted to attend Dignity's Christmas Headquarters in Chullora in December to meet with volunteers packing hampers for the Christmas season. The Headquarters is presently operating in a Fantastic Furniture Warehouse. There, I had the pleasure of meeting Dignity Chair and Fantastic Furniture CEO Kieron Richard and Dignity Founder Suzanne Hopman and heard about the important work they do, including how they supported people during COVID lockdowns. Dignity has supported more than 65,000 people since its inception. Homelessness demands nationwide and community-wide action. We owe a debt of gratitude to organisations like Dignity that seek to empower people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Their efforts represent the best of our community.

MATAAM AL ARABI

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I am very proud to acknowledge the restaurant Mataam al arabi and its owners Mr Akram Bhai, Habeeb Bhai, Fasi Bhai, Arbaz and Majid. I was delighted to attend the restaurant's grand opening on 23 December 2021 at 17 South Terrace, Punchbowl and honoured to be part of the ribbon cutting alongside Rizwan Khan Muzammil, a leader in Australia's South Indian community. The food was delicious and the staff were professional, excited and lovely to interact with. Such establishments remind me of why the Electorate of Lakemba is so blessed by the vibrancy of its diversity. The vast array of food offerings, such as those at Mataam al arabi, is only one example of how our community harmoniously brings together people from all walks of life. The Bhai family and their employees are making an important contribution to our community by sharing their culture and themselves. I am proud that they have chosen to establish a business in our community.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SPORT CLUB

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I would like to extend my warm congratulations to the team at Australian National Sports Club [ANSC] for hosting an amazing End of Year Celebration. As you know, last year, Australia experienced a once in a century pandemic. Many communities in our State experienced immense personal losses. The ANSC community lost a member of their team, David Marsiglia. David passed away after a short illness from leukaemia. He left his wife Heather and two children, Aidan and Zoe. He joined ANSC in 2013 and was a star player winning a premiership in his first year with the club. Many loved him and I was honoured to present his family with his framed jersey. Australia enjoys a rich tapestry of cultural diversity. ANSC contributes to this by encouraging people of immigrant backgrounds to share their knowledge and skills to further enhance the cultural diversity of our community. ANSC volunteers and Committee Members come from all walks of life and different ethnic backgrounds and illustrate that Australia is at its best when we work together. I want to especially all who dedicate their time and efforts to ensure the success of this sports and community organisation.

LOCAL HSC FIRST IN COURSE STUDENTS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the incredible achievement of two local students within my electorate, who were recently notified that they were the 'first in course' in one of their chosen HSC subjects. To be the first in the state in a HSC course is a tremendous achievement, and one that shows a dedication to the student's studies, and a genuine passion for the subject being

studied. Specifically, I would like to recognise Sarah Wilson of The Hills Grammar School, who received a first in course in Geography, and Akane Kunita of Castle Hill High School, who received a first in course in Japanese & Literature. This is a great testimony to the high educational standards of the Hills, and I would like to wish both students all the best for their futures.

ADUNY - GRIFFITH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Aduny Takele, Amanuel Takele and Amidu Issah of Griffith for their service to the Griffith community. Aduny and his team recently returned from Melbourne after a two year stint making and producing music videos at the Australian Institute of Music, believing that there was a real opportunity to create change in their hometown. To achieve this vision, Aduny and his team set about organising a youth basketball tournament aimed at engaging young people across community in a positive activity. The resulting tournament was a huge success, featuring live music, a free BBQ and community-donated prizes. As well as organising the tournament, Aduny and his team have also created several short videos of themselves and keen kids playing basketball at their local courts. Each week, those same children now eagerly await the arrival of Aduny and his team for a game of basketball. I commend Aduny, Amanuel and Amidu on their phenomenal service to their community, and thank them for their efforts.

BRONWYN BROUGHAM – BALRANALD

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Bronwyn Brougham for services to the Balranald community. Born and raised in Balranald, Bronwyn is a Life member of both the Balranald Pony Club and the Balranald Netball Club. Beyond these involvements, Bronwyn holds committee roles on the Balranald Racing Club and plays an active volunteer role in the Balranald Football Club, assisting with fundraising, catering and canteen duties since 2008. Outside of sport, she has had strong links with her pre-school committee and some 10 years on the Balranald Central School Parents and Citizens Committee. In support of the local economy, Bronwyn assisted Council as a representative on its Tourism Committee. I congratulate and thank Bronwyn for her community spirit, and the energy and time she has given to her community.

ISABELLA HARRIS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I'd like to congratulate Isabella Harris from Mudgee, who received an Australia Day award from the NSW National Council of Women. Isabella has just entered her final year of a combined Bachelor of Design in Architecture (Honours), and a Masters in Architecture at the University of Sydney. Her research focuses on social and humanitarian architecture, specifically for victims of domestic violence. Isabella's paid tribute to her home town as a "very giving community", and has urged other young aspiring architects to "make the most of learning opportunities, not just through formal education but through conversation. Look to those around you to gain knowledge". She says "through education, conversation and storytelling, alongside action, we can disrupt the inequalities faced not only by women, but by all marginalised people". Very wise words, Isabella. Congratulations! and I can't wait to see what you are able to achieve in this space.

POOLWERX

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—Speaker I'd like to congratulate the entire team at Poolwerx Dubbo – which was recently named the company's 2021 National Winner for Cross Counter Retail Sales. The team beat more than 150 retail stores across Australia, both metro and regional to claim top honours. Incredibly, it's the 5th time in 7 years the Dubbo store has taken out this award. The store has achieved double digit year-on-year growth every year since 2014 – even more remarkable when you consider the tough conditions we've experienced through most of that time with drought, mice plague, dust storms, floods, storms and COVID-19. That's hard on any industry, let alone an industry that relies quite heavily on consumer confidence. To the franchise partners, Jane and Adrian Driscoll, and all the team, congratulations on a job well done, and keep up the great work!

PETER HEYWOOD

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—Speaker I congratulate Peter Heywood on his Services to Sport Award at Dubbo's 2022 Australia Day ceremony. Peter has been a valuable member of the Dubbo croquet club, where he's held roles as Secretary, President and Treasurer. Four years ago, when the club was told it would need to find a new home, Peter volunteered to coordinate grant funding applications. I'm proud to say they secured funding through our Stronger Country Communities Program to make their relocation to Muller Park a reality. Peter project managed the installation of the new synthetic surface, which included the clearing of the surface area, court design, hoops, artificial surface selection, lighting and shaded seating. He coordinated the club's 100-year celebration with a

detailed history of the early years on display boards. Peter's also proactive in enhancing player skills and introducing new members to the club. The Dubbo Croquet Club quite literally wouldn't be where it is today without the efforts of Peter Heywood. Congratulations Peter on a very well-deserved award.

2021 HSC SHOWCASE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Every year, students across the state are selected to be featured in performances and exhibitions to celebrate the hard work and talent of the HSC cohort. This year, five students from the Camden electorate have been featured in showcases and Mr Speaker, I am proud to recognise these students today. Benjamin Waight of St Benedict's Catholic College was selected in ARTEXPRESS in a virtual exhibition. Samuel Corkhill of St Gregory's College was selected in ARTEXPRESS for his work to be featured in Bank Art Museum Moree and Jonathan Lin of Macarthur Anglican School was selected in ARTEXPRESS where his work will be featured in Art Gallery of NSW. Ethan Byatt of Macarthur Anglican School was selected in ONSTAGE and will be performing at York Theatre, Seymour Centre and Zoe Byatt of Macarthur Anglican School for Textstyle and her work will be featured on the Technology Educators Association NSW Website. I congratulate these local students on being selected and for their artistic talents.

SERVICE TO COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—In Camden we are blessed to have so many community minded and dedicated individuals living amongst us and Mr Speaker, I am delighted to recognise this local resident who I probably should not name. This resident served 21 years in the Royal Australia Navy and 25 years in the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation [ASIO]. This community minded resident also unconditionally cleans rubbish around local streets where they live to help keep our community looking immaculate. I thank this resident for your service to our country and your service to our community in Camden.

ALLE LLOYD

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—The NSW Seniors Card introduced the Seniors' Stories writing competition in 2013 as a way of recognising and valuing the experiences of NSW seniors and building connections between young and old. This year's theme was 'What does age have to do with it?' The best 100 entries are then selected to be published in the new volume, and today Mr Speaker I am delighted to recognise Alle Lloyd on her published short story "Charlotte Judd, John Llewellyn Lloyd and John Dunmore Lang". This heart-warming story begins in England in 1870 where Charlotte Judd sails off for a new life on a ship bound to Sydney. On board on Christmas Day Charlotte meets her younger husband John. I thank Alle for her beautiful story and congratulate her for this wonderful recognition.

ABERDEEN COMMUNITY AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate the following winners of the Upper Hunter Shire Council – Aberdeen Community Australia Day Awards 2022. Robert Dixon on being named Aberdeen Citizen of the Year. Dylan Denley was recognised with the Aberdeen Young Citizen of the Year & Upper Hunter Shire's Young Citizen of the Year awards. Ciannah Sullivan Aberdeen Young Achiever the Year. The recipients are to be commended for their community work within the Aberdeen community and I thank them for their contribution to the Upper Hunter electorate.

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate the winners of the Muswellbrook Shire Council Australia Day Awards 2022. Brian Collard on being named Citizen of the Year. Meg Southcombe on receiving the Young Citizen of the Year Award. Joan & William Tindale, Bec Wright, Brayden Dever, Paul Benkovic and Muswellbrook Shire Local and Family Society Inc. for Service to the Community. Emity Croft and Ayton Risby were recognised for Sporting Achievement. Peter Cooper was acknowledged for Services to Sport. Bridget Smith and Brett Leaver for their Contribution to Health Services. The recipients are to be commended for their community work within the Muswellbrook Shire and I thank them for their contribution to the Upper Hunter electorate.

RAY BARBI

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate St George Basketball Association president Ray Barbi on being named Georges River Council's 2022 Volunteer of the Year and Citizen of the Year. This Award is a recognition of many years of service to basketball and his local community, particularly the encouragement and development of young sportspeople. Ray has been an active member of the St George Basketball Association since 2005 as Academy Couch, Head Representative Coach and president. Ray has sought to promote basketball in the local area and encourage physical activity amongst local kids. I would also like to acknowledge the other award winners - Ahmed Daaboul was the Young Citizen of the Year, Koda

Ghassa was awarded Sportsperson of the Year, and Annette Mayne Green was awarded Advocate of the Year. The Awards were presented at the Council's Australia Day ceremony at Marana Auditorium at Hurstville. All recipients are worthy winners and I congratulate them again on their achievements.

SANTA SOPHIA CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Tuesday 14th December 2021, I had the pleasure of touring Santa Sophia Catholic College, Box Hill – the newest school of the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta. Built at the centre of an emerging local community, this co-educational College will eventually cater for up to 2000 students ranging from preschool age to Year 12. Currently, the school has welcomed students from approximately 80 different schools, creating an inclusive and diverse school community. I was so impressed by the school's design, modern facilities and expansive resources that offer students a contemporary learning experience within a faith based community. Students are inspired to explore their passions, encouraged to become their best selves and guided to formulate future careers. Thank you to the dedicated teachers, staff and students for the warm welcome and interesting tour. I would especially like to thank Ms Linda Ducksbury, and Mr Mark De Vries, Principal for their efforts in conducting an inspiring tour. Finally, I would also like to thank the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta for opening another wonderful Catholic School that caters to students in our Western Sydney community.

THE VERY REV. FATHER PETER WILLIAMS AM

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer my personal congratulations to The Very Rev. Father Peter Williams for his receipt of a Member of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day 2022 Honours List. The Order of Australia is an honour that celebrates and publically recognises the extraordinary actions undertaken by an individual for outstanding achievement and service. Father Peter is a very deserving recipient of this appointment. For decades, Father Peter has serviced our community through his contributions and dedication to Tertiary Education and strong leadership of the Catholic Church, particularly within the Diocese of Parramatta. He has worked tirelessly and selflessly to support the faith, growth, and wellbeing of thousands of members in our community. I commend Father Peter's ongoing support towards the mission of the Catholic Church and our Lord. Thank you to Father Peter for your continued dedication to providing outstanding service to our community. Congratulations again on receiving a Member of the Order of Australia. I look forward to continue working with you in the future. I pray for ongoing success in your vocation.

SISTER BARBARA MCDONOUGH OAM

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer my personal congratulations to Sister Barbara McDonough on her receipt of a Medal of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day 2022 Honours List. Sister Barbara is a very deserving recipient who has spent more than four decades providing invaluable service to Education and the Catholic Church, as well as selflessly committing to improving the lives of people in our Western Sydney community. Since 1955, she has been a Sister of Mercy. Sister Barbara has also made great contributions to the school communities of Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, and Catherine McAuley. Being a science and religion teacher since 1963 and working as the Principal of Catherine McAuley, Westmead from 1984 to 1987. Sister Barbara should be commended for changing the lives of young women who struggled with having very limited opportunities in the 1950's and 1960's. Thank you Sister Barbara for your continued dedication to providing outstanding service to our community. I look forward to continue working with you in the future. I pray for ongoing success in your vocation.

SAM KONSTAS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the outstanding achievements of an extremely talented young cricketer in my electorate. Sam Konstas enjoyed a record-breaking season for St George Cricket Club this season. As captain of St George's U16 team playing in the famous AW Green Shield competition, Sam scored 795 runs in just 10 innings at a ridiculous average of 113 - including three centuries. Sam set a new club record for the most runs in a Green Shield season. And his season total is the second highest in the history of the competition. Sam has now scored 1,670 runs in his Green Shield career - the most runs anyone has ever scored in the competition, smashing a record that has stood for more than 70 years. I would also like to extend my congratulation to St George cricket club for winning its 13th Green Shield. Just two days after winning the grand final - Sam at just 16 years of age - scored a Second-grade century - his fifth century in grade cricket. I wish Sam all the best in the future, and I'm sure we will be hearing a lot, more about him.

HIGHLY SPRUNG' SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE 2021 CAMPAIGN

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I want to recognise members of the Middle Harbour Yacht Club [MHYC] on their commendable results in the 2021 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race as part of the crew of 'Highly Sprung'. 'Highly Sprung' raced under the MHYC burgee and was led by owner and Skipper Mark

Spring. The rest of the crew consisted of Patrick St John, Anthony Bruce, Andrew Pearson, Craig Bannister, Stuart Milne, Phil Peterson, Greg Burke, Tanguy Fournier Le Ray, Matt Lumsdaine, Scott Poole, Jeremy Goodall, and Tim Longstaff. 'Highly Sprung' achieved multiple honours from the race including first place in RC Division 3, first place in ORCi Division 2, eighth overall in IRC Full Crew, and they came seventeenth overall in Line Honours. Congratulations to the entire crew for these incredible results in what was a very tumultuous race. The race fleet was battered by harsh weather conditions with more than a third of the original fleet having to retire. The race also had the slowest line honours win since 2004 due to the treacherous conditions. I also congratulate the MHYC and any others involved in their successful 2021 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race campaign.

SYDNEY INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE WINS THE 2021 NSW BIODIVERSITY AWARD

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I congratulate the Sydney Institute of Marine Science [SIMS] on winning the 2021 NSW Biodiversity Award for their Living Seawalls research program. The Living Seawalls program involves embedding ecologically enhancing structures within the manmade infrastructure built in our waters to support the marine life and ecosystem of the area. Manmade infrastructure has often been quite damaging to our marine life; through blending science, engineering, and creativity SIMS has developed these seawalls to help combat this problem which has revolutionised the approach to development in marine areas. 3D printing technology is used to create customisable panels that mimic the crevices and shapes of natural shorelines which can be fitted to new or existing marine development. The success of Living Seawalls has expanded beyond Sydney Harbour where it was first used, to currently being utilised across 3 different continents. The program was also a top 3 finalist in the inaugural Earthshot Prize. Congratulations again to the entire team at SIMS, who are based in Mosman, for this deserved achievement. I thank you for all the amazing work you do for our local and wider community.

NORTH SHORE CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION 2021

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I want to recognise the winners of the North Shore Christmas card competition for 2021. Every year, I organise a competition for primary school students from the schools within my electorate to design my community Christmas card. The winner has their artwork used as the cover, and three runner ups have their designs featured on the back. Each year it is always extremely hard to pick finalists as we receive so many great submissions. Congratulations to our winner Mia Rich from Queenwood for her design "It's Christmas" which depicted Santa in a Hawaiian shirt and sunnies with a surfboard at the beach. I absolutely loved Mia's design, especially the koala in the palm tree saying "G'day". Congratulations to the runners-up who all submitted beautiful designs too, Summer Murray from Mosman Public School, Aurora Suttor from Blessed Sacrament School, and Jayden Zhou from Neutral Bay Public School. I would also like to acknowledge all schools who participated and thank all of the staff who assisted in organising the competition for the students. I look forward seeing what designs students come up with for 2022 later this year.

LEONE MCMANUS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I acknowledge Leone McManus of Como who shared her heart-warming story in Seniors' Stories Volume 7. Our seniors hold remarkable lived experiences, and the Seniors' Stories Book provides a fantastic opportunity for our local community to learn from their fellow residents. It is apt that the theme of this edition is "What's age got to do with it?" as writers such as Leone beautifully reflected upon their life experiences to impart their wisdom upon the reader. Leone's story, "All Quiet on the Western Front", teaches the reader meaningful lessons about what is most important in life. Her touching story follows her journey of ageing, finding love and making memories with family, all set against the challenging backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her adventures are told through hand puppets who represent the important people in her life, and capture her sense of wonder and delight for the world around her. Most beautifully, Leone ends with a statement of hope that "Love conquers all. The Pandemic may have its Dance Macabre, but love wins the war. "I congratulate Leone on having her story published and thank her for sharing her important experiences with our community.

ROBYN SCHIRALLI

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I acknowledge Robyn Schiralli of Miranda who shared her touching story in Seniors' Stories Volume 7. Our seniors hold remarkable lived experiences, and the Seniors' Stories Book provides a fantastic opportunity for our local community to learn from their fellow residents. It is apt that the theme of this edition is "What's age got to do with it?" as writers such as Robyn beautifully reflected upon their life experiences to impart their wisdom upon the reader. Robyn's story, "My Nanna Through a Child's Eyes", shares her most sacred memories of her nanna. To Robyn, her nanna was both a mentor and friend – she was always gentle and nurturing, at times a mischievous playmate, and also a beloved Australian children's author whose books have reached far across the world. Robyn shares special memories of weekly visits to her nanna where she would calm Robyn's fears and share her

knowledge over a pot of tea. Despite her passing, Robyn reflects on "the joy she gave both to her grandchildren and now, children throughout Australia through her storytelling." I congratulate Robyn on having her story published and commend her for keeping her nanna's legacy alive.

GYMEA MIRANDA BOWLING AND SPORTS CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I acknowledge the wonderful GyMEA Miranda Bowling and Sports Club ("GyMEA Bowls") who are the successful recipients of \$19,915 from the NSW Government's 2021 Community Building Partnership Program. With over 60 years of history in the Sutherland Shire, GyMEA Bowls continues to be a community favourite amongst locals who enjoy participating in social, competitive and barefoot bowls tournaments provided by the Club. The grant funding will help purchase two new lawn mowers and a scarifier to maintain the lawn bowl greens to the highest standard and encourage community participation. I acknowledge the hard-working team behind this fantastic club, including Chairman Kevin Jeffree, Treasurer Debbie Brooking, Directors Kerry Baker, Terry Bouggas, Greg Letch and Marcus Worthington. I especially mention the late Ian Clark who sadly passed last year and had an incredible passion for our community and this Club. I thank the wonderful members of the GyMEA Miranda Bowling Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and look forward to seeing the positive impact it makes in our community.

CENTENARY MEMORIAL FOR COOGEE SURF LIFE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On Feb 4th 1922, Coogee Surf Life Saver Milton Singleton Coughlan tragically lost his life in a shark attack while swimming off Coogee Beach. The tragic loss of this young man who had devoted himself to protecting beachgoers shook our community for generations. This year on February 4th 2022, the Coogee Surf Life Saving Club honoured his memory and the centenary of his death with a special memorial service. The memorial also recognised the extraordinary bravery of the two Coogee SLSC members, who brought Milton back to shore. In preparation for the centenary of his passing the Coogee SLSC commissioned a restoration of his memorial, overlooking Randwick Cemetery. I was honoured to attend the memorial and pay my respects to one of our local heroes. I would like to thank Coogee Surf Life Saving Club for organising the service and for the excellent restoration of the memorial.

CENTENNIAL PARK – 100TH PARK RUN

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Congratulations to Centennial Park Parkrun on reaching the milestone of their 100th Park Run. The Centennial Park Park run is a fun and friendly weekly 5k community event and it is completely free to join in. People can choose to walk, jog, run, volunteer or simply spectate as people navigate the 5 km course through beautiful Centennial Park. Thanks to all the volunteers that make the run each week possible. Since its inception, more than 500 people have volunteered to make the Centennial Park Run happen, supporting more than 7,500 people complete the course. We know that volunteers are the heart and soul of our wonderful Eastern Suburbs community and we also know how important it is to have an active community. Centennial Park Park Run combines these two worthy initiatives to great success and does an amazing job and fostering a sense of community and a healthy and positive lifestyle. If you haven't already, I encourage you to head down to Centennial Park next Saturday at 7 am to give it a go!

COOGEE CROQUET CLUB SEASON LAUNCH AND AWARDS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Wonderful to again join the fantastic members of the Coogee Croquet Club for their annual awards day and season launch. It was great to be joined on the croquet green by the Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP, Federal Member for Kingsford Smith and Cr Dylan Parker, Mayor of Randwick City Council. It is a tremendous privilege to be the patron of this incredible club, which despite all obstacles has continued to grow throughout the past two years of very interrupted life. The club's membership has increased by over 30 per cent in the past year, but the club executive committee assure me that there is always room for more! If you haven't tried your hand at croquet, it is a great way to stay active and to meet new people. This is your sign that 2022 is your year to grab a mallet and have a game. Good shots to you all!

JR COMPLETE PAINTING FINALIST

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I congratulate the team at JR Complete Painting of East Maitland who have been announced as finalists in the 27th Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards. The Awards are one of our region's longest-running awards and have built a reputation as the Hunter's premier business excellence awards. JR Complete Painting state that "not just a team of painters, we are a team of bright and talented individuals whose expertise flourishes over a wide range of exterior and interior painting projects". I commend this team and their leaders for ensuring that they present their skills as linked to, and fed by, their passions, talents and gifts. It can be very difficult to have the quality of your work and final product noticed by anyone other than those who commissioned the work. This nomination is a recognition of the labour, the skill and the thought that

are all parts of any quality service delivery and JR Complete Painting should be proud of this recognition. I wish them all the best in the awards and as they move through this year.

HUNTER INTERIOR DESIGN FINALIST

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Since 2012 Brooke Farrell, Director and Principal Designer, has utilised her skills and insights to improve the lived environment for the clients of Hunter Interior Design. This work has now been recognised as Hunter Interior Design was recently announced as a finalist in the 27th Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards. Hunter Interior Design state that they focus on the creation of fluid, comprehensive spaces for the ease and liveability of its occupants. This design studio also connects with the local community and other businesses through the Hunter Valley via the delivery of workshops and collaborative events. I personally appreciate the layers of thought, communication and consideration that are critical to developing bespoke designs, and the linked increases in facility and utility. I wish Hunter Interior Design the best of luck in the upcoming awards and as they move forward into 2022.

HUNTER EVENTS GROUP FINALISTS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I congratulate Louise Manning, Director, and the entire team of the Hunter Events Group who have been announced as finalists in the 27th Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards. The Awards are one of our region's longest-running awards and have built a reputation as the Hunter's premier business excellence awards. The Hunter Events Group have successfully extended their brands and signature events to now incorporate several wedding focused special events and coordination services, health and wellbeing events as well as broader regional promotion events. In addition to the events produced and delivered across the Group, they also deliver large scale events for a number of organisations across the Hunter Valley. I commend the entrepreneurial spirit displayed by the team at Hunter Events Group as they identify needs and possibilities and then pursue them, often providing opportunities for other regional entrepreneurs to collaborate. I wish you well in the upcoming awards and a very bright 2022.

JENNIFER MCNAMARA

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)—Congratulations to Jennifer McNamara on being appointed CEO/Director of Clinical Services. Jennifer was previously a Registered Nurse, then a Surgical Nurse from 2007-2017 and moved into her role of Director of Clinical Services at Gosford Private hospital from 2017-2021. Jennifer is passionate to see Tuggerah Lakes Private Hospital grow and improve accessibility to health care on the Northern End of the Central Coast. Thank you Jennifer for all your previous work in the community and best of luck in your new role.

MICHAEL BRANNOCK OAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)— I congratulate Michael (Mick) Brannock of Caringbah South on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2022 Australia Day honours, in recognition of Mick's service to surf life saving. Mick joined Wanda Surf Life Saving Club in 1962. He has been a committee member at Wanda since 1964 and has held positions such as president, club captain, members' services captain and boat captain. He was recognised for his tireless contribution to the club by being awarded life membership in 1982. Mick has also had a major influence on life in the Shire as director of the biggest community event, the Sutherland to Surf fun run, a role he held for 25 years. His strong commitment to the club and surf life saving continues today, doing a range of jobs behind the scenes such as repairs and maintenance, as well as volunteering as an official for surf carnivals. Mick has been described as an 'inspiration to all' and I thank him for his tireless and dedicated service to our Sutherland Shire community.

JOHN DOBSON OAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)— I congratulate John Dobson of Burraneer on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2022 Australia Day honours for his service to the legal profession. A life member of the Law Society of NSW, John served the organisation in senior positions before becoming President in 2013. As President he wanted to show people the human and empathetic side of lawyers and advocated for the society to work harder to inform the public of the consequences of changes in the law. John was a board member of Legal Profession Admissions Board and a Director of the College of Law. He has contributed to the St George Sutherland Regional Law Society of NSW since 1971. In a career spanning more than 50 years, John has been an arbitrator with the District and Local Courts. He has also lent his expertise to the finance committee at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Caringbah and as a pro bono legal advisor to the Caringbah Parish. As Attorney General it is a pleasure to be able to recognise one of my constituents for service to the legal profession and I thank John for his contribution.

OAM RECIPIENT WAYNE MASON

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley)—I'd like to congratulate OAM recipient Wayne Mason who was recently recognised for his service to the local Mid North Coast community. Stuarts Point resident Mr Mason said he was overjoyed and humbled to receive the OAM honour, which is in keeping with a man who has constantly strived to do rather than be seen. Mr Mason has been heavily involved in the RSL, serving in many leadership positions at both a local and state level, and has also been an active member of Legacy and was the founding member of the Nambucca/Macleay Pensions and Welfare Officers' Network. As a Vietnam veteran, Mr Mason knows these organisations and the work they do in the community are so important for other veterans and their families who need support. Mr Mason has also been a leading figure of sporting associations in the region, especially cricket. He believes local volunteers are of great value, and he's proud to be one of them. In addition to Mr Mason, I'd like to mention two other local Oxley OAM recipients; Geoffrey Minett for service to the community of Nambucca Valley and John Kent for service to the community of Nambucca Heads.

COREY PAYNE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish to acknowledge Mr Corey Payne – Australia Day Ambassador for 2022 at the Australia Day Community Awards and Citizenship Ceremony. Corey is a former NRL player and the founder of the Future Direction Network. The organisation's mission is to inspire young people from Southwest Sydney to attend university, and gives them the tools to achieve their goals through mentoring, pathways programs and financial assistance. Corey is passionate about further education and was awarded the NSW Young Australian of the Year in 2013 for his work in assisting disadvantaged young people to further their education at a university level. In 2012 Corey was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship to research on a global scale how sport can be used as a means to engage young people to continue their studies. Corey Payne is an inspiration and his appointment as Australia Day Ambassador is well-deserved. I commend him on his dedication to Southwest Sydney youths and his inspirational encouragement of university study.

COMMUNITY FIRST STEP YEAR IN REVIEW EXPO

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On 14th December 2022, I had the honour of opening Community First Step's Year in Review Expo. The Expo began with an endearing performance from Community First Step preschool children who played their instruments to a traditional indigenous song. Chief Executive Officer, Mr John Gilmore, kindly guided me through the exhibition highlighting all the great work the organisation has accomplished this past year. I was pleased to hear about Community First Step's efforts throughout the pandemic. The organisation distributed 60,000 meals and assisted those with limited language skills and those without access to a computer in arranging their vaccination passports. It was a pleasure meeting Community First Step's team as well as staff from other organisations that operate within the Fairfield Local Government Area. I commend Community First Step for their dedication and commitment to the people of Fairfield and congratulate them on a successful event.

2022 AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS AND CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—It was a pleasure to join in with Fairfield City Council and community representatives to celebrate the 2022 Australia Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony. On the day the traditional owners of the land were acknowledged and thanked for their custodianship of country. There was also an acknowledgement of the contributions of those that followed - migrants, descendants of migrants and refugees. The event was well attended by both special guests and community champions. The Australia Day Ambassador was Mr Corey Payne former St John's Park resident, former NRL player and founder of the Future Direction Network. It was an honour to join in with Mayor Frank Carbone, Federal MP Chris Bowen and local Fairfield City Councillors and staff to affirm the efforts of all community award nominees. Congratulations to the following award winners: Sports Achiever of the Year - Adrian Pini; Volunteer of the Year - Bashar Hanna; Young Citizen of the Year - Nancy Nguyen and Citizen of the Year - Colin Arnold Phipps. I commend Fairfield City Council staff for organising and hosting the event in a COVID safe manner.

PORTERS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—I would like to congratulate and wish all students, families and teachers good luck at the new Porter Creek Public School. Currently Porters Creek has 83 students and aims to serve 460 students but in the future would be able accommodate 1000 students. As a former teacher and Principal I know how exciting starting the new school year is especially for kinder students. I hope you create amazing memories for years to come at the new Porters Creek Public School.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I rise today to recognise Meals on Wheels which is an outstanding community organisation that has been doing incredible work in the St George area for over 60 years. Each year in NSW, the organisation delivers over 4.5 million individual meals thanks to their 14,000 strong army of volunteers. These services are often a lifeline to vulnerable and less mobile members of the community, particularly senior citizens who rely on these meals to get the nutrition they need. Before my involvement in Meals on Wheels as a volunteer, I was unaware of how prevalent malnutrition was in older Australians. Not only does the organisation provide meals, they also provide education on the importance of a balanced and healthy diet. With 150 local Meals on Wheels branches across the State, they are a large organisation both in contribution and in outreach. I encourage anyone who is interested in getting involved in their local branch to do so now. It is most certainly a rewarding experience and it is one that I thoroughly enjoy and always look forward to.

OATLEY PARK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I rise to announce that the brand new amenities precinct at Oatley Park is now officially open. These state of the art facilities are fantastic news for the countless community organisations and local residents that utilise Oatley Park. It was a pleasure to join Member for Banks, David Coleman and representatives from Georges River Council to officially open these facilities to the public. The new amenities block includes: male and female restrooms; improved wheelchair access; sporting club facilities; two change rooms; a canteen; and plenty of storage options. I know that President, Jeremy Babb and the entire team at the All Saints Oatley West Football Club are particularly excited about these upgrades, as are a number of local residents who utilise the space for recreation and leisure. These upgrades can also facilitate an increase in female participation by giving local women access to the premier changing rooms and facilities that they deserve. I have no doubt that these facilities will be cherished and appreciated by the entire community well into the future.

ST GEORGE BASKETBALL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate one of my favourite local sporting organisations, the St George Basketball Association, for receiving much needed grant funding thanks to the NSW Government. As part of the Local Sports Grant program, the St George Basketball Association has received \$7000 to increase female participation and provide additional coaching services. This funding program is achieving incredible results throughout the State, including right here in the St George area, where almost \$40,000 is being injected directly into our local sporting community. It was an honour to drop in to a training session with President Ray Barbi, Administrator Anna Pazanin and Board Member Kate Joveski, to announce this important funding boost for their organisation. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation had over 1000 registered players and I have no doubt that their numbers will grow even higher in the future. The strong community support for the organisation is thanks to the ongoing commitment of Ray Barbi and the team who are continuing to provide an inclusive and enjoyable environment for players of all ages and abilities. Well done to the St George Basketball Association.

APIA LEICHHARDT FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House APIA Leichhardt Football Club for their incredible performance in the FFA Cup in 2021. APIA advanced to the quarter finals, setting a record to become the first non-A-League team to defeat two A-league opponents in the FFA Cup. This is an incredible achievement and one Leichhardt will not forget soon. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Club President Tony Raciti, APIA Head Office administrator Pia Scarselletta, Elite Development Program Convenor Rick Montrome, Head Coach Danial Cummins, and the entire Leichhardt FC Mens First Grade team. I also want to thank the fans of APIA Leichhardt for their ongoing support of the club. May there be more victories to come. Forza Apia.

10 YEARS OF THE TEMPE BIRDOS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The Tempe Birdos are celebrating their tenth anniversary this year; for a decade, the Birdos have conducted their monthly survey of the Tempe wetlands, making a significant contribution to bird conservation efforts along the Cook River. The place which is now Tempe wetlands has undergone many an environmental change over the years. It was a shale quarry in the 1920s before most famously becoming the Tempe tip through to the mid-1970s. Since then, Council has worked to remediate the site, reverting the site to wetlands. Each month, the Birdos set about the wetlands to survey birdlife and share morning tea. The Birdos enter the data from their observations into the Atlas of Living Australia, ensuring local government and other bodies are well informed in decision making. When the Birdos began their work back in 2012, they could

never have predicted the sort of milestones they would reach. In 2016, they recorded their 100th species. Since then, the number has reached 120 – unimaginable in the days of the Tempe Tip. Congratulations and thank you Tempe Birdos, for 10 years of service to both the birds and the local community.

MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—On February 11, the Marrickville community celebrated the centenary anniversary of the opening of our Marrickville Town Hall. The Town Hall was built on land that housed a nursery and on 11 February 1922, 20,000 people gathered to watch the town hall's opening. Over the years, the Town Hall has served many purposes. It was the administrative heart of the council, hosted public meetings and has been the place generations of locals have become Australian citizens and voted. From the 1920s through to the 1950s, the town hall was famous for raucous social dances and concerts. I've heard quite a few stories from locals from their younger years, sneaking out of the house to attend dances or meeting their future spouses on the dance floors. It's clear the Town Hall has always been at the very centre of social, cultural and civic life of our community. I'm excited plans to convert the Town Hall to a hub for multicultural performance and live music are back on the table. It means future generations will be able to add their own story to that of this beautiful public building.

MOUNT SAINT PATRICK COLLEGE MURWILLUMBAH

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate HSC students, teachers, support staff, parents and carers on a fantastic set of results in the 2021 HSC exams. Despite a challenging year Mount Saint Pat's have excelled and done our whole region proud. Coming 114th in the state is an incredible achievement and this places them firmly in the top 200 schools in New South Wales. Principal Paul Reidy and Assistant Principal Narelle Sherrah say that the schools successful approach centres around each student forming a strong sense of belonging in the school community. A compassionate and nurturing approach that clearly gets results. At Mount Saint Pat's there were so many standouts but particular commendations goes to Miranda Quantrill who scored a 99.35 ATAR and came first in the state for Music. Fellow graduates Ysabella Purser achieved a 99.1 ATAR and Tiffany New achieved fourth in the state for multimedia. The cohort was a standout achieving 73 band six results in the 2021 HSC. For a small country school that is an extraordinary achievement showing that our local young people have just as much smarts and determination as their city cousins. I can't wait to see what they do in the future.

KYOGLÉ GIANT PUMPKIN AND WATERMELON FESTIVAL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Kyogle Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival was a roaring success this year with lots of outstanding entries. I thank Kyogle Tidy Towns Secretary Joan Hayman, Chair Robert Dwyer, Vice Chair Anne Reardon and the entire committee for their hard work in putting on this event. Particularly in the times of COVID. I was delighted to be asked to do the honours and open the festival and I enjoyed giving out some prizes. I congratulate the following Pumpkin and Watermelon prize winners: Open Pumpkin – John Leadbeatter with a 390kg pumpkin; Under 250kg – Dale Oliver; Junior Pumpkin – Pippa and Ester Galvin; Open Watermelon – Tony Forhloff with a 65kg watermelon; Home Gardener – John Leadbeatter. I also congratulate the following Arts and Craft Prize Winners: Senior Art 1st Prize – Thomas Law; Junior Art 1st Prize – Audrey Lee; Commendation Awards – Cameron Johnston, Misty Lawson and Xavier Rooney; Open Craft – Kyogle Quilters; Cooking Competition – Helen Goebel; Pumpkin/Melon Sculpting Competition – Ross Mathers with Gerry the Ginger Tom. Other Prizes: Business Window Dressing – Amanda's Hair and Beauty; Watermelon Eating Competition – The Simpson Family. It was wonderful to see Kyogle alive with festive spirit again. I'm already looking forward to next year.

MOUNTAIN TOP COFFEE – CHAMPION COFFEE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate Mountain Top Coffee in Georgica, just outside of Nimbin on being named Champion Coffee at the Sydney Royal Fine Food Show. Champion roaster Bernard Rooney, grower Peter Webb and owners Denise and Owen Whitney have reason to be very proud. Mountain Top Coffee scored well with an impressive 92.25 score and a gold medal in the espresso category of the show. What's even more impressive is that this was the first time Mountain Top Coffee entered the competition. But it's much more than beginners luck. Both Bernard and Peter have over 15 years and 20 years respectively of experience in their trade. This experience as roasters and growers make for the great blend of coffee that Mountain Top offers. Mountain Top Coffee is loved by Australian cafes and also has international buyers in America and Japan. Bernard explains his coffee is premium coffee that's not overwhelmed by sugar. It is pleasing to hear Peter predicts 2022 will be a bumper crop at the farm and the business has growing local, national and international interest. I was very fortunate to visit the farm last year and personally experience their talents and wonderful products.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—The Davidson electorate had a number of local residents recognised this year in the Australia Day honours list. Dr Graeme Morgan, for his service to medicine through

radiation oncology practice and research and The Hon. Justice Michael Slattery, for his service to the law, the judiciary and professional legal associations, were appointed Members in the General Division of the Order of Australia. Professor Catherine Birman of Killara received a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to medicine through otolaryngology and various other roles, as did Alexander Purnell of Killara for his service to sport and as a gold medallist in rowing at the Tokyo Olympics. Other recipients of the Medal of the Order of Australia were Juliet Smith and Wayne Lyne of Forestville, for their service to the community through emergency response organisations. Congratulations to these constituents and everyone else recognised in this year's Australia Day Honours list.

GEORGIA RYAN – YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today, I extend my sincere congratulations to dyslexia and dysgraphia awareness campaigner Georgia Ryan on being awarded the 2022 Port Macquarie-Hastings Young Citizen of the Year. Georgia is well known in our community for her tireless efforts in shining a spotlight on dyslexia and dysgraphia. At the age of eleven Georgia was diagnosed with both disorders and has since championed a number of initiatives to increase awareness so that the next child is not left behind in their schooling. A student at Mackillop College, Georgia is a Youth Ambassador for Dyslexia Mid North Coast, a position she has held for the past three years. She is also the driving force behind Port Macquarie's "Go Red for Dyslexia" event in October where a number of businesses light up in a red glow to show their support for people living with the disorder. In her Ambassador role Georgia has collected 4325 signatures in a petition for dyslexia education. She has distributed brochures, been a keynote speaker at many events and published articles in magazines. Thank you Georgia for your leadership and advocacy.

ST AGNES PARISH FLOOD RECOVERY – COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I recognise The St Agnes Parish Flood Recovery staff and volunteer team on their recent recognition as Community Group of The Year at the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Australia Day Awards. Following the devastating floods in March 2021 a group of Parish staff and volunteers rallied to support those impacted in this time of crisis. From the gruelling clean-up to the long-term recovery process, St Agnes Parish has tirelessly laboured to aid our flood-affected communities by re-purposing their Retreat at Bonny Hills as an evacuation centre to home 70-plus displaced residents, providing food, accommodation, respite, pastoral care and links to other government and community services, housing displaced elderly residents in their Aged Care Services, sending crews to assist with clean-up, repairs and maintenance, and establishing a Pop-Up Pantry which provided non-perishable food, cleaning products, blankets and linen. This work is a marvellous testament of the Parish's dedication to our community. I want to particularly acknowledge the leadership of Peter Johnson and the many staff and volunteers for your care and compassion during this difficult time for our community.

LARRY BROOK – SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise in the House to congratulate a champion of surf lifesaving Larry Brook on receiving the 2022 Port Macquarie-Hastings Senior Citizen of the Year award at the Australia Day celebrations. Larry has dedicated over 60 years of service to surf lifesaving with a strong legacy in volunteering and community leadership. During this time Larry has actively patrolled our beaches and undertaken literally 300 hours of coaching every year. He is credited with mentoring the young members of the Club for twenty one continuous seasons and has been elected to various positions including Vice President, since joining surf lifesaving in 1962. It is not surprising that in six decades of competitions Larry has taken out major awards in local, state and national events including a world championship medal for his trophy cabinet. Larry is a life member of St John's Ambulance Australia, Port Macquarie Swimming Club, Port Macquarie Winter Swim Club and Port Macquarie Surf Life Saving Club. A role model by any standard for people to aspire to, Larry is a worth recipient of this honour and I thank him for his service.

BEN EWINGS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—I would like to congratulate and acknowledge 19-year-old Ben Ewings an emerging young pet grooming entrepreneur. Mr Ewings has autism and had difficulty with schooling, he decided to study Certificate III in Pet Grooming at TAFE NSW, where he is now a successful business owner of Coastal Pooches a pet grooming business. Ben, your hard work and dedication got you where you are today and you should be extremely proud of yourself. Thanks to TAFE NSW for the guidance and support Ben received to not only take up a career that he loves but to be working for himself doing what he loves working with animals. Again congratulations Ben and I wish you all the best for the future of your business and your focus to build your business into a franchise.

ROY FORD

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Roy Ford who was recently recognised for his volunteer work. Roy has been volunteering for the Grafton Branch of the United Hospital Auxiliary for 20 years and was one of the first male volunteers to put his hand up to assist the UHA. Roy has volunteered for a number of various organisations within his local area and the community owes him a great debt of gratitude for his generosity with his time. Congratulations Roy and keep up the great work.

LESLEY ROBSON

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The Campbelltown Australia Day awards present an opportunity to recognise the unsung heroes of our community. The 2022 awards were certainly no different. Among the plethora of winners was Citizen of the Year, Lesley Robson. Lesley has been an incredible advocate for many years for victims of domestic and family violence in our community. Lesley has helped establish and promote a number of programs and projects to address the issue. Those projects and programs include: the annual 16 Days of Activism; and the Wash Away Violence Program. The 16 Days of Activism begins on November 25 – which coincides with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It is an incredibly important yearly program that helps to continue to awareness in relation to violence against women. There is no doubt that many, many residents in Campbelltown have benefited enormously from Lesley's tireless contributions. Whilst Lesley it's not accolades and rewards that motivate Lesley to do what she does, it certainly is wonderful that her efforts could be officially recognised. Again, on behalf of the Campbelltown community, congratulations on being named the 2022 Citizen of the Year.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 20:13 until
Wednesday 16 February 2022 at 9:30.**