



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday 29 March 2022

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 29 March 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

GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST BILL 2021

Returned

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

Announcements

CHAMBER COVID-SAFE ARRANGEMENTS

The SPEAKER: For the information of members, further colleagues within our ranks have tested positive for COVID-19 since the last sitting day, including this morning, as well as staff. I urge members to take sensible precautions. A lot of that is self-directed, but masks must be worn during question time.

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The SPEAKER: I welcome back the member for Lismore.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank you for your visit to the electorate of Lismore and for the library books in the Parliamentary Library. Do not take that out of my time.

Later,

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Lismore that the additional time allocated for her notice of motion was a one-off, not a precedent.

Later,

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the member for Castle Hill that his time has expired.

Bills

GREATER CITIES COMMISSION BILL 2022

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 22 March 2022.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:18): I lead for Labor in this debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022 and indicate from the outset that Labor will not be opposing the bill. But we on this side will move sensible amendments that I trust the Government will see are considered and will support during the debate. The Minister noted in his second reading speech that in 2015 the Greater Sydney Commission, the precursor to this revamped and expanded Greater Cities Commission, was established with bipartisan support. He is of course correct. Labor had taken the idea of a Greater Sydney Commission to the 2015 election. It had been Labor's view at the time that the establishment of the commission could provide the means to end the development wars that frustratingly and increasingly beset Sydney and to give the importance of strategic planning its dominance. At the time of the debate in October 2015 former Labor leader Luke Foley indicated Labor's support for the commission, noting the long gestation period for a body in Sydney that was to coordinate planning across the city. Mr Foley noted in his contribution:

Our State government is characterised by siloed departments rarely working together and never working towards agreed metropolitan goals. Our local government is focused on the micro-urban issues and is, at times, oblivious to the city-wide issues. A big State government combined with small local councils often sees Sydney get lost in between.

Those comments from the initial debate are considered in the context of the Minister's second reading speech, where he noted:

In this context, bringing together State and local governments into a single commission model binds levels of government together in a more coordinated governance model.

...

The commission [model] allows us to face the difficult planning actions we need to take, safe in the knowledge that the challenges cannot be shirked or ignored.

And challenges there are. Challenges in western Sydney should not be shirked or ignored, yet they have been. Challenges in Newcastle and the Hunter should not be shirked or ignored, yet they have been. Challenges on the Central Coast should not be shirked or ignored, yet they have been—as the member for Wyong will no doubt speak about in his contribution. If members listen to any of my speeches in this place, they certainly know that there are challenges in Wollongong and the Illawarra that should not be shirked or ignored, and yet they have been.

For too long in many instances those issues and challenges in Newcastle and the Hunter, in western Sydney, on the Central Coast, and in Wollongong and the Illawarra remain unresolved. It is Labor's hope that some of those issues and challenges may finally get the resolution that they deserve and that the emerging issues in the expanded six-city vision might get the attention that they deserve. The Premier's announcement, as part of the Bradfield oration in December last year, of the addition of Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast to a Greater Cities Commission means that the expanded commission will cover some two million hectares of land with a population that will grow to more than eight million people over the next two decades.

It is said that population is destiny, and most of that population growth will be destined for western Sydney. Let us look at the facts. Population targets from the New South Wales Government indicate that between 2021 and 2041, 20 years hence, the Blacktown local government area will take an additional 200,000 people. Liverpool will have an additional 190,000; Camden, 180,000; Parramatta, 140,000; and Penrith, 140,000. That is 850,000 people, for those doing the maths, between those local government areas alone. Two-thirds of the population growth of Sydney is expected to go to western Sydney. But Sydney's population growth and its density is highly unequal across the city.

In contrast, the area of Northern Beaches Council is expected to take an additional 27,000 people, while Mosman takes around 1,000. I am sure the House will agree that the contrast is stark. The new cities will take their share of population growth as well. The combined challenges of planning for a mega-region of eight million people pose a considerable challenge for the new commission, for this Government and—depending on the election in 12 months—for the government to be elected in March 2023. As I indicated earlier, population is destiny. There is little point, unless one is inclined to an academic debate, to question that we must find ways to house and provide jobs, education, health facilities and infrastructure for eight million people. Stripped down to its core, that is the challenge that governments face in years to come. Let me be clear, housing eight million people and providing jobs, schooling, training, hospitals, train stations, buses, local roads and open spaces must be done fairly and equitably.

The tale of two Sydneys, so exposed by COVID, cannot be permitted to ever turn into the tale of six Sydneys. As the 2018 Committee of Sydney report on the sandstone mega-region noted, "Mega-regions around the globe are delivering economic and social outcomes for their collective communities". It is also noted that there was little integration between the six cities of the Sydney, Newcastle, Central Coast and Wollongong mega-region intended for the commission's coverage in this bill. That integration will be one of the key challenges to address. It is not only a strategic planning challenge but also an infrastructure coordination and delivery challenge. It is timely that we debate those changes today because the limited interconnectivity that was found to exist between the six cities by Professor Paul Wellings and Kyle Loades in their 2018 report on the sandstone mega-region has been similarly found in an examination of public transport accessibility level data by the McKell Institute in a report released just yesterday.

The McKell Institute report, *Funding the infrastructure of tomorrow*, found that access to infrastructure is unequal and strongly affects the metropolitan divide in Sydney; that public transport is skewed to areas of higher incomes; that all eight western Sydney local government areas are in the bottom third of councils close to public transport and, conversely, that of the 33 local government areas, the third with the best access to public transport are all in the east and north districts; and that for all local government areas the median household income is strongly correlated to access to public transport. The earlier mega-region report that I referred to also noted:

Using existing private and public transport routes, neither Wollongong nor Central Coast commuters can access significant parts of Sydney within an hour, and Newcastle remains relatively isolated.

Labor expects that the connectedness of parts of the six cities and the imbalance of current Government infrastructure spends would be matters for review and consideration by the commission in the future, and so too matters associated with housing affordability. Debate rages around the reasons why housing prices have risen so much for Sydney to become the second least affordable city in the world. Let that sink in. Sydney is the second least affordable city on the planet in which to buy a home. Some elements of the cause are now almost indisputable. They principally relate to infrastructure delivery. Servicing new housing lots or allowing for additional density, where approved, is often being delayed by lack of access to the basics: water, sewerage, drainage and roads. The matter has come up multiple times in my conversations with stakeholders about this bill and other planning matters. Infrastructure delay is contributing to house price increases because it is holding back housing supply. This is the reason why committees like the infrastructure delivery committee proposed in the bill are so important.

I note that proposed section 15 in part 2, division 3 of the bill, which seeks to establish the infrastructure delivery committee, only requires the appointment of one of the city commissioners to that committee. Even if it is not a strict legislative requirement, I would argue that as a matter of practice the city commissioner of one of the six cities being discussed by the infrastructure delivery committee should at least be in the room when discussions about their city are under consideration. I would expect and in fact demand that if the bill passes, the city commissioner for the Illawarra and Shoalhaven city be in the room having a voice at the table when matters relating to the integration of departments and the delivery—on time, on budget and when people need it—of infrastructure in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven are being discussed. It only makes sense.

I appreciate why the bill has not gone to that level of detail, but I would expect it in practice because coordinating infrastructure delivery through multiple agencies and multiple levels of government should be one of the primary focuses of the city commissioners. While Labor will not be seeking an amendment to require the relevant city commissioner be at the table during discussions about the infrastructure delivery in the city they represent, we will be watching how it works in practice. How the infrastructure delivery committee works in practice is of particular interest to community leaders and stakeholders of the Illawarra-Shoalhaven city, the Central Coast city and the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle city.

I also take the opportunity to touch on the regional plans that are currently under development and their future. I note that the bill provides for the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 to continue to have effect as if it were a district strategic plan until a district strategic plan is made for the Illawarra-Shoalhaven city. That is a good thing. Currently both the Hunter and the Central Coast regional plans for the period to 2041 are in draft form. Schedule 4 to the bill provides for the considerable work that has already been undertaken by many stakeholders in those areas to be completed—not lost and scrapped—and for those plans, once finalised, to become the relevant city plans. It is also noted that the Hunter regional plan covers a geographic area beyond the area proposed to form the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle city. For this reason, it is important that the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan continue to be recognised by the Government. I am advised that the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan cannot be directly referenced in this bill for technical reasons. The plan stems from the Hunter Regional Plan rather being a plan in its own right under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. However, it is an important plan in its own right and in discussions with stakeholders in the Hunter is widely acknowledged as an important part of the area's planning framework and architecture.

Before I turn to some comments on the amendments proposed by Labor, I touch on the question of cost-shifting that has been raised with me by stakeholders. The effective operation of the commission will rely on good cooperation and working relationships between the commission and relevant local councils across not just the three existing cities but also the six proposed cities. No one body holds all of the information needed to tackle some of the issues the commission will deal with, and no one person or organisation holds all of the ideas and answers. But the local government areas that are being added to the area covered by the commission in this bill do not want to be—and should not be—the only ones wearing the cost if there are attempts through provisions of the bill to shift costs from State agencies onto local councils. I understand that the operation of the commission to date has been cooperative with relevant councils, and Labor expects that this cooperation will continue and be extended to those new councils to be covered. Labor will watch this interaction between the commission and local councils very carefully as the provisions in this bill are implemented.

Briefly I turn to the amendments proposed by Labor, which of course I will go to in more detail during the consideration in detail phase. Labor seeks two amendments to the bill before the House. The first is a residential requirement on city commissioners. Briefly I put on my hat as the member for Wollongong and say—and the member for Wyong and my colleagues in the Hunter will agree—that none of us from those new city areas want drive-in, drive-out city commissioners. We do not want Princes Highway flyers coming in and letting us know what we should and should not do. This is not a question of parochialism but rather of wanting to see someone from the city in question appointed to the role who already has an understanding of the challenges that face that city. More importantly, it results in the appointment of a city commissioner who shares and understands the aspirations of that city. That is highly important.

Many members would not realise that some of the issues that city commissioners will be trying to tackle have been around for years, if not decades. I acknowledge the member for Wyong is in the Chamber, and I am sure we will hear as much in his contribution to this debate. Often they are not new debates but rather the perspectives and questions that have been ignored or unresolved. Adding a requirement that new city commissioners should reside in those cities will add to the confidence of residents that the new city commissioner and anyone appointed to that role in the future will have an interest, share an aspiration and carry with them the desire to get results. Initially Labor was proposing that the residential requirement be limited to the new cities being added to the remit of the commission. However, in discussions with the Minister and his office it has been concluded that it is a better arrangement that this requirement extend to all future commissioners—those in the new cities as well as the existing.

Mr Jamie Parker: You've got to get someone from Bellevue Hill in there.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I am sure the member for Balmain may nominate someone from Bellevue Hill. I note the amendment has been drafted to facilitate the arrangements I have outlined. I am pleased that the Government also sees merit in this amendment and will be supporting it. Our second amendment is a requirement that there be a statutory review of the Act five years after its commencement. This is a pretty standard arrangement and one that was contained in the Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015. It is important that a powerful statutory authority such as the proposed Greater Cities Commission should be subject to a comprehensive review to assess whether it is meeting the objects of the bill and, more importantly, delivering the connectivity outcomes for the six-city mega-region. Again, I am pleased that the Government has indicated its support for that amendment.

However, it would be remiss of me not to touch on one element of the bill that has been raised with me by a number of members, specifically, the six city regional designations outlined in schedule 1 to the bill. As members know, we have the Eastern Harbour City; the Central River City; the Central Coast City, as proposed; the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City; the Western Parkland City; and the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City. No, I am not amending the bill to put the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City first, although in my view it should be. But the appropriateness of where some of those cities may fall has been raised with me, in particular the city of Blacktown.

As I mentioned earlier, Blacktown faces a population growth of 200,000 people over the next 19 years or 20 years. As the member for Blacktown said earlier during the giving of notices of motions, by 2037 it will have a greater population than Tasmania. At the moment it falls within the city categorisation of the Central River City. Under schedule 1 to the bill, that extends from Blacktown to Sutherland. Some members opposite have also asked questions about how their city or their local government area should rightly be categorised. I have discussed this with not only the member for Blacktown but also the mayor of Blacktown, Tony Bleasdale, OAM, and the general manager of Blacktown City Council, Kerry Robinson, OAM. They rightly asked where their council should go, and their answer to me stated:

We are of the view that Blacktown's best fit is in Western Sydney. It is how our people identify and it is how the rest of Sydney sees us.

They cite supporting arguments:

- A lack of communities of interest with Councils such as Georges River and Sutherland.
- Strong working relationship in Western Sydney through organisations such as: WSROC, Civic Risk Mutual, Western Sydney Institute of Sport, the Western Sydney Wanderers, etc.
- Strong cultural associations with communities in Western Sydney and the like.

I raised the matter with the Minister and his office, and I hope he will reflect on and respond to it in his contribution later in this debate. I appreciate and understand that there are consequential impacts to picking up one local government area, which seems quite straightforward, and then ruling a line through it and putting it in another city designation. I appreciate there are domino effects that need to be taken into consideration, but I hope there is a sensible way forward.

There are great expectations on our cities, and there will be great expectations on the city commissioners and on the Greater Cities Commission, whether it is working across agencies to drive outcomes that result in housing across the six cities becoming more affordable, whether it is better coordinating infrastructure delivery to make up for the infrastructure deficit in western Sydney under this Government—where almost all of the infrastructure spending by this Government over the past decade has been east of Parramatta, while the population is growing west of Parramatta—or whether it is providing advice to government on rebalancing that distorted infrastructure spend. That distorted infrastructure spend has meant the areas that can least afford poor infrastructure or that can least afford to pay tolls in the most tolled city on earth have not had the same investment as other parts of Sydney in supporting and enabling infrastructure.

There will be an expectation of the commission that those issues are among the challenges that, as the Minister said, cannot be shirked or ignored. Opposition members do not want to see that continue; we want to see the commission work properly. In their report *The Sandstone Mega-Region*, which I cited earlier, Professor Wellings and Mr Loades note:

Many leading cities of today are best understood as mega-regions that bring together once separate settlements into an amalgamated 'functional city', where flows of people, capital, goods and ideas extend beyond the boundaries drawn on a map.

If that is truly the motivation behind the Government extending the geographical remit of the Greater Sydney Commission by turning it into the Greater Cities Commission, then that is likely a good thing. But Labor members will be watching it closely because if all we get out of this change is new letterhead and a bloated quasi-bureaucracy, then everyone should be rightly disappointed by the change. It will not fix those issues that have been shirked and ignored in the past, whether they be in western Sydney, Newcastle and the lower Hunter, the Central Coast or Wollongong.

Cities are complex places. They are diverse, they can be chaotic and they comprise many interests that are reflective of their complexity and diversity. They have their own character, history and geography. They are places of lifestyle, culture and commerce; places of government, governance and administration; places people get to, move around in and move away from by car, by rail, by plane and, increasingly, by bike and on foot. Cities are places where ideas are created, nourished and nurtured, and then die. They are places of cooperation and competition. They have been damned and praised, written off and renewed. These descriptions apply to all of the six cities proposed in the bill. The Greater Cities Commission has a big task ahead of it as we navigate a post-pandemic future and provide for eight million people. That said, in addition to the amendments that have been proposed and circulated, Labor does not oppose the bill.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:39): On behalf of the Government, I contribute to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I note that the member for Wyong was nodding furiously about the opportunities for the Central Coast that the bill will deliver. I also note that the Minister has been in the Chamber from the minute this debate commenced. I add my support to this excellent piece of legislation, and I am delighted that the Central Coast City is one of the six cities set out in the proposed legislation. By way of background, I will highlight the work that has already been done by the Greater Sydney Commission on the Central Coast Strategy.

From the outset, I note that it was a bipartisan exercise. Together with the member for Wyong and other MPs on the Central Coast, I took part in the exercise to look at setting up that framework and those priorities that the Central Coast needed. I acknowledge the great work done by former Premier Gladys Berejiklian in establishing a Central Coast Strategy because, let us be very clear—and I heard the contribution from the member for Wollongong earlier—the reality is that no such strategy had ever been done for the Central Coast. This Government recognises the growth opportunities on the Central Coast, whether in health, education or infrastructure, and we have put those strategies in place. I thank all of the stakeholders that took part in the lengthy consultation to come up with those six priorities that our region deems to be the most important.

Moving forward, it will be fantastic that the Central Coast will have its own locally based commissioner. I commend the Minister for ensuring that that will be a part of the legislation, because having a Central Coast local as the commissioner to implement the priorities of our region is absolutely appropriate. There are some outstanding leaders on the Central Coast, many of whom would make excellent commissioners, and the member for Wyong and I will look forward to working in partnership with the commissioner for the Central Coast as part of the six-city strategy. As I said before, the Central Coast Strategy has already been constructed by the Greater Sydney Commission. I thank the hundreds of people in industry, in government and in our community who have taken part in working out those six priorities. I will go through the six priorities that have been identified by the Central Coast.

The first priority is locating a university campus in the Gosford city centre to bring those learning opportunities again to our region and stimulate the economy in our CBDs, such as Gosford, which is exactly what having a university in the region will achieve. This will pair beautifully with the recent announcement prior to Christmas of a brand new TAFE campus in Gosford, and the Government is in the final stages of negotiating the purchase of the former Gosford Council Chambers site for it to become a brand new vertical TAFE. We are talking about a massive investment in education on the Central Coast, and the number one strategy identified by our region as part of the Central Coast Strategy is that university campus in the Gosford CBD. The member for Wyong and I both know that having the opportunity to go to primary school, high school and then university or TAFE on the Central Coast without having to leave the region is a huge advantage to our community. It is a massive input economically as well as from an education perspective.

The second priority is expanding the health services in Gosford to support the Central Coast's growing population to generate more local jobs. Health is the single largest employer on the Central Coast. This

Government has invested more than half a billion dollars into basically rebuilding both Gosford and Wyong hospitals, most recently with the opening of the brand new operating theatre at Wyong Hospital. I was with the CEO of the Central Coast Local Health District, Mr Scott McLachlan, on Saturday night. Interestingly, Gosford Hospital is now the fifth-largest hospital in the State of New South Wales. It has one of the largest emergency departments, soon to be surpassed by the size of the emergency department at Wyong Hospital. This Liberal-Nationals Government has made record investment in health, which, sadly, had fallen by the wayside under Labor. This Government not only made the commitment but also delivered the bricks-and-mortar outcome.

In addition, we are hiring more nurses and doctors on the Central Coast. Recently I greeted the 154 new nurses who are graduating from a clinical research unit right across the road from Gosford Hospital. That unit is the result of a \$78 million investment by this Government, the Federal Government and the University of Newcastle to create jobs and opportunities for our health clinicians. It is probably one of the world's best clinical research units and medical schools, and is located across the courtyard from Gosford Hospital. Other regions can only envy that facility. Because of the delivery on those commitments, the Central Coast is becoming the destination of choice for many people who want to leave Sydney. Pre-COVID, the population was projected to grow by 100,000 people by 2041. Those numbers will have increased because COVID has effectively supercharged sea changes to regions like the Central Coast and your electorate of Lake Macquarie, Mr Assistant Speaker. That is why being part of this six cities strategy is so important for our region.

The third priority is facilitating faster transport connections between regional centres to foster economic growth and new jobs on the Central Coast. I acknowledge the Federal Government's budget commitment of an additional \$1 billion to increase the speed of rail between Wyong and Tuggerah, which will be announced this afternoon. That is a wonderful investment. Of course we need to do more. New rail improvement strategies are being developed all the time. I look forward to the release of the McNaughton report, which will help frame additional investment in regions such as the Central Coast as part of the six cities strategy.

The member for Wyong and I are acutely aware of the fourth priority, which is increasing the amount of serviced industrial land on the Central Coast to support expanded industries such as food technology and advanced manufacturing. We have been pulling out our hair watching B-grade local government politicians argue over connecting those areas. The Central Coast has its own water authority worth billions of dollars. The now sacked elected body failed to prioritise that infrastructure investment, despite the fact that it owned the water and sewerage authority. Those sorts of issues need to be addressed in our region, especially in the northern part of the Central Coast, which has been clearly identified for economic and industrial investment.

One of the biggest roadblocks has been local government. I thank the Minister for sacking our councillors recently. That great decision was welcomed by everybody on the Central Coast because one of the single biggest roadblocks was councillors' behaviour. That was identified in the review of the Central Coast Strategy. Local government had become one of the greatest imposts on investment in the Central Coast. The Central Coast Council is the only council ever to hand back money to the State Government—almost \$5 million in tourism funding. Weaknesses have been identified by our community, our business leaders and State Government. Our local government has admitted that it was the greater part of the problem in securing future investment in the Central Coast.

That brings me to the fifth priority, which is streamlining the planning process to remove barriers, such as uncertainty and wait times, for businesses that want to locate to the Central Coast. As I said, one of the single biggest barriers was the recalcitrant behaviour of the elected body in failing to address the growing need for investment on the Central Coast. The member for Wyong and I were at our wits' end as we saw investment opportunities lost as a result of businesses being unable to get the most basic infrastructure connected because our councillors wanted to argue over a tree and a movie theatre for seven hours rather than make the big decisions to help our region move forward. Again I thank the local government Minister for sacking them. It has been an interesting trip. This feedback was provided by not only government but also community members, community organisations and businesses that are located on the Central Coast or looking to invest in the Central Coast. The sixth priority is establishing a high-speed internet network to attract new and diverse businesses to the Central Coast and to remove any existing barriers to growth that are related to digital connectivity. I seek a brief extension of time. *[Extension of time]*

The framework for the Central Coast has already been laid through the Central Coast Strategy. I acknowledge the diligent work of the Greater Sydney Commission. The strategy lays a solid framework for the Central Coast to be part of the six cities commission and to have its own commissioner to continue to drive delivery forward on the Central Coast. As I said, I heard the member for Wollongong speak earlier about the deficit in infrastructure. He should come to the Central Coast and I will show him where money has been spent. We have invested more than \$1 billion in road infrastructure. We have not just talked about it; we have delivered

it. We have invested more than half a billion dollars in hospitals. The Wyong electorate got a brand new primary school, which recently opened for day one of term 1 this year.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: How many demountables are there?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Actually, we got rid of a whole heap of demountables on the Central Coast that Labor left us. That was an interesting interjection by the member for Coogee. We are removing the demountables because we are upgrading our schools and dealing with the \$1 billion backlog of infrastructure that Labor failed to deliver, especially on the Central Coast. Our schools are going from strength to strength, which shows in the NAPLAN results. The bill is a fantastic piece of legislation because it frames the future for our rapidly growing region. The Central Coast is parochial; it is not Newcastle, the Hunter or the Sydney metropolitan area. The people of the Central Coast know that to move forward we have to continue with the vision already outlined in the Central Coast Strategy. The six cities commission allows exactly that.

I welcome a local commissioner for the Central Coast because all members of Parliament can work with them. It is interesting that the strategy that was set up was bipartisan. All members of Parliament took part in it and agreed on the priorities. I thank all members who took part in creating the strategy for the Central Coast because it lays a solid framework for the region moving forward. If anything, it gives us a leg-up on other regions, which is good. The Central Coast must continue to see this type of investment so that people in the region have the jobs, opportunities, growth and education that they absolutely deserve.

Currently we are only one hour and 20 minutes from Central station by train. I am sure that time will decrease with the Fast Rail Network Strategy, which will add to the quality of life of people on the Central Coast. Those connectivity improvements have already happened with projects like NorthConnex, which was a game changer. It removed 15 sets of traffic lights and increased people's quality of life because they could spend more time with their families rather than being stuck in traffic coming into Sydney every day. It would be better if those people did not have to travel to Sydney and could live, work and play on the Central Coast, which is one of the priorities of the strategy.

Again, I welcome the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I thank the Minister for all the time he spent on the bill and with all members. He had an open-door policy to make sure that our regions will benefit and achieve their maximum potential. We have professionalism at the highest levels of government to deliver on large projects, which will continue to reinforce the positive nature of where we live. The member for Wyong and I know that we live in the best region in New South Wales; we talk about the Central Coast all the time. We are lucky to represent the more than 360,000 people who live on the Central Coast, but we know going forward that we have to ensure that this investment continues to provide the best opportunities for generations to come. Some councillors wanted to shut down the regional airport. I have no idea why anyone would want to shut down a regional airport. That was another argument the Central Coast Council carried on with for three years while it was busy going broke.

Responsible people with experience are setting up a framework that is totally deliverable. That encourages confidence in investment for businesses outside the Central Coast to realise what a great opportunity the region is. It includes the Regional Job Creation Fund, which delivers millions of dollars to our region to continue to grow jobs for the Central Coast, and the upgrades to transport, health and education. Rapidly growing regions like the Central Coast must continue to have those. As Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, I travel regularly from one end of the region to the other and see the confidence and excitement of the people living on the Central Coast. They have seen the change. The Central Coast has become a destination where people want to live. That has its own challenges with housing affordability.

The best solution for that is a good delivery framework for planning in a timely manner to make sure houses are built and not deferred or delayed for years. It should not take 400 days for a development application to be approved. It should be done in a timely manner and in a sustainable way for the region to grow. Again, I congratulate the Minister and all those who took part in creating the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022 and thank them for their hard work in setting up a fantastic, positive framework for regions like the Central Coast. When the Bradfield Oration was delivered, I was delighted to hear the Central Coast identified as one of the six cities in the proposed new city region falling under the remit of the Greater Cities Commission. I commend the bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member. I think we had all forgotten—I certainly had—how well the member for Terrigal can flesh out the time allocated to him. My congratulations to the member.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:54): I speak on behalf of The Greens to address the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I share the passion that so many in this House have for our cities, for the way our communities look and feel, and for the type of cities we build into the future that are sustainable, affordable and

build community and culture—all the issues that have been raised today. The great challenge and a great concern of The Greens is that the Greater Sydney Commission or Greater Cities Commission is failing to address and tackle some of the big-picture issues that are undermining our capacity to deliver all the positive things that members have spoken about. I want to mention a few of those.

The Minister and I have both travelled overseas and studied the issues of cities and urbanisation. Around the world, in every single market, the same thing is happening—the market cannot deliver affordable housing. It cannot do it. That is why, whether it is London, New York, Hong Kong or Singapore, governments must participate proactively in the market to bring about affordable housing. When we look at the issue of affordable housing in other jurisdictions—and the Minister's staff know this—by comparison, our definition of "affordable housing" is pathetically weak. In this State when a developer develops a piece of land, in very limited circumstances there may be affordable housing provisions attached that do almost nothing to address the affordability crisis. In other jurisdictions—such as Europe, the United Kingdom—20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent of government land is affordable, and I mean affordable long term. Councils manage the social housing in those jurisdictions. In New South Wales developers are crying over 2 per cent: "We can't give 2 per cent to affordable housing. It's so difficult. Oh, my God, it's so hard." This is public land we are talking about and they say it is all too difficult.

We need a significant shift, philosophically, culturally and politically, otherwise we will never be able to get a handle on how to deal with affordability. We need an intervention. Go to the Australian Stock Exchange to see how developers are doing—very well, thank you. They deliver less of the pie and the State receives less in revenue from public land. New South Wales is in a very unusual situation. The City of Parramatta Council is hundreds of millions of dollars behind when it comes to funding basic infrastructure. Yet the council, or the State Government, rezones a piece of land and the value of the land owned by the land-banking developer goes from \$30 million to \$400 million? The developer puts that money in their pocket, making minimal contributions—not even to the Special Infrastructure Contributions or for any other value share. That is another critical issue—value-sharing and value uplift.

I know the Australian Capital Territory has a different land environment, but if the value of land is massively increased simply through the stroke of the Government's pen, the ACT Government takes 75 per cent of the increase: "Thank you very much, we'll take that. We'll put that into schools and hospitals and so on." In the ACT they actually value share in a legitimate way. In New South Wales value-sharing seems to be anathema. It is so difficult to get genuine and real value-sharing happening. Developers from other jurisdictions who come to New South Wales cannot believe their luck.

Look at the huge windfall profits they have gained in Burwood, in Parramatta and in other places. They have had massive windfall profits, not because of any thrift or investment or anything in particular; it is because the council or the State Government revalued their land. The developer happily says, "We will take all that money, thank you very much." Who is left carrying the can? It is the ratepayer and the taxpayer. I use Parramatta as an example because the impact on the community there has been quantified. Whether it is a Labor government or a Coalition government, it will be up to the taxpayers to fill that hole or, as we have heard from the member for Wollongong, there will be unsatisfactory infrastructure in those communities.

We have seen a twinkling of opportunity: the Parramatta Road transformation plan. Members may have heard of that plan. It was an attempt by UrbanGrowth NSW to look at what rezoning the whole Parramatta Road precinct would mean for our schools, hospitals and communities, how we fund it and how we can create a genuine value-sharing arrangement. It was not perfect; we thought it was problematic. But it shows how pop-up strategic planning happens. We do not say, "We are going to rezone all this area," and then say, "We have to think about schools and hospitals," and everything else. It happens up front and the funding is provided as a part of that rezoning process.

Developers have been crying about the Government taking a few per cent for affordable housing. Developers have had the most massive increase in profits because of the huge escalation in property prices, which has a lot to do with the way we treat property as an asset class. Property is treated generously in the tax system, so why would people not invest in it and not continue to bid up the price when generous tax provisions are available to those who invest in it? Value-sharing must be tackled if we are going to change the way that our system works to fund infrastructure. If we are not serious about value-sharing, then we are not serious about funding infrastructure because the only other way we fund it is through the taxpayer. Governments are reluctant to do that, but we cannot maintain the current situation.

People who are most vulnerable in our community are being dealt with by the biggest slum lords in this State: the New South Wales Government and the Land and Housing Corporation. Anyone in this House who has social housing properties in their electorate will know that they are a disgrace because the Government will not invest in social housing. The Government says to the Land and Housing Corporation that whatever money it

makes and whatever money it spends, it has to make ends meet. We know that there has been a collapse in rent in social housing. I come from a working-class family. My dad worked in the shipyards and my mum worked in a shoe factory in Marrickville—four kids. We were offered social housing in Doonside. My parents decided not to take it; they wanted to live in the slum of Balmain—it was not the most exciting place at that time. That is an example of working-class families getting social housing, but not anymore.

People who earn incomes have been pushed out of the social housing market, and only people on income support, the most desperate and vulnerable people, get social housing. Rents are collapsing. The Government is not investing in social housing stock, so repair prices are going through the roof. How does the Government fill the gap? It cannibalises stock—sells houses. The other way is through the Government's communities program where it redevelops public land, but 70 per cent of the profit goes into the developer's pocket and 30 per cent goes to social housing. In many cases there is less social housing accommodation. They might have more letterboxes, but they are generally one-bedroom properties after three- and four-bedroom homes have been demolished. It is a sleight of hand. If we do not address social housing, we do not address the most vulnerable in our community.

That is another reason the Greater Sydney Commission has failed. It has failed to address those issues because it is locked into the market and into the psychology of the developer-driven planning. Whilst it stays in that mould, we will not be able to solve those problems. I will now address how we manage development in Sydney and why The Greens originally opposed the Greater Cities Commission. We believed, and we still believe, that despite criticisms of local government, the best approach is to invest in regional organisations of councils, which we know have been very successful. Resource councils with the people who have the skills and the capacity to do this strategic development work, instead of creating a bureaucracy and giving the position of chair to a political mate just because Lucy Turnbull needed a job.

We see a lot of mates are involved; not democratically elected councillors who can be kicked out at the next election. They are people who say, "We like that bloke. He is an ex-Labor Minister. We will give him a gig," or, "This bloke was an ex-Liberal Minister. Let's give him a gig. We have to look after them. We will give them a bit of a run." One of the great things about councils, for better or for worse, is that people decide who will be their councillors. When we create a bureaucracy, people have genuine concerns about how it can relate to communities.

I conclude by addressing infrastructure. The member for Wollongong hit the nail on the head when he spoke about infrastructure. My community is well served by infrastructure, but I will give an example of how wrong it is. The Sydney Fish Market will be a \$250 million glorified shopping centre. No more fish will be sold after the new development, which has blown out to almost \$800 million. That is a \$500 million blowout by Infrastructure NSW. Some \$500 million should have been invested in Blacktown and in the regions, but instead Infrastructure NSW invested it, not because it is part of some strategic thought but because it cannot manage infrastructure projects, and the broader community paid for that. While we do not support the bill, we recognise that overall strategic planning is absolutely critical. There are a lot of benefits in doing that. We believe that we can do a lot better. If we do not address the fundamental issues of market intervention from the Government when it comes to affordable and social housing, and if we do not address value-sharing, we cannot address housing issues in New South Wales.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:04): I support the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I recognise that the genesis of all of this was in the Premier's Bradfield Oration, which included a number of things that I was pleased to hear the Premier articulate relating to an innovation economic development agenda. I believe that the bill is another arm of that economic agenda for this State, which goes beyond and complements the economic agenda we have had for the previous decade. The existing economic development activity in which we have engaged over the forward estimates—a \$108 billion investment—is the hard infrastructure which includes hospitals, schools, roads and metros that we are building across the State. But the complementary piece of economic development with which we need to push forward is an economic development agenda based on ideas and the innovation economy. Indeed, the bill embeds that more formally in our New South Wales legislative framework.

The vision is for a six-city city and new city regions. We have our existing three city regions, which will be part of the new six-city region that has been embedded in the new bill—the Eastern Harbour City, where my electorate is based, the Central River City and the Western Parkland City, which is a growing and economically developing and accelerating part of Sydney. Sydney is a global city. Whenever we are involved in economic development we hear people talk up and talk to the importance of the role that Sydney plays in its more traditionally defined geographic boundaries; the talent and the lifestyle, albeit expensive, as is the case in many other world-scale cities. But the natural beauty of this city and the attributes that make it a talent magnet have become more important as we try to build our economy, even though our unemployment rate is lower than it has

been for some time. We are still in the process of rebuilding our economy and part of that is the ideas economy, which I think is very much supported by the bill.

I reflect on the history of the Greater Sydney Commission. It was set up in 2015. I congratulate the Ministers and Cabinet involved in that vision of the city as it was cast then, which will be broadened by the bill. I acknowledge the contributions of Lucy Turnbull, AO, the inaugural chief commissioner and a resident in my electorate, and the current and second chief commissioner, Geoff Roberts, AM, whose birthday it is today, and I commend them for the good work they have done. Why is that important to acknowledge? We can have a legislative construct, a commission and a great vision, but the work that they have done has embedded a framework into the work that government has done. This is whole-of-government legislation, which is when we do our best and most important work for the whole community. What has it drawn together? It has enabled data and objectives to be shared and responsibilities to be connected in areas of regional planning in State infrastructure strategy and our Future Transport 2056 Strategy.

The commission and the work of the chief and district commissioners has enabled and made real the vision of the commission. That would not have been possible without their personal commitment to the work of the commission and its legislation—not only its intent but also the way in which it was carried out. But we are now moving forward. The Premier and the Minister for Infrastructure have clearly articulated where we need to move as a State and they have broadened that vision to the greater city of six cities, which is entirely appropriate. I will speak to the economic development opportunities that I foreshadow will come from broadening our city lines. Those opportunities relate to the economic development agenda of the State. When it comes to whole-of-government policies, the hardest work of government is to make those policies succeed across our clusters and ministries, and to have the bureaucrats come along with us on that journey to make those policies live and not just documents to be viewed on the website.

I am passionate about the agenda around an ideas economy. I have been able to carry out that work as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier under former Premier Berejiklian and Premier Perrottet. It goes to the ideas sitting in our startups, scaleups, economies and universities. It goes to the ideas sitting in the test tubes of our labs and the ideas of researchers who are eminent on the world stage. It goes to making sure that those ideas move outside those confines to create jobs and future industries that we can only dream about now.

The bill makes that more possible because one of the priority actions in our research and acceleration action plan, which was launched by Premier Berejiklian only a year ago, relates to ensuring that the innovation activity is based in our key precincts, including Tech Central, Westmead Health and Innovation District, and the wonderful aerotropolis, which is many things to many people, including a new city to our State. The bill allows the special activation precincts, which are overseen by the Department of Regional NSW, to also come within the purview of our policies around economic development. I am gratified about that.

The member for Terrigal spoke about the exciting future opportunities on the Central Coast, because of the universities, jobs, workforces and TAFE. All of those can be connected under the rubric of a Greater Sydney Commission. That is so exciting. Ideas, researchers, startups, scaleups and small businesses know no geographic boundaries—they speak across those boundaries. By joining all of that under the framework of this commission and the good work of its commissioners, we will make those connections better than they are now. I agree with the member for Balmain that the commissioners should be people from the communities who understand those communities, have a technical background and can speak with authority.

My recent work has looked at where the research strengths are in the States. It may not surprise members that the strengths are in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, robotics, quantum and Agtech. The regions that will be encompassed in the commission bill allow us to reach into areas with profound and deeply exciting talent and capacity, which we can then link with our traditional city precincts. The University of Wollongong has done work with energy. Renewable energy has been embraced by that economy because it feels the impact of how the world has changed. The science dictating investment decisions is pointing to renewable energy and away from our traditional fuel- and coal-based industry. The economy has had to embrace that for real-world politics and for its economic survival.

The University of Wollongong and the surrounding area has produced many innovative ideas. The bill will enable those ideas to be a part of other whole-of-government decision-making processes and turn them into new jobs and new industries. In relation to Agtech, the Central Coast is the best place to base and to draw on the innovation in its economy. At the beginning I mentioned biotech. There is a biotech precinct in Newcastle, in the Hunter, and the University of Newcastle is heavily involved in that. I see so many opportunities that are beyond the planning, with a capital P. It is about making the jobs, people and ideas in our economy more joined up and represented.

Debate interrupted.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR TWEED

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Tweed a happy birthday.

Announcements

OZHARVEST

The SPEAKER: I have just come from a meeting, along with the President, where we met with Ronni Kahn, AO, the founder and CEO of OzHarvest, the food rescue charity, which does a fantastic job in our community. The New South Wales Parliament partnered with OzHarvest during the COVID lockdowns to supply over 180,000 meals, which were distributed to needy people, through 277 organisations. I thank Ronni and her team. I also thank and congratulate our parliamentary chefs team on the great work it has done. I am relaying Ronni and OzHarvest's appreciation to this Parliament. I was given an apron, a cup and a pair of socks. The first person to go by my office and see Jodie can pick those up, if anybody is of a mind to do so, as long as they do not get thrown out today.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: On behalf of Mr Paul Toole: I inform the House that for today, and for the remainder of the sitting days this week, the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney will answer questions in the absence of the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy; and the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading.

Documents

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Tabling

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES: By leave: I table a copy of the full text of the proposed resolution regarding the establishment of an Independent Complaints Officer.

Document tabled.

Question Time

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOODS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:21): My question is directed to the Acting Premier. My electorate of Lismore, along with large parts of the Northern Rivers, is flooded for the second time in a month. Murwillumbah is already flooded, and they are currently evacuating, or have evacuated, people in the Lismore CBD. Floodwaters are expected to reach 10.6 metres by this evening, and the levee limit is 10.6 metres. Will the Acting Premier report to the House what the emergency response plans are for my community?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:22): I thank the member for Lismore for her question. At a time like this, when we are seeing continuing rainfall around the State, it is tough for many of our communities and also for the communities of the member for Lismore. The member has experienced firsthand flooding on her properties so she understands the impact on the people in Lismore and in the surrounding areas. The news that we have been reporting over the past couple of days, and even today, is not what people want to hear. More rainfall is forecast. It has been raining overnight and more rain will fall today. The ground is completely saturated, and it is not taking much rainfall at the moment for water in those riverine communities to rise quickly. We are experiencing cases of flash flooding and, in other parts, there are concerns about landslips.

We have been given reports that towards the end of the week there will be wind, which has the potential to bring down trees in those communities. I am talking about communities from the mid North Coast all the way through to the Queensland border. This is an evolving situation. I spoke with the SES last night, and I had conversations today with the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience to keep up to date with what is happening. The SES and the Australian Defence Force [ADF] have been on the ground, and they have been doorknocking in those communities.

Yesterday people in and around Lismore, South Lismore and North Lismore were asked to leave their homes. Many people are not in their homes—90 per cent of people are not in their homes because of the flooding

that we saw just over four weeks ago. The ADF and the SES have been moving around to those communities and asking people to leave. Also 44 motor homes have now been moved to higher ground. Communities in those areas are being supported by all of those agencies. I thank the agencies. The SES, Fire and Rescue NSW, the Rural Fire Service, the police and volunteers are working tirelessly to ensure those communities are kept safe. Later this afternoon we may see those waters rise, but at the moment we have to wait and see. It depends on where the rainfall is landing. With the levee banks being at 10.6 metres, there is a real concern that a major flood watch will be announced this afternoon when the water gets around 9.27 metres high.

At the moment the SES are continually monitoring the situation and ensuring that communities are being supported to deal with the recent floodwaters. The SES has also been putting out lots of communiques through social media and various channels to alert the community about the weather pattern that has been coming into those areas. The weather patterns that we are seeing at the moment are predicted to continue right throughout April. So, while we are looking at the flooding situation in front of us right now, these communities could be in for a very long road as we go forward over the next month. Everything is saturated, everything is wet, and it is only going to take a storm or a shower of rainfall in the wrong spot for waters to rise very quickly in those communities.

The Government will continue to work with the member for Lismore and her community. This is above politics. This is about doing what is right for people and making sure that we put people first. It is horrendous to go there and stand with people, as the member for Lismore and many other members in this place have, to walk in their shoes and to see how they have lost everything. I assure the member for Lismore that the Government will continue to work with communities such as Lismore, Ballina, the Tweed, Coraki, Murwillumbah, Mullumbimby and Broadwater. We will make sure that we assist all of those communities, stand by their sides and get them back on their feet.

NEW SOUTH WALES FLOODS AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:27): My question is addressed to the Acting Premier. Will the Acting Premier update the House on what the Government is doing to support those impacted by floods?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:27): I thank the member for Clarence for his question. He is a great member who is working in the Northern Rivers and dealing with a very difficult situation for his community. I know that he has spoken with many people and has assisted in the recovery efforts. We know that we are not out of this. One of the conversations that he and I had when I was up there was the fact that this wet season could go all the way through to June. While the weather for April is predicted to be quite wet, we also know that the journey going forward could need ongoing support provided by the Government. Sadly, the flood crisis is continuing. Rain was falling yesterday and it is falling again today. Evacuation orders have been put in place for parts of the region. As I have said previously, the Government will do everything it can to support those impacted by flooding; it is there for the long haul.

Last week I outlined a number of support packages that have been made available to residences, businesses, councils and primary producers across the region. Today I touch on another area of support which is absolutely critical; that is, mental health support. In times of crisis it is easy to focus on the tangible and visible things in those communities that need to be fixed. We can see fallen buildings, damaged houses and potholes in the road, but one of the things that we do not see is the damage to people's mental health. It is just as important. In many cases it lasts longer, and in some cases it can be harder to fix. Tragically, we have had too much experience with natural disasters recently, and more than ever we realise the importance of providing appropriate support around mental health. That is why the Government has announced a \$25 million package to support mental health services in flood-impacted communities.

That is going to be so vital for those areas. The package contains \$7 million dollars over three years to boost local access to psychological and clinical support; \$5 million over three years to establish grants programs for NGOs to fund trauma-based programs; \$3.5 million over three years to appoint headspace and Lifeline to work with affected communities and to identify what each community's needs are; and \$3.5 million over three years to recruit 10 local recovery coordinators to work with communities on the ground, and to identify and respond to emerging issues such as increases in mental health hospital activity. There is also \$1 million to set up four pop-up Safe Havens in the areas that have been hardest hit. Safe Havens are a place for people in distress or experiencing suicidal thoughts to seek refuge and support from people with lived experience. The space is welcoming and has a range of activities to help people in these situations. No referral is required to access one of the Safe Havens.

That support is just as vital as the physical rebuilding efforts in those communities, and I encourage everyone in those communities to reach out and use the resources that they need to support them. There are no short-term fixes. The Government will continue to be there on the ground long into the future, because the trauma

might not appear for weeks or for months. It might appear in years to come, but we need to make sure that we are standing with those communities well and truly after this crisis seems as though it has moved on. I thank the Deputy Leader of The Nationals and Minister for Mental Health in the other place, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, for her work in this area. I ask the MPs in this place and the shadow Ministers to please publicise these programs. Members need to publicise them for people.

People need this support and they need to know what is available out there on the ground. It may not be something that they wish to access in the next day, week or month; it may be something that is critical in those areas in the next few years. As a government, we need to lead the conversation around mental health. The toll of the crisis has already been too high; we do not need to add to it as people process the trauma of the floods. In some of those communities at the moment, having been there, I know that some owners of houses and businesses have not been able to go back. [*Extension of time*]

A lot of people in those communities have not been able to go back into their houses or their businesses to clean up at this point in time. For a lot of them, it is still very raw. It may take time before they are able to have the strength to be able to do that. As MPs, we need to lead the conversation around mental health. The Government is fast-tracking grant claims and getting cash out the door and into the pockets of residences, businesses and primary producers. The Government has also announced over \$2.5 billion in support for communities that have been impacted by floods. The Government will work with those communities. It will rebuild those communities and ensure that they receive the support that they need. The Government will stand side by side with them. We know that they have been through hell and back, but I give the reassurance that the Government will continue to be there because, at the end of the day, it is the right thing to do.

FLOOD RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:34): My question is directed to the Acting Premier. I thank him for his response to my first question. Thousands of families have lost their homes in floods or have had their homes made uninhabitable at this stage. It will take quite a bit to rebuild or get people back into them. The Acting Premier has acknowledged that mine was one of many such homes. Will the Government immediately consider upping the structural assistance grant to \$50,000 like the Queensland Government has done? Given where we live, we watch what happens in Queensland, as he would be well aware. The current grant is \$10,000 for a single person or \$20,000 otherwise. It just does not quite cut it.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:34): I thank the member for Lismore for the question. I know that she wants the very best for her community. As local members, that is what we should want. We should be always fighting to ensure that our communities get the best outcome. Any of us here who have been through natural disasters in our communities know the impact and understand the need in those areas and the support that is required to be able to rebuild. Already we have announced a number of packages and around \$2.5 billion in support for those communities. Our primary focus was ensuring people had roofs over their heads, whether that was temporary or emergency accommodation. That was part of our \$250 million package to support those individuals and families who need it right now. Those people are not only single people; they are people with kids as well. Families have been displaced.

We have seen the generosity of people in and around those communities. Some have shown their generosity by opening up their homes. I spoke to two people living within a particular home. They have shown generosity to others by opening their doors, and they have had 16 other people living in their home. For a lot of us that would be unimaginable. We could not tolerate having an extra 16 people in the house every day. That is how these communities have stood up and—

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: I appreciate the Acting Premier's response. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The member for Lismore is going back to Lismore this afternoon. I am sure she would like to go back with some good news. The question was specifically about whether the Government would consider—not necessarily announce now—increasing that grant to \$50,000, in line with the Queensland Government.

The SPEAKER: The question was fairly wideranging in nature. The Acting Premier's answer is relevant to it.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I acknowledge the point of order of the Leader of the Opposition. Our Government has already put \$2.5 billion on the table in just over four weeks. More support is coming along the way. I am not going to stand here today and tell him exactly what that package is.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Why not?

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Hang on. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party came up with a 10-point plan for those communities. The floods occurred four weeks ago. They came up with a plan four weeks after the disaster had gone through those communities. We have not waited four weeks to put a plan together. We will continue to support those communities.

Ms Prue Car: So the answer is no.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: How many times has the member for Londonderry been there? Has she been there? The member for Londonderry has not been there. It is a bit rich for her to be talking about what she knows about those communities when she has not been there. Our \$2.5 billion is a start. There is much more to come because as a government we have been talking to residents, businesspeople and primary producers, and talking to the community about what is needed. That is how we will tailor our programs to support those communities. The member for Lismore's question was whether there will be more support for her communities. The answer is yes. I am a member of a dedicated team in government that regularly meets to talk about support for those communities. I am happy to talk to the member for Lismore. I will meet with her so that we can continue to discuss her concerns.

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOODS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:39): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience. Will the Minister update the House on the weather situation in the Northern Rivers region and the preparedness of emergency services for this event?

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (14:40): I thank the member for Tweed for his question and wish him a happy birthday. I apologise for my birthday message to him this morning also saying that we are evacuating Tumbulgum for the second time in a month. It just goes to show that this weather event and this season that we are experiencing is far from over. I thank him for his advocacy on behalf of the communities there and for taking me back time and time again to see the progress, to talk to new individuals who have been impacted and to thank the volunteers and the people who are running the neighbourhood centres and supporting those wonderful communities.

I acknowledge the member for Lismore today. It is hard for me not to get emotional. I thank her for all her advocacy. Few members would know, because neither of us have broadcast it, that we have had some late-night meetings in her part of the world. I remember coming in late on a Saturday night while she was still working away at the university. I said, "All right. Why don't I come over, and we'll sit down and have a yarn about what needs to be done." Two hours later, we had both just about run out of gas. I deeply thank her and acknowledge the hardship her communities are going through. We will keep getting through this together. We have another meeting at four o'clock this afternoon to continue those discussions.

Since the weekend, we have observed deteriorating weather conditions across the Northern Rivers region. Over the past 24 hours to nine o'clock this morning, another 200 millimetres of rain has fallen across the region. The highest rainfall so far was 283 millimetres, at Banora. This low pressure system is not quite as bad as the east coast low parked over south-west Queensland and north-east New South Wales earlier this month, but it will drop a lot of rain from Port Macquarie to the Queensland border over the days ahead. By the end of the week, it will become windy across a large part of the east coast, particularly around the Sydney area. The rain is falling on very saturated catchment areas, resulting in life-threatening flash flooding and significant riverine flooding.

The SES has so far today conducted a couple of important rescues in the Northern Rivers region. There is also a high chance of landslips. We are particularly worried about landowners who have been able to return to their properties but have access roads that are a bit dicey after the last event. We are mindful that landslips might trap them on their properties. That will not be because of flooding but because their access roads are cut off. We are very mindful of landslips at this stage.

As I mentioned earlier, damaging wind gusts are possible from Wednesday and continuing into Thursday and that has the potential to bring down more trees, impacting the landscape further, people's access to properties and our road network, of course, and bringing down powerlines. Rough sea conditions are expected to develop, peaking on Thursday. From Wednesday onwards beach erosion is unfortunately possible, particularly for south-facing beaches. We have a complex weather system that is presently throwing up all of these different challenges to communities up and down the east coast.

To that end, I have been based at the State Emergency Operations Centre since 6.30 this morning. It has been stood up once again and will remain so until we work our way through this current event. It is wonderful to have this central hub based in Sydney Olympic Park where all of our emergency services agencies can work together under one roof. They are very well supported by the other government agencies and of course we have the Department of Defence and the Bureau of Meteorology both embedded there. [*Extension of time*]

This allows for a coordinated response. I will quickly run through some numbers, noting the time I have available. There are three evacuation warnings covering a little over 9,000 people in the Northern Rivers region. There are now seven evacuation orders in place. It was six as I came into the Chamber today, but that has since risen to seven to include the Lismore CBD. There are 12 flood warnings current within the seven river systems and they are either at moderate or major.

We have taken a number of precautionary measures to make sure that communities are safe. These include 44 motorhomes based at the Lismore Central Tourist Park, which I had the opportunity to visit on Friday. We have now relocated them temporarily to Alstonville to keep people there safe. We have paused the operations of some recovery centres for 48 hours to make sure that people remain safe. We have stood up seven evacuation centres up and down the North Coast so that people have somewhere to go if they do not feel safe to stay in their home at this time. There are still approximately 1,500 people in emergency accommodation and we continue to work with them to look at options into the future.

The SES and other emergency agencies have pre-positioned resources right across the North Coast, including aircraft. There are now four staging locations at Ballina, Coffs Harbour, Taree and Cessnock. Aircraft are spread across all of those areas so they are able to respond. There are also approximately 4,000 Australian Defence Force personnel still on the ground, along with approximately 1,000 emergency services personnel from our own agencies. It is great to see that come together. I repeat what I said earlier, we will continue to work through this event and any others that might come in the future.

BUSINESSES FLOOD RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Lismore—the trifecta.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:48): Then it will be a quad. I have the fourth question too, just to give you the heads up. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving me the opportunity to ask my questions. Acting Premier, when I am asking you questions, I am asking them on behalf of the community, as you know.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lismore will ask the question.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I shall, Mr Speaker. I just wanted to give that reassurance. My question is directed to the Acting Premier. The \$50,000 grant to help small businesses get back on their feet is of course welcome. But the way it is designed, where businesses need to spend money first—not the first \$15,000, but the additional \$35,000—is making it really difficult. It just is not working because they do not have the cash flow or the spare cash on hand. As the Acting Premier knows, the Lismore CBD has been smashed and there are very few businesses operating. This needs to change urgently. Will the Acting Premier consider removing this rule and redouble efforts to get as much grant money as possible out to businesses that have been devastated by floods?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:48): I thank the member for Lismore and I look forward to her next question today. I say to the member for Lismore that I am very happy to talk to her at any time. I am happy to answer questions in this place, but I point out we had a meeting scheduled today that her office cancelled beforehand.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I always have an open door to my office for the member to come and raise any matter.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am also happy to take the question here as well.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: There is no doubt that the Government's support package of \$2.5 billion includes up to \$75,000 for primary industries, \$50,000 for small businesses and a rural landholder's support package of \$25,000. Money is also going to councils. All of that is required across the board to help communities rebuild. The Government wants to ensure that it is putting money into people's pockets as quickly as possible. I know that through Service NSW those efforts have been stepped up. Yesterday around 400 assessments were done, and that has now been bumped up to around 600 a day. We are very much on the member's side and support what she wants to see happen for her communities. We want to make sure that the money to support business owners is out the door as quickly as possible. We have 70 assessors working around the clock to ensure that can be delivered into those areas for those communities.

As I said, we will continue to look at ways to tailor programs, if need be, to ensure that they are effectively reaching the people who need support. I say to the member as the Acting Premier and the Minister for Regional New South Wales that we will tailor programs for her communities. We also want to make sure that the programs are reaching the people who require the support. There are checks and balances for these programs, and the reason for that is to ensure that the money goes into the hands of the people who need that support. Whilst a number of programs are part of our \$2.5 billion support package, we will continue to look at ways to get the money out the door. The worst that can happen is that support is not delivered to the communities who need it right now.

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:52): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is ensuring communities have access to world-class health systems now and well into the future?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (14:52): I thank the member for Camden for his question. I know from the work he has been doing in the south-west of Sydney that he well understands all of the work that is going on to support the health needs of the people of western and south-western Sydney. I will take a moment to address the broader health needs before I address the question specifically. I draw to the House's attention that today there have been 21,494 positive COVID test results. Just two weeks ago there was about half that number, 10,689 positive cases. I think that should be a salutary reminder to all of us that, as is evidenced by the masks being worn today in the Chamber, the COVID virus is very much amongst us, doubling the numbers in just a couple of weeks. I also note that today there are 1,283 people in hospital. Again, two weeks ago it was a lot less—994. Today 53 people are in our intensive care units. Two weeks ago, on 14 March, there were 38. These are not reasons to be alarmed but they are reasons to be cautious.

I certainly encourage people who have not yet had their booster shot to go and get their booster vaccination. At present, 59.5 per cent of people aged 16 and over have received a third dose. In other words, about 40 per cent of people have not. Young people particularly need to get out and get vaccinated. Do not be slack; get vaccinated. Do not be too busy; go and get vaccinated. We need to get it done and we need to get it done as soon as possible. It keeps us safe and it keeps our relatives safe. The member for Camden raised a specific topic. I remind the House that when Labor was last in office almost no major hospital capital builds were underway. I also remind the House—despite the apparent reconfiguration of the memories of Labor members—that more than 2,000 hospital beds were closed by the Labor Party while the New South Wales population grew by more than one million people. One million people more; 2,000 beds less.

I also remind the House that, by the time Labor left office, hospital waiting lists had grown by more than 50 per cent and wait times had doubled. The New South Wales Government has built more hospitals and infrastructure, and employed more health staff than ever in the State's history. This year's budget is \$30.2 billion—an 85 per cent increase on Labor's last budget of \$16.4 billion. The allocation for capital in this year's budget is \$3.1 billion—a 237 per cent increase on Labor's last capital budget. Labor did not rebuild Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals; the Liberals and The Nationals rebuilt those hospitals at a cost of more than \$700 million. Despite many promises, it did not rebuild the Nepean Hospital. More than a billion dollars is being spent on Nepean Hospital for the people of western and north-western Sydney. In south-western Sydney the planning for Bankstown Hospital is underway with an allocation of \$1.3 billion.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Where is it? Tell us where.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: There is a lot of noise but not a lot of action from Labor. The Premier and I were at Campbelltown Hospital to see the new acute services building. [*Extension of time*]

That reminds me; the member for Camden was with us that day when we had a look at the brand new tower that is being built for the new emergency department at Campbelltown Hospital. It was low rise previously and now there are massive new facilities. The doctors and nurses there are so excited to see that being completed. Just yesterday I was having a coffee as I came back to work; it has been a rough week for me. Two doctors who I did not recognise from a particular department in Liverpool Hospital—I do not want to name them because they are quite well known—came up to me and said, "We just want to thank you for the work you and the Government are doing in building and looking after our hospital."

More than three-quarters of a billion dollars' worth of hospital is being built at Liverpool for the people of south-west Sydney. It does not matter where we look in west and south-western Sydney; new hospital developments are being built. It was with some concern that I saw the Labor leader yesterday telling the community that he wants to go back to the old warfare of a part of Sydney versus another part of Sydney. That is the worst possible and most base political approach. The simple fact is, when Labor was in office, it took the west and the south-west for its—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Sorry, what did you say? I heard that. Right now more is being done in south-west and western Sydney than ever in the State's history because the Liberal-Nationals Government is doing more than Labor would do, could do or would ever try to do.

FLOOD RECOVERY COORDINATION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:59): My question is directed to the Acting Premier. So far the people responsible for the emergency flood response include the Premier, the Acting Premier, the emergency services and flood recovery Minister and a whole raft of other people and agencies. I cannot name them all. But we really need just one person on the ground who is in charge. As the Acting Premier knows, these are things I have said publicly, for which I have advocated and on which I have lobbied all Ministers. I have called for a reconstruction commission and a commissioner. Call it whatever we want but we just need one person who is in charge who can cut through all the agencies and all the issues that local members are experiencing. Will the Acting Premier consider that? I had students here from Richmond whose school got smashed—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lismore has asked her question.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (15:00): I thank the member for Lismore for her question. Let me point out a couple of things. First, a recovery coordinator, Mal Lanyon, has been appointed for the Northern Rivers. Mal Lanyon, as a deputy commissioner of police, has the ability to pull in the resources and the support, and to cut through any red tape as required for those communities. If the member for Lismore needs to meet with the coordinator to raise any concerns that she wishes to raise that need to be addressed, we can organise that at any time. I know that the member would have his number to raise any concerns with him. I commend the member for speaking about a recovery or other commission. Labor put out a 10-point plan but it never mentioned a recovery commission. Labor did not even mention that as part of its 10-point recovery plan.

Mr Dugald Saunders: It's 11 and 12.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: It is 11 now. While I have an opportunity I point out to the member—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Some people may not want to hear about the floods and the efforts that are being made. I will make sure that communities get the information they need to support them. But I point out that the member mentioned previously the Queensland Government's support package. I know there are variations in support packages but its support package is only \$741 million and this Government's support package is \$2.5 billion. There is a huge difference in the support that is being provided by the New South Wales Government to communities in those areas. I will outline a few other areas where the Government has continued to support those communities. We have waived a number of fees and charges. Waste levies for residences and businesses have been waived. Building materials, furniture and other flood-generated waste can be taken to the tip for free. There is motor vehicle stamp duty relief to replace vehicles damaged beyond repair in the flood. Local councils are waiving any interest on overdue rates and charges for ratepayers.

We have also included extended payment time frames. We have arranged for debt payments in instalments. Wages paid or payable to an employee for flood assistance activities or emergency operations are also exempt from payroll tax. The New South Wales Government continues to assist businesses on a case-by-case basis. There is \$285 million in temporary housing support; a \$248 million package towards rent relief covering costs for up to 16 weeks; disaster recovery payments are being provided; a disaster recovery allowance is providing income assistance for up to 13 weeks; there are disaster relief grants for low income families to cover the replacement of essential household items and for structural repairs; there are small business grants of up to \$50,000 for eligible small businesses and not-for-profit organisations; and there are flood grants of \$10,000 for eligible small businesses in the Northern Rivers region.

Concessional loans and disaster relief loans are available for small businesses, primary producers, not-for-profit organisations, sporting clubs—the list goes on and on. These were four very important questions, and I thank the member for asking them on behalf of her community. I assure her, the community of Lismore and the communities in the Northern Rivers that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government will have their back and will continue to work with them in those areas.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Government is achieving its vision for New South Wales through its infrastructure pipeline?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (15:05): I thank the member for East Hills very much for her question. As members in this place would know, the member for East Hills is a tireless, earnest and indefatigable campaigner for the interests of her community.

Mr Stuart Ayres: Indefatigable!

Mr ROB STOKES: That is right, indefatigable. The question she asks today is particularly relevant as the House is looking at some of the challenges that the State is facing with the flood disaster confronting the communities of the Northern Rivers and also, as the Minister for Health has indicated, the continuing challenges of rising COVID-19 infection rates. That points to what is special about the machine that ensures that we are able to respond appropriately and compassionately to help those in need in this State. That machine, of course, is the powerhouse that is our infrastructure program.

By itself, either directly or indirectly, the infrastructure program accounts for about 300,000 jobs and is delivering more than \$110 billion worth of infrastructure projects across the State. That is an incredible enabler. It is catalysing private sector investment and keeping people in jobs, which not only provides people with the opportunities to have gainful and worthwhile employment in projects that matter and that make people's lives better, but also ensures that they can gain new skills to equip them to provide even more efficient and effective infrastructure services as the Government's pipeline progresses.

It is really important to recognise that the infrastructure pipeline is precisely that: an iterative, growing list of projects that responds to the increasing complexity of needs of communities across New South Wales. The strong financial management by the New South Wales Liberal Party and The Nationals over more than a decade in government, which has been about controlling costs and expanding revenues, has enabled that massive, nation-leading infrastructure program to be delivered.

To put a sense of scale around what I am talking about, the New South Wales infrastructure build is more than \$15 billion bigger, on last year's figures, than that of our nearest rival—as recently indicated in the McKell report, which I had the good fortune to launch yesterday. Our infrastructure spend is bigger than that of every other State and Territory combined, apart from Victoria. That is the scale that I am talking about. The scale of the infrastructure program has seen an 87 per cent increase since 2014-15. By delivering world-class infrastructure, the Government is hard at work making life better for families across New South Wales.

Members tend to focus on the transformative, big-ticket items like the two largest infrastructure programs in the nation, WestConnex and Sydney Metro, which are all about providing better linkages between communities in the east and the west of Sydney. But they are just two metro mega-projects, and the hyper-local projects are also really important in making people's lives better. The Premier is fond of referring to the insistence by the member for Blacktown on his railway lifts at Doonside, but that is just part of a transport access program that has delivered more than 80 lifts to train stations across the metropolitan rail network, which have made it easier for people with disabilities to access services that many of us take for granted.

Those sorts of investments are enormously exciting because they mean that every one of us can deliver things that matter to the people we represent, and that is the great joy of being members in this place. The Government's infrastructure program is about transforming lives across the State. I have focused my comments on projects in metropolitan New South Wales, but there are also big projects on the Central Coast. A recently announced project co-funded with the Federal Government will deliver faster rail. The Government is also delivering improvements to the Wyong River bridge on the Central Coast Highway and new commuter car parking at Wyong railway station. Work is going on in the community of Coffs Harbour to improve access through the Pacific Highway, making it safer and easier for people to access jobs and get to their homes faster. Those are just a couple of snapshots of the sorts of things that the Government is doing to make New South Wales better, fairer and more prosperous for everyone across the State.

The SPEAKER: Members—including the member for Rockdale, the member for Lakemba, the member for Oatley, the member for Orange and the member for Bankstown—will cease interjecting across the Chamber. I call the member for Orange. He will be heard in silence.

REGIONAL EDUCATION

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:10): My question is directed to the Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, representing the Minister for Education and Early Learning.

Mr Paul Toole: That's Alister.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Good work; I'm glad you know. Given that the chronic teacher shortage at Canobolas Rural Technology High School in Orange has resulted in 849 merged or uncovered classes in 2021 and 852 merged or uncovered classes this year to date, with as many as 15 classes recently merged into one, what is the Government doing to address the education crisis?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (15:11): I thank the member for Orange for raising this important issue and I recognise his genuine interest in regional education, including the Canobolas Rural Technology High School. This question obviously falls within the direct responsibility of the education Minister in the other place and I will raise this matter directly with her, but I will provide a little bit of information. Staffing our schools, particularly in regional areas, is a complex issue but is one that the Government is committed to addressing. The Government is actively working on this issue through a number of initiatives, including the Teacher Supply Strategy and FASTstream, both of which are directed towards ensuring that there is a sustainable pipeline of educational leadership within our public schools and a sustainable pipeline of teachers in the right locations to meet student needs. Being a teacher is one of the most rewarding and important professions anyone in New South Wales could ever have.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: There are more teachers than ever before employed in New South Wales, with more than 91,000 teachers on the payroll. Since 2019 the Government has recruited an additional 3,400 teachers into New South Wales public schools.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Teacher supply is in a better position than it was four years ago. In 2019 there were more than 1,500 vacancies in New South Wales schools.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Since then the system has grown by 3,400 teachers, while the vacancy rate has remained stable.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Schools have more and more positions thanks to record funding, with 7,300 full-time teachers being employed to provide additional support across the system.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Those extra positions have led to unprecedentedly low ratios of teachers to students.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister has been going for 2½ minutes in response to a specific question asked by the member for Orange, directed to a specific geographical area, and he is just giving a general overview.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister has answered the question. He has provided information but I take it that he will also raise the specific issue with the Minister.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Whilst we appreciate the challenges in regional and remote parts of the State, we must also acknowledge that the pandemic has posed real challenges for schools across New South Wales, including in regional areas, particularly during the two years that the member's question specifically relates to. More than 8,000 additional staff are being engaged across the State to deliver our COVID intensive learning support program. We acknowledge that has had an impact on the pool of casual teachers. I think the member for Orange would recognise, even if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants to be rude and interrupt, that that program has been incredibly important to support students who have fallen behind due to the interruptions from COVID.

In term one of 2022, new contingency measures and supports were put in place to help address COVID-related shortages, including utilising teachers in nearby schools, non-school-based teaching staff and retired teachers. I am happy to discuss the member's concerns about the particular high school in question. Certainly I will take up those concerns with the Minister.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's efforts to protect our natural environment and improve quality of life across New South Wales?

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:16): I thank the member for Heathcote for his question, which is much appreciated. Over the past 11 years this Government has delivered a significant number of amazing, positive outcomes for the environment. We can be justifiably proud of those achievements, which have benefited citizens right across this State. However, sometimes the work that we do in the environment results from stepping up to help New South Wales communities when they need us most. I acknowledge the presence of the member for Lismore. She would have seen the work that the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] has been doing after activating its dedicated Incident Management Team in response to the floods.

The focus of that work has been broad. It has focused on environmental protection, including wildlife; human health; and the safe and efficient management and disposal of flood-generated waste across New South Wales. It was wonderful to meet with the Incident Management Team recently and tour its facility at the EPA in Parramatta. Management of flood and storm waste is well underway. The EPA is leading the multi-agency response to ensure that flood-generated waste on shorelines and in waterways is removed in a safe, effective and efficient manner to reduce impacts on sensitive environments and communities. The multi-agency response led by the EPA includes the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the RFS. In addition, the EPA has waived the waste levy for the 57 natural disaster declared local government areas.

As at 21 March 2022, a total of 11,690 loads of flood waste, with an estimated total tonnage of 58,500 tonnes, had been removed from the community and taken to emergency waste transfer stations prior to the separation of recyclables and waste for landfill. That important work supports those who have been worst hit by the recent floods and protects human and environmental health. I thank the EPA teams on the ground and the Incident Management Team, who are working around the clock. The Government is also delivering the New South Wales Flood Prone Land Policy through the Floodplain Management Program 2022-2030, supported by \$102 million from the Climate Change Fund. The Floodplain Management Program assists local government to better understand and manage flood risk to local communities.

While we deliver those important community responses, we continue to work on programs that improve the way we live in and interact with our environment right across the State. We are delivering landmark programs for the conservation of our important native species and their habitat. Since March 2019 more than 600,000 hectares have been reserved or acquired for the national park estate across more than 80 reserves, increasing the park estate by 8.4 per cent. We made three of the 10 largest land acquisitions in National Parks and Wildlife Service history. We have secured 12 key koala habitat properties for the park estate, including areas in Port Macquarie and the Southern Highlands. We have purchased properties with exceptional conservation values, including recently purchased Brindigabba-Bindra, which features nationally significant wetlands and habitat for up to 40 threatened species. A full year ahead of schedule, we have exceeded the commitment to reserve over 400,000 hectares.

The Government also secured the transfer of over 30,000 hectares of State forest and Crown land to create the Gardens of Stone Reserves near Lithgow, enabling an historic \$49.5 million investment to deliver an exciting new ecotourism destination and iconic Lost City Adventure Experience. We are also conserving important habitat on private land. Since the Biodiversity Conservation Trust was created in 2017, more than 300 landholders have signed or plan to sign a conservation agreement with the trust, creating conservation areas across more than 194,000 hectares.

We have secured an additional \$75 million to continue the momentum and innovative work of the Saving our Species program for at least another five years. Investment in that program now amounts to \$175 million over 10 years to secure threatened species and ecological communities in the wild. In June 2021 we released the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy, which outlines the Government's approach to transitioning to a circular economy over the next 20 years. The plan sets actions to address plastic throughout its lifecycle, including phasing out single-use plastics. From 1 June this year, single-use, lightweight plastic bags will cease. That will be followed by the cessation of single-use plastic straws from 1 November. That work will be delivered through a record \$356 million investment over five years from 1 July 2022. [*Extension of time*]

We also continue to deliver the very successful Return and Earn container deposit scheme. Since its launch in December 2017, the scheme has delivered a 52 per cent reduction in the volume of drink container litter. The recent milestone of more than seven billion containers returned for recycling equates to \$700 million in container refunds. Since the launch of the scheme, over \$30 million has been raised for community groups and charities via donations and fees from hosting return points. New South Wales is now home to Australia's largest plastic recycling plant, which was opened recently in Albury. The Return and Earn automated depot service in Sydney opened this week. It has a wonderful charity partner in the KARI Foundation and will benefit people in Aboriginal communities across the State.

We will continue to build on our achievements in our national parks and through projects such as plastic container collection through Return and Earn. I am determined to continue to find innovative solutions that can motivate more investment in private land conservation. We will continue to invest in our national parks, delivering the largest ever investment in national park infrastructure—over \$450 million from 2019 to 2023. People visit national parks as tourists and leave as conservationists. We are meeting the explosive 60 per cent increase in visitation to our parks by continuing to invest in and deliver upgrades right across the State. I am personally committed to ensuring that we continue to achieve positive outcomes for our important native species, including koalas, and for our protected areas. I hope that assures the member for Heathcote that this Government is committed to achieving the best environmental outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Mr LEE EVANS: On behalf of the Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 41/57*, dated 22 March 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr LEE EVANS: I also table the minute extracts of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 40/57*.

COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 24 March 2022 the Hon. Wes Fang was elected Chair of the committee and Mr David Layzell was elected Deputy Chair of the committee.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Floraville Public School Out of School Hours Care

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to pause the Floraville Public School Out of School Hours tender process, received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

Members

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Bega, I acknowledge that there are a number of his guests in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon to view his inaugural speech. In particular, I warmly welcome the wife of the member for Bega, Mrs Lyn Holland, who is sitting in the advisers area. I note for the record that a photographer has been authorised to take photographs in the Chamber during the member's speech. I now have the pleasure and privilege of welcoming the member for Bega to deliver his inaugural address.

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:25): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Walawaani njindiwan, a Dhurga greeting. I acknowledge the First Nations of the State of New South Wales. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation on whose land we assemble today. I show my respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today. I acknowledge the peoples of the

Yuin nation, who are the traditional owners of the Bega electorate, which I now represent. Daily I acknowledge this and my personal relationship with God and my community. Some 800 metres from here, the Gadigal people made their first contact with Europeans. Sadly, the Indigenous owners of the land were soon decimated by disease from overseas. Now our State shares a similar sadness and I offer my condolences to those who have lost their loved ones or suffered disease during our current pandemic. I thank my health colleagues who have worked tirelessly to provide health care to the people of our State during this crisis.

The First Nations peoples were from that time dispossessed of their land which they had inhabited for tens of millennia. It has been said that forgetfulness is essential in the creation of a nation. That is not the case. Remembrance is essential for the creation of a State. Without remembrance of the true history of our State, we will not reach genuine reconciliation with our Indigenous peoples. On being endorsed as the New South Wales Labor candidate for Bega, I informed the Indigenous peoples of the Bega electorate that my first act would be my commitment to their needs. My Indigenous neighbours continue to suffer the inequalities of health outcomes, employment, education and housing. They can and will solve these problems through self-determination. In the future, the Aboriginal flag will fly on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which is built on Moruya granite from my home, the land of the Walbanja people. Under this standard, our Parliament must fulfil its responsibility to close the gap of equality with which the Indigenous peoples of our State still live.

It is of note historically that this new member of the Legislative Assembly, a doctor, gives his inaugural speech in the old Rum Hospital. I am not the first. D'Arcy Wentworth was an Irish surgeon and paying passenger to the new colony of New South Wales and served under seven governors of the colony. I acknowledge my medical colleague Dr Joe McGirr, the member for Wagga Wagga, who shares a proud history with this Parliament, and previous medical practitioners who have added their lived experience to the service of government. Why does a doctor stand for public office? Surely, the path to political representation is a course from student politics, legal qualification or local government experience. The health of a State does not only rely on doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health workers. It is not only defined by buildings, bed numbers and procedures. Health is influenced by social determinants. It is determined by secure housing, good education, reliable employment and a safe environment for our future generations.

These determinants are defined within New South Wales Labor principles, and these are the principles with which I have aligned. These principles and the principles of Medicare—universality, equity and choice—which I witnessed develop, should define the provision of health services in New South Wales. In particular, it is necessary for these principles to be extended to the areas of greatest need, which are the rural areas of New South Wales. Health remains the primary concern of the people of the Bega electorate and was equally the catalyst for my decision to stand to represent them and the people of New South Wales. It is the reason why a grassroots movement in the Eurobodalla has campaigned, lobbied and advocated for a new level 4 regional hospital. This and the improvement of health care services in the Bega Valley are commitments to which I pledge during my time in political office.

The four pillars of medical ethics are: beneficence—the principle of doing good; non-maleficence—the principle of firstly doing no harm, "primum non nocere"; autonomy—the right of competent adults to make informed decisions about their medical care; and justice—the compatibility with the law and patient's rights. Most importantly, is it fair and balanced? I was warned to tread carefully with political and government ethics. But I ask: Should these four principles not be the basis of good government? Government exists for achieving the greatest good, the least harm and providing justice for the people of our State, respecting their democratic autonomy. As such, it is the ethical responsibility of the members of this Legislative Assembly to follow these principles. I thank the Speaker and the representatives of the Department of the Legislative Assembly, the members of both major parties and Independent members whom I have met during my orientation and over the past week. They have given me the reassurance and faith that this is the true nature of our parliamentary and democratic process.

One thing that my father left me was a copy of Rudyard Kipling's *If*, the classic Victorian era expression of stoicism. There is nothing wrong with a little bit of stoicism; it is part of the Australian nature. It is more than bearing your troubles without complaint; stoicism has the virtues of courage, moderation, justice and wisdom. That is how the Bega electorate has survived the physical losses and mental impacts of natural disaster. The Eurobodalla and Bega communities have focused on what they can control. Communities and individuals led, and continue to lead, by example. They have taken action where they can and they have practised resilience. The 250 kilometres of Princes Highway from Durras to the Victorian border connects towns and villages who share the same challenges and happiness. But, like families, they have their individual difficulties and, therefore, individual solutions. Our community triples in size when we welcome visitors from across the State, boosting our economy but stretching the resources of our health system.

Our community has suffered greatly over the past two years. It has been struck by a bushfire disaster of historic proportions, floods and the impact of the COVID pandemic—disasters which have recently been shared by the rest of our State. It is a proud community which has chosen to be represented for the first time by a Labor representative. It is a diverse community blessed by natural beauty and capable, resilient people. It has strong Indigenous communities, hardworking primary industry workers, dedicated healthcare workers, skilled teachers and resourceful business owners. But two years is a long time. It is time for our community to rebuild with the support of the New South Wales Government. The greatest need should determine policy and action. Our homes and businesses need to be rebuilt. Our environment needs to be protected. For our sake, for the sake of our State and for the sake of our future generations, climate change needs to be controlled.

The motto of my professional college is "ab umbris ad lumina vitae"—from the shadows to the light of life. It refers to the wonder of birth and our professional responsibility to the health care of women, their children and their families. It has been my career for the past 40 years. My advocacy for women's health is not stopped by my entering Parliament. Women's health care extends from before birth to the end of life. It requires comprehensive physical and mental health services, which are provided to the areas and individuals of greatest need. Women's health throughout life requires equality of reproductive, medical, surgical and mental health services across New South Wales, particularly to rural regions, including the Bega electorate.

Perinatal care particularly is the generational link that determines the development of our future individuals and consequently our society. This includes the provision of good preconception care, prenatal diagnostic services and comprehensive antenatal and intrapartum care from a variety of providers, from midwives and general practitioners to specialist obstetricians. It specifically requires comprehensive prenatal and postnatal mental health services. It requires the provision of early parenting services such as Tresillian Family Care services. These are deficient in many of our rural communities, including the Bega electorate.

These services are a legislative and ethical responsibility of the New South Wales Government for which I will continue to advocate. As a white male, I can no more speak for women than I can for Indigenous peoples, but I can attest to my lifelong commitment to justice for women's health and Indigenous health care. As the member for Bega, it is time to bring our community from the shadows to the light of universal and equitable health care, to the light of safe and secure housing, to the light of the best education, to the light of reliable employment and to the light of a protected and preserved environment.

Traditionally, one's inaugural speech contains some biographical content. I have had a privileged life. All newcomers to our State come here for a better life. My maternal great-great-grandfather boarded a ship from Hamburg to seek a better life in New South Wales. He settled as a shepherd in the New England region. I was the youngest of three children born in the postwar baby boom. My father was an ex-serviceman who served in New Guinea and who represented his country in Rugby League. For my first five years, I lived above the historic and appropriately named Three Swallows Hotel in Bankstown, where my parents managed the pub. Our family then moved to Brighton-Le-Sands, a Sydney suburb that was multicultural before the word existed. Our Chinese-Vietnamese next-door neighbours owned the Orient Chinese restaurant in Rockdale, and I experienced the old-time Haymarket with their son, my friend. We had Maltese, Yugoslav and English neighbours. We also had the president and secretary of the then Miners Federation of New South Wales thrown in for some flavour of Labor.

Unfortunately, as a consequence of the traumatic experience of war and postwar male culture, I witnessed at a young age the effects of alcohol abuse and domestic violence on my family. This had a lasting effect on my family and for a while I lost my way. I personally have felt the distress of depression and worse. The effect was worse on my late brother, of whom I am reminded each evening as I pass the homeless in Martin Place so close to here. I am reminded of my visits to him in the Matthew Talbot Hostel—hence my personal and professional commitment to improved drug and alcohol and mental health services, particularly in our deficient rural communities. Our State needs to cure this disease of homelessness, which can affect any of us or our families.

I am privileged to have had the support of a strong mother with strong faith and an extended matriarchal family. I was privileged to have been protected by the reforms of family law. I am therefore committed to the safety of women and their families from the scourge of domestic violence. I am privileged to have had an excellent and supportive education at Waverley College. I am eternally grateful to be the first member of my family to attend university, thanks to the great Labor leader Gough Whitlam.

I am privileged to have received my postgraduate specialist training from wonderful clinicians, who teach their knowledge and skills pro bono in our unique system of medical education. As a consequence, I am committed to the equitable opportunity of early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education for the people of the Bega electorate. These privileges have given me a secure income. They have allowed my family to have secure housing and the best of health care and education. They have given me the privilege to serve my community

socially, professionally and now politically. It is now my responsibility to advocate for a better life for its members as my ancestors would have expected.

My political life has been short, but I have many people to acknowledge and thank. I thank the community, which has placed its trust in me to represent them. I thank the many hardworking New South Wales Labor branch members who helped to achieve this historic election result. They were joined by a fine team of Young Labor volunteers—indeed, generations of Labor members. I thank my two campaign managers, Alex Costello and Rosie Ryan, who guided me through the weeks and made sure that I was fed, watered, and rested like an old warhorse. The team of James Cullen, Chloe Smith, Ed Ovadia, Zack Solomon and Sarah Michael covered hundreds of kilometres between the Monaro and Bega by-elections. They are almost locals to us now. I will be excused for not naming all the members and shadow Ministers who gave their time generously to the by-election campaign. Many came and went without our paths crossing.

Jo Haylen, Rose Jackson and Jodie Harrison were some who witnessed the unique experience of pre-polling and medical consultation. I thank Prue Car, David Harris, Greg Warren and local lad Tim Crakanthorp for their help on specific electoral issues. Mick Veitch and Hugh McDermott gave me their most helpful counsel. The individuals whom I have met and talked to are people of the highest principles who sincerely considered my welfare as much as the result of the electoral campaign. I am honoured to join them here today. In particular, I thank Chris Minns, the Leader of the Opposition, for supporting my nomination and endorsement. Chris reminded me on the day after the election that, when we first met, I told him that my only concern was that I will win it. Chris is a great leader with a future to lead this State to greatness. In addition, there were two special individuals who volunteered weeks of their time to support the campaign, Steve Kamper and Penny Sharpe. They have been sincere mentors and resources during my campaign.

I also thank the former shadow Minister for Health, Walt Secord, who encouraged me to keep up the fight for fair healthcare services in the Bega electorate and rural New South Wales generally. Equally, I thank the current shadow Minister for Health, Ryan Park, for his continued support for our electorate. I thank two strong women in Federal Parliament, Federal member for Gilmore Fiona Phillips and Federal member for Eden-Monaro Kristy McBain, for their advocacy for the Bega electorate and their support for me. I acknowledge the previous member for Bega, Andrew Constance, for his 19 years of service to the Bega electorate. I would like to recognise and congratulate the other newly elected members of the Legislative Assembly: Jason Yat-Sen Li, the new member for Strathfield and a new Labor member who will excel in his role; my neighbour Nichole Overall, the new Nationals member for Monaro, whose electorate shares our border, roads and health district; and Tim James, the new Liberal member for Willoughby and proud new father.

Family is first and last. My family has witnessed the service of an obstetrician's life. As a husband, father and doctor, there were only two things: my family and my profession. Now they see a local representative, father, and grandfather who has three things: my family, my profession and my constituents. My wife, Lyn, has been the woman whose first interest had been the welfare of our family and that of the women and families of the South Coast. For nearly forty years, she has been my foundation, my anchor. She is the fierce defender of our pride. Her father said to her when she married a doctor, "I suppose that you will become a Liberal now."

That proud, skilled, Labor master toolmaker would be very happy to have been proven wrong. My daughters, Kate, Rosemary, Emily, Grace and Alice, are fine strong women. They have shared the problems of anxiety and depression, which increasingly trouble their generation. They now serve their communities and country in their careers and families. I know that they are proud of me, but I am prouder of them than they are of me. I have already had a generational effect on the Bega electorate. Now, as the member for Bega, I hope to serve my electorate as its political representative as well as I have served it clinically.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The SPEAKER: I join with members of the House in congratulating the member for Bega on his inaugural address.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to provide for the proposed resolution regarding an Independent Complaints Officer, notice of which was given by the Chair of the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics today, to be called on forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

*Motions***INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER**

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:47): I move:

- (1) That this House considers and adopts the revised proposal for the establishment of an Independent Complaints Officer, which was considered and agreed to by the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics, during a meeting held earlier today.

(1) Establishment of position

That this House directs the Speaker to join with the President to make arrangements for the establishment of the position of an Independent Complaints Officer to expeditiously and confidentially deal with low level, minor misconduct matters so as to protect the institution of Parliament, all members and staff.

(2) Functions of position

The Independent Complaints Officer shall have the following functions:

(a) Receive and investigate complaints

The Independent Complaints Officer may receive and investigate complaints confidentially in relation to alleged breaches of the members' code of conduct, not related to conduct in proceedings of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly or their committees, including:

- (i) misuse of allowances and entitlements;
- (ii) other less serious misconduct matters falling short of corrupt conduct; and
- (iii) minor breaches of the pecuniary interests disclosure scheme.

The Independent Complaints Officer shall also have the function of receiving and investigating complaints confidentially in relation to bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviour by members, not related to conduct in proceedings of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly or their committees.

In regard to bullying and harassment, consideration of complaints will take note of members' legal obligations including under the:

- Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013;
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977; and
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Section 22(b) of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 makes it unlawful conduct for a member to sexually harass a workplace participant or other member in the workplace, or for a workplace participant to sexually harass a member.

(b) Monitoring Code of Conduct for Members

The Independent Complaints Officer shall monitor the operation of the Code of Conduct for Members, the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 and the members' entitlements system, and provide advice about reform to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics ("Privileges Committee") as required.

(c) Educational presentations

The Independent Complaints Officer shall assist the Privileges Committee, Parliamentary Ethics Adviser and the Clerk as requested in relation to the education of members about their obligations under the Code of Conduct for Members and the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983.

(3) Term of appointment

(a) Appointment by Presiding Officers

The Presiding Officers shall appoint an Independent Complaints Officer within three months of the mid-term point of each Parliament, or whenever the position becomes vacant, for the remainder of that Parliament and until the mid-term point of the following Parliament, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon with the Presiding Officers, not inconsistent with this resolution. The proposed appointment must have the support of the Privileges Committee in each House. An appointment may be extended for a period of up to six months so as to ensure there is no period in which there is no person holding the position.

(b) Contract with Clerks of both Houses – Independent Complaints Officer

The appointment of the Independent Complaints Officer is to be confirmed by the Clerks of both Houses entering into a contract of employment with the appointee.

(4) Complaints investigations

(a) Protocol

The Independent Complaints Officer shall, within three months of his or her appointment, develop a protocol to be approved by the Privileges Committee and tabled in the House by the committee chair, outlining how complaints may be received, the manner and method by which complaints will be assessed and investigated, the definition of low level, minor misconduct, and arrangements for the notification of matters between the Independent Complaints

Officer and the Independent Commission Against Corruption and other relevant bodies (including the most appropriate agencies in relation to bullying and harassment matters), subject to relevant legislation (including section 122 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988).

(b) Standing

This protocol shall include definitions of standing such that:

- Only current members of the NSW Parliament, those who currently work for members of the Parliament of NSW in their capacity as members, and those who currently work for the parliamentary departments, have standing to lodge complaints. This includes current contractors or subcontractors, current volunteers, current interns and current trainees.
- An individual may make a complaint up until 21 days following termination from their employment, but not have standing after that date if not remaining within any of the aforementioned categories.¹
- Complaints must be lodged within two years of the incident alleged to have occurred, unless this is not fair or reasonable to a complainant or member.
- No complaint may be considered which is alleged to have occurred prior to the passing of this resolution.

(c) Confidentiality

Individuals with standing who are not members of Parliament and who make complaints shall be required to maintain confidentiality concerning complaints and investigations. Others involved in any complaints investigations, for example witnesses shall be required to maintain confidentiality concerning complaints and investigations.

There shall be an expectation that, except in extraordinary circumstances, members of Parliament will maintain confidentiality about complaints and investigations. However, nothing about this expectation affects parliamentary privilege and, in particular, the parliamentary privilege of freedom of speech.

(d) Protocol with the Independent Commission Against Corruption

Where the Independent Complaints Officer has concerns that a complaint may potentially involve corrupt conduct, he or she should cease the complaint investigation and invite the complainant to raise the matter with the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The Independent Complaints Officer in determining to draw back from the investigation of a complaint may make a notification to the Independent Commission Against Corruption but should not hand over papers and records obtained under the Independent Complaints Officer system unless under legal compulsion.

The Independent Complaints Officer is not required to notify the Independent Commission Against Corruption when he or she begins an investigation.

(e) Investigatory report to the House

Where the Independent Complaints Officer ("the investigator") finds that there has been a misuse of an allowance or entitlement, the investigator may recommend repayment of funds misused. Where the investigator finds that a member has otherwise breached the Members Code of Conduct or engaged in bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour the investigator may recommend corrective action.

Subject to (f) below, the Independent Complaints Officer will make a report if the member does not accept the recommendation and, in the case of bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviour matters, only where the complainant consents to the making of the report. This report will be presented to the Privileges Committee. The Committee will consider whether to adopt the recommendations of the Independent Complaints Officer.

(f) Minor breach

Where the Independent Complaints Officer ("the investigator") investigates a matter and finds that a member has breached the Code or Regulations or engaged in bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour, but in the investigator's opinion the breach is minor or inadvertent and the member has taken action to rectify the breach – including the making of appropriate financial reimbursement – the investigator shall advise the member in writing of the finding, and the complainant in writing of the finding and the action taken by the member. The investigator shall briefly report his or her findings and the rectification action taken by the member on a confidential basis to the Privileges Committee. However, if the matter relates to bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour, the report must only be made to the relevant Privileges Committee with the complainant's consent. No report to a House is required in this circumstance.

(g) Declines to investigate

If the Independent Complaints Officer receives a complaint but upon assessment declines to investigate the matter, or upon investigation the Independent Complaints Officer finds no evidence or insufficient evidence to substantiate a complaint of bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour; a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members; or a breach of the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983, the Independent Complaints Officer shall advise in writing the member and the complainant of the decision. The Independent Complaints Officer shall also briefly report the decision to the relevant Privileges Committee on a confidential basis. However, if the complaint relates to bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour, the decision must only be reported to the Privileges Committee with the complainant's consent. No report to a House is required in this circumstance.

(h) Breaches where the member has failed or declined to take rectification action – reports and appeal rights

Where, after investigating a complaint, the Independent Complaints Officer ("the investigator") finds that a member has breached the Code of Conduct for Members or the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983, or has engaged in bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour and the member has failed to undertake the stipulated rectification action or declined to do so pending appeal:

- the investigator shall report his or her findings and conclusions to the Privileges Committee on a confidential basis including recommendations as to the sanctions, if any, that should be imposed by the House. However, if the matter relates to bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour, the report to the Committee must only be made with the complainant's consent
- the member in question shall also have the right to lodge an appeal against the investigator's findings, conclusions and recommendations with the Privileges Committee where they have been so reported to the Committee.

Further, after receiving:

- an investigatory report from the Independent Complaints Officer about a breach for which the member has failed to take the stipulated rectification action, and/or
- an appeal from the member in question concerning the investigator's findings, conclusions and recommendations;

the Privileges Committee shall:

- form its own conclusions
- have the power to report its conclusions and recommendations – including as regards appropriate sanctions – to the House
- have the power to decide that a report to the House and/or sanctions are not warranted in a particular case e.g. where the Committee disagrees with the investigator's findings.

(i) Expert assistance

The Independent Complaints Officer shall be able to engage the services of a person or persons to assist with or perform services for the Independent Complaints Officer, and in the conduct of an investigation, within budget.

(5) Powers of the Independent Complaints Officer

The Independent Complaints Officer shall have power to request the production of relevant documents and other records from members and officers of the Parliament.

Members, their staff and parliamentary officers are required to reasonably cooperate at all stages with the Independent Complaints Officer's inquiries including giving a full, truthful and prompt account of the matters giving rise to a complaint.

The Independent Complaints Officer may report to the Privileges Committee any failure to comply with a request, and the committee will recommend whether the matter requires the determination of the matter by the House.

(6) Keeping of records

The Independent Complaints Officer shall be required to keep records of advice given and the factual information upon which it is based, complaints received and investigations. The records of the Independent Complaints Officer are to be regarded as records of the House and are not to be made public without the prior approval of the Independent Complaints Officer and resolution of the House, except for the notification of information between the Independent Complaints Officer and other relevant authorities in accordance with the protocol to be developed pursuant to clause 4(a), or where the member requests that the records be made public.

A member requesting the records be made public should table them in the House. During an extended break in sittings a member may table records with the Privileges Committee.

(7) Reports to Parliament

In addition to reports on investigations, the Independent Complaints Officer shall provide to the Chair of the Privileges Committee to table in the House quarterly reports that contain general, de-identified information about matters dealt with under the Independent Complaints Officer system including:

- the number and types of complaints received
- the number of investigations undertaken
- the number of matters found by an investigator to be unsustainable
- the number of matters involving breaches that were dealt with via the rectification procedure, and the rectification action that was taken for these matters, such as repayments
- the number of matters the Independent Complaints Officer found to involve breaches for which a member failed to undertake the required rectification action, that were reported to the Privileges Committee but not to the House

- the number of matters the Independent Complaints Officer found to involve breaches for which a member failed to undertake the required rectification action, that were reported to the Privileges Committee and to the House
- the results of matters reported to the House including the type of sanctions imposed.

(8) Annual meeting with relevant committees

The Independent Complaints Officer is to meet annually with the Privileges Committee of the House.

(9) Review of the Independent Complaints Officer System

The Privileges Committee is required to review the Independent Complaints Officer system within 12 months of the establishment of the Independent Complaints Officer position, in consultation with key stakeholders. The committee must examine how the system is operating in practice and whether any changes are needed and in particular:

- the confidentiality provisions applying in respect of complaints and investigations under the system
- the timeliness of complaints assessments and investigations conducted under the system, and
- the provisions applying with respect to standing for complainants and retrospectivity under the system.

Following the initial review the committee is also required to review the Independent Complaints Officer system once every parliamentary term, in consultation with key stakeholders, to examine how it is operating in practice and whether any changes are needed.

- (2) That this resolution have continuing effect until amended or rescinded.
- (3) That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Council conveying the terms of the resolution agreed to by the House.

¹ However, this does not affect timeframes for complainants to take action under the relevant legislation, for example, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

I note that the committee's agreement to the terms of the proposed resolution was reached on a bipartisan basis and in consideration of the first and second inquiries that the Legislative Council's Privileges Committee conducted.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:48): The Opposition concurs with the motion as moved by the member for Camden.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

GREATER CITIES COMMISSION BILL 2022

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:48): Picking up on my speech from before question time, I commend the bill to the House. [*Extension of time*]

I see great potential for collecting the data, getting the policies and uniting the vision that we have, as a Government, across a bigger area of Sydney rather than the three cities that are part of the overview of the commission as it is put together currently. We will be able to extend this beyond those geographical boundaries, which do not mean much when it comes to some of the economic development opportunities that we have. Communities to the south, west and north of the metropolitan areas of the three cities that are a part of the existing commission have great ideas that are going to build the future jobs and industries of our economy, and they link up with businesses and ideas that are inside, for example, the Eastern Harbour City. By creating a broader network, those ideas are going to travel between those locations.

The *Turning ideas into jobs: Accelerating research and development in NSW* policy position paper that the Premier launched about a year ago made this very point. It has two principal and priority actions: putting innovation into our existing precincts, including special activation precincts, which are principally outside of the existing three cities that are a part of the existing commission's overview; and working more strategically with our universities, and not only those that sit close to metropolitan Sydney. There is the University of Wollongong—

Mr Paul Scully: A great university.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: It is a great university that does a lot of work in the energy space because of the challenges the area has had with workforce and the traditional base of people who have gone there in search of employment opportunities that have diminished. Those jobs and industries have to evolve because of the pressures, and the opportunities, that come from the impacts of climate change. The University of Newcastle is another extraordinary university, which works in the medical technology space but also in the area of energy and renewables. It does great work with businesses in Sydney and commands the eyeballs of many people who have great ideas outside of universities in Sydney. This is the new way that we are going to design our view of cities with a better-connected role, with data collection, and with a vision about what they can deliver, beyond the capital P planning decisions that are principally in the purview of the commission. That is going to be possible through this new way of looking at our six cities in the regions beyond that.

I commend the bill to the House. It creates a better way in which our Government can deliver better practical outcomes from all of the policies that we have on the books. The hardest thing in government is making policies real and lived beyond the intention of the policy. That often involves working together with bureaucracies across ministries. Some of the hardest work that I have ever done as a Minister is taking a policy intent out of one portfolio and making sure that it works to create a broader whole-of-community impact. It often involves working with different departments of government, different Ministers and different stakeholders on the ground who may not be directly accountable to you as a Minister in that portfolio.

I commend the bill to the House and thank the Minister for bringing it forward. I thank all of those who have worked in the commission to this stage to get it to the point where it is internationally respected as a way to give effect to planning policy and innovation policy, to create jobs and industry, to create better lifestyles, to create better transport and all of the other things that are the measure of quality of life that we in this Chamber come here to represent for our constituents. This framework creates a way that we can unify the common purposes of the work that we do in government. I congratulate the Minister on the commission. I look forward to seeing this bill pass speedily with, at the margin, some immaterial changes that might be and have been foreshadowed by Opposition members. I welcome their support in principle for the motion, and I look forward to the bill having safe passage through this House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (15:54): I speak on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I endorse the fine words of the shadow Minister in his address and concur with the ideas that he put forward, including the foreshadowed amendments. I thank the shadow Minister for his consultation with the MPs from the Central Coast, Newcastle and the wider Hunter. That is very important. Being from the Illawarra, he understands the problems and issues that we share across the outer regional cities away from Sydney. I also thank Minister Stokes and his staff for their briefing. On these important issues where we all, on behalf of our communities, have skin in the game, there is as much bipartisan support as there can be. I make one small criticism of the shadow Minister. Given all of the Central Coast's problems with the council et cetera, I said to him that we might consider changing the name of our city to "Gotham", but he would not put that forward as an amendment. I will just have to think that myself.

On a serious note, I have been a supporter of the Greater Sydney Commission. I welcomed it when the original legislation was passed and I asked that the Central Coast be included. In 2020 I welcomed it when the Government then included the Central Coast as part of the commission's work. This is an extension of that and I really hope that it is successful. From the Central Coast's point of view—and Minister Stokes', as a former Minister for the Central Coast—although it is Central Coast city, we are not one city. We are a region of villages and towns that are becoming more and more urbanised and are facing the challenges that come with that. Within Central Coast city we have our internal tensions, fighting for resources amongst ourselves.

One of the greatest disappointments was that when Central Coast Council was formed, there was a promise that it would be one voice speaking for the region. Unfortunately, that has not been the case in practice. The council has been under a period of administration, and there has been continued tension between the administrator and the State Government on particular issues. I spoke at the Central Coast Urban Development Institute of Australia [UDIA] meeting. I think it was in 2020. It is hard to remember with COVID; memory fades because of all the restrictions and lockdowns and whatnot.

Mr Kevin Conolly: It's age.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It's age, as well. I spoke quite strongly in support of the commission having a role, particularly the role of commissioner, and that is why I welcome the amendment that has been put forward by the shadow Minister that the commissioner should be a resident of the region or city they are serving. We need that local knowledge to break through some of the key problems that confront us. On the Central Coast we have been planned to death. In the last decade there have probably been 10 plans. When the Greater Sydney Commission came along and had another consultation, guess what? They came back and gave us what we already knew, the key priorities that we have known for a long time—more than a decade.

Our key issue—and I hope the Minister takes this on board—is that the commissioner needs to have teeth in order to be able to bring agencies together and get action. In saying that, the Minister knows that Warnervale town centre is dear to my heart. Minister Roberts' office is working on this for me again at the moment. Since 1975 there has been a town centre planned. Commercial entities have wanted to invest. Residential development has gone ahead, but we are still left with no commercial retail centre because we cannot get concurrence between departments. We have a situation where there was a planned railway station. Woolworths was part of the planning for that. To this day we still cannot get an answer from Transport about whether or not that station is going to go ahead. The investment from Woolworths is sitting there. Woolworths is threatening to walk away because it cannot get a key answer. Our community—including where I live, in Hamlyn Terrace—was built on the promise of the town centre.

I moved there in 1999. That whole area has been developed since then, but there is still no town centre. The land is there. The park is at the top now. Woolworths wants to invest, but we cannot get an answer from Transport. I am hoping that part of the commissioner's role is banging bureaucratic heads together and actually getting some of these things solved; our community is losing because of this. Our other shopping precincts are under higher pressure with parking and those sorts of things because the centre has not happened. One of the biggest issues on the Central Coast, in the Illawarra and in the Hunter—I assume it is in western Sydney, as well—is the delivery of key infrastructure in order to allow these developments to go forward.

To its credit, the State Government has invested through grants in delivering water and sewerage upgrades to the area, which has allowed housing to go ahead. I have acknowledged the member for Terrigal in regard to that before. But currently, in terms of development applications [DAs], there are a number of projects that are sitting dormant. There are literally thousands of jobs that could walk away from us simply because we cannot put the infrastructure in place for those businesses to connect to and invest their money. We do not have a problem in terms of people wanting to put their money out in a commercial way for these developments. Recently a brewery was announced. There is a mixed retail, service station and fast food precinct. We have the plans for an airport precinct. The council wants to do an education precinct. But all of those things are being held up by the fact that water, sewerage and road infrastructure—and electricity, for that matter—are not available.

I am genuinely enthusiastic about the extension and having our own commissioner for the Central Coast. But unless they have teeth to force agencies to deliver, in 10 years' time we are still going to be waiting for some of those projects to get off the ground, or that investment is going to walk further up the road and we are going to miss out on those jobs all together. I had a meeting with Minister Roberts' office recently. It is no surprise to anyone in this place that Central Coast Council is financially challenged—that is a euphemism for being broke. At the moment, average DAs are taking eight months. The council has asked the Government for assistance. I have given my support that if the Government stepped in, the Opposition would welcome that support. We do not just need housing being developed; we need jobs. The land is there. It has been zoned. The investment is there. These projects are ready to go; we just need that infrastructure. In most cases the State Government is putting forward the money in terms of grants, but the council cannot cope so those projects are sitting dormant. [*Extension of time*]

I have spoken to the local UDIA development representatives and informed them that we are very supportive of their projects. They are very frustrated. They ring me and visit me all the time asking, "How can we get rid of these roadblocks?" Back in the day we had regional coordinators through the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In our time in government, the regional coordinator for the Central Coast was Leoni Baldwin. I had a great relationship with Leoni. Every Friday we would meet, sit down and try to work our way through the problems, bring departments in and get solutions to these roadblocks. Unfortunately, that role has faded over the years and it is a different role now. I am hoping that the commissioner role will go back to the days of people sitting around a table setting benchmarks and departments delivering.

One of the most frustrating things when we were in government and I was the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast was that departments loved to send people who did not have authority. We would hold a meeting and when we would get to one of the key stakeholder departments, they would say, "Sorry, I don't have the authority to make that decision. We will get back to you." Months would go by and we still would not get answers. It was the classic delaying tactic, and it used to drive me mad. I always said that whether it was Regional Development Australia, the Central Coast Development Corporation or the Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation, whatever iteration, they needed teeth to force departments to make decisions and do things so that we could move these projects forward.

I know that the member for Gosford has a number of projects in her area that are key to the development of the Central Coast and key to delivering jobs, and she is facing the same roadblocks as we are. It is not a lack of political will, and it is not a lack of bipartisanship on these issues; it is just a lack of decision-making on planning issues. I thank the shadow Minister and the Minister for bringing the bill to the House, and I hope for the sake of our communities that it does deliver what we all hope it will.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:06): I make a short contribution to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. It is a fairly simple piece of legislation to replace the Greater Sydney Commission with the Greater Cities Commission by adding three new areas to be designated as cities within that structure—the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City, the Central Coast City and the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City—and to provide to those regions the same strategic overview and strategic approach to planning as the Greater Sydney Commission has been providing for the Sydney region. The logic of that—and I appreciate the in-principle support of the Opposition for the bill—is to provide seamlessness, which is the goal of all of us in planning, where strategy drives action, government agencies are coordinated within the strategy, and infrastructure is provided in a way that supports the planning and enables development. That is the vision that we broadly share and what we are hoping this structure can provide.

Coming from the area that has been known as the north-west growth area of Sydney, I have seen how it is supposed to work and how it can work when done well. It does not always go as well as one would want, but I can see how it is supposed to work. Since I was elected 11 years ago, this Government has delivered in the north-west, in just the electorate I represent, six new schools, two major sub-arterial or arterial road projects, a new police station, as well as various other projects, funded through councils, to upgrade local roads and services. The Government has delivered the north-west wastewater carrier—not terribly sexy; it is a sewer line, basically—and an upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant at Riverstone in order to service the proposed developments. Electricity infrastructure was upgraded and provided, and water was provided so that the suburbs of the north-west could be developed. There was a great deal of coordination and effort required to get all of the agencies on the same page. The North West Growth Centre structure initiated that process at the time.

As I said, not everything happened without additional input from local members or Ministers to bring people back to the plan. Not everything was perfect, but a great deal has been achieved in that region because of the coordination provided by the planning. More recently the Greater Sydney Commission has taken over that task and will continue to provide the overarching strategy to deliver for the north-west. As I said, a great deal has been achieved, and so I was a bit bemused to hear Labor members this morning talk about things not happening in western Sydney. Apparently they were not looking at my patch to see what was going on. It did not happen prior to 2011. The locals tell me that these plans had been on the books for years. Rezoning had been done but nothing happened because there was no infrastructure to go with it.

After 2011, when the structure was put in place under the present Government, we saw those things occur. So I had a long list of delivery items to talk about, unlike the Labor members. We heard in question time how many hospitals those opposite did not build. There is a stack of hospitals across western Sydney and south-western Sydney—and indeed the same is true in country areas—that Labor promised, talked about, talked up and never delivered, but they have happened under the current Government. The structure that we put in place and that has been adopted by the Greater Sydney Commission—now to be widened and called the Greater Cities Commission—has real promise to deliver the coordination, the strategic view and buy-in from agencies and arms of government to provide the result we are all looking for. The bill before the House provides the structure to do that.

I take on board the comments of the member for Wyong that the structure also has to bring with it the authority to make it happen, and that we cannot just sit back and say it is in place. It will require the attention of the Government to make sure that the strategy does bring with it the coordination and cooperation of government agencies and provides all the pieces of the puzzle to allow for the kind of planned, ideal development that we are looking for. This bill is a step forward. It is positive legislation that can be made to work. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:11): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I acknowledge the good work of the Government and Minister Stokes on the bill and support any effort to produce an integrated, long-term strategy for the future of the State and to ensure our cities are properly connected, integrated and leveraged for prosperity, competitiveness, liveability and social cohesion. The bill and its thinking is primarily focused on New South Wales and how to achieve the strategy and its benefits within the New South Wales political system and bureaucracy.

My contribution to this debate is to try to frame it within a broader regional and global context and to urge the Government to take an expansive and international view of how to position New South Wales and our cities, industries and workforces for success over the long term. This means deeply understanding who we are competing with as well as who we can partner with regionally and globally. In his book *Connectography*, my good friend Parag Khanna outlines three major driving forces that are underpinning the development of our societies around the world. These driving forces should also be part of our thinking around the future development of the greater cities strategy.

The first driving force is connectivity. Connectivity has become the new organising paradigm for the world and certainly before the pandemic was arguably more powerful, more meaningful and more instructive than political borders as a construct for understanding growth and development. By "connectivity" I mean functional infrastructure such as plane routes, highways, railways, ports, pipelines, internet cables and policy frameworks for the free flow of capital, goods and people across borders. The COVID-19 pandemic has of course reasserted the importance of national and, in our Federation, State boundaries. In spite of this, I believe the underlying trend towards greater connectedness of our people across the globe will continue.

The second driving force is a combination of devolution and aggregation. On the one hand, power is being splintered and pushed away from national capitals towards regional centres, which are aspiring to more autonomy and more control over their own destinies and are often more agile and innovative as they seek their own political autonomy. In corollary, they realise that they cannot do everything alone, so they are banding together, partnering and forming networks or commonwealths that freely share talent, information, infrastructure and resources. Across the world, regional federations are taking shape, not necessarily in formalised treaties or through legislation but in practice through increased connectivity and, most importantly, how they think about their place in the world, where they belong and how they compete.

The third driving force is that, in spite of the conflict in Ukraine, geopolitical competition is increasingly changing from a war over territory to a contest for connectivity. Nations, states and megacities compete in continuity now for capital, resources, talent, energy, food, water, control over production supply chains and, of course, technology. Winning this competition relies not on military power but on the quality of strategic and economic planning and the quality of relationships and alliances. In light of all of this, we should be asking: Where does the Six Cities Region fit into this broader regional context?

Where do we play into and where do we connect into the strategic development of major regional megacity clusters such as those centred on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; capitals like Jakarta, Bangkok, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Manila; other regional epicentres like the Toyko-Nagoya-Osaka megalopolis; and the massive Chinese metropolitan regions of the Pearl River Delta, encompassing Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Macau, the Yangtze River Delta, encompassing Shanghai, Hangzhou and Ningbo, and the capital economic zone, encompassing Beijing and Tianjin? Each of those megacity clusters has a population of well over 100 million and a GDP larger than Australia's. How do we best leverage the advantages that we have, such as our great, diverse migrant and multicultural population with their deep business and personal links overseas, to drive our State and our city's integration into the blockbuster economies of the region?

It is against this backdrop and within this larger regional and international context that I urge the Government to place its prosecution of the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022, and the work of the Greater Cities Commission itself. Specifically, I would ask: Does our thinking around the long-term strategy for our State's development adequately consider global and regional dynamics, opportunities and threats? Do the objectives of the commission as set out in clause 9 to the bill adequately capture the need to think and act globally and regionally with respect to the positioning and competitiveness of the Six Cities Region in New South Wales? Lastly, does the governance and capability of the commission provide the expertise and experience to allow it to prosecute these issues?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:17): I contribute to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. Cities of every size in every country are important. The core ingredient of a great city that produces prosperity and a high quality of life is actually its people. We have to make sure that we build cities and environments that encourage a wide diversity of people to move in so that they can share their ideas and energies. We do not want homogenous cities that do not create the innovation we need to make our country and our communities competitive for a very long time. We have seen it in history with one-industry cities, or where people confuse great cities with just a few buildings here and there. It is not that. Great cities are born out of great people and diverse communities that allow people from all walks of life to engage and to move into particular areas. Of course, a lot of that comes down to affordable housing.

I again tell the story of my community's lived experience and of the many thousands who are moving into our area. The investment in their quality of life has not kept up with the population growth. It is indeed a lived experience of frustration, delays, pork-barrelling at our community's expense and no-show infrastructure delivery. This is not what a great city should look like in the south-west and north-west areas of western Sydney. The focus on "greater cities" in the bill's title should not solely focus on geographic areas measured by distance from the seashores of Bondi Beach or the suburbs surrounding the Anzac Bridge. The growth in south-west and western Sydney lays the foundation of the emergence of a great city.

However, this population growth must be matched with infrastructure investment and quality of life as people arrive and move in. We should not ask them to wait for years on end, wondering whether things will arrive

at all. The New South Wales Government has indicated that from 2021 to 2041 Blacktown will take an additional 200,505 people; Liverpool, which is just to the north of my electorate, an additional 190,105 people; Camden, to the west of my electorate, an additional 180,000 people; Parramatta, a little further north-west, an additional 140,000 people; and Penrith, further west, an additional 140,000 people. That does not even include the Campbelltown local government area [LGA], which I know well. It is a place I call home. It is experiencing significant population growth as major new suburban developments to the south near Appin and Menangle are developed over this period of time.

I know all too well the pressures my community experiences because I live it. In essence, two-thirds of the population growth in New South Wales will be in western Sydney LGAs. But let us also examine the level of public investment in public infrastructure. The McKell Institute released its *Funding the Infrastructure of Tomorrow* report, highlighting the inequity between regional New South Wales, inner Sydney and suburban New South Wales when it comes to public infrastructure, investment and accessibility. The evidence is all too clear on how this Liberal Government treats the people of my community in greater western Sydney.

Table 8 of the report shows that not one out of the nine eastern Sydney LGAs were categorised in the lowest tertile. In northern Sydney, eight out of nine LGAs were either in the middle or in the top tertile. But—wait for this—none of the eight LGAs in western Sydney were in the middle or the top. They were all placed in the lowest tertile. Not one LGA experiencing the greatest growth—Blacktown, Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool, Wollondilly or even Fairfield, just to name a few—received an adequate public infrastructure investment that would put them in the top tertile. Not one. The appendix reinforces this view. The public transport accessibility level scores for western Sydney barely reach double digits, while inner-city areas score as high as 52. This inequality is a failure of the planning system and the commitment to invest in growing communities. If we are going to make great cities, we have to make sure that people have a quality of life that allows them to live a good life so that they can make great contributions to the local community and the wider economy as well.

After all these years, I would hope that there is more than just a bill to rename a government agency or do a bureaucratic restructure. Sydney does not necessarily need a rebadged agency. It needs a government that governs for all of us. I would think that, after 11 years in power, the solution to Sydney's housing and infrastructure needs would be more than just a new name for the same planning agency. More needs to be done to address the infrastructure deficits that growing communities such as those in my electorate and surrounding areas need. More also needs to be done to restore trust in the planning system, which is skewed to urban growth concentrated in a few particular areas. Those of us on this side of the Chamber, including my good friend and colleague the member for Wollongong, understand the failures of the Government's planning policies. We see it every day. I live it every day as I visit people in my community. We see it in schools that are not built, in bus services that do not exist, in overcrowded classrooms, in congested roads, in hospitals that are struggling with overworked staff, and in the eyes of frustrated residents who just want their fair share.

In the past, I have spoken at length about the Government's failed planning policies and how there seems to be one rule for central Sydney and one rule for where I live. I find it intriguing that ambitious housing targets set for suburbs in south-west and western Sydney easily eclipse those for much more established suburbs like Mosman and Wollstonecraft, despite the fact that these suburbs have been a stone's throw from existing public infrastructure for over a hundred years. As the past few years have demonstrated with COVID, residents in the south-west copped quite a raw deal. Unfair, harsher restrictions—including curfews—are just one example. They are not exactly a good way to create great cities. As those in the Chamber know too well, the workers of south-west and western Sydney kept our economy going during the most recent challenges of the ongoing pandemic. And yet my community and I feel as though our needs are routinely ignored.

I have seen that in my electorate, where suburbs have borne the full brunt of overdevelopment that does not come with commensurate public investment to improve people's quality of life. Since I was first elected in 2015 I have been campaigning on that issue, which resulted in my Stop the Squeeze survey. A shocking but not surprising 98 per cent of respondents said they have had enough of overdevelopment in their suburbs, and 96 per cent of people think developers have too much power under this Government. My Stop the Squeeze campaign made it clear that residents are fed up with the unfair planning agenda, which threatens to produce high-rise overdevelopment, destroys open green spaces and fails to deliver the infrastructure the community needs.

The Government is obviously very good at setting housing targets and forcing high-density development on communities, but those opposite fail to deliver the infrastructure needed to service those growing communities. It is not rocket science, and governments have been bleating and talking about infrastructure needs for decades now. I know from my lived experience and that of my community that all we want is our fair share and to ensure that greater cities can be built. But they need more than just development; they need the services and the quality of life that they and their families deserve.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:25): I contribute to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. The object of the bill is:

... to repeal and re-enact the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*, in substantially the same form, for the following purposes—

- (a) to reconstitute the Greater Sydney Commission as the Greater Cities Commission (the Commission),
- (b) to replace the Greater Sydney Region with the Six Cities Region (the *Six Cities Region*) and define its boundaries and the boundaries of the 6 cities within it, being the following—
 - (i) the Eastern Harbour City,
 - (ii) the Central River City,
 - (iii) the Central Coast City,
 - (iv) the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City—

That is why I am speaking on the bill—

- (v) the Western Parkland City,
- (vi) the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City.

The Bill also amends the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* to provide that each district strategic plan for a city within the Six Cities Region must, and each other district strategic plan may, include targets for net additional dwellings in local government areas within the district. The Bill also makes savings and transitional amendments ...

At the outset, I say that the intention of the bill is good. The move to expand the New South Wales Government's three cities strategy to six recognises the importance of major hubs outside Sydney in the ongoing economic and social development of the State. My electorate sits in the Hunter region and can be considered as being within the greater Newcastle area. It is an important area of industry as well as becoming a tourist and lifestyle destination. It is certainly fitting that the Hunter be included in a plan for what Chief Commissioner Geoff Roberts, AM, called "a series of interconnected, dynamic and resilient places, each with their clear and unique identity".

It has to be remembered, though, that the area outlined as the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City is an extremely diverse region. Its communities range from urban city-dwellers through to small urban centres and farming communities, and it is important that the services currently offered to regional communities in the Hunter are not lost because they are being lumped into a Greater Cities region. Being named a Greater Cities region certainly does not automatically deliver increased access to services or decreased waiting times for people to access key services, particularly specialist health practitioners. It will not automatically provide better education for our kids or better transport, but it will hopefully create some better linkages between our cities.

Another concern I have with the inclusion of the Hunter in the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022 is whether my local area is a region or a city. There may be unintended consequences. Older people and seniors in my electorate are very keen on the regional seniors travel card. Seniors are eligible to get a regional seniors travel card in the Lake Macquarie local government area but not in the Newcastle local government area. I will keep fighting for Newcastle people to be able to get it, but I certainly do not want people in Lake Macquarie to lose access to the card. It is helping them carry out their vital travel and, with the current cost-of-living crisis, it will only become more and more important that the service is maintained. I would like an assurance from the Government that the changes will not lead to those in areas currently receiving the benefits of the regional seniors travel card missing out in the future.

It has been suggested during the debate that the boundaries of the districts included in the Greater Cities Commission may be amended in the future. That process can be achieved through regulation rather than legislation, and it certainly needs to be a nimble process. But it is important that it occurs in consultation with the affected communities. My local community and my local government areas would certainly want to be consulted on where they sit. Community consultation is key to ensuring that the arrangements that will come into effect under the bill roll out in a way that is beneficial at a State and a local level. The Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport has rightly recognised that one of the greatest strengths of the commission would be its membership, and it is really important that the membership of the commission and the commissioners have a local perspective. It is suggested that three new city commissioners will be appointed for the three new city areas, including Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle. Strong local council representation has been promised in the recruitment to those positions, but it is not clear whether that means that the appointment of a city commissioner will be made by a consensus of local councils within each district or by the Greater Cities Commission following consultation with councils.

It also remains to be seen how the existing regional plans for the Hunter, both active plans and draft plans, will be worked into the new plan. The Minister noted in his second reading speech that there would need to be clarity about how the draft Hunter regional plan would transition into the new commission model. That is of

particular concern to local government in my area, which notes that, going forward, the Greater Cities Commission and not greater Newcastle will be responsible for the regional plan. That decision has been made in spite of the area for the Hunter regional plan extending far beyond the boundaries of the new city district. The section of the bill dealing with the existing and draft Hunter regional plans makes mention of the *Hunter Regional Plan 2036* continuing to have effect until a new plan is prepared, but there is no mention of how the new Hunter regional plan would be adopted. That is of significant concern considering that this is supposed to be only a few months away.

I wonder whether that suggests that the revised plan will effectively be scrapped ahead of the creation of a new plan, consistent with the requirements of the bill. I seek some clarity on that. If so, it may leave areas of the Hunter without a forward planning document. In bringing together State and local governments to attempt to achieve a more coordinated governance model, as the bill does, communication will be absolutely essential. I have already heard from one council in my local area that it has concerns about the lack of consultation in the creation of the bill. The City of Newcastle was disappointed that the first glimpse that it had of the bill was when it was tabled in Parliament, rather than being consulted prior to that. Councils will also need certainty that the new bill will not bring with it a requirement for local planning panels to be introduced, which are currently required in areas covered by the Greater Sydney Commission Act.

Councils will need to know how their resources may be used and whether there will be ways for them to recoup their expenses as part of that process. We often hear about joint regional planning panels being expensive for councils to support. As the Minister has noted, local government already has significant fiscal constraints on its service provision. No additional responsibilities or costs should be placed on councils as a result of the bill. Having said that, there are significant opportunities to be found in a cooperative and collaborative approach to promoting the wellbeing of major regional hubs in New South Wales, as proposed by the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. To ensure its success and effective delivery between State and local government stakeholders, a focus on communication and transparency is required.

On the face of it, the intention of the bill appears to be good. The devil is always in the detail and the implementation. Certainly I will continue to work with my local community and local councils to ensure that the bill does what it is intended to do and to ensure that their concerns are raised about any unintended consequences. I do not oppose the bill but will certainly support the proposed Opposition amendments.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:35): I am generally supportive of the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. However, some issues need to be highlighted. I acknowledge our shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the member for Wollongong, for his hard work and his discussions and negotiations on the bill with the Minister for Cities, which have resulted in some good outcomes. The Opposition will propose amendments, which I believe will be well received. That is very positive. As I said, some issues need to be highlighted and taken into consideration by the Minister. Specifically, the bill refers to the Hunter Regional Plan but does not reflect the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan. By fault of a technicality, there is no reference to this adopted and supported plan for our Newcastle area. Instead, a draft plan that covers a much larger area—the whole of the Hunter Valley—is referenced as a key planning document.

The bill should reflect the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan to ensure that all the work of the five councils over the past five years is taken into consideration and included. The Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan is already negotiated and agreed, and outlines the shared key priorities for the region for all the five Greater Newcastle councils. It is a retrograde step to ignore that work and refer only to the Hunter Regional Plan. The second significant issue is the Infrastructure Delivery Committee. A real positive to come from the bill could have been the ability for the infrastructure challenges of cities like Newcastle and Wollongong to be considered alongside other priorities via the Infrastructure Delivery Committee, which includes all the key departmental secretaries as ex-officio members. In theory, that would enable our local councils to avoid having our genuine issues overlooked in favour of pork-barrelling elsewhere. I see significant merit in hardwiring into the bill the District Commissioner's role on the Infrastructure Delivery Committee, rather than simply leaving it to chance for the commission to determine.

The third major issue relates to clause 20 of the bill, which provides for cooperation by local councils. That clause is a bit rich, especially when coupled with the confidentiality provisions of clause 22. The bill provides the commission with unfettered access to council information, staff and resources. However, the same provisions do not apply to State agencies. Clause 11 of the bill enables the commission to only request information from other State agencies and enables no access to staff or resources. Clause 20 will result in further cost-shifting to local government. As a local councillor for eight years prior to becoming a member of this place, I was certainly aware of that occurring under this Government. It is particularly frustrating for councils, given that in his second reading speech the Minister noted specifically that councils are more fiscally and politically constrained than the State Government. As an alternative, a mechanism of engagement prior to such a request being made is required.

Further, councils should have the ability to recover the reasonable costs of complying with such a request. A model is the framework established in the State Owned Corporations Act 1989. A request made of a State-owned corporation by the Executive Government must be made via a transparent direction that is issued with the concurrence of the Treasurer and with a mechanism for payment of the costs of compliance. The Opposition's proposed amendments include a requirement that a person must not be appointed as a city commissioner to represent a city in the Six Cities Region unless the person resides in that city. I would have thought that such a commonsense provision would have been in the original bill. It appears that there may be agreement on that proposal.

I am pleased that the proposed legislation does not include local planning panels for the Hunter. We have good and capable councils in the Hunter, which do a terrific job on that front. Certainly, there is no need for local planning panels. In summary, quite a few outstanding issues with the bill need to be addressed. I hope the Minister takes note of some of those issues and proposes changes to resolve them.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:41): I make a short contribution to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I thank the shadow Minister, and member for Wollongong, for outlining our party's position on a range of matters. Of course, for us, all things become local in the end. It is not the first time I have said that over the past 18 months a two-city situation has arisen. Certainly many members in this place know that I have often spoken in this place about the "tale of two cities" during COVID. I was quite public about it. We went through something that was quite difficult. Some people have said we must forget about it, but we cannot forget because it taught us many lessons and gave us an insight into what we want for the future. Whilst we are still going through the pandemic, the one thing we must note is how circumstances differed greatly in different parts of the city and, indeed, different parts of the State.

As has been clearly outlined, the Opposition will support the bill with amendments. To echo the words of the member for Newcastle, the suggestion that the commissioner at least be within the locale is a sensible one. I am glad to hear that the Government will be supporting that proposal. On paper, the bill's concept of the Six Cities Region is good. Who does not want cities that are connected and unified, cities that work and have a good sense of livability, and that people are proud to call home? That is what everybody wants. The challenge is in making sure that what is on paper transposes into reality and into a lived experience for people, regardless of what region they live in. That is the challenge for the Minister and for future governments.

I mentioned the lack of unity. But rather than focus on some of the COVID issues, I prefer to focus on my neck of the woods—which is the Canterbury-Bankstown area, one of the largest local government areas in the State—on what we do not have and on the challenges for the commission. During lockdown and its limitations on movement, we learnt that many people did not have access to good, quality green space for recreation. Some people in our community must leave the local area to have a nice picnic. Of course, we do not have a beach and I do not expect a beach to be built in Lakemba, but we need better parks.

Mr Mark Coure: That is a lofty aspiration.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Yes, it is a lofty aspiration. Never say never. We could get a wave pool. We have a block of land and a good wave pool could sort that out.

Mr Mark Coure: You should tell Georges River Council this.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I should tell Georges River Council that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will come to order.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Of course, I would say that if they had not closed Carss Park pool. But things like green space came into effect during the lockdown period. The only real choice for those who lived in the Lakemba area was to walk along King Georges Road towards Punchbowl Road until they got to Parry Park—which, thank goodness, the council is upgrading at the moment. But at Parry Park, which is the biggest park in the area, there was not one swing set, there was no barbeque and there was nowhere for people to sit down and have a family picnic when that was allowed. The question that I would ask a planning commission is, "What can we do to make sure that places are much more livable? What can we do to make sure that people who grow up in certain areas have the same level of opportunity as others when it comes to education, work and further study?" Those are the things that I think make good cities. Those are the things that make places much more livable.

I would love to be able to walk up and down green, leafy, tree-lined streets, like they have elsewhere. The fact of the matter is that it is good for people's mental health and it is good for their personal health, because it encourages them to get out and about. If we do not have a nice environment to go out and exercise in, there is a good chance that we probably will not exercise. I am talking about incidental exercise. I love listening to other members talk about cycle paths and things like that in their electorates—I genuinely love it—but I also feel a pang

of jealousy because we do not necessarily have that in Lakemba. I am not here crying poor; I am talking about what possibilities there are for the commission to say, "Well, what is missing in one particular area and how do we make it better?"

We know that the Canterbury-Bankstown area will experience a huge increase in population—an additional 140,000 people over the next 16 or so years. That would require at least 60,000 to 70,000 dwellings to house them. Just building units will not solve that because people in my electorate have reasonably large families. During the pandemic, the most difficult of times, families were stuck in the old squat-type apartment blocks that we called flats and they had nowhere to go. That is not good for anybody's health. That is not livability; that is basically just saying, "I have a place to stay." With all of that we need to address infrastructure. Infrastructure is the key here. We cannot have population increases without balancing that with the things that people need. What infrastructure do we need? We are talking about schools and hospitals. Today the Minister spoke about the new Bankstown-Lidcombe hospital that was announced three years ago, but we still do not know where that hospital will be. There has not been any announcement other than an election commitment.

The upgrade of Canterbury hospital, which the member for Canterbury and I have been working so hard to achieve, has still not happened. We are bringing in more people and making these areas less livable and accessible. We have schools that still need upgrades. Not only that, we need places like community centres, which are at the heart of a community. Community centres act as a touchstone for people to go to and enjoy, and for them to understand and to work with one another. The role of the city commissioner is an important one. I say to the city commissioner, whoever it may be, that his or her role is not just about having a title and ticking boxes from a distance; the commissioner needs to understand what the local issues are. Granted, we are talking about an area that goes from the Hills district through to Canterbury-Bankstown and through to Sutherland shire. There are a lot of cultural and social differences in those places. It is quite a large task that will require understanding the differences in each community. When one understands the community, one understands the issues that are important to them: the deep cultural ties that they have, the local industry, the opportunities and the lack of opportunities.

There are a lot of positives here and we need to build on the positives. As I said, I do not want to cry poor and say what we do not have. Rather, let us ask what we can do to bring this area up to the same level as everybody else, so that somebody living in one part of Sydney—for example, Greater Sydney—does not feel that they are missing out because they are in the wrong spot. We do not need to create a system where people living in one place have one thing and people living in other places do not, and it is simply because they cannot afford to move somewhere else.

I would love every electorate in Sydney to be a place where people can live, work and recreate not too far from their homes. It has to speak to the character of the community, fit within existing streets, and embrace aspirations and opportunities. Most importantly, there has to be a strong connection to everything. These are all bits and pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which when put together correctly are quite beautiful but when put together incorrectly are an absolute mess. We need to make sure that there is no mess and that everything works. One of the issues facing people who live in some parts of western Sydney, which is where I live, is the tolls. How is it that people still cannot get from point A to point B without having to pay some money?

Mr Mark Coure: You can.

Mr JIHAD DIB: These are serious and lived experiences of people. The Minister said, "You can." That is true; one can, but the choice that one makes is either to pay a toll or to sit in traffic for an additional half an hour, which is not fair. These roads are there for everybody to use. I get upset when people say, "You can choose to travel the free roads." Tell that to the person who lives on Bexley Road, who has trucks driving past at three in the morning, nonstop, because the trucks will not go on the toll roads. The role of the commission is to improve the lives of everybody. That is what I would like to see. I am pleased that the shadow Minister, the member for Wollongong, has made some sensible suggestions. Labor members are not against the things that will improve communities; we want to improve communities. I implore the Minister, as he is further developing this, to make sure that the improvements that happen in the community are holistic, that they are about connecting people and improving people's lives, and that they improve the quality of people's lives so we can all say, regardless of where we live, that we are all citizens of one great Sydney. That is what is really important.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:51): I make a contribution to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I do so as a representative of communities in the Hunter and the Central Coast regions. It is understandable that a change as significant as that proposed by the bill has caused some anxiety amongst those communities, and there are questions that I will be asking on their behalf. I start by thanking both Minister Stokes and the shadow Minister, my colleague the member for Wollongong, who I acknowledge is in the Chamber. I thank him for his attendance. I thank both of them for engaging with members as they have, particularly with

those members whose communities will be affected, and for providing members with information regarding the Greater Cities Commission.

As the shadow Minister has made clear, Labor will not be opposing the bill. But as a local Hunter and Central Coast MP, I am sceptical—and there is scepticism in the community—as to whether the commission will provide additional funding for the region and not just another layer of bureaucracy. This is a real problem and a real concern. I hope that I am wrong and I hope that the community's scepticism is not proven correct. I refer now to my community's concerns. My first question is: Will the Minister guarantee that the regional grants and funding structure, as it stands, will continue to be accessible to these communities under the new commission structure? That is very important because it is only through these grant programs that regional areas can access money. It is therefore incredibly important that it is not taken away.

Other community concerns about the proposed bill relate to what it must deliver to help take our regions forward. One of the misconceptions, unfortunately, about planning in regions such as the lower Hunter is a supposed lack of planning. I say to the House that this is not the case. Local councils such as City of Newcastle Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Cessnock City Council, Maitland City Council and Port Stephens Council, along with organisations such as the Committee for the Hunter and the Hunter Joint Organisation, have been putting a lot of work into planning and projects that will be of ongoing benefit to our communities. The problem has been the lack of funding from the State and Federal governments, despite constant requests from our councils, Federal MPs, local State MPs and the local organisations I just mentioned. We need look no further than the Newcastle Art Gallery upgrade. I note that the member for Newcastle is in the Chamber. All the Newcastle MPs are champions. They are all here. The upgrade has also been championed by Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes for years, before the State and Federal governments finally, just weeks ago, came to the party to fund the project. It has taken the best part of two decades to get the funding for it. If members want paragraph and verse on it, the member for Newcastle can fill them in. That is just an example, but there is a whole list of projects across the Hunter and the Central Coast.

Mr Paul Scully: And the Illawarra.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: And the Illawarra, of course. I have brought forward a couple to demonstrate to the Chamber that they are real projects for which this Government has been asked to provide funding and the requests have fallen on deaf ears. I have the New South Wales budget 2022-23 submission from the Committee for the Hunter. It is a committee set up by this Government, yet the Government does not even listen to it. Again, I note the scepticism. The committee has listed in its submission a great project about affordable housing. Just last week Shelter NSW released a report and, sadly, of the seven worst regions in terms of housing crisis, four were in the Hunter. I note that the member for Maitland, the member for Cessnock, the member for Newcastle and the member for Port Stephens are here.

The affordable housing project is a demonstration of what is really needed in our local government areas and in the Hunter generally. The committee's proposal—\$522 million to fund a program enabling infrastructure to unlock 40,000 homes and 590 hectares of employment land—is stuck in the planning pipeline. This is just one example of the planning roadblocks that we face. Another example is a \$40 million upgrade to Mandalong Road in Morisset, Lake Macquarie, which will release \$1.2 billion in capital investment, 6,500 jobs, 4,500 new homes and 175 hectares of employment land. Those are the sorts of projects that are literally gathering dust on someone's bookshelf. I have one here from Lake Macquarie City Council. This one is a ripper. Everyone will know about it; I think it was a project when I was born.

Mr Clayton Barr: That is an old one.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Cessnock. This is the lower Hunter freight bypass, separating freight rail, including coal, from passenger rail between Fassifern and Newcastle. All we hear about is fast rail. Here is step one. This has been at every budget request for as long as I can remember, long before I became a member of Parliament. These projects are shovel ready; we just need the money. If members want to talk about expanding the Hunter's tourism economy, another great opportunity is Newcastle Airport. We have recently seen significant upgrades to Newcastle Airport. It is seeking a further \$50 million to upgrade the airport's terminal, which will open up the Hunter to incredible international potential. We want to make sure that the Government is addressing these proposals. I spoke with the airport authorities just two weeks ago who indicated they have had talks with the Government, so I know the Government knows about it. Again, the scepticism is sneaking back in. There is also the recommendation to shift the harness racing from Hunter Park to Cessnock, which is also awaiting funding.

Mr Clayton Barr: Hear, hear! Bring the greyhounds as well.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: That's right, giddy up! This project would be a major boost for the Cessnock local government area [LGA] but, along with that, it would assist the plans for the Broadmeadow precinct. Again, the member for Newcastle would be able to talk about that project. Of course, it provides those light rail corridors that we are so desperately seeking. I refer to the recently opened Maitland Hospital. I met with the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea will be heard in silence.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The institute is keen to establish a regional research hub at the facility. On the Central Coast, projects include the long-overdue upgrade to Carters Road, which has consistently fought for funding from this Government. Scenic Drive, running through Budgewoi, is another road that urgently needs upgrades. If the commission is able to provide funding and see that funding flow to our communities for those crucial projects, I say bring it on. That is what we want it to do, but we need guarantees that that is exactly what will be happening and that it will not just be another layer of bureaucracy standing in the way of creating all of these projects.

The commission simply cannot become another level of bureaucracy that is full of Sydney bureaucrats telling the people of the Hunter and the Central Coast what is best for them, nor can it be a means by which money is taken from the regions to be spent on Liberal-held seats in Sydney. We will not cop that. For this commission to succeed, it must respect the independent identity of all of these areas and the agencies in each of the regions, whom we regard very highly, while enabling better communication between government departments. While we have seen some positive forward planning from the Greater Sydney Commission, which the member for Lakemba just spoke to, Sydney remains a divided city with a lack of transport, health, education and infrastructure investment, particularly in western Sydney. I note that the member for Londonderry is in the Chamber and I hear that she too agrees with these sentiments.

We only have to look at the estimated population growths. Between 2021 and 2041, in the LGA of Blacktown, the population is expected to grow by more than a whopping 200,000 people, in Camden by 180,000 people, in Liverpool by 190,000 people, in Parramatta by 140,000 people and in Penrith by 140,000 people. Whilst two-thirds of the population growth in Sydney will be in western Sydney, we are not seeing the planning for infrastructure and land development reflect this growth. We cannot allow the same planning fails to be repeated in the Hunter, the Central Coast and the Wollongong-Illawarra area. [*Extension of time*]

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Wollondilly, I remind the House that some members are on two calls to order.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:02): I move:

That this House acknowledges the Government has delivered, and continues to deliver, a record amount of new and upgraded schools, hospitals, roads and transport for the people of New South Wales.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollondilly will be heard in silence.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: I thank the crowd for coming here to hear the wonderful work of the Liberal-Nationals Government over the past 11 years. We have got a great crowd. Isn't this wonderful? The Government's strong financial management has enabled it to support the response to COVID-19 while maintaining the State's record infrastructure program. Yes, we are a Government that can walk and chew gum at the same time. Over the past three years we have managed drought, we have managed bushfire, we have managed flooding and we have managed a pandemic, and now we are delivering.

The State's record \$110.4 billion infrastructure commitment includes \$70.2 billion for public transport and roads, \$10.4 billion for hospitals and health facilities and \$8.4 billion for TAFE and schools infrastructure. The Government is continuing to invest heavily across regional New South Wales with new infrastructure, support for jobs, the delivery of vital public services and the ability to manage and respond to natural disasters and events. Game-changing infrastructure projects such as WestConnex, NorthConnex and upgrades to the Great Western Highway and Princes Highway are creating jobs and delivering economic benefits to local communities across New South Wales. Throughout the pandemic, critical construction and maintenance work across the New South Wales roads and transport network has kept more than 130,000 people employed directly and indirectly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Coogee to order for the second time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: Across regional and metropolitan New South Wales, more than 300,000 direct and indirect jobs will be created across the full spectrum of industries required to assist the construction supply chain. The New South Wales major projects infrastructure pipeline brings together all New South Wales Government infrastructure projects expected to come to market with a minimum capital value of over \$50 million to provide Infrastructure NSW with information to enable planning and resourcing for the next three to five years. The purpose of the pipeline portal is to provide industry with an appropriate lead time and readiness for government engagement, bidding, procurement, contract planning and the mobilisation of a skilled workforce.

The project delivery includes \$75 billion, with approximately \$57 billion invested in transport, \$7 billion invested in health and \$1 billion invested in education. In my electorate of Wollondilly, the Government has delivered \$44 billion for the development of a final business case for a detailed design of Picton Road to an upgraded motorway standard between the Hume Highway and Mount Ousley Road. I know the member for Wollongong, the member for Keira and the member for Campbelltown are thankful for that project because the New South Wales ports are important pieces of infrastructure, and Picton Road will deliver entry to the south-west and to the Illawarra.

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

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: This road is important because, at the moment, Picton Road has just over 20,000 movements a day, with 25 per cent in freight, which is increasing 5 per cent each year. This incredible piece of infrastructure will bring south-western Sydney and the Illawarra together. It is extremely important. Also in Wollondilly—and the member for Campbelltown should take note—there is \$23 million in upgrades to Appin Road, which is another dangerous road linking the Wollondilly and Campbelltown regions. There is also \$5 million allocated for improvements to Menangle Road and \$5.5 million for the upgraded Mittagong station, with new platforms, disabled toilets, a formal bus stop and crossing CCTV. Also in my electorate, the Government has committed to working with councils for the creation of active transport and a pedestrian link between Tahmoor and Picton High School.

No-one will forget the \$14.6 million that this Government is investing in tourism and heritage rail for the Thirlmere steam museum, which is going to bring thousands of people to the area and bring revenue to the New South Wales Government. In health, we have invested \$10.8 billion in capital infrastructure over the next four years, with a program of \$3.2 billion in 2021–22. This record investment will ensure that 29 new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities that were announced prior to the 2019 State election will commence before March 2023. There are currently almost 110 capital works projects underway across the State, with more than 70 projects in rural and regional New South Wales. This is ensuring that rural communities get their share of health upgrades, which you did not do a bloody thing about when you were in government for 16 years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat or she will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Wollondilly will direct his comments through the Chair and not incite members opposite. I am trying to help him, but he is not helping himself.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: In my electorate of Wollondilly, there is the redevelopment of Bowral and District Hospital, which is the largest piece of infrastructure investment in the Southern Highlands in a generation. Spending on this hospital totalled \$120 million, which has only been done under a Liberal-Nationals government. As a lot of people would know, 40 per cent of the population in the Southern Highlands is over 65. This is an important piece of health infrastructure for my region and for other regions that are involved in the south-west network. The Government has invested more than \$7 billion in education in my region, which has delivered 119 new and upgraded schools.

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

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: The additional funds in the 2021 budget grow the pipeline to \$7.9 billion worth of investment in new school upgrades over the next four years, making it a \$14 billion building program. The New South Wales Government has achieved 21 new and upgraded schools in 2021. Seven of the upgraded schools were completed from day one of 2022. We inherited a \$1 billion backlog in school infrastructure and maintenance from those on the other side of the House. In my electorate, the \$112 million upgrade to Picton High School is spectacular. It is like a second TAFE college, with motor mechanic workshops, metal workshops, woodwork and a recording studio.

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

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: When we opened that wonderful school, in an area that has gone through so many natural disasters, it was a very proud moment to see the smiles on the kids' faces. We are also doubling the size of Wilton Public School in my electorate. Let us not forget the \$5 billion—*[Time expired.]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Campbelltown, I remind members that a number of them are on two calls to order. There seems to be heightened interest in this debate, and I would not want anyone to miss out. That is my final warning. The member for Campbelltown has the call. He will be heard in silence by members on both sides of the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:10): I am delighted to lead for the Opposition in this important debate and add the dignity and respect that this issue deserves. The only thing that I agree with the member for Wollondilly on—and I appreciate him acknowledging it—is the great work that the former Labor government did on Picton Road in connecting the two great regions of the Illawarra and Macarthur, which is the gateway to south-western Sydney, as members on this side of the House understand and appreciate. The member mentioned the word "managed". The only thing this Government has managed to do since 2011 is disengage western and south-western Sydney. This motion was labelled "Achievement and vision", but we know it highlights the blind and tired outlook of this Government and the contempt with which it has treated western and south-western Sydney.

The reality is that local families, businesses, ratepayers and stakeholders lose out across the west and south-west every day because of the failures of this Government and its policies. We have not seen adequate new roads. We have seen more tolls on old roads. We have seen one standard for the west and a whole different standard for the rest of Sydney. It is a symbolic representation of a government that is out of touch and that does not get western and south-western Sydney. Sydney's east gets public transport, and the rest in the west get tolls. There are no alternative road routes for many residents across western and south-western Sydney. We have seen increasing tolls and, as I mentioned before, new tolls on old roads. Why should the people of the west pay for a toll on a road that is not going to provide them with the access they need? I will come to the population later in my contribution.

This Government's priorities are all wrong. As the Labor leader, the member for Kogarah, pointed out on Monday, we need new schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, roads and public transport links to open up the economic potential in the west and south-west and provide the connectivity that local families and businesses need. That is our agenda on this side of the House. We hear the rhetoric from the other side, but everyone knows that it is nothing short of spin. I reaffirm that Labor will scrap the northern beaches link, which is a \$10 billion project with limited economic benefits, and direct infrastructure spending to where it is needed more—in the west and south-west. We know that because we are out in the west and the south-west, and we are with the people. When we look at population growth, we see that over 200,000 people will be going to Blacktown, 190,000 people to Liverpool, 180,000 people to Camden, just under 140,000 people to Parramatta, just under 140,000 people to Penrith and around 120,000 people to Canterbury-Bankstown. That is just to name a few.

By comparison, bring in the Government's billion-dollar investment in the wrong priorities. There will be 27,000 more people on the Northern Beaches and 999 in Mosman, and the Government is going to invest \$10 billion. Meanwhile, people in western and south-western Sydney get up every day, looking forward to sitting on a congested road, sitting on a new toll road or parking in a commuter car park that they do not have, waiting for a train that is either not coming or is late.

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

Mr GREG WARREN: I urge members opposite to get their priorities right. Public transport and roads in the west and the south-west have been ignored by the Government, and that is very clear. Government members may not know it, but we in the west and south-west live it every single day. The Government has the wrong priorities and the McKell report points that out very clearly. I thank the House.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:15): I note that Opposition members are very excited about this public interest debate. It is fantastic that they finally have realised that the State has turned a corner from the terrible, dark days of the Labor Government. In education infrastructure alone, as the member for Wollondilly outlined, 21 new and upgraded schools have been delivered in 2021. Seven upgraded schools were completed in time for term one, 2022. The \$240 million Metro and Regional Renewal Program benefits more than 1,300 schools across New South Wales. There has been a \$100 million investment to improve indoor air quality. Forty-seven Government-subsidised outside school hours care hubs have been delivered to schools, creating almost 2,500 additional spaces for students. Across New South Wales classrooms have got LED lighting, an upgrade from power-guzzling energy. There is continuing work on almost 700 schools earmarked for new roofs, repairs and upgrades as part of a \$60 million roof repair program.

In health infrastructure in my area alone, there is an \$88 million upgrade of The Sutherland Hospital, which includes a new MRI machine. Investment in health is \$10.8 billion, as the Minister outlined today in question time. NSW Health is building purpose-designed facilities right across the State to drive improved outcomes and experiences that matter to patients. It supports a sustainable health system that delivers outcomes that are

personalised, invests in wellness and is digitally enabled. The 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. Currently almost 110 health capital works projects are underway across the State, with more than 70 projects in regional New South Wales in places like Cooma, Cowra, Glen Innes, Grafton, Gunnedah, Lismore, Moree, Wentworth and Manning, ensuring that rural communities get their fair share of health upgrades.

Other hospital upgrades and redevelopments in progress include the new Bankstown-Lidcombe hospital, which will receive \$1.3 billion. Nepean stages one and two will receive \$1 billion; John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct, \$835 million; Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, \$750 million; Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct, \$740 million; and Prince of Wales Hospital at Randwick, \$783 million. We are working on the new Shellharbour hospital with colleagues from Shellharbour and surrounds. There is \$699 million for that brand new hospital. Tweed Valley Hospital will receive \$673 million; Campbelltown Hospital stage two, \$632 million; The Children's Hospital at Westmead stage two, \$619 million; Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick, \$608 million; the new Maitland hospital, \$470 million; Wagga Wagga hospital, \$431 million; St George Hospital, \$385 million; Concord hospital, \$341 million; Lismore hospital, \$313 million; Griffith hospital, \$250 million; and Dubbo hospital stages three and four, \$306 million.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong will come to order. The member for Maitland will come to order.

Mr LEE EVANS: As members can see, the Government has not been sitting on its hands over the past 10 years. It has been out there in the community, building assets for the community. In the late 2021-22 financial year the Government will spend over \$900 million on health and capital works in regional communities throughout New South Wales. In late 2021 the New South Wales Government announced a \$500 million funding boost for rural health projects to be spent over several years, including an additional \$60 million for Eurobodalla Health Service, bringing the total to \$260 million. Cessnock Hospital will receive \$101 million; Finley Hospital, \$25 million; Glen Innes Hospital, \$30 million; and Temora hospital, \$80 million.

Wyong hospital will receive \$6.4 million to expand the cancer day unit to deliver specialist cancer treatment services, to complement the recent opening of the \$200 million expanded Wyong hospital. Wagga Wagga Health and Knowledge Precinct will receive \$1 million for planning. As members can see by this laundry list of how much money the taxpayers of New South Wales have been spending—[*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I ask Opposition members not to assist, heckle or in any way impose on the performance of the member for Blacktown. The member for Wollondilly will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:20): Aren't we so lucky! The people of western Sydney have never had it so good with this Liberal Government. Somehow we are all asleep, aren't we? Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition was talking about the fact that Sydney is divided and about where the infrastructure has not kept pace with the population growth. He must be on his own; it must be rhetoric. The McKell Institute came out with a report saying that access to infrastructure in major cities is unequal and strongly reflects the regional and metropolitan divide between household income, historical disadvantage and all of the infrastructure. Obviously, The McKell Institute is sadly deluded as well! But this is not just a recent thing. In May 2015 Jessica Irvine wrote an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* called "Sydney's rich and poor: the rising crisis in our suburbs".

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: She outlined that western Sydney was falling behind. Nothing changes. It seems like the Liberal Government believes that we are all equal, but unfortunately the Liberal and Nationals electorates are more equal than the Labor and crossbench electorates. We see the toll roads—

Mr Kevin Conolly: Campbelltown hospital, Westmead hospital, Blacktown hospital, Liverpool hospital—

Mr STEPHEN BALI: I will get to you in a second, member for Riverstone.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Riverstone will come to order. The member for Londonderry will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Then there is WestInvest. How wonderful is the WestInvest scheme! The Government privatised the toll roads—which it never talks about—in western Sydney. It says, "Here's \$11 billion, but we will only give \$5 billion to western Sydney." I love the member for Strathfield, but the only time Government members ever talk about Strathfield being in the west is if a murder or something happens there; then it is in the west. If it is good news, then it is obviously in the inner city. That is the only time Strathfield gets mentioned as part of the west.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Blacktown will stop inciting the member for Strathfield.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Strathfield and Burwood, et cetera, are now sharing in that \$5 billion while \$6 billion goes to the northern suburbs. In 2017 toll revenue was \$872 million. By 2021, in middle of the pandemic, it was \$1.27 billion per year. Imagine what it will be worth in 40 years' time—and we only get \$5 billion. If members look around at the State's infrastructure, Blacktown will be lucky to pick up \$300 million. Right now Blacktown council is owed \$250.1 million by the Treasurer of this State.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Riverstone will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Blacktown council is owed \$250.1 million in unfunded section 7.11 contributions plans, which the Government is using all over the State. There are 200,000 people moving into the city of Blacktown—by the way, I would like to thank all members for mentioning Blacktown today. I reckon there were more mentions of Blacktown today than the western Sydney Minister has ever made in his parliamentary career. The population of the Blacktown local government area will increase by 200,000. Only 13 local government areas have larger populations. For public transport accessibility, Blacktown is rated towards the bottom.

There is not even a high school in Marsden Park, where 30,000 people are moving in. As the member for Riverstone likes to point out, we will get six extra schools. But 110,000 people have moved into the north-west and the Blacktown area. The Government will give those 110,000 people six schools. The Government is deluded. The member for Wollondilly talks about the Government's great response to the pandemic. The people of Blacktown had to leave Blacktown to get vaccinations. The member for Riverstone never had a clinic until I negotiated with the International SOS to open up a hub in Riverstone. He was asleep at the wheel.

[Members interjected.]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Blacktown will resume his seat. There was a breakout of enthusiasm across the Chamber, which makes things very hard for an external observer. It is not good order to run the Chamber like that, and it is hard for Hansard. I ask all members to tone it down a bit for my benefit. I have never put any member on a call to order. I do not intend to do it now, unless I am forced to do so. The member for Blacktown has the call.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: The Rouse Hill hospital was announced in 2014 and cancelled in 2015, after the election. Then it was announced in 2019 and cancelled after the election. It has been announced again. It keeps getting smaller and smaller. The member for Riverstone started off by talking about a top-tier hospital, and in his last meeting at the chamber of commerce he said that we were lucky to get a suburban hospital there. The waiting lists for ambulances and elective surgery are at all-time highs. There is an 18-month wait for our kids to find out whether their food allergies will kill them or not. The community had to raise money to have allergy testing introduced at Mount Druitt Hospital. Government members are a disgrace and should hang their heads in shame.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:26): It gives me great delight to speak on this motion. As I look around the Chamber today, I think that only three of us were part of this Parliament in one form or another under a Labor government.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Maybe four. You came and went. There was the member for Marrickville, the member for Wallsend and me. There were a lot of staffers here, including the Leader of the Opposition.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: What am I? Chopped liver?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I am sorry. There was also Mr Assistant Speaker, the member for Lake Macquarie. The Leader of the Opposition was the chief of staff or had a very important role in Carl Scully's office. His big pieces of infrastructure were things such as the Lane Cove Tunnel. We remember when that house fell in. We remember the building of the Cross City Tunnel, when Labor got the numbers so wrong that it sent a company broke. We remember the Rozelle tunnel—wait, Labor forgot to build that. It spent \$100 million on looking at doing it and then did not do it.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I am interested in the contribution by the member for Blacktown, who called The McKell Institute a leader in Australia for great public policy. Looking at the people on The McKell Institute board, I see there is Craig Emerson, who is a former employer of Chris Minns. There is Steve Bracks, Mary Easson and Mark Lennon—it is an incredible Labor hierarchy. Amazing people on that board are supporting what the Labor Party did in government.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I hoped that The McKell Institute might support what Infrastructure Partnerships Australia is saying about the \$110 billion worth of forward work we are doing in this State. We are building railway lines and metros for the people of western Sydney and participating in the greatest building of freeways not only in Sydney but also in regional New South Wales. In government we have had the energy and foresight to get the Pacific Highway dual carriageway done, with 20 per cent of the money coming from the State and 80 per cent coming from the Federal Government. The member for Coffs Harbour is in the Chamber. More than a billion dollars is going into building the Coffs Harbour bypass, which will be an amazing project.

We have \$500 million going out the door to local governments in regional New South Wales, helping to seal country roads throughout the bush. We have \$500 million going to replace timber bridges, to ensure that farmers and community members can have safe access to and from their farms and homes. We have planning going on for the Blue Mountains tunnel. We also have plans for dual carriageways for the entire Princes Highway. We have done the Pacific Highway, but we need to also fix up the east-west routes. As country people, we know that there is no chance whatever of seeing the finalisation of those projects if the Labor Party is elected to government. The investment we have made into regional New South Wales has been incredible.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: There are the plans for Cessnock Hospital, the new Maitland hospital, the new Macksville hospital, the new Kempsey hospital, the improved Coffs Harbour hospital, the new Lismore hospital and the new Tweed Heads hospital.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We have built infrastructure in this State. We are proud of what we have done because we have allocated around 20 per cent of our State budget every year to building infrastructure, creating jobs and creating opportunities. Yet we have had less help from the Federal Government than any other State. We have a super-pipeline of work, jobs and opportunities for people across New South Wales. People who remember what it was like between 1995 and 2011 know that there was not the same emphasis on infrastructure by any calculation or on any reckoning. I refer to you, member for Kogarah, because you were here and part of some of those complete and utter disasters.

Mr Chris Minns: You are doing the same thing now. Did you read the paper on Monday? You're all cancelling.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Oxley will direct her comments through the Chair and not incite the Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We are building railway lines. We are building roads. We are building dual carriageways. We are building town bypasses. We are building new hospitals. We are reinventing public housing. I note that the housing Minister is outside the door. We are creating opportunities for people across New South Wales. Those who were here in the dark days of the Labor Government know that it was very dim. But we are achieving across the width and breadth of this great State. I am proud of what we are doing. May it continue.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:32): What a pack of self-congratulating, preening peacocks we see on government benches. Look at them congratulating themselves on doing nothing more than giving infrastructure and roads to the eastern suburbs, the North Shore and some of their country areas and giving no infrastructure and nothing but tolls to western Sydney. What a piece of Orwellian doublespeak this motion put up by the member for Wollondilly is. What a disgrace. He sits there smugly, like the rest of the D-graders on the front bench. What a tired old government this is. Apart from the infighting, which I quite enjoy, all we see are Government members focusing on themselves time and time again. That is all they do. Their priorities are wrong. Their priorities are on themselves. Their priorities are not on where the infrastructure is really needed, not on where Sydney is growing, not on where the families are and not on western Sydney. Their priorities are on their self-congratulatory, Tory electorates on the North Shore and in the eastern suburbs.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Hawkesbury will come to order.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: What a disgrace. The west needs schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, roads and public transport links to open up economic, job and social opportunities. When western Sydney does well, New South Wales does well. When our economy does well in western Sydney, the rest of Australia does well. But what happens? We have seen so clearly during the COVID-19 pandemic that this Government has created two Sydneys: us in western Sydney and everyone else, who are all looking after themselves. They say that is not true. They heckle rather than taking responsibility for themselves. The member for Heathcote, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Oxley should be ashamed. They say, "No, no, we don't do that." But they do, and it can be seen in the pork-barrelling of this Government. How proud they were to pork-barrel. The last Deputy

Premier, the bear of The Nationals, made it a pride of honour. Absolutely disgusting. Now the Minister, and the member for Oatley, who is in the Chamber, is heckling. As the Minister he has multicultural communities that he is supposed to represent, yet he does not represent them. Those areas west of Sydney are neglected time and again. That is what is disgraceful about this Government. Let us look at some of the funds—

Mr Mark Coure: What are you talking about? I was fishing with the member for Fairfield on Sunday.

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

Mr Mark Coure: I am only assisting the member.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Prospect does not need any assistance.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Surely this Minister needs to be named.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I do not need the assistance of the member for Prospect. A few other members would be named before the Minister is named. The member for Prospect has the call.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) Replacing the word "acknowledges" with the word "notes".
- (2) Replacing the word "continues" with the word "attempts".
- (3) Inserting "and to rule out the future sale of electricity assets to prop up the capital side of the New South Wales budget" after "New South Wales".

The pork-barrelling by this Government shows just how bad it is. Some 96 per cent of grants available from the \$250 million Stronger Communities Fund went to councils in Coalition-held marginal electorates. On 8 February, in a scathing report, the Auditor General said there was "a purposeful attempt to avoid transparency and accountability over the involvement of the former Premier and former Deputy Premier in approving grant allocations."

We know what happens. We have lost 12 Liberal MPs from the Central Coast, a former Premier and a former Deputy Premier have jumped. Who else? How many crossbenchers have we got at the moment because of others being under investigation? Between 2013 and 2021 at least 75 per cent of the New South Wales Government's ClubGRANTS category 3 funds were awarded to projects in Coalition seats—\$70.6 million of the \$103 million in funding went to their seats, and not to western Sydney. Not to where it is actually needed. Not to where the families demand it. And by God there will be a reckoning to this. It will come to them in 12 months' time when those opposite are back on the Opposition benches where they belong. [*Time expired*]

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:37): In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Campbelltown, Heathcote, Blacktown, Oxley and Prospect for their contributions—and the member for Oatley's contribution throughout the debate was wonderful. The member for Campbelltown said we do not spend anything in western Sydney. We have spent \$632 million on the redevelopment of the Campbelltown Hospital. Neither he nor his former Government delivered that; the Liberal-Nationals Coalition did and it is well underway. The member for Blacktown complained that his electorate gets no money. The member for Blacktown is like one of those characters with black shades and a big gold chain, flipping money out left, right and centre. This Government has spent \$750 million on Blacktown hospital. There was no mention of that today. What about the school maintenance backlog?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Prospect will come to order. The member for Wollondilly has the call.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: From the member for Prospect we heard about class warfare: the regions have had nothing spent on them. The Bowral hospital could have an historic car number plate. Most of the hospitals and schools were not looked at before this Government took over in 2011.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Prospect will come to order.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: It is only under this Government that we are seeing construction, because the Opposition staffers were taking orders off Eddie Obeid, Joe Tripodi and Ian Macdonald when they were in government. Look where they are now. Two of them are now—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It is one thing for there to be vigorous debate and interjection; it is quite another to cast personal reflections and improper motives on Opposition members.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. However, the member for Wollondilly should be more careful about making such assertions.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: I am just wondering, Country Labor is building its numbers—and the member for Cessnock is over there.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Wollondilly will resume his seat.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76, relevance. The member is meant to be talking about achievements. The Government clearly has none, so the member is waffling on about other things.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I remind members of Standing Order 249A, under which I can remove a member from the Chamber for a period. I do not want to do that. The member for Wollondilly will be heard in silence.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: We could talk for hours about the achievements that this Government has produced for the people of New South Wales—whether it is schools, roads, hospitals, sporting infrastructure, rail or ferries, you name it. Only under this Government is there building; those on the other side are the wreckers.

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

The House divided.

Ayes32
Noes36
Majority.....4

AYES

Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dalton, H

Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Kamper, S
Li, J

McDermott, H
Mihailuk, T
Minns, C
O'Neill, M (teller)
Parker, J
Scully, P
Smith, T
Tesch, L (teller)
Warren, G
Washington, K

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Coure, M
Crouch, A
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Evans, L
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C

Hazzard, B
Henskens, A
Lee, G
Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
McGirr, J
O'Dea, J
Overall, N
Pavey, M
Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A

Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Singh, G (teller)
Smith, N (teller)
Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Williams, L
Williams, R

PAIRS

Aitchison, J
Hornery, S
Lalich, N

Perrottet, D
Layzell, D
James, T

PAIRS

Lynch, P
 Mehan, D
 Park, R
 Saffin, J
 Voltz, L
 Watson, A
 Zangari, G

Davies, T
 Gibbons, M
 Kean, M
 Cooke, S
 Petinos, E
 Bromhead, S
 Wilson, F

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***GREATER CITIES COMMISSION BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:55): Thank you very much for granting me a short extension of time, Mr Assistant Speaker. Another concern that has been raised with me by local stakeholders is the impacts of clause 20 of the bill, which states:

A local council in the Six Cities Region is, if requested in writing by the Commission—

- (a) to allow the Commission to have access to, and take copies of, documents held by the council that are relevant to the functions of the Commission, and
- (b) to provide the Commission with staff and facilities, or other assistance, as may be required to assist the Commission in exercising its functions.

That is a bit heavy-handed, and I would like the Minister to clarify that it is not a cost-shifting exercise whereby the commission will now also be leaning on our local governments to provide staff and facilities—as is listed in the bill—and documents from the local government area. There is concern about that and I would like clarification from the Minister. In addition to that, clause 22 of the bill concerns disclosure of information. I will not read it because it is quite long. Essentially, councils must not disclose information obtained in connection with the administration or execution of the Act unless the disclosure is made, and there are five dot points. The point that I make to the Minister is that I hope it is not a gagging mechanism for councils when decisions are being made by the commission, because that would certainly not be in good faith with our local governments in the areas of the Central Coast and the Hunter. I ask that the Minister please explain that that is not the case, as there is great concern locally that those two clauses are in the bill. As the Hunter and the Central Coast are new councils coming into the Greater Cities Commission, clarification around that would be most appreciated.

I note that the shadow Minister has indicated that Labor will move two very sensible amendments, and I encourage the Government to support them as they will improve the legislation. The shadow Minister has spoken with the Minister, as I understand it, who is always very cooperative. Given that the amendments will improve the bill, I have confidence that the Government will adopt them. In conclusion, I look forward to working with the Minister to achieve the best outcomes for the people of Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast. This very important matter goes to the heart of making sure that our communities are best served by future planning and future infrastructure funding.

The House has just had a debate in which it was pointed out that those on the Government benches are quite delusional when it comes to the way that their spending is presently being undertaken. Members have heard about the tale of two cities in western Sydney, and I spoke about that earlier in my contribution. I hope the bill will be an opportunity to see more money coming into the areas that really need funding in the Central Coast and the Hunter—which Madam Temporary Speaker, the member for Wallsend, and I both represent. The bill is an opportunity, and if it delivers that then there will be bipartisan support. But if it delivers just another layer of bureaucracy and people from Sydney telling us in the Hunter or the Central Coast what we need and when we need it—or if, in fact, it takes money out of the regions—then we will not cop that, and members will hear us back in here louder than we have ever been before. The people in those regions do not deserve that sort of ignorance and arrogance. I like the Minister and I think he is a terrific fellow, so I am sure that that is not the case. But he needs to answer those questions. I have put them all in my contribution, and I know that they will be answered when he speaks in reply. If they are not, I will expect them in writing.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:00): I thank the shadow Minister responsible for this area, the member for Wollongong. I acknowledge the work that he has been doing to ensure Labor's position, particularly in relation to planning. Planning across New South Wales involves having a strategic vision for our communities and an understanding of principles and what drives us, as well as making sure that our planning documents include jobs, affordable housing, infrastructure, transport, schools, health and liveable cities with open space.

I start by talking about what the Government should be doing in my local area and my concerns about the thousands of units that those opposite have been pushing into our local community. A member of this place appeared before the ICAC in about 2014 or 2015. Members have seen the ICAC report into the former Canterbury council, but we are still waiting for the other ICAC report. Former member for Wagga Wagga Daryl Maguire lived 400 kilometres away from my community but, without my knowledge or anybody's knowledge, was interfering in planning processes in my local community.

The Government is putting forward the Greater Cities Commission and six new regional cities, and that is great. Members have heard the arguments from my colleagues and particularly from the regional MPs, who are very hardworking and very good advocates. But in 2015 the Government established the Greater Sydney Commission and Infrastructure NSW and made changes to the Environmental and Planning Assessment Act. Who is responsible for what? The Government created massive chaos in my part of Sydney, without a business case. The former transport Minister was Gladys Berejiklian, who introduced the Sydenham to Bankstown metro without a business case. We heard that because there was an inquiry in the upper House. I have spent endless hours with my staff lodging submissions to council, to government agencies and to inquiries, and the reality is we do not get listened to.

No-one in my community is against people moving into our area; my community has people from all across the world. When I was elected as the member for Canterbury, I spoke about our community as a regional trading centre. We speak 200 languages, and we do trade in our community. We want upgrades to our local facilities, affordable housing and connective transport options—not pulling out a heavy rail line, which is what those opposite have done. They have pulled out a heavy rail line to put in a metro to justify the development of 50,000 units. I keep repeating myself. We do not have a funding commitment for Canterbury Hospital. Our population has doubled in size and we have major issues with specialists. We have challenges in our community. Everybody saw that during COVID. We talked about it endlessly. We saw the divide between east and west. I will not talk about class warfare. I come from a working-class, aspirational family for whom education is the key driver. But we want to have 30-minute cities that enable us to get home to our kids and families and ensure that our kids have better education. For us, education is the key. Learning language is the key. We need to be able to sell our goods. We are changing; the world is changing, and it comes from our area.

I offer an example. In 2007-08 the new Federal infrastructure Minister in the Rudd Government was the Hon. Anthony Albanese. He and Kevin Rudd took to the election a policy to establish Infrastructure Australia, an independent Federal body that would use key principles to drive a merit-based process for a pipeline of projects. It would give builders and major companies the certainty they needed to obtain finance. Some 15 years later, Infrastructure Australia still exists. This Government tried to do it but it failed. It has the Greater Sydney Commission, the planning department and a number of other bodies. But there is no one body that has the power to say, "Here is a pipeline of work, this is how we will get financing and this is how we will help the key workers in our State." Essential workers, such as teachers, nurses, firefighters and cleaners, have to come into the city to work but have to live in greater western Sydney because that is where they can afford to live. Teachers who live in Picton have to travel to Campsie to teach at our local primary schools.

In my area specialist classes are collapsing because we do not have the specialist teachers. They have left the system for other jobs because wages are down and they had to travel to work. They cannot afford to live in Campsie. Anthony Albanese's plan for Infrastructure Australia is a blueprint for giving certainty to everyone—big businesses, banks and communities. It means that every project is based on productivity and future economic growth. But it is also about jobs. When he was the Minister, the now Leader of the Federal Opposition said, "I'm not going to be here to cut a ribbon in three years' time. We have to go beyond and look toward the future. We've got to build Australia to get economic benefit in the long term."

I have concerns about the way in which the Greater Sydney Commission has been operating. In my community planning does not get done by these organisations. It is by tick and flick. Corrupt people have been doing the planning in my community. Let us face it, that is what happened; that is how planning has been done in my community. It was not done by the Greater Sydney Commission. The commission had a plan, but the real "planning Minister" for the area from Sydenham to Bankstown was Daryl Maguire, not the Greater Sydney Commission or the planning department. I urge members to take the time to look at the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and its recommendations about the planning department. The planning department must be held accountable for what it did not do.

In my electorate I have a major issue with the Campsie Master Plan. I have gone to the Government and to the council. We need better consultation. We need to listen to what the people want. We have a lack of green space, a general lack of infrastructure and a lot of development. I hear Government members say, "I'm so lucky. I've got this and I've got that," which is great. They are good local members and that is what they should be doing. But when the Government is pushing so much development in our area, we want the infrastructure to go with it. That includes Canterbury Hospital. I acknowledge that Minister Rob Stokes did visit my electorate a few months ago, together with the member for Summer Hill. He listened to the concerns of my constituents about Canterbury Park Racecourse. [*Extension of time*]

I understand that the City of Canterbury Bankstown is working on a master plan for the racecourse. We have written on many occasions. Last year a private member's bill was put forward to stop the Government rezoning that recreational land and to prohibit any sell-off. The community must be involved every step of the way. Community involvement is not a handbrake; it can result in great ideas. I ask the Minister to provide in his reply any updates on Canterbury Park Racecourse and Canterbury Hospital because our community members have a lot of concern and anxiety. I raised the issue of the hospital with the Minister when he visited. He knows, as do all other Ministers after all the ICAC revelations, year after year we put forward a very good, well-analysed budget submission. We include population projections, outline the challenges that our community faces and request the redevelopment of our hospital. Other members talk about how the hospitals in their electorates have been redeveloped. What about our hospital? We are 20 minutes from the city on the train. We are the ones coping all the development without the infrastructure.

I acknowledge that Canterbury South Public School is being redeveloped, which is good, and that Canterbury Boys High School will get a new school hall. We want to increase enrolments at Canterbury Boys, which I will be happy about. But we want more jobs, more companies and more corporates in our local area. We are close to Sydney airport and to Port Botany. We speak 200 languages. I could go on and on about our community. Our students have very good grades and our parent body is immensely committed to increasing student marks. In my community, parents are all about education, jobs and ensuring their kids will be able to afford somewhere to live. I call on all members to read The McKell Institute report, which was launched yesterday. It identified many important issues. The Minister was at the launch, together with the Labor leader, Chris Minns, who has identified the infrastructure deficit that exists after 11 years of this Government. The member for Blacktown talks about this ad nauseam. We represent different electorates but we hear and talk constantly about the need for infrastructure to catch up.

Of course, there are going to be more people moving into our areas—in my area, in particular, as we are 25 minutes away from the city and the airport. We need that infrastructure. I would like the Minister to provide updates in his reply in two matters, the Canterbury Racecourse redevelopment and the Canterbury Hospital upgrade. I want the Government to provide a funding commitment for Canterbury Hospital that will see it double in size. That would mean 1,000 new jobs and justify the development that the Government wants—not all of it, but the existing development. More consultation needs to happen. I want reassurance that the Government is committing to the recommendations contained in the ICAC report and that Planning will rigorously review any development proposals relating to Campsie and other suburbs in my electorate.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:15): I make a contribution to the debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022, introduced by the Hon. Rob Stokes, MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport. The objectives of the bill are to repeal and re-enact the Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015 to reconstitute the Greater Sydney Commission as the Greater Cities Commission. The bill also seeks to replace the Greater Sydney Region with the Six Cities Region and to define its boundaries and the boundaries of the six cities within it. These cities are the Eastern Harbour City, the Central River City, the Central Coast City, the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City, the Western Parkland City, and the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City.

The New South Wales Government has stated that the intention of bringing these six cities together is for New South Wales to build a world-class city region that has the scale to provide better jobs, housing, education and lifestyle opportunities for its people. The New South Wales Opposition does not oppose the bill. The Opposition supports improving strategic planning throughout New South Wales and the recognition of cities such as Wollongong, Newcastle and the Central Coast as centres of innovation and infrastructure. However, it cannot go unnoticed that the bill is missing a significant and crucial component. The bill does not make any mention of western Sydney. This is an incredible oversight but, frankly, it is not surprising from this Government. The O'Farrell, Baird, Berejiklian and Perrottet Governments have had a horrible track record in supporting and providing infrastructure development in our western Sydney community.

We must acknowledge the hypocrisy of the New South Wales Government when it stresses the need to improve planning around Greater Sydney and our State's regions but fails to mention western Sydney. If the

Government wants to succeed in providing better jobs, housing, education and lifestyle opportunities for New South Wales communities, as hoped through the bill, the New South Wales Government must put money where it really matters, and that is in western Sydney. Western Sydney is the third-largest economy in Australia, behind the Sydney CBD and Melbourne, producing 31 per cent of Sydney's gross regional product, that is, over \$104 billion. Our western Sydney community is vital in providing necessary healthcare services, social assistance, retail and construction to the rest of New South Wales. Without western Sydney, the economy of New South Wales will fail. When western Sydney is supported, New South Wales prospers. At yesterday's McKell Institute report launch, the New South Wales Opposition Leader, Chris Minns, MP, said:

Western Sydney is a dynamic, ambitious community. It is the place where businesses are starting, where future millionaires are being born, where 60-hour work weeks are not uncommon, where both mum and dad are often working full-time jobs and where obstacles—whether they be the lockdown laws that this Government introduced that only seemed to be aimed at our half of the city, to COVID, to the floods, to the blistering summer days—are simply speed bumps designed to be rolled over with ease.

Although our western Sydney community may make it look easy to deal with these issues, the New South Wales Government is delusional to think that we can handle these burdens on our own. However, despite the community being absolutely critical to the future of New South Wales, on Monday 28 March 2022 the McKell Institute launched a report exposing how unfairly the western Sydney community has been treated and what needs to be done about it. The report found that access to infrastructure is unequal and strongly affects the metropolitan divide in Sydney. We know that the New South Wales Government has poured money time and time again into Sydney areas east of Parramatta. However, any communities west of Parramatta are neglected and left behind.

The report also revealed that public transport is skewed to areas of high incomes, whilst eight western Sydney LGAs are in the bottom third of councils close to public transport. Conversely, of the 33 Sydney LGAs, the third with the best access to public transport are all in the eastern and northern districts. For all LGAs, median household income is strongly correlated to access to public transport. So what does this mean? It means we know that Sydney has a deficit when it comes to access to public transport. This is incredibly unfair to families who are located far from Sydney's CBD or who are required to travel for work. Further to this public transport deficit, the western Sydney community is disproportionately affected by toll costs. Seventeen of the 20 worst-affected areas for tolls are in western Sydney. Families living in every single postcode in the electorate of Prospect are burdened by toll charges—every single family. Sydney motorists will pay over \$100 billion in tolls during the remaining life of the existing toll contracts, all going, of course, to private toll-road operators.

Ms Robyn Preston: They're getting cashbacks. They get cash back.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Wealthy shareholders and corporate fat cats are laughing all the way to the bank. I note the member for Hawkesbury is throwing out delusions such as "You'll get a cashback." It does not really work when you pay thousands of dollars out and you get a small amount in. That is what it means. You do not need to be giving it away.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Prospect will direct his remarks through the Chair. The member for Hawkesbury will remain silent.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Conscience is a terrible thing, especially when those opposite who represent western Sydney communities, which are being subjected to huge tolls, have to lie to them to defend this Government. Sydney motorists will pay over \$100 billion in tolls during the remaining life of the existing toll contracts. As I said, wealthy shareholders and corporate fat cats are laughing all the way to the bank, with the support of this Government. Annually, drivers in Sydney now pay over \$2.3 billion in tolls. I ask the New South Wales Government: Why has the infrastructure boom in Australia's largest city resulted in toll roads for western Sydney but brand new public transport infrastructure for parts of northern and eastern Sydney? These findings are alarming and, quite frankly, disgusting. For an area representing three in 10 people in New South Wales and one in 10 people in the entire country, western Sydney has been left behind by the Perrottet Government.

The New South Wales Government has denied western Sydney again and again when it comes to providing vital infrastructure. For years western Sydney families have felt the disappointment of schools that have been promised but still remain vacant blocks of land. Marsden Park High School, which is yet to begin construction, is a striking example. However, if we think that the situation is bad now, it is only going to get worse. Population targets from the New South Wales Government indicate that in the 20-year period between 2021 and 2041 the population of the following LGAs will rise: Blacktown by 200,000; Liverpool by 190,000; Camden by 180,000; Parramatta by 140,000; and Penrith by 140,000. To put this into perspective, the City of Blacktown, which today has a population of 405,000, will in 2041 have a population of 612,000 people. If we compare those figures to the Northern Beaches Council, it will take an additional 27,000 people, and Mosman just 999 people, over the same 20-year period. [*Extension of time*]

Further figures indicate that over the 20-year period, two-thirds of the population growth in Sydney will be in western Sydney and there will be more growth in the areas of Blacktown, Liverpool, Parramatta, Camden, Penrith, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland and Campbelltown than the rest of New South Wales combined. We currently have a situation where we already have an under-resourced, underfunded region that is set to take on the pressures of a population boom. The Perrottet Government knows these facts and has done nothing to address these issues. The Perrottet Government has some serious questions to answer when it comes to strategic planning for our city's future.

The New South Wales Government is obsessed with spending public money, but it does so with no regard to where it might need to go to assist hardworking individuals and families. It is time that the taxpayer's money went back into the pockets of ordinary workers and families in western Sydney. It is no wonder that our western Sydney families feel like they have been forgotten about and left behind. Our ambulance wait times are continuing to blow out as the hospital system is at breaking point. We have massive delays in elective surgery. We have the most expensive toll network in the world, and our State is in a housing crisis with more than 50,000 people on the social housing waiting list. If the Ministers of the Liberal-Nationals Government need to be told how to do their job, I am happy to instruct them on a number of issues and demands.

In western Sydney, we need improved staffing and services at Blacktown, Fairfield, Westmead and Cumberland hospitals, and key State road upgrades on Brandon Road, Richmond Road, the Rooty Hill overpass and the Prospect Highway. Schools must be improved and upgraded, including providing fresh air purifiers in all schools. Increased counselling and support services for vulnerable people are essential. Bus services also need to be improved. The metro rail planning link to St Marys must be completed. We need to increase housing surplus and funding for social housing maintenance. We need a freight rail line into the Smithfield-Wetherill Park industrial estate. Improved youth facilities, including music, education and sport must be delivered. Finally, a new hospital must be provided that services the growing needs of areas in north-western Sydney. The complete and utter disregard by this Government, the lack of duty of care and its failure to address inequality poses questions as to its motives. As it so happens, the areas that are typically forgotten are overwhelmingly in Australian Labor Party electorates.

On top of neglecting western Sydney's vital infrastructure, the New South Wales Government is renowned for depriving our community of grants that could fund infrastructure. Of the \$252 million distributed by the New South Wales Government as part of the Stronger Communities Programme, 96 per cent of the money went to Coalition-held seats. The funds were meant to be given to councils that had been merged by the New South Wales Government—forcibly merged—to ease the transition to a new single administration. Yet one Liberal council, Hornsby, was awarded \$90 million for a park, despite the fact that the council had not even merged. That in itself, as an example, is an absolute joke. It is time that the New South Wales Government got serious about providing infrastructure equitably and finally invested in our hardworking western Sydney families. The Opposition does not oppose the Greater Cities Commission Bill. However, we will not stop fighting to ensure that western Sydney gets its fair share and becomes the beneficiary of improved strategic planning and crucial infrastructure.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:29): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I acknowledge the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in the Chamber, who has carriage of the bill on behalf of the Opposition. The bill implements the Premier's recent commitment to expand the Government's three-cities strategy to six cities and include Wollongong, Newcastle and the Central Coast. The bill proposes the replacement of the Greater Sydney region with the six city regions—the Eastern Harbour City, the Central River City, the Central Coast City, the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City, the Western Parkland City and the Illawarra-Shoalhaven City. Labor will not be opposing the bill in this House but we will be moving sensible amendments in this place and the other place.

I take this opportunity to outline my concerns in relation to the infrastructure deliveries, and the disparity and divide that exists between the east and west of Parramatta. The first issue is that the bill has placed the City of Blacktown in the Central River City with Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Georges River, the City of Parramatta and the Sutherland shire. I question the logic of why the City of Blacktown is placed in that group rather than with the Western Parkland City. I wonder if the Government knows where Blacktown is. This Liberal Government has created the divide between the east and west, and the gap has continued to widen since the Liberals came into government in 2011.

The McKell Institute recently delivered a report titled *Funding the infrastructure of tomorrow*. That report confirmed the New South Wales Government's priorities are wrong. The divide between the east and west is evident in many aspects. Sydney's east gets public transport and the west gets tolls. There are no alternative road routes for many residents in western Sydney, so they are forced onto the tolled roads. The growth is in western Sydney, yet the infrastructure is delivered in areas of least growth. The west needs schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, roads and public transport, yet those pieces of infrastructures are delivered in the areas with the least growth.

The report uses the public transport accessibility level, or PTAL, scores to rate local government areas in relation to distances to public transport and frequency of service. The lower the score, the poorer the infrastructure in the LGA. It shows that all eight western Sydney LGAs are in the bottom third of the PTAL scores. For example, the PTAL scores for eastern LGAs range from 17 to 52, while western Sydney LGAs range from 2 to 10. This clearly shows that access to infrastructure is unequal between east and west and strongly reflects the regional and metropolitan divide, based on household incomes and historic disadvantages.

It is disgraceful that this Liberal Government has created this divide where access to public transport infrastructure is geographically concentrated and skewed to areas of higher incomes. But the divide is not only limited to infrastructure delivery; the Government has placed a further divide in the cost of living for western Sydney residents. Let me highlight some of the cost of living pressures, such as tolls. Government data shows that out of the top 20 tolled postcodes, 17 are in western Sydney—that is, 85 per cent of the tolls collected come from western Sydney residents. Sydney is the highest tolled city in the world. Sydney motorists will pay over \$100 billion in tolls during the remaining life of the existing contracts. That means that western Sydney residents will be slugged \$85 billion out the \$100 billion collected from motorists.

Let us look at the issue of population growth. Greater Western Sydney is home to 2½ million people, 35 per cent of whom were born overseas. Its population is projected to reach three million by 2036. More growth is expected in the suburbs of Blacktown, Liverpool, Camden, Parramatta, Penrith, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland and Campbelltown than in the rest of New South Wales combined, yet this Government allocates its infrastructure funds in the areas of least growth. Why? Because this Government prefers pork-barrelling over delivering projects based on merit and where there are needs. I remind this Government about its history of pork-barrelling. Ninety-six per cent of the \$252 million worth of Stronger Communities Fund grants went to councils in Coalition-held or marginal electorates. The Auditor-General was scathing in a report dated 8 February 2022, saying there was "a purposeful attempt to avoid transparency and accountability over the involvement of the former Premier and Deputy Premier in approving grant allocations".

Between 2013 and 2021, nearly 75 per cent of the New South Wales Government's ClubGRANTS funds, which is \$76.6 million of the \$103.4 million, was awarded to projects in Coalition-held electorates. The most recent round of these grants was advertised on the New South Wales Liberal Party website. These grants are meant to help Indigenous, disadvantaged and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, but areas where the need is the greatest miss out because distribution is not based on need or merit but rather on looking after Liberal Party-held seats. Nearly 75 per cent of the \$33.4 million Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund grants program was awarded to Liberal-held seats in the lead-up to the March 2019 election. Grants of between \$500,000 and \$5 million were issued to nine Liberal-held electorates but to only two Labor seats. A second round of funding in 2019-20 saw a further \$44 million handed out, with Liberal electorates receiving 17 of the 22 grants awarded.

In 2020 the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery fund saw the New South Wales Government hand out \$177 million for projects in bushfire-affected areas, but Labor seats like the Blue Mountains got zip. This is despite that electorate suffering an economic loss of \$65 million. Why? Because it is a Labor seat. The Regional Cultural Fund saw \$99 million awarded to 147 cultural projects in regional New South Wales; however, 22 per cent of the panel recommendations were not followed by Ministers, and \$9.3 million was awarded to projects not recommended by the panel. [*Extension of time.*]

In my electorate of Mount Druitt, we have been pleading with the Government about the importance of upgrading the Francis Road overpass. It is a State road in the suburb of Rooty Hill, and it is the main thoroughfare providing access to Mount Druitt Hospital, Mount Druitt Police Station, Mount Druitt Fire and Rescue Station and the recently opened Sydney Coliseum. There are concerns that in peak traffic times, the fire department, ambulance services and police will be unable to mobilise a quick response in the case of a life-threatening emergency, as there are no suitable alternative routes. This road is heavily congested during peak hours and brings traffic to a standstill, causing motorists frustration and dangerous situations where emergency services are delayed when travelling on this road.

I have been voicing these concerns since my election in 2015 but, given the history of this Government's pork-barrelling, my calls have fallen on deaf ears. I fear that this continued inaction will cause the unnecessary death of members of my electorate because emergency services will not be able to respond in a timely manner. The complete disregard for the people of my electorate for all these years is shameful. I call on the Greater Cities Commission to better plan infrastructure projects based on needs and merit and to not sit silently while this Government continues its practice of pork-barrelling and creating a wider gap between the east and west, guaranteeing that our most disadvantaged will continue to miss out while those in less need reap the entire jackpot.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (18:40): I make a brief contribution to the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I do so by acknowledging that there is a trend emerging amongst Opposition members speaking from this side of the Chamber. I add weight to our call about it being all well and good for the Government to establish

the Greater Sydney Commission and now the Greater Cities Commission, but what we need to see is actual investment in properly planned infrastructure, particularly in the rapidly growing parts of the outer suburbs of western Sydney. The member for Mount Druitt, whose electorate adjoins my electorate of Londonderry, spoke about this and the priorities for his electorate, and I do the same for my electorate.

I am privileged to represent some of the fastest growing parts of western and north-western Sydney. I have spoken about many of these issues in this Chamber previously, but I want members to take a minute to consider the lives of young families living in suburbs like Marsden Park and Jordan Springs. They are young, working families who save up like hell to buy or build their first home and raise their young children or start a family. They are told by developers that are working with the Government in this new idyllic housing estate—and I declare an interest that I live in one of these beautiful housing estates in Jordan Springs—that the Government will come to the table with the infrastructure that the rest of Sydney seems to enjoy.

For instance, the people of Jordan Springs had to fight their own Government to get a local public primary school, which was delivered late and is now already full. We have had to continue to press the case for the Government to provide stage two of the upgrade, even though there are more than 900 students in the primary school at the moment—because when there are new housing estates, people move in with young children. In that same suburb, the Government cannot get it through its head that once these children finish year 6, they need to go to high school. The Government will not provide any land or any commitment for a high school in this suburb, even though there are tens of thousands of families living there and we had to fight tooth and nail to get the public primary school. As a result, all of the private schools are full, and the Government is abdicating its responsibility to provide public education to suburbs in western Sydney. That is just one example.

Commissions are great, extra levels of bureaucracy are great and all of the best planning is great, but the people of western Sydney, particularly the rapidly growing parts of western Sydney, desperately need this to be met with actual investment in infrastructure. In Marsden Park, we still do not have any movement on the high school that was promised at the election. When I was fortunate enough to be elected as the member for Londonderry, there were maybe 1,000 people in the suburb of Marsden Park. Now 13,000 people are living in the various housing estates that make up Marsden Park, the fastest-growing part of Sydney. The people who live in Elara, Melonba and Newpark, and the people who are going to live in Angus, cannot get the Government to commit to a time line on the Marsden Park high school.

The primary school in that suburb was also 12 months late. That school at Northbourne has 1,000 children. If it were not so serious, it would be comical. Time and time again we have to fight our own government for basic infrastructure. A few times today Government members have come into the Chamber and congratulated themselves and patted themselves on the back—they are very good at that, at least—for the delivery of infrastructure. However, I would hazard a guess that none of them have tried to drive on Richmond Road, as my constituents in Marsden Park have to do to get anywhere.

Ms Robyn Preston: I do it every day.

Ms PRUE CAR: The member for Hawkesbury says that she does it every day, so she would well know that heading away from the Hawkesbury and onto the junction with the M7 is a car park.

Ms Robyn Preston: It is busy.

Ms PRUE CAR: It is more than busy; it is actually ruining people's lives. In order to raise your family and pay a mortgage on a new home that you have built in somewhere like Marsden Park, you have to travel outside of the local government area to get work. Do members know what the Greater Sydney Commission talks about a lot? It talks about something called a "30-minute city". Hang on a second—anyone who talks about a 30-minute city cannot seriously live in western Sydney. There is nothing "30 minutes" about western Sydney. It takes people in Elara 30 minutes to get out of their housing estate and onto the main road, and then at least another 30 minutes to get on to the M7 and then pay for that privilege to get anywhere. That is the reality of their everyday lives.

The Government can establish all the commissions it likes, keep releasing north-western Sydney planning documents and plan until the cows come home—those people are living amongst the cows in north-western Sydney—but those communities desperately need infrastructure. The people of western Sydney are driving our State's economic recovery right now. The same people who suffered the most in the lockdown from the harshest restrictions are the working families, tradies, small business owners and sole traders, and they are being let down by a government that does not provide the infrastructure even though they have to shoulder the lion's share of population growth.

I am very proud of all of my colleagues who today have raised the very valid concerns about the delivery of infrastructure, particularly in my part of western Sydney. The Opposition will continue to use every available opportunity to do so, because the people of outer western Sydney deserve nothing less than what the rest of Sydney

gets. They also deserve nothing less than a government that meets the needs of this growing area of families who want to work hard and contribute to our State.

They deserve schools, roads, public transport and a hospital at Rouse Hill, which, by the way, will not have an emergency department. That is not the best idea for a growing area in north-west Sydney, but that is another speech for another time. When it comes to planning for Sydney's future, in particular for the future of the north-west and western parts of western Sydney, I urge the Government to get on with the job of delivering the infrastructure that families in western Sydney deserve and need.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:48): I make a contribution to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill. The Opposition will not oppose the bill but will propose some sensible amendments to improve it. Labor supported the introduction of the Greater Cities Commission and it supports the extension to include Wollongong, the Central Coast and Newcastle in the commission, which will encompass three ports, Australia's largest CBD in Sydney and the fifth largest CBD in Parramatta. That wider area is home to 8 million people and an economic powerhouse. While the expansion of the Greater Sydney Commission to the Greater Cities Commission is welcome, the existing Greater Sydney Commission has multiple shortcomings that are not addressed in the bill. The Greater Sydney Commission releases a lot of plans and has a lot of objectives, but none of them seem to be met and the Government seems to be going in a different direction all the time.

The Greater Sydney Commission serves an important role in the highest level of strategic planning for our city. But thus far, it has not turned around the mess that is developer-driven bad planning across Sydney, highlighted in particular by yesterday's McKell Institute report. The report identified that access to infrastructure is completely unequal and strongly reflects a metropolitan divide in Sydney between the area to the west of Parramatta and to the east of Parramatta. Public transport is skewed to areas where people earn higher incomes. That partly reflects that having access to public transport is appealing and people pay extra to live close to public transport. However, everybody needs access to public transport and our city does not function without it. People on lower incomes should not have to choose between getting into the housing market or renting somewhere where they might have access to poor public transport because they cannot afford to live where it is pretty good.

The McKell Institute found that all eight western Sydney LGAs are in the bottom third of councils for their proximity to public transport. Of the 33 Sydney local government areas, the third with the best access to public transport are all in the east and the north. Across Sydney, median household income is very strongly correlated with access to public transport. We all know that public transport makes getting to and from work cheaper than driving, yet drivers in the west are sluggish with tolls in the most tolled city on earth. Clearly the Greater Sydney Commission is not doing enough to drive the infrastructure needed to support population growth and development that it approves. It needs to be working side by side with Infrastructure NSW, which instead seems to just be responding to election promise wish lists from the pork-barrelling Liberal-Nationals Government.

The vast numbers of people who will move into the Central River City and the Western Parkland City will outstrip the growth in the Eastern Harbour City. Conversely, this Government's infrastructure investments are the other way around. They are concentrated on benefitting communities where projected and expected population growth is a mere fraction of that in the west. The Government is funding projects like the \$10 billion Northern Beaches tunnel, when the Northern Beaches population is only projected to increase by 27,000 people in the next 20 years. I wonder whether the Greater Sydney Commission and Infrastructure NSW are even talking to each other.

Earlier today the member for Wyong referred to the Government's inability to bring agencies together, and certainly that is the case. I note time and time again how housing developments have progressed because a developer wants them but the infrastructure lags, often by decades. Roads and Maritime Services seems to be the only agency that dares to say no because the road network cannot cope, and it does not do that that often. Despite repeated failures to provide the education, transport and public space that people need to support housing developments, there is no pushback on those things. The Central River City, which is where my electorate is, has had the fastest population growth in recent years. In the next 20 years 140,000 new residents are expected in the City of Parramatta and over 200,000 are expected in the City of Blacktown. That will represent 50 per cent population growth in the City of Blacktown alone, which is the biggest local government area in Sydney.

In my electorate, while a lot of new housing areas have been approved, train services have been cut by this Government and the promised new schools are nowhere to be seen in my electorate or in the adjoining areas. Neither the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment nor the Greater Sydney Commission sought to prevent Sydney Trains taking Granville off the western line, nor did they cancel their plans to bring in 10,000 new residents into the area between the train line and the M4 when the train services were cut. That is an utter failure of integrated holistic planning across government.

The Greater Sydney Commission should be doing more to balance population growth with infrastructure. It needs to be strategic, responsive and balanced. Instead, as with the Department of Planning and Environment, its approach to developers is to think how we can say yes on this site, rather than how this will work as part of the city as a whole and what is the best outcome from a holistic perspective. Thousands of units have been approved in Wentworth Point and Melrose Park near my electorate, with communities now established on a promise of public transport that this Government looks likely to defer again—stage two of Parramatta Light Rail. The light rail as it stands replaces the popular free Parramatta CBD shuttle bus and the Carlingford heavy rail line, yet it is facilitating a massive up-zoning for all units in the area. The Government keeps changing its mind about the future of Camellia. Land banking developers have been pushing for a residential rezoning, which was supported and then opposed, and which now seems to be back on the agenda again—a residential rezoning for 10,000 units without the western metro, which will pass through the Camellia peninsula without stopping.

It is a deeply problematic site with a long history of multiple chemical contaminants and only a really high unit yield will cover the remediation costs to make it a safe place to live. It already faces huge traffic snarls every day as an industrial area with a minimum number of employees and there is no road or public transport solution anywhere in sight. The designated school would probably be the redeveloped Macquarie Boys High School site that has sat idle for a decade. When it closed it was to be refurbished and reopened as a co-ed school. Instead this Government has left it open for vandals, not education. There is a promise to redevelop and reopen the school, but nothing is happening. Camellia is an example of a site where the Greater Sydney Commission has not done enough to protect employment land.

As much as the Government talks about making Sydney a 30-minute city—a ridiculous thought when one lives in western Sydney and one sees the way in which the city works—it claims it wants to place jobs close to where people live, but time and again employment lands are lost to housing and our capacity to offer diverse types of jobs and opportunities other than CBD office work is limited. We need those jobs and we need them close to people's homes. People in my electorate in the 2145 postcode area—which includes Westmead, Wentworthville and Greystanes—spend an average of over \$4,000 per annum on tolls, and most of that is to get around Sydney to go to work. It has a huge impact on families and reflects a huge failure to go anywhere near the stated objective of reducing endless commuting around Sydney. The problem of the urban heat island effects, which have been known about for years in Sydney, are being repeated in new housing estates everywhere. All the existing tree cover is removed, homes are designed to maximise developer profits and not environmental performance, and innovations in energy and water conservation have not been reflected in timely changes to BASIX. The Greater Sydney Commission should be doing something about this, and it is not.

With all these issues, extending the role of the Greater City Commission to strategic planning from the Shoalhaven through to Newcastle presents enormous challenges. It presents an opportunity to provide a better, effective and strategic link between government and the additional three cities. But there needs to be a greater understanding of what this means for the existing strategic plans for the additional three cities and what will change. It needs to work a lot better within Sydney as well. As we heard today, concerns have been raised by MPs from across the areas that are going to be included. Existing plans have been developed in consultation with communities and with councils and we do not know exactly what will happen to those. We do not want to see the failures of planning in Sydney repeated in the Illawarra, the Central Coast, the lower Hunter and Newcastle, but we already have. Ask the member for Port Stephens about the need for a high school in Medowie. Exactly the same problems are being experienced in fast-growing suburbs with no high school, such as Marsden Park. We need planning to improve. The Greater Cities Commission is an opportunity for that, but this bill does not go far enough towards addressing the problems that we face.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:58): I contribute to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022 and invite members' attention to a speech I made on 25 October 2015 when debating the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. I said in the House then that the intention of the Greater Sydney Commission was to create what were then called regional and subregional plans which used to exist in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The commission would do something similar with regional and district plans, which would overlay the planning system to ensure not only strategic planning but also planning throughout the Sydney metropolitan area.

I envisaged it would be part of the planning function and I envisaged that its work would include planning not just for population density but also for supporting infrastructure, employment-generating land and all those things that are important in the planning of a city. It would also have the statutory authority to implement those plans with the approval of the Minister. Everything I envisaged the Greater Sydney Commission would do has not been done as it has not been given the statutory authority. For some time now it has not even been part of the Planning portfolio. In my view, the planning failures of this State—which can probably be traced back for two centuries—occurred because we have not had an integrated planning policy.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979—that groundbreaking piece of legislation that provided a way forward for this State—has been systemically changed and neutered by this Parliament and it bears no resemblance to the 1979 Act or the lofty heights and values that would have led to planning for the next century. I am first to concede that, under that legislation, a successful regional plan was never prepared. The valiant attempts by the Department of Planning, in particular people like Dr Haddad, to prepare a subregional plan for Botany Bay simply failed because various government agencies would not cede what they considered to be their responsibility for and control of their budget arrangements to the Department of Planning, and those plans fell into disrepute. I thought that then planning Minister Stokes, through the enactment of the Greater Sydney Commission, would provide a vehicle to establish regional and subregional plans—or district and regional plans—that would be given some teeth and that they would be subject to ministerial control, but that never eventuated.

Some of the work of the Greater Sydney Commission and some of the matters that it has identified in relation to my electorate and my region have been quite outstanding. I have found impressive the personnel from the commission with whom I have met from time to time. How impressive would it have been if that commission was authorised to prepare district plans that had some teeth, or regional plans that could identify areas of need for improved infrastructure. As we expand population densities we create various lists of demands necessary to support population densities. We create demand for schools and for public transport; we create demand for drains and for roads; we create demand for parking and for hospitals; and we create demand for social security services. For example, if you are planning to provide employment-generating land then also you have to plan the associated infrastructure that enables people to get to work by public transport, by road or by parking. Unfortunately, even when the people of the Greater Sydney Commission have identified those shortcomings they have never had the ability to overlay it over the top of planning instruments. At the end of the day, all these planning proposals are considered and all these densities occur, there is no supporting infrastructure and it becomes worse and worse.

I have listened to a number of people from western Sydney complain about the quality of infrastructure out west and all of those concerns are genuine. What I hear from western Sydney MPs are almost like horror stories, but the same horror stories exist in the inner-city and even in the leafy eastern suburbs. Planning panels consider developer proposals to increase population density over areas that simply cannot withstand such increases—and nothing is integrated. After debate on this bill the House will consider a bill in relation to the Greater Sydney Parklands. Even with the construction of a \$3 billion CBD light rail that is not part of an integrated system, the member for Sydney and I are going to have trouble moving cars parked on open space in a very densely populated area for an extra few years to service the Sydney Cricket Ground. This is despite there being a \$3 billion light rail and despite the advice that has come from the Greater Sydney Commission about the way forward for that particular area.

While I support the views expressed by the member for Wollongong in respect of this bill, and nothing I say should be seen either directly or by implication as inconsistent with any remarks that he may have made to this House, I make this point: Whatever areas it incorporates, if you want the Greater Sydney Commission to work it needs to be given planning power. It needs to be within the Department of Planning and Environment. It needs to overlay and have the planning controls to begin the process of effecting change in identifying areas to be planned and set aside for the supporting infrastructure, irrespective of the type of development proposed. Having said that, I support the Opposition's position in respect of this bill.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:08): I thank the Minister for Cities for bring the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022 to the House. I also acknowledge the shadow planning Minister for his work and collaborative discussions, and thank the Minister's staff for their work in sharing knowledge and answering questions of members representing the electorates of the Central Coast and Newcastle region. It is much appreciated to work in such a collaborative style and I hope the proposed commission will be a collaborative oversight of solutions. Nearly every member on this side of the House has raised the issue of pork-barrelling and the delivery of equitable infrastructure that sits with good planning. Members know that good planning goes on. This new commission proposes a new shape to the challenges of city development and the necessary components of infrastructure improvements, in what I think we are calling a conurbation of the greater cities of our environs and the environs of their influences. In his second reading speech the Minister stated:

The commission model, bringing together deep knowledge and connection to State and local government, allows the commission to get on with setting the necessary long-term objectives and plans to manage and coordinate growth, while being able to withstand short-term political pressures and exigencies.

It is important to note that whilst this is all good, to date we have not seen this from the commission. We have seen ongoing pork-barrelling—and I bring in the Federal Government as well. It would be great to be able to introduce the Federal level of communication so we do not get such things as the most expensive ever, in the whole wide world, Federal delivery of car parking in Woy Woy. We need to ensure we have good planning oversight that connects deliveries from Federal, State and local governments to the betterment of communities. I acknowledge that the member for Lakemba spoke of this as a complex jigsaw puzzle. As members of Parliament,

it would be great to work with the commission on the complexities of the jigsaw puzzle that we deal with every day.

I also note the proposed Labor amendment to the bill that would require the commissioner to actually live in the area where they work. On the Central Coast we have seen so many administrators who do not live in our community act in various planning roles. They fly in and fly out, without the long-term best interests of the community and the feel for what is happening on the beautiful Central Coast. The members for the electorates of Terrigal, Wyong and Swansea also spoke about the Central Coast being a series of villages. It is a unique environment. I do not think we call ourselves a city, but it is good that we are to fit in under this Greater Cities Commission. I back up the member for Swansea's expression of community concerns that we make sure that joining the greater cities is not going to take us away from opportunities for regional grants. We are still a region, not one of the great big cities of this State. We still need to hold on to the regional grant opportunities.

When this Government took office it removed the position of Minister for the Central Coast. Ironically Minister Stokes, who presented this bill to the House, used to hold that ministry. Labor has always believed that we need a shadow Minister for the Central Coast. It is vital to ensure that we are represented and we actually have our voice heard. I understand that Minister Stokes' parents live in my electorate, so he has got an extra eye on the Central Coast. In lieu of the ministry, some on the Central Coast remember that in 2017, on the same day I was elected to the Parliament, the then and now Minister for Planning, Anthony Roberts, created a position of Coordinator General for the Central Coast. It was a position with a title as vague as its results. The coordinator general was heralded as an agent of change. At the time Minister Roberts said the position would breathe new life into the Gosford CBD. In usual Liberal Government style, we got a glossy office, a few new brochures with pictures of Gosford on them, new gigs for this revolutionary position and the word "evolved" plastered along the side of the office. We had the possibility of work from home for government employees, which was quite revolutionary at the time and now has settled in after COVID and the work-from-home movement.

However, two years later the coordinator general resigned and the New South Wales Government declined to fill her position. The office she once occupied remained empty for some time. Today the Gosford CBD, across the road from her old office, could be compared to a war zone. Buildings are hollowed out and busted. Large parcels of land are empty, with graffiti all over the former businesses and office blocks. It is so disappointing that the planning we have seen investment in has not continued in Gosford. I hope this new strategy will finally see things delivered, not just glossy slogans, and I look forward to working with the local commissioner in the ongoing development. I also commend the Minister for his inclusion of the Aboriginal people on the Central Coast in the planning oversight. It is the fastest growing Aboriginal population. It is really nice to see the Aboriginal community being represented and included in the planning conversations.

In the context of this new conurbation, I also note the changing shape of our community and regional communities across New South Wales as a result of flexible work. Historically we have faced a 60- to 90-minute commute to work; in western Sydney a 60- to 90-minute commute is over a much shorter and much more frustrating distance. But on the Central Coast we are seeing a massive change to our population. The Liberal Government proposes that our population will rise from 360,000 to 415,000 by 2036, but I believe we might be much closer to that now than we realise, with the increasing number of people working from home on the coast.

We are now looking at the Greater Sydney conurbation as part of a three- to four-hour region of connection to the city. It was nice to hear the member for Strathfield talk about this conurbation of cities in the context of the Asia-Pacific region and where we fit in the world, and the importance of the commission in overseeing our contribution to and connectivity with not just our conurbation but also the rest of the Asia-Pacific and other world capitals. In that context, I will talk about protecting the food production areas on the Central Coast from the sprawling development of the city, as they are incredibly prosperous and very close to the Asian market. That will be very important as our cities grow, as we have seen urban sprawl take out a lot of farming areas in western Sydney.

Members have heard that we have been overplanned. We want to see action. In 2010 Labor conducted a very comprehensive Gosford city planning oversight that began with the Gosford Challenge in 2008. That was a partnership between Gosford City Council and the community, and it articulated the need for Gosford to be recognised as a regional city of the coast. Out of that came the Our City, Our Destiny master plan. Since then, we have seen many pictures of what Gosford could be, but in reality—even the member for Terrigal talked about it—we still have the waterfront, the arts and entertainment precinct, the city hall, the railway precinct and the hospital precinct, which are independent precincts that continue to grow from that original planning document. Unfortunately, in 10 years of Liberal government we have not seen any development on the Gosford waterfront. We have a lovely park that cost \$10 million—and it will cost another \$100,000 to fix problems with the park, a lot of responsibility for which has been lumped on our council.

We still have not seen the arts and entertainment precinct. I thank John Singleton for Bonython Tower, which is the only new tower block we have seen under the new planning leadership of the Liberal Government. John Singleton's commitment to our community has delivered a fantastic apartment block with a beautiful bar and a really good restaurant facility that definitely lifts our town centre. I commend John, who is still being challenged by the council on planning regarding his future place-making vision for a development at Mount White. Lots of other apartments in our region have been completed, but sadly Gosford Alive is still not developed. Waterside is not developed. The Archibald is now up for sale. The poor old town centre of Gosford is still not looking too alive, despite the Go Gosford campaign talked about by Lee Shearer. [*Extension of time*]

I reiterate the words of the member for Balmain, who expressed concern about the bill failing to address directly the issue of affordable housing in the super-expensive land model for the conglomeration of cities. We need a huge shift, with leadership intervention and emphasis on possibly putting part of the profits into delivering affordable housing. The three sites that I have noted in Gosford are land banking sites. They increase in value for developers, but nothing comes back to the community when the blocks are unsold after sitting undeveloped for long periods. Value sharing, which happens in the Australian Capital Territory, occurs when funds from increased land values go to the Government to reinvest in other aspects of our society, such as our schools and, in particular, affordable housing. That would be a great incentive for developers in the Central Coast region to construct the developments the glossy brochures tell us about, rather than waiting for land values to increase.

There is hypocrisy in the oversight of this commission. When the Greater Sydney Commission was in place the Liberal Government invested in road upgrades, especially on Brisbane Water Drive, but there was no additional futureproofing or future planning for our community. On Brisbane Water Drive there is a little more, with two lanes and some nice new tar, which looks great. Once the two lanes were lined appropriately it slowed down the traffic, so trip times to Gosford have increased as a result of that development. We have limited bike paths and no bus overtaking lanes. It is the same with the Blackwall Road development and the Federal Government funded Ocean Beach Road and Rawson Road crossing. Neither of those two developments have bus overtaking lanes or bike paths, which is an abject failure when we are talking about futureproofing and extra people moving into our community. We talk about 15-minute cities, yet we are spending millions and millions of dollars without investing in what we will need for the future.

Another issue of concern to our community is that the planning process needs to include local knowledge. Some planning panels—that has happened with our council—have taken away the voices of local people. The commissioner has a challenging job in getting to know the coast and including the voices of Central Coast people moving forward. Unfortunately, with the failed Central Coast Council amalgamation, we are in a bit of a dark place on the beautiful Central Coast as far as new infrastructure goes. It would be great if the \$100 million amalgamation cost had been invested in the Central Coast. But we definitely need oversight from the commissioner to continue infrastructure development, because at the moment the Central Coast Council is not willing to put additional infrastructure on its books.

I again reinforce the words of the member for Swansea: We need to make sure that regional grants and regional opportunities remain accessible for our communities. Grants cannot be taken away. It is great to talk about taking our region forward, and I look forward to working with the local commissioner on ongoing development. This is about equitably delivering appropriate infrastructure seamlessly for a population that will increase rapidly in years to come.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (19:21): I am very pleased to speak in debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I just had a chat to the member for Wollongong and, before him, with the Minister for Cities, whom I acknowledge for bringing the bill to the House. I was reflecting with the member for Wollongong on just how difficult planning in our State has been over the years. There have been some courageous attempts to tackle fundamental issues. I go back a little bit further than the member for Wollongong, but I start with one person who was a committed planning Minister in this House—a good Labor member, who has roots in Lake Macquarie at Wangi Wangi—and that is Craig Knowles. I acknowledge the work he did to try to deliver many of the fundamental planning reforms that were needed in New South Wales.

I move on to acknowledge a very interesting member and former planning Minister, Frank Sartor. I found Frank Sartor to be extremely diligent and genuine in his attempts to reform planning, as was a former planning Minister of the current Coalition Government, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, who has taken on quite a few different roles in his long career. I am sure all of them had some success, but certainly not the success that I know they set out to achieve. It is a wickedly difficult area in which to operate and bring together the needs of not just the current population but also of New South Wales residents and communities well into the future. You often only get one reasonable shot at delivering planning for our cities, which is what we are trying to do here.

I have been known to be somewhat painfully parochial about Lake Macquarie, particularly in my time in local government and as mayor of the City of Lake Macquarie, which had a large population at the time. I think

we were the seventh or eighth largest in Australia. I think Newcastle ran in at about twentieth. I am sorry; I did mention that I was parochial. Newcastle has always been the sixth largest because it co-opts our population to do it. Setting that aside, while I was very parochial and would fight for Lake Macquarie, no one community can prosper in isolation from its neighbours. Lake Macquarie always benefited from having a positive relationship with a city such as Newcastle and with our neighbours in Cessnock and Maitland and Port Stephens and all of the other local government areas that ran up through the Hunter. We formed the Hunter Joint Organisation, the model of regional organisation in councils and one that has been very highly regarded.

That is on the smaller scale of that region, but the same thing applies when we look at the Greater Sydney metropolitan area and how it benefits and needs to benefit from those regional areas, such as western Sydney, north-western Sydney and the Illawarra. In this case, we are talking about the Central Coast and the lower Hunter or that area around Lake Macquarie and Newcastle, Port Stephens, Maitland and Cessnock. It is important that we draw on the benefits each region is naturally gifted with. All areas in New South Wales have some inherent fabulous reasons why people choose to live there. But we must make sure that we have intergenerational equity and that we are planning for those communities of the future. I hear many issues being raised about the lack of funds and the lack of focus on the provision of basic infrastructure that is needed, whether it is hard infrastructure or social infrastructure, in places such as western Sydney. I have great sympathy for members who represent communities who are seeing that. We need to do better in all of those areas. If those areas do better, they will lift the rest of the State.

I was heartened by some discussions I had with Greater Sydney Commissioner Geoff Roberts and CEO Elizabeth Mildwater when I sat down and discussed the issues and how this could work. One of the great concerns I have is that trying to bring councils in a particular area together under a commission will not really work unless each of those councils is fully on board, and they will not be fully on board unless each of them is equal at the table. So I was very pleased to have that discussion with Commissioner Roberts about how that would be done. Part of that was that it will be very important to have each commissioner reside in each particular area, which I appreciate. The member for Wollongong talked about that in his contribution. I am not sure of how that would work if we had somebody who was outside the area but had really good knowledge of it and came in and had amazing qualifications, but I understand the case and talked to Commissioner Roberts about it. We need someone who understands, in our case, the values and opportunities of the Hunter, what we really love about it and also what we need.

If that is done, we will have a framework that can be built on well into the future. Whether with this Government or a subsequent government, of whichever stripe it might be, it is not a bad thing to change the paradigm from what it has been in the past, because we really have not changed things too much. We always come back to some of these major issues. We need to provide for things such as housing, work opportunities, education, recreation, culture and sport. We need connectivity, including public transport and good roads. We need health services. We need parks. We need to make the places where we live into places where we want to live. Often that is about green space. I would like to see a hierarchy of parks. Once again I reflect on what I have seen in my travels around the world. *[Extension of time]*

We need to address those issues to make these areas livable. If they are recognised and invested in by the Government to provide for the particular benefits they bring to the State, and if we make best use of those, all of our areas will benefit. I acknowledge the City of Newcastle council, which has reached out to me and to the Minister. The council has taken a very strong interest in this. Why would it not? It is a significant player, not only in the Hunter area but also in New South Wales. Newcastle has been undergoing a major renewal. Things are going extremely well there. I give credit to people who have been involved, but let us not pretend that this has all happened because of only the good wishes of local investors and through a big local effort. There has been a huge effort by two governments, the Commonwealth and the State, to do this. I do not know that we can afford to do that in every area. We need to have good planning and good policy to drive local investment so that we get organic growth, which will be much better into the future.

I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Balmain. I told him that he made a great and very impassioned speech. He was absolutely correct in so many things he said. The member for Gosford is in the Chamber. She was talking about affordable housing. I am also very concerned about social housing, as every member of this House is. We are all frustrated by the problems around delivery and maintenance of enough affordable housing out there, whatever "affordable housing" means. But social housing is a real problem. The member for Balmain made some very strong points, including that the largest slum lord in New South Wales is NSW Land and Housing Corporation. It really is. It is a disgrace.

We need to provide affordable housing for people who can afford to buy into or rent in the private property market, but we also need good social housing for those people who cannot. We are not talking only about four walls and a roof over somebody's head to keep them dry. We are talking about a quality and standard of housing

that makes them feel they are valued members of our community, that they are respected and that they are being provided the dignity they deserve. We are a rich country and a rich State. We need to do better in that space. I thank the member for Balmain for raising that so strongly. These are things we need to do. I want to live in a community that has all of those nice things, but not only for people who are employed and can afford to buy a house and maybe an investment property or two. I want my community to be fair and just to those people who can never, ever dream that they can get there themselves, that they can buy their own houses or afford to rent so that they do not have to fear that the rent will go up every six or 12 months and they will be struggling again to live there.

That is not the type of society that I think we want to live in. We have to address those issues as well as all those other issues, such as providing for education, recreation and health, but also good housing and work opportunities. I know it is hard. I acknowledge Minister Stokes, because in my conversations with Rob Stokes over the years I believe that he is very genuine in his intentions to reform this sector. I believe if we all support the bill—and I note that the Opposition is—we are in a better place than we were yesterday. It will not be over. I do not know who will be in government next year; I do not know who the Minister will be. But if we have an opportunity to change the paradigm, we should seize it. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:35): I speak in debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. I too commend Rob Stokes, the Minister for Infrastructure, Minister For Cities, Minister for Active Transport and member for Pittwater for bringing the bill to the House. As previous speakers have said, he has positive intentions to make a difference. I also note that he has been in the House listening intensely for the vast majority of the debate, which is appreciated by all members who contribute. I also thank Paul Scully, the member for Wollongong and shadow Minister, for the discussions I have had with him in relation to Labor's stance on the bill. I note that Labor will not oppose the bill but will put forward constructive alternatives. Once again, I appreciate the shadow Minister and the Minister working together as much as possible. The member for Wollongong identified that there are plenty of issues and challenges that have been ignored and are unresolved at the moment. He expressed with concern that, "Hopefully this won't be just a new letterhead and a bloated bureaucracy." I am sure the Minister will keep an eye on them.

I will focus my initial comments on the Act itself and then in relation to my electorate. I understand that both the Minister and the shadow Minister have been talking about the identification of councils. There may be the ability to change that at some stage, perhaps not in this bill. We have heard a lot of discussion, which I will address in more detail. The Central River City seems to be an odd combination, with some of the mega councils throughout that area. I, the mayor, the CEO and everyone in our region feels that Blacktown should be more aligned to the Western Parkland Councils—I note that "Sydney" has been dropped from the name—which is predominantly western Sydney councils.

The second key area is the funding and the mandatory support. I note that the member for Wollongong, the member for Swansea and many others talked about the potential cost shifting. Clause 20 allows for staff and facilities to be provided or seconded to support the Greater Cities Commission. I note for the three new cities that are joining us, they may not have seen it, but it already exists in the current Act. I have to say that at the moment it has been working wonderfully well. A lot of councils see the advantage of working with the Greater Sydney Commission to get their message across when there are limited resources. But the problem is the funding. The Government is about to bring down a budget shortly, and some people say there will be a \$100 billion deficit. It will come down to the priorities of the Government and whether it will provide adequate resources. Hence, the councils are worried if it is mandated that they have to help and provide support and resources, given that the councils are under enough challenges already trying to deliver infrastructure projects.

I believe there is a lost opportunity of mandating councils to join the Regional Organisation of Councils [ROCs]. I would not say it needs to be written in the legislation which ROCs represent which cities for the purpose of membership. I think the Regional Organisation of Councils can organise themselves and get the councils there. I think it is a good independent voice, and the Regional Organisation of Councils should get the councils in their area to join. We have seen the success of the Joint Organisation of Councils, the JOs, in the regions. It would have been preferable to see the mandating of councils in the Sydney Basin join the ROCs.

After all the positive talk, I do not want to bust anyone's bubble. Members pictured some kind of nirvana when talking about the concept of the Greater Sydney Commission and how it will work with the Minister and all the different agencies and deliver fabulous outcomes. The member for Riverstone said that he saw how it can work, with six new schools, a police station, arterial roads and a wastewater management treatment plant all being put in his area. "A great deal of coordination" and "a great deal has been achieved", were his words. I point out to the member for Riverstone—and I am sorry to burst his bubble and bring him back to reality—but when the population is growing extensively, the infrastructure has nothing to do with the Greater Sydney Commission. With 110,000 people moving into the City of Blacktown during the term of this Government in the last 11 years—we

average about 10,000 people a year—you are going to build a school. The police station had to be upgraded; it was a tiny fibro house that the police had operated from. These things are going to happen. I put on the record while the Minister is in the House, the Riverstone West precinct was fast-tracked in 2009 and it still has not been mandated or released to the public. That is how wonderful things are!

The Greater Sydney Commission was established in 2015, some seven years ago. How has it helped the people of Blacktown City? Over seven years, after numerous consultations, many thousands of pages in reports, millions of dollars spent, many, many, cups of coffee during many different consultations, it has produced for the Central City two seminal papers. The Greater Sydney Commission has produced "Towards our Greater Sydney 2056"—16 pages, 5,000 to 6,000 words about the Central City, which has four local government areas. I am extremely unhappy to say that Blacktown got one mention in that report. All the members were speaking about how the Greater Cities Commission in the new bill will be helping everyone out. And we have the seminal paper about the Central City moving towards the Greater Sydney of 2056—6,000 words, one mention of Blacktown.

The Greater Sydney Commission also released a more general plan called the Greater Sydney Plan, a metropolis of three cities connecting people—194 pages, 70,000 words. Blacktown city got eight mentions and a mention on a map. You cannot miss us on a map. There is a photo of the hospital and it says it was taken at Blacktown. It mentions that there is a hospital in Blacktown. It mentions that there is an art centre in Blacktown. It lists many metropolitan centres, of which Blacktown is one. It lists that the Central River City consists of four councils, which includes Blacktown. That is the sixth time it is mentioned. The seventh time, it lists that there are numerous areas where there will be health and education precincts and mentions Blacktown as possibly one of them. It also mentions that Blacktown could be a strategic centre. They are the eight mentions. There is no great detail on infrastructure or on anything to be provided.

Blacktown is a city of 400,000 people, the largest council area in New South Wales. Blacktown has a \$20 billion gross regional product. If we were the People's Democratic Republic of Blacktown, a standalone nation, out of 195 countries we would already be larger than 72 nations. Yet we only got eight "by the way" mentions in a major report. We have heard from the New South Wales Labor leader, Chris Minns, about Sydney as a divided city and infrastructure not keeping pace. The McKell report also came out yesterday. It talked about the major cities and how unequal the divide between the east and west is. It strongly reflects the regional and metropolitan divide, household incomes and historical disadvantage.

This is nothing new. All these reports have been talked about since 2015. There have been academic reports and reports from community organisations. They talked about how social infrastructure and physical infrastructure have not kept pace. Yet the legislation before the House is no different to what was in the Greater Sydney Commission. It talked about providing advice and recommendation to Ministers; producing reports; making recommendations on dealing with impediments in implementing plans; providing progress and assurance reports to the Minister; and assisting council, State and Federal governments and their agencies in developing plans. All this is in the current legislation and all Blacktown got was nine mentions in two reports across 80,000 words. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the House for its indulgence. I note the situation of the Marsden Park to St Marys railway line. I can hand the 2009 report and diagram to the Minister if he wishes. Somehow the Greater Sydney Commission, the planning department and Transport for NSW cannot draw a line from the proposed Marsden Park railway station to St Marys. I have the document where it identifies all the railway stations on the line. Yet they have not released it. Unfortunately the Government has put in one metro line and it stands up and says how wonderful it is that it is delivering rail to western Sydney. It actually replaced three dedicated lines that were going through to the north-west with one metro line. It basically axed three lines.

A report came out about how bad public transport is and how inaccessible it is for people of the west, especially the north-west. The Government has wiped it out. Where was the Greater Sydney Commission standing up for that report and trying to develop more railway lines? Five billion dollars' worth of State roadworks needs to be delivered in Blacktown City to sustain the extra 200,000 people. Some \$263 million ought to be allocated in the budget to the city of Blacktown every financial year over the next 19 years to make up the \$5 billion for roads. We do not see anything. It is basically a doughnut with minor, occasional road upgrades.

The member for Riverstone would know Bandon Road is a major flood mitigation route and major arterial road. It is another road that has not even started the design phase. The health and education precinct should be centred on Riverstone. Yet there is no mention of it. The member for Gosford, the member for Wyong and the member for Terrigal are in the Chamber. Everyone has talked about how wonderful the benchmarks and everything can be with a functioning Greater Sydney Commission—or Greater Cities Commission—but it has not happened. We have a situation where Blacktown gets nine mentions across 80,000 words. Suddenly we are dumping into the Sutherland Shire, Georges River, and Canterbury-Bankstown councils. These are gigantic

councils. Canterbury-Bankstown has 400,000 people. Sutherland Shire Council has over 300,000 people right now. All the different councils have their needs.

How are we going to compete? How many times have we have seen it with Doonside lifts? We had 10,000 petitions. The Auditor-General said it was the twelfth most important project to get done. Pre-COVID, the station had 6,400 users. And yet what got done before it? The \$13 million massive rebuild of Como Station. There were massive discussions about Aboriginal art and heritage and working with the local community. What do we get? How many people use Como Station a day? One thousand and seven hundred. There are 3.6 times more people using Doonside Station and we hardly get any consultation. We just get a stock standard petition. Talk about pork-barrelling! I wonder how it is all going to work out.

Blacktown has got more mentions today in Parliament than mentions by the western Sydney Minister in his 11-year parliamentary career. Seven out of 93 electorates have an element of Blacktown City Council. Yet we only get nine mentions. We grow at 10,000 people a year. To put that into perspective, that is a Hunter's Hill Council every 18 months. That is how fast Blacktown is growing. Northern Beaches' anticipated growth over the next 25 years is equal to Blacktown City for the next three years. So much more can be talked about, be it the mental health services that have been cut in the local area or the multicultural services. The member for Balmain talked about the \$500 million blowout for the fish markets. That would have gone a long way towards supporting a lot of people in the Blacktown area. I understand and acknowledge that the Minister wants to make positive change. He wants to improve the quality of life for residents. But I have to say that I have seen the bill. He has engaged me but I feel frustration, anger, and annoyance. I am very annoyed that nothing will come of it. This is just a talkfest. Let us make something happen.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (19:45): In reply: First, I thank every member of this place for their contribution to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022, which has been wideranging, constructive and illuminating. Many members have talked about issues of urban planning and other issues as they relate to their community. In listening to the debate, it does appear that the Greater Cities Commission will have to deal with a large list of issues. I suspect some of the contributions strayed outside, perhaps, what the objectives for the commission will be. Perhaps some of those issues might be better dealt with by H.G. Nelson and the "Even Greater Sydney Commission" than the Greater Cities Commission. Nevertheless, a lot of very relevant and impassioned comments were made.

Again, I seek the indulgence of the House to list all those members who participated in the debate, including the shadow Minister and member for Wollongong, Paul Scully, who is in the Chamber. I also mention the members representing the electorates of Terrigal, Balmain, Vacluse, Wyong, Riverstone, Strathfield, Macquarie Fields, Charlestown, Newcastle, Lakemba, Swansea, Canterbury, Prospect, Mount Druitt, Londonderry, Granville, Heffron, Gosford, and Lake Macquarie. Last but not least I mention the member for Blacktown, who also expressed some annoyance, which is unusual for the member. The member for Blacktown is normally not annoyed.

Mr Paul Scully: Always passionate.

Mr ROB STOKES: Always passionate. I thank each of the members for their considered contributions. I acknowledge the collegiate way members in this place—and in particular the shadow Minister—have engaged with the Government on this reform. This is a wonderful example of where people representing different communities with different interests and perspectives can come together in goodwill and where, despite ideological and all sorts of differences, they can look for the things that they agree upon. That is a wonderful part of working in this Chamber. I acknowledge the contributions of my colleagues—the member for Terrigal, the member for Vacluse and the member for Camden—in support of the bill, in particular the member for Terrigal, the ferocious advocate for the Central Coast. He picked up the work undertaken to date on the Central Coast strategy. It will be taken to quite another level as it becomes part of the Greater Cities Commission. The extensive debate on the bill shows how passionate members are about their communities, particularly awakened during the pandemic. As the member for Lakemba said in his eloquent contribution, all things become local.

Contributions discussed a wide range of issues, like housing affordability, social and affordable housing, access to jobs, infrastructure, and the provision of public space. They will all be critical components in forming the new region and city plans for the six cities as the Greater Cities Commission commences its work, and I will try to address the concerns relevant to the bill before us. I also note, because otherwise I will forget to note, that today is the birthday of the chief commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission, Mr Geoff Roberts, AM. I am sure I join with all members in wishing him a very happy birthday.

I particularly welcome the contribution from the member for Strathfield, who challenged the commission to look at the role of the six cities not only in New South Wales but also in our wider global and regional economic

context and to seize the opportunity for the area—with three international airports, three deepwater ports and six universities in the world's top 200—to both compete with and partner with our neighbours. It was a particularly considered contribution from someone who has only just joined the Parliament.

Opposition members have foreshadowed amendments that this House will consider in the consideration in detail stage following this debate. In previous weeks my ministerial team and I have met with members from across this Chamber to discuss the reforms. I acknowledge the particular interest from the member for Lake Macquarie, the member for Drummoyne and the member for Balmain, who have spoken directly with me and my team on those matters among others.

I acknowledge that the shadow Minister, the member for Wollongong, has indicated the Opposition will not oppose the bill, but I also note that he will move some amendments to the bill to improve its operation in the consideration in detail stage of this debate. He is right that a key aspiration of the commission should be to overcome the divisions that have affected communities in the past over development, and I note his emphasis that the commission should not shirk or ignore the challenges of better planning in the three new cities. I acknowledge his suggestion, although not required under the bill, that the city commissioners should be part of the discussions of the infrastructure delivery committee. I will speak to the chief commissioner about how that might be achieved.

The appointment of city commissioners attracted some commentary during the debate. The shadow Minister has foreshadowed amendments that will require the relevant city commissioner to be resident in the city they represent, to overcome the concern about "Princes Highway flyers"—an expression of which I was not hitherto aware—in the case of the Illawarra-Shoalhaven. Now that I am aware of that expression, I will use it. He is right that the commissioner must already deeply understand the challenges and aspirations of the city they represent, and what better way to do that than being resident in that city? Without referencing the proposed amendments to follow, I place on record the Government's intention that, while the bill does not set out a selection process, local councils would be strongly represented in recruitment.

It is my own strongly held view, and also the view of the Government, that the commissioners have a representative role for the local governments that constitute their area. The process will be managed by an independent recruitment agency with probity advice. Each local council will be invited to sit on the relevant selection panel along with the commission, represented by the mayor or general manager at their election. It is absolutely crucial for the operating model of the commission that the councils feel represented by the commission, because it is to be a neutral ground on which State and local interests can properly be dealt with, hopefully by consensus but if not then by adjudication. That is what the balance of the commissioners is there to achieve. That councils should feel properly represented by their city commissioners is of fundamental importance in ensuring that the commission can be the representative body as well as the expert body that it needs to be.

I acknowledge the contribution by the member for Swansea concerning cost-shifting onto councils. I make it clear to the House that the expansion of the Greater Sydney Commission to the new six cities region is not intended directly or otherwise to shift costs for the strategic planning undertaken by the commission onto councils, whether they be in Greater Sydney, the Central Coast, Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City, or the Illawarra-Shoalhaven. The clauses in question reflect existing arrangements under the Greater Sydney Commission Act that allow for the sharing of data and information to inform best practice planning. I cannot say that any councils or other stakeholders have raised concerns with me regarding those requirements or any undue or unreasonable impost on council resources, and the commission advises me the same. Nevertheless, I agree that better planning should not result in unreasonable asks of the resources of councils—which, as we all know, have significant limitations.

I note that the member for Canterbury has asked about significant places in her electorate as they relate to the bill. In regard to the Canterbury racecourse, she would be aware that a joint State-council planning process is being chaired by the central district commissioner, Peter Poulet, who is himself a former government architect. It is a good example of the joined-up planning enabled by the commission structure. The issue of Blacktown and the allocation of local government areas [LGAs] to cities was raised by several members, and I am very mindful of resolving it. I note that the bill has an enabling provision that would enable those concerns to be resolved, which is why it is important that I put on the record the intention to resolve the outstanding issues in relation to appropriate boundaries for LGAs.

In relation to the allocation of local government areas across the three existing cities, I note the concerns shared about the appropriate City for Blacktown. The shadow Minister noted concerns the boundaries do not reflect communities of interest, existing advocacy organisations or historical cultural associations. Those are, of course, important considerations in shaping our planning geographies, as are the fundamental catchments and water flows that have shaped the topography upon which metropolitan New South Wales is situated. There are other considerations as well. Blacktown and The Hills, for example, both in the Central River City, have accommodated much of Sydney's greenfield growth over the past 15 years. They share expertise and experience

in how to manage growth. It would be foolhardy to lose the opportunity to join up the strength of those planning processes and that delivery experience that could do incredible things working together.

Planning is an iterative process pointed toward the future, and members will need to consider the strategic directions of future region and city plans as we get to the detail of setting boundaries. To that point, the boundaries should express not just the shape of the city of the past but also the shape of the city we desire to create, and that is a really important part. The work of the Greater Cities Commission is aspirational; it is about helping the community to make choices about their spatial futures. That is sort of the point: Of course the boundaries will partly reflect history, but they will also partly reflect the future that the community wants to see.

Nevertheless, I note the concerns raised by the member for Blacktown questioning why it makes sense to be included, for example, in the same city as Sutherland. I also note that the member for Cronulla has raised the same concern in reverse, so it appears that there may be a happy coincidence of interests in relation to those issues. I also note that the first plan of the three cities released by the Greater Sydney Commission had the Central City incorporating Hornsby as opposed to Sutherland, which may be an appropriate way to resolve the issue. It is nevertheless important to ensure that the cities have a similar size and scale, given the fact that the commissioners are there to represent interests in an equivalent sense as far as is possible so that all communities have the same general level of representation.

That is an important principle for the bill to enshrine. I will certainly seek the commission's advice on the specific matter of setting boundaries between the cities as it develops the region plan over the course of this year and will continue to consult with the relevant members and councils on the outcomes of those investigations. The new commission will be constantly reviewing its processes to ensure that it is delivering the strategic vision that the six cities region needs, delivering for all communities across the region.

That gives me an opportunity to briefly reflect on a matter that the member for Blacktown expressed his annoyance about. He was exasperated that major publications released by the Greater Sydney Commission made just nine scant references to Blacktown, despite its importance as a local government area. I agree it is a very important local government area. It does a lot of the heavy lifting in terms of the growth of the city. The same criticism, however, might also be levelled at the McKell Institute report that is referenced favourably by members opposite, which only mentions Blacktown once. Hopefully the imbalance is corrected somewhat by this speech, which has now mentioned Blacktown on several additional occasions. I hope Blacktown is mentioned again. The member for Gosford also raised concerns about pork-barrelling by district commissioners. I think that was just some loose expression, rather than reality. It was loose expression; we all do that. If the member was expressing a view, I would reject that. The commissioners do an expert job independently representing their districts. I certainly do not think there is any evidence that they have engaged in any of those sorts of practices.

I acknowledge the shadow Minister's comments about the status of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan. I have heard a lot about the success of that plan, and I have seen it firsthand. In fact, since its release in 2018 I have been involved with it in many ways and with the governance model that supports it. The bill preserves the draft Hunter Region Plan. Once finalised by the Minister for Planning, it will form a consideration in the city until the new city plan is prepared. So it will remain on foot. The new region plan progresses many of the metropolitan plan's actions and directions. The shadow Minister noted correctly that the metropolitan plan has no statutory status that would enable its preservation in the transitional arrangements, yet it is a terrific example of bottom-up progress and of the Government working together with the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils. If anything, we need to build on that collaborative approach as we develop the Greater Cities Commission model. There will be no interruption to the good work underpinning the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan. That plan will continue as we build a strong platform for the future Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Plan.

I acknowledge the leadership of local government leaders in the City of Newcastle and their advocacy for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan. In particular, I acknowledge the leadership and advocacy of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Nuatali Nemes, who does an amazing job and has done so for many years. Regional New South Wales eligibility is an important point that was raised by members representing the Hunter. In particular, the member for Charlestown and the member for Swansea raised the eligibility of their communities for the regional seniors travel card and regional funding grants, respectively. In this place it is important for me to assert and guarantee to the member for Swansea that the bill will do nothing to impact on existing eligibility for regional grants and funding for those communities that are currently eligible. In particular, the bill makes no changes to the Restart NSW regime, which sets the parameters for many regional programs, including the regional seniors travel card. The Government considers individual community needs and characteristics as they relate to specific programs or projects. For instance, this allows for local government areas like Newcastle and Wollongong to be eligible for Resources for Regions because of significant mining links.

I thank all members for the issues they have raised, their support for the bill and their passion for urban planning. In a final point of dedication, it is important to acknowledge one notable urban planner, Christopher

Alexander, whose seminal work *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* is instructive in helping us understand that the bill's governance model for metropolitan New South Wales is a pattern for our cities and for their governance. I acknowledge Christopher Alexander for his incredible contribution. I also acknowledge an Australian urbanist, who is in poor health, who has made an incredible contribution over many years, including his contribution to the Sydney Region Outline Plan, which has been referenced in this debate, and that is the great Bob Meyer. On behalf of all members, I wish him all the best and thank him for his contribution. We hope that he will make a quick recovery. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Paul Scully.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 26 and schedules 1 to 5 be agreed to.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:08): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-037B in globo:

No. 1 City Commissioners

Page 3, proposed section 6, lines 44 and 45. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (6) A person must not be appointed as a City Commissioner to represent a city in the Six Cities Region unless the person resides in the city.

No. 2 Review of Act

Page 10. Insert after line 14—

27 Review of Act

- (1) The Minister is to review this Act to determine whether—
 - (a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and
 - (b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 5 years from the commencement of this Act.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of 5 years.

I will keep my remarks brief, given the Minister has indicated his support for the two Opposition amendments. Amendment No. 1 relates to the future city commissioners. In their contributions, many members reflected that a city commissioner should share the aspirations, understanding and perhaps the frustrations of the cities for which he or she is the commissioner. Those members included the member for Wyong, the member for Gosford, the member for Swansea, the member for Charlestown, the member for Newcastle and me. The amendment proposes that a person appointed as city commissioner to represent a city in the Six Cities Region must reside in that city.

As I foreshadowed in my contribution to the second reading debate, amendment No. 2 requires that there be a review of the Act to test and determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. The amendment requires that review to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of five years from the commencement of the Act. I have outlined my views on the amendments in the debate. A number of members on this side of the Chamber touched on these proposed amendments during their contributions, and the Government has indicated its support for them.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (20:10): The Government will support Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2. The Government always expected that the city commissioners' knowledge, experience and expertise in their respective cities be taken into account during recruitment, but we welcome the Opposition amendment to enshrine requirements that each city be represented by a local resident. We thank the shadow Minister and the Opposition for that amendment. We also support amendment No. 2, which relates to the review of the Act. Planning is always an iterative process, but we welcome enshrining a review of the Act in the bill. It is important that this House continues to have confidence in the policy objectives and the appropriateness of the Act. We welcome a review of the Act as soon as possible after a period of five years has elapsed. Of course, we further welcome a report to be tabled in this House and in the other place. The Government will always welcome scrutiny of this important legislation by both Houses of Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-037B be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 to 26 and schedules 1 to 5 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 26 and schedules 1 to 5 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr ROB STOKES: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST BILL 2021

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 24 March 2022

- | | |
|-------|---|
| No. 1 | <p>OPP No.1 [c2022-010I]</p> <p>Page 3, clause 9(1)(b), line 28. Insert "and conservation" after "environmental".</p> |
| No. 2 | <p>OPP No.2 [c2022-010I]</p> <p>Page 4, clause 10(2), line 5. Insert "in writing" after "Trust".</p> |
| No. 3 | <p>GRNS No.1 [c2022-022A]</p> <p>Page 6, clause 15(1)(a), line 5. Omit "and enhance the". Insert instead ", enhance and ensure no reduction in the extent of the net existing".</p> |
| No. 4 | <p>OPP No.3 [c2022-010I]</p> <p>Page 7. Insert after line 23—</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">16A Exercise of functions in conjunction with community trustee boards</p> <p style="margin-left: 60px;">(1) This section applies if the Trust is exercising functions in relation to—</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">(a) the granting of a lease, licence or easement over land within the GSPT state under section 20, or</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">(b) the preparation or approval of a plan of management under section 23.</p> <p style="margin-left: 60px;">(2) The Trust must—</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">(a) have regard to the views of a community trustee board for the relevant parkland, and</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">(b) for a plan of management—obtain the community trustee board's agreement to the plan of management before submitting the plan to the Minister.</p> |
| No. 5 | <p>GRNS No.2 [c2022-022A]</p> <p>Page 8, clause 20(1), lines 37 and 38. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(1) The Trust may grant a lease, licence or easement over land within the GSPT estate if the lease, licence or easement—</p> <p style="margin-left: 80px;">(a) is consistent with the objects of this Act, and</p> <p style="margin-left: 80px;">(b) will not reduce the extent of the net existing natural environment of the GSPT estate.</p> |
| No. 6 | <p>OPP No.4 [c2022-010I]</p> <p>Page 9, clause 20(4), lines 6—8. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(4) The Trust must give public notice, in the way prescribed by the regulations, of the following—</p> <p style="margin-left: 80px;">(a) that the Trust proposes to grant a lease, licence or easement under this section,</p> <p style="margin-left: 80px;">(b) that a lease, licence or easement has been granted under this section.</p> |
| No. 7 | <p>OPP No.5 [c2022-010I]</p> <p>Page 9, clause 23(3)(a). Insert after line 40—</p> <p style="margin-left: 80px;">(iia) the maximum amount of land to be used for each activity and use of land permitted in the park to which the plan relates,</p> |

No. 8 **OPP No.6 [c2022-010I]**

Page 10, clause 23. Insert after line 12—

- (6) The Trust's annual report under the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984* must include information about the maximum amount of land used for each activity and use of land permitted in each park—
 - (a) within the associated Trust's estate, and
 - (b) acquired and owned by the Trust under Part 3, Division 2.

No. 9 **OPP No.7 [c2022-010I]**

Page 11, clause 27, lines 2—8. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 10 **OPP No. 8 [c2022-010I]**

Page 13, clause 37(1), line 20. Omit "Trust". Insert instead "Minister".

No. 11 **OPP No. 9 [c2022-010I]**

Page 13, clause 37(2), line 30. Omit "Trust may". Insert instead "Minister may, on the recommendation of the Trust,".

No. 12 **GRNS No. 5 [c2022-001F]**

Page 13, clause 38(1), lines 33 and 34. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (1) A community trustee board has—
 - (a) a member nominated by each relevant local council, or chosen by the Minister under subsection (1A), as a community representative, and
 - (b) the number of other members, not more than 6, appointed by the Minister on the advice of the Trust.
- (1A) For subsection (1)(a), if more than 3 persons are nominated by relevant local councils as community representatives—
 - (a) the Minister must choose at least 3 members from the persons nominated, and
 - (b) the persons nominated, but not chosen by the Minister, may attend meetings of the board but—
 - (i) are not members of the board, and
 - (ii) are not entitled to vote at a meeting of the board.

No. 13 **OPP No. 11 [c2022-010I]**

Page 13, clause 38(2), line 35. Omit "Trust". Insert instead "Minister".

No. 14 **GRNS No. 6 [c2022-001F]**

Page 13, clause 38(2), line 35. Insert "under subsection (1)(b)" after "members".

No. 15 **OPP No. 12 [c2022-010I]**

Page 13, clause 38(2), line 36. Omit "chief executive". Insert instead "Trust".

No. 16 **OPP No. 13 [c2022-010I]**

Page 13, clause 38(3), line 38. Omit "chief executive". Insert instead "Trust".

No. 17 **OPP No. 14 [c2022-010I]**

Page 13, clause 39, line 21. Insert "and approve the plan of management for the relevant parkland" after "relevant parkland".

No. 18 **GRNS No. 7 [c2022-001F]**

Page 14, clause 38(3)(b)(iii), lines 11–13. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 19 **GRNS No. 8 [c2022-001F]**

Page 14, clause 38. Insert after line 17—

- (5) In this section—

relevant local council means a local council in whose area the part of the relevant part of the parklands estate is located, or whose area adjoins the relevant part of the parklands estate.

No. 20 **OPP No. 15 [c2022-010I]**

Page 14, clause 40, lines 36—41. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

40 Power to change part of parklands estate for which the community trustee board is established

If a community trustee board is established for part of the parklands estate, the Minister may, at any time on the recommendation of the Trust, change the part of the parklands estate for which the community trustee board is established.

40A Dissolution of community trustee board

- (1) The Minister may, on the recommendation of the Trust, dissolve a community trustee board.
- (2) A community trustee board is dissolved by written notice given to each member of the board.
- (3) The written notice must state—
 - (a) the reasons for the dissolution of the board, and
 - (b) the date on which the dissolution takes effect.
- (4) If the Minister dissolves a community trustee board (the *previous board*) established for a part of the parklands estate, the Minister must establish a new community trustee board for the part of the parklands estate within 3 months after the day the previous board was dissolved.

No. 21 **OPP No. 16 [c2022-010I]**

Page 16, clause 42, line 7. Omit "Trust.". Insert instead—

- Trust, and
- (c) the Entertainment Quarter.

No. 22 **OPP No. 17 [c2022-010I]**

Page 16, clause 43. Insert after line 16—

- (3A) Money received by the Trust as result of a lease granted over land in the Entertainment Quarter is to be paid into the separate account within the Fund established for the Entertainment Quarter.

No. 23 **GRNS No. 11 [c2022-001F]**

Page 16, clause 45(2), line 29. Omit "The". Insert instead "Subject to subsection (3), the".

No. 24 **OPP No. 18 [c2022-010I]**

Page 16, clause 45(3), lines 32—34. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (3) Subject to subsection (4), the Trust must ensure that, in allocating money from a separate account in the Fund, priority is given to—
 - (a) for a separate account established for an associated Trust or park—the associated Trust or park for which the separate account was established, or
 - (b) for the separate account established for the Entertainment Quarter—the Trust lands, within the meaning of the *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*.

No. 25 **GRNS No. 12 [c2022-001F]**

Page 16, clause 45(3), lines 32—34. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (3) The Trust must ensure that, in allocating money from a separate account in the Fund—
 - (a) priority is given to the associated Trust or park for which the separate account was established, and
 - (b) if the Trust proposes to allocate money from the separate account to an associated Trust or park other than the associated Trust or park for which the separate account was established—
 - (i) a community trustee board established for the part of the parklands estate administered by the associated Trust or park has been given written notice of the proposal to allocate money in that way, and
 - (ii) the community trustee board has not, within 14 days after receiving the notice, objected to the allocation of the money in that way.
- (3A) To avoid doubt, if a community trustee board objects under subsection (3)(b) to the allocation of money in a way, the Trust must not under subsection (3) allocate the money in that way.

No. 26 **OPP No. 19 [c2022-010I]**

Page 21. Insert before line 15—

58A Review of Act

- (1) A Joint Select Committee of the Parliament is to be established in relation to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.
- (2) The Joint Select Committee is to review the Act to determine whether—
 - (a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and

(b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.

(3) The review is to be undertaken as soon as practicable after the period of 2 years from the commencement of this Act.

(4) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of 2 years.

No. 27 **OPP No.20 [c2022-010I]**

Page 24, Schedule 1. Insert after line 11—

10A Public notice of meeting

The Board must, at least 7 days before each meeting of the Board is held, publish on a website kept by the Trust notice that the meeting is to be held.

No. 28 **OPP No.21 [c2022-010I]**

Page 24, Schedule 1. Insert after line 39—

14A Requirement to keep and publish certain records regarding meetings

The Board must—

(a) keep minutes of all meetings of the Board, and

(b) publish, on a website kept by the Trust, a report summarising the matters discussed at a meeting of the Board within 21 days after the meeting.

No. 29 **OPP No.22 [c2022-010I]**

Page 25, Schedule 2, clause 2(2), line 12. Omit "2". Insert instead "5".

No. 30 **OPP No.23 [c2022-010I]**

Page 25, Schedule 2, clause 4(1)(d), line 24. Omit "Chairperson of the Trust". Insert instead "Minister".

No. 31 **OPP No.24 [c2022-010I]**

Page 25, Schedule 2, clause 4(2), lines 38 and 39. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

(2) The Minister may, on the recommendation of the Chairperson of the Trust, remove a member from office at any time.

No. 32 **OPP No.25 [c2022-010I]**

Page 28, Schedule 2, clause 14, lines 1—3. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

14 First meeting

(1) The first meeting of the board must be held within 3 months after the appointment of the board.

(2) The Trust must, before the first meeting of the board is held, provide each of the board members with all relevant documents and information relating to the relevant parkland.

No. 33 **OPP No.26 [c2022-010I]**

Page 28, Schedule 2. Insert after line 3—

Part 4 Miscellaneous

15 Assistance from staff

The Trust must ensure the persons employed in the Public Service to enable the Trust to exercise its functions are available to assist each board exercise its functions, including conducting meetings, by providing information to and answering queries from members.

Note—See section 14 of this Act which provides that persons may be employed in the Public Service under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* to enable the Trust to exercise its functions.

No. 34 **OPP No.27 [c2022-010I]**

Page 29, Schedule 3. Insert before line 25—

1A First meeting

The Minister must establish the community trustee boards mentioned in section 37(1) within 6 months after the commencement of section 5.

No. 35 **GOVT No.1 [c2022-024H as amended]**

Page 29, Schedule 3. Insert after line 34—

4 Assessment of suitability of certain parks becoming part of the parklands estate

(1) The Trust must, as soon as practicable after the commencement, conduct a review to assess the suitability of the following parks becoming part of the parklands estate—

- (a) Chipping Norton Lake,
- (b) Millennium Parklands,
- (c) Mt Annan Botanic Gardens,
- (d) Lake Gillawarna.
- (2) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 2 years after the commencement.
- (3) In this section—

commencement means the date of assent to this Act.

No. 36 **GOVT No. 2 [c2022-024H]**

Page 30, Schedule 4, line 8. Insert "under the associated Trusts legislation" after "the associated Trusts".

No. 37 **OPP No.28 [c2022-010I]**

Page 30, Schedule 4. Insert before line 28—

Entertainment Quarter means the land located at 122 Lang Road, Moore Park known as "The Entertainment Quarter".

Note—A map showing the land located within the Entertainment Quarter is available at entertainmentquarter.com.au

No. 38 **GOVT No. 3 [c2022-024H]**

Page 32, Schedule 5.1[2], lines 9–16. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 39 **GOVT No. 4 [c2022-024H]**

Page 37, Schedule 5.2[7], proposed section 18AA, lines 26–37. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 40 **GOVT No. 5 [c2022-024H as amended]**

Page 40, Schedule 5.2. Insert after line 20—

[15A] Section 20AA

Insert after section 20—

20AA Restrictions on parking in Moore Park East

- (1) The following areas of the Trust lands are closed to parking of vehicles—
 - (a) the non-parking areas,
 - (b) from 31 December 2023—carpark 2, Lower Kippax,
 - (c) from 31 December 2025—non-parking grass areas that are not referred to in paragraph (b).
- (2) In this section—

non-parking areas means the areas of the Trust lands that are—

- (a) shown on a map, included in the regulations, as being areas in or on which parking is not allowed,
- (b) otherwise described in the regulations as being areas in or on which parking is not allowed.

carpark 2, Lower Kippax means the part of the non-parking grassy area shown on the map in Schedule 3 and marked 'Car park 2 - Lower Kippax'.

non-parking grass areas means grassy areas shown on the maps set out in Schedule 3 as being areas in Moore Park East in or on which parking is not allowed.

No. 41 **GOVT No. 6 [c2022-024H]**

Page 39, Schedule 5.2[9] and [10], lines 26–29. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 42 **GOVT No. 7 [c2022-024H]**

Page 40, Schedule 5.2[20], line 36. Omit "18AA(2)". Insert instead "20AA(2)".

No. 43 **GRNS No. 3 [c2022-033A]**

Page 41, proposed map, omit the map on the page. Insert instead—

[Map detailing Non-Parking Grass Area, Sheet NPGA_001]

No. 44 **GOVT No. 8 [c2022-024H]**

Page 43, Schedule 5.3[1]. Omit "parking offences". Insert instead "restrictions on parking".

No. 45 **GOVT No. 9 [c2022-024H]**

Page 43, Schedule 5.3[1]. Omit "18AA(2)". Insert instead "20AA(2)".

No. 46 **GOVT No. 10 [c2022-024H]**

Page 45, Schedule 5.4[4], lines 18–25. Omit all words on those lines.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (20:13): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

I thank members of the Legislative Assembly and members of the other place for their contributions to this truly incredible reform with respect to the parklands estate in Greater Sydney. The legislative process can be complicated. However, I found members of both Houses across the aisle sought to establish common ground and move forward together in the interests of shared State parklands. It was edifying to see that we could bring the combined power of our different ideological perspectives to produce a piece of legislation that is greater than it was before. That is a lovely metaphor for the point of the parklands legislation in the first place, which was to take a series of parks and make the whole greater than the sum of its parts and to form a context for the creation of an even bigger and stronger parklands estate across metropolitan Sydney.

I acknowledge the amendments made concerning community trustee boards and future assessments of the suitability of certain parks to become part of the parklands estate, such as Chipping Norton Lakes, Millennium Parklands, Mount Annan Botanic Gardens and Lake Gillawarna, as well as clarifying the future of parking on the grass at Moore Park east, including the return of car park 2 at Lower Kippax to the community from 31 December 2023. I place on record my thanks to the member for Sydney, in particular, for his continued advocacy. I acknowledge his ongoing interest in our parklands estate and his fiercely protective nature in relation to the parklands on behalf of the community he serves. I certainly look forward to working with him in the future to ensure the protection of our city within a park. I thank the House.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:15): There is no doubt that the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021 has been returned a better bill than when it left this place, following the work put in by the Minister for Cities and his office, the Labor Opposition, The Greens and others to reach agreement in large part on the amendments put before the Legislative Council. The arrangements with respect to local involvement through community trustee boards have been strengthened through the insertion of a legal requirement for the trust to have regard to the views of the boards. Strong measures have been put in place with respect to the potential for shifting revenue from one park to other parts of the city.

A series of other amendments made in the Legislative Council and supported by Labor, the Government and, in the main, The Greens and the other minor parties mean that, as a whole, the bill—ironically, given that its name is the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill—proposes a better arrangement than when it left this place. Does the returned bill satisfy everyone—every stakeholder, every interest? No, it does not—and I am sure we will hear from at least one of those unsatisfied people in a minute. But it has wound up proposing a better arrangement for parklands across the city that helps align with Labor's aspiration to grow the parklands estate throughout Sydney into the future.

Labor's intent in pursuing the bill and the approach taken was to make sure that strong, passionate, local voices have a say in the management of the parklands that are near and dear to them. During the COVID pandemic we saw how green open spaces—the great commons of our city—where people can congregate, exchange ideas, socialise, recreate, be entertained and the like became more and more important. That is reflected in the bill and it is reflected in the amendments that Labor put forward in the other place. I believe it is largely reflected in the arrangements in the bill. I thank the Minister and Mr David Shoebridge for their constructive approach to this issue. I thank Estelle Grech from the Minister's office for her approach to dealing with the bill. It was at times, dare I say, challenging. But, as I said, I think the bill now reflects a better arrangement than it did when it left this place. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (20:18): I make a brief contribution to consideration of the Legislative Council amendments to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021. At the outset, I reiterate the comments of the member for Wollongong, who thanked the Minister and his staff for their consultative approach. I also give a special shout-out to Estelle Grech for her great work with a wide variety of members who had various competing interests regarding the bill. I put on record my community's frustration that again this Parliament has sold out public land for vested interests. Despite some improvements to the role and influence of the community consultative committees, the Legislative Council removed two key parkland wins that made the bill very worthwhile. Many are concerned that it now represents little more than a bureaucratic restructure.

The bill that passed this House would have taken all cars off Moore Park by the end of 2023. This has now been pushed back to the end of 2025. What could be more offensive than using public, green recreation space as a car parking station? The sporting stadia have been using the parkland as a patrons' car park for decades. The grasslands have suffered from constant damage and lack of landscaping. Soon Venues NSW will get a new car park above ground and below ground, and by the time car parking is removed from Moore Park the stadia will have received a net gain in car parking spaces. This is despite the massive investment in light rail and the Tibby Cotter bridge that helps people get to the stadia by public transport—but which, I might add, permanently alienated chunks of parkland. This is despite the traffic gridlock that car use continues to cause during events. Unfortunately, in the New South Wales Parliament we have seen time and time again that what the sporting trust wants, the sporting trust gets.

The Legislative Council also reversed my amendment that would have limited leases on land under the custodianship of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust to 50 years. Leases of 99 years will now be permitted on public land dedicated for community recreation. This essentially permits freehold ownership of public land. It was done to facilitate the sell-off of the former showgrounds land for commercial profit. When millionaires and *The Daily Telegraph* lobby the major parties, they back vested interests over public interest. I am committed to defending green open space in my community, but it is difficult to get an outcome when the Government and Opposition join forces to privatise public land.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (20:21): I make a final contribution regarding the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021. I thank all members for their contributions in relation to the amendments and, as a last word, express my enduring gratitude to all the staff of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, the board and, in particular, my ministerial staff, who do an incredible job and have incredible subject matter expertise. I know that some offices tend to have people who are more politically minded. My office is full of people with very strong policy experience who are passionate about the future of this great city. I particularly note the contribution of Estelle Grech, a young planner with an incredible future ahead of her. Estelle did a huge amount of work to facilitate what I think will be a very significant piece of legislation upon which to build a great legacy of parklands for future generations of residents and visitors to this great city.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES BILL 2021

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (20:23): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

At the outset, I acknowledge and thank the former Special Minister of State, the Hon. Don Harwin, who as the responsible Minister at the time introduced the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021 in the other place. I also acknowledge and thank all members of the other place for their earnest and serious consideration of this significant legislative reform. The Whistleblowers Protection Bill (No. 2) was introduced by then Premier John Fahey in late 1992. The Fahey Government had committed to legislate to provide full protection of the rights and employment of any public sector employee who exposed corruption, matters constituting public maladministration or significant waste, in a memorandum of understanding entered into with three independent members of Parliament. That 1992 bill was referred to a legislation review committee. Following consideration of the recommendations of that committee, the Fahey Government introduced the Protected Disclosures Bill in 1994.

The resulting Act was renamed the Public Interest Disclosures Act in 2010 following reforms to implement recommendations of another parliamentary committee, the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. It was a brave reform and it has served our State well over the past 28 years. It is one of the oldest public interest disclosures schemes in Australia, providing an important precedent for the whistleblower protection legislation that now exists in every Australian jurisdiction. The current Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 establishes a whistleblowers scheme for the disclosure of serious wrongdoing in the public sector in New South Wales. Public officials who make public interest disclosures, or PIDs, are protected from detrimental action and generally cannot be subject to any liability for making the disclosure.

The bill will repeal the existing Act and enact a new Act protecting disclosures by public officials about serious wrongdoing. This reform is the first substantial rewrite of the existing Act since its commencement in 1994. The bill will also increase protections for people disclosing misconduct or wrongdoing to the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption, the NSW Ombudsman and the New South Wales Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC]. It is apt that this bill, like the existing Act, has its origins in the

committee processes of this Parliament. In October 2017 the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission, which I will refer to as the Ombudsman committee, tabled its report on the review of the Act, making 38 recommendations for reform. The Ombudsman committee determined that the disclosure process could be simplified, that technicalities cause disclosers to miss out on protections and that the protections around detrimental action should be enhanced. The Ombudsman committee also recommended that the Act be redrafted to simplify its provisions and structure.

In November 2017 the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, which I will refer to as the ICAC committee, tabled its report entitled *Protections for People who make Voluntary Disclosures to the ICAC*, making 10 recommendations. The ICAC committee found that the existing protections for people who make disclosures to the ICAC likely only apply where a person is required to make the disclosure and not to a voluntary disclosure. The ICAC committee concluded this may deter people from reporting corrupt conduct, and it recommended legislative reform to protect people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC against criminal, civil and disciplinary liability and reprisal action.

The bill implements, or partially implements, the recommendations for legislative reform by the two committees. This bill, in fact, goes further than what the Ombudsman committee contemplated to simplify the disclosure process and enhance protections for disclosers by introducing a "no wrong door" approach, meaning a person making a public interest disclosure is not disadvantaged by whom they make the disclosure to. I will provide further detail about this enhancement shortly. Considerable work has been undertaken to harmonise the recommendations of those two committees. Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance in the other place conducted an inquiry into the bill. Ultimately, amendments were agreed to in the other place responding to issues raised by that committee.

I will now briefly explain the expert consultation process that developed the bill, before moving to describe the provisions of the bill in detail. The Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee regularly meets to consider the operation of the Public Interest Disclosure Scheme and will continue regularly meeting to implement and monitor the reforms after their commencement. The steering committee has the ongoing statutory function of advising the Government on the operation of the Act and providing recommendations for reform. The NSW Ombudsman is the chair of the steering committee and has responsibility for oversight of the public interest disclosures regime. The other members of the steering committee are drawn from the State's key integrity agencies as set out in section 6A of the current Act, including the ICAC and the LECC. The Department of Premier and Cabinet has worked closely with the steering committee to ensure that expert advice and input were provided in preparation of the bill. The steering committee has met on 11 occasions since December 2017 to consider the proposed reforms and various drafts of the bill. The steering committee has advised the Government that it:

... unanimously welcomes the PID Bill, and believes it will represent a significant enhancement to whistle-blower protections in NSW, helping to ensure that reports of wrong-doing are acted upon, and that reporters are encouraged to come forward and are protected when they do. The Bill addresses many of the weaknesses in the existing PID Act.

The Government is grateful to steering committee members for contributing their time and expertise to the development of the bill. The committee's work has greatly improved the bill. I note that on 19 October 2021 the NSW Ombudsman, Mr Paul Miller, PSM, tabled a report in Parliament entitled *Special report by the NSW Ombudsman on the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2021*. I refer members to that report, which helpfully provides a detailed assessment of the bill against the recommendations made by the Ombudsman committee and the ICAC committee in their respective October 2017 and November 2017 reports. The Ombudsman indicates that he is "confident that the bill will better ensure that reports of wrongdoing are acted upon, and that reporters will be safer and feel more encouraged to come forward", describing the bill as "a colossal improvement on the current PID Act". I thank and acknowledge the Ombudsman and his office for their careful consideration of the bill and preparation of the report.

Recommendation 38 of the Ombudsman committee report was that the Act be redrafted to simplify its provisions and structure. The Government determined that a repeal and rewrite of the Act would best implement the committee's recommendation, enabling simplification of the Act's structure, provisions and language. I will now briefly explain several of the introductory provisions in part 1 of the bill. Clause 3 sets out the objects of the bill. Members will note that, on the advice of the steering committee, the objects have been expanded when compared with the objects of the current Act, including promoting a culture in which public interest disclosures are encouraged. Generally, the provisions of the bill, once enacted, will prevail over any inconsistent Act or law. However, where other Acts or laws compel persons to provide information, the proposed Act will not affect legal professional privilege and the privilege against self-incrimination. Legal professional privilege will also not be waived merely because a public interest disclosure breaches legal professional privilege.

The proposed Act will also not affect the availability of public interest immunity claims. Clause 12 of the bill deals with the impact of recent Commonwealth legislative reform. After consultation with the Assistant

Treasurer of Australia, the Hon. Michael Sukkar, MP, it was determined that the most appropriate course was for the New South Wales PID scheme to apply to New South Wales agencies, noting the ability for New South Wales to exempt its own entities from the Commonwealth corporate whistleblower laws under part 9.4AAA of the Corporations Act 2001.

The proposed new Act provides a framework for public officials to report serious wrongdoing in the public sector and to receive protections when reporting. Currently, the existing Act requires disclosures concerning particular types of misconduct or wrongdoing to be made to particular recipients. For example, disclosures concerning corrupt conduct are to be made to the ICAC. Generally, a disclosure under the current regime to an incorrect recipient is not a PID and does not receive the protections under the Act, unless the disclosure is a "misdirected disclosure" to an investigating authority under section 15 of the Act.

Recommendation 3 of the committee's report was that the protection for misdirected disclosures be extended to all disclosures where the public official making the disclosure honestly believed that it was the appropriate public authority. The bill ensures that disclosures do not lose protections because they have been made to the wrong recipient by implementing a "no wrong door" approach. It is proposed that PIDs be made in one uniform manner, replacing the separate and slightly different pathways that currently exist for disclosures about different categories of wrongdoing to different recipients. Clause 13 of the bill collectively refers to the six different types of wrongdoing as "serious wrongdoing". "Corrupt conduct" continues to have the same meaning as in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, which I will refer to as the ICAC Act.

"Serious maladministration" is defined to mean conduct, other than conduct of a trivial nature, of an agency or a public official relating to a matter of administration that is unlawful; unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory; or based wholly or partly on improper motives. This is broadly consistent with the definition of maladministration in section 11 (2) of the existing Act, with the exception that the threshold requirement that the action be "of a serious nature" has been replaced with the threshold "other than conduct of a trivial nature". The change in language arises following advice from the Ombudsman that, in practice, agencies may apply an inappropriately conservative view of the meaning of "serious". For example, an agency may incorrectly apply a requirement that "serious conduct" must amount to the commission of a criminal offence when, in fact, a "serious" threshold merely excludes trivial matters.

The definitions of "government information contravention" and "privacy contravention" similarly exclude trivial failures. A "government information contravention" is defined as a failure, other than a trivial failure, by an agency or public official to exercise functions in accordance with the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 or the State Records Act 1998. The inclusion of a failure to exercise functions under the State Records Act in the definition implements recommendation 7 of the Ombudsman committee. Although contemplated by the Ombudsman committee, a failure to exercise functions in accordance with the Data Sharing (Government Sector) Act 2015 has not been included because a relevant breach of that Act would necessarily already be covered by existing categories of serious wrongdoing.

A "privacy contravention" is defined as a failure, other than a trivial failure, by an agency or public official to exercise functions in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 or the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. A "local government pecuniary interest contravention" is defined as the contravention of an obligation imposed in connection with a pecuniary interest by the Local Government Act 1993 or a code adopted by a council under section 440 (3) of the Local Government Act 1993. The inclusion of a contravention of a code of conduct adopted by a council is an expansion of the existing definition of "local government pecuniary interest contravention" under the current Act.

Amendments agreed to in the other place insert a note in clause 13 indicating that these categories of serious wrongdoing are further defined in the dictionary in schedule 2. The final type of serious wrongdoing, a "serious and substantial waste of public money", is not defined in the bill, as is the case in the existing Act, as it is a term of art and is well understood. The bill establishes three types of PIDs. Firstly, voluntary PIDs are disclosures of information about serious wrongdoing made by a public official. This is comparable with a PID under the existing Act. Secondly, witness PIDs are disclosures of information in an investigation of serious wrongdoing. Thirdly, mandatory PIDs are disclosures about serious wrongdoing made by a public official while meeting the ordinary requirements of the official's role or functions, or under a statutory or legal obligation, other than an obligation imposed by a code of conduct.

All PIDs will receive the protections in part 3 of the bill; however, the administrative requirements in part 5 of the bill will apply only to voluntary PIDs. The three categories of PIDs implement recommendation 14 of the Ombudsman committee to provide that officials who make a disclosure under a statutory or other legal obligation, or while assisting an investigation by a public authority, are considered to have made a PID, but only for the purposes of receiving protections under the Act and avoiding administrative burdens associated with PIDs. The

bill enables a disclosure by a public official that the maker honestly, and on reasonable grounds, believes, shows or tends to show serious wrongdoing to be a voluntary PID and to receive protections where it is made to any of the broad list of recipients in clause 27 of the bill, regardless of the nature of the alleged serious wrongdoing.

The "no wrong door" approach is a novel policy concept developed by the steering committee. I commend them for their ingenuity to enhance the recommendations of the Ombudsman committee and to further simplify the PID scheme. The bill does not change that PIDs are to be made by public officials. Clause 14 of the bill defines who is a public official. This is broader than the equivalent definition under the existing Act, reflecting the changing nature of service provision in the modern public service. The definition expressly captures statutory officers and people providing services or exercising functions on behalf of an agency, including contractors, subcontractors and volunteers.

Clause 14 (1) (f) provides that the employees, partners or officers of an entity who are involved in providing the services under contract, in whole or in part, or who are to exercise the functions of an agency, are public officials under the proposed Act. It is not intended that all employees, partners or officers of an entity that provides services on behalf of an agency or exercises the functions of an agency are public officials and therefore able to make a PID. Rather, the definition of a public official captures those employees, partners or officers who are involved in providing the services, in whole or in part, or who are to exercise the functions. It is contemplated that this definition could relevantly capture certain employees who provide back office support functions that enable the services to be provided on behalf of the agency. For example, this could cover back office staff who become aware of potential serious wrongdoing who are working in human resources, finance or other corporate roles in an entity that provides services to government, where those persons are involved in the services being provided.

Currently, section 8 of the Act provides for the making of PIDs to specified recipients. The Ombudsman committee was concerned that public authorities do not nominate enough officers to receive PIDs. Clause 27 of the bill provides for the making of PIDs to a much broader range of recipients, including the head of an agency, including an integrity agency; a disclosure officer; or the person's manager. A manager who receives a PID must, as soon as reasonably practicable, communicate the disclosure to a disclosure officer, which is described in clause 51 (1). This is an example of a mandatory PID, which I referred to previously.

Ministers are not currently designated PID recipients under the Act, except where a PID can be made to a member of Parliament under certain circumstances, which I will describe shortly. The Ombudsman committee considered that a Minister can be distinguished from a member of Parliament, and recommendation 2 of the committee's report was that a Minister should be able to receive a PID. Clause 27 of the bill provides that a Minister or a member of the Minister's staff may receive a PID if the disclosure is in writing.

Clause 52 provides that a Minister or a member of a Minister's staff to whom a PID is made must, as soon as reasonably practicable, communicate the disclosure to a disclosure officer for an agency that is responsible to the Minister, or to an integrity agency. Clause 52 (c) provides that if an oral disclosure is made to a Minister or a member of the Minister's staff, the maker of the disclosure must be directed to a disclosure officer of the agency that is responsible to the Minister, or an integrity agency, for the purpose of remaking the disclosure. Section 19 of the existing Act provides that a disclosure by a public official to a member of Parliament or a journalist is only a PID if the public official making the disclosure has already made substantially the same disclosure to an investigating authority or public authority, and the authority must have done one of three things: first, decided not to investigate the matter; second, not completed any investigation within six months; or, third, failed to notify the discloser within six months of the disclosure being made whether or not the matter is to be investigated.

The Ombudsman committee considered that the requirement that a disclosure first be made to a public or investigating authority should continue, which is implemented in the bill. Clause 28 of the bill, although drafted to reflect the different terms used in the proposed Act, is not intended to change how these requirements under section 19 of the existing Act apply in practice, except in the following respects: first, to provide for the investigation period to be extended to 12 months in limited cases, in particular where there has initially been a decision that the internal agency disclosure was not a PID and where that decision is subject to internal review; second, to modernise the definition of "journalist" to be consistent with the definition in the Evidence Act 1995; and, third, to omit the requirement in section 19 (4) of the existing Act that the public official must have reasonable grounds for believing that the disclosure is substantially true.

This requirement is being removed as it is not necessary, given that there is already a separate requirement that the maker must have an honest belief, on reasonable grounds, that the disclosure shows or tends to show serious wrongdoing. That is a standard requirement that applies to all voluntary public interest disclosures. Clause 28 of the bill continues the requirement under the existing Act that a disclosure to a member of Parliament or a journalist is in fact substantially true. Unlike some other jurisdictions, New South Wales has a comprehensive array of integrity agencies established for the purpose of investigating serious wrongdoing in the New South Wales public sector, and they have been given significant investigative powers. The bill facilitates the making of

disclosures within the Executive arm of Government, including to those integrity agencies, and will ensure that the disclosure is dealt with by the appropriate agency or integrity agency.

If a public official decides that a disclosure has not been adequately addressed within the Executive, it is an appropriate safeguard to require the disclosure to be true before conferring protections on a person disclosing what may be a confidential or defamatory matter outside of the Executive, given the importance of protecting the reputation of individuals against defamation and discouraging the unauthorised public disclosure of confidential information. Public disclosure of some allegations may unjustifiably and irreparably damage reputations, especially when those allegations are found subsequently to be groundless or inaccurate. The ability for a person within the Executive arm of Government to make a PID outside of the Executive to a member of Parliament or to a journalist is a final safety net in the very rare circumstance where integrity agencies and other agencies are aware of proven serious misconduct but have failed to deal with it. The steering committee has indicated to the Government:

... although some of the members of the PID Steering Committee are of the view that the PID Bill could be further improved ... all are unanimous that the PID Bill as currently drafted is a positive reform and a significant improvement to the current PID Act. The PID Steering Committee would support the PID Bill being passed in its current form.

The Government has made its position on this matter abundantly clear. As indicated in the other place, the Government will not support the bill if it omits the "substantially true" requirement for disclosures made to members of Parliament or journalists. I ask members to carefully weigh the overwhelming benefits of the bill for whistleblowers in the public sector and our community when considering this aspect of the bill. I wish to clarify one matter that caused some confusion when the bill was being considered by the other place's Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance. Clause 28 (1) (c) of the bill provides that a disclosure made to a member of Parliament or a journalist is a voluntary public interest disclosure if, among other things, the maker of the disclosure made substantially the same disclosure to an agency and that previous disclosure was not anonymous. The dictionary of the bill provides the following definition:

anonymous, in relation to a disclosure, means that, taking into account the circumstances of the disclosure and the material accompanying the disclosure, there is no reasonably practicable means of communicating with the maker of the disclosure about the disclosure, whether or not the maker's name is known.

As in the existing Act, one of the circumstances where an external disclosure to a member of Parliament or a journalist can be made is where the agency that received the previous disclosure has failed to provide the maker of the disclosure with certain information at the end of the relevant investigation period. Consequently, the agency must have a means of communicating with the maker of the disclosure to provide the relevant information, regardless of whether the name of the maker of the disclosure is known. I am advised that it is not uncommon for disclosures to be made, for example, using an email address that does not identify the name of the disclosure maker but enables the agency to communicate with the disclosure maker. Amendments agreed to in the other place have inserted notes clarifying the definition of "anonymous" where it is used in the bill.

Clause 26 of the bill prescribes the content of a voluntary PID. Generally, the maker of a voluntary PID must honestly and on reasonable grounds believe that the disclosure shows or tends to show serious wrongdoing. However, a voluntary PID cannot relate only to a disagreement with government policy, including a government decision concerning amounts, purposes or priorities of public expenditure. This requirement continues the principle in section 17 of the existing Act, while providing further clarification regarding public expenditure.

Further, a voluntary PID cannot concern only a grievance about an employment matter for an individual, except in limited circumstances. This provision implements recommendation 33 of the Ombudsman committee. The drafting of the exemptions from what is a voluntary PID in clauses 26 (2) and (3) of the second print of the bill were inserted by amendments agreed to in the other place in response to issues raised by Portfolio Committee No. 1. Clause 84 of the bill provides that wilfully making a false statement to mislead or attempt to mislead in making a PID is an offence. The maximum penalty is 100 penalty units or two years' imprisonment, or both.

I now move to what is in many ways the most important part of the bill, the protections for PID makers in part 3 of the bill. The bill continues five types of protections and remedies available under the existing Act: first, an offence prohibiting the taking of detrimental action against a PID maker; second, a right for the PID maker to recover damages for detrimental action; third, the availability of an injunction to restrain detrimental action; fourth, protection from liability for making the disclosure; and fifth, prohibitions against disclosures by agencies of information tending to identify a PID maker, subject to exceptions. Each of these protections and remedies has been enhanced in response to the recommendations of the Ombudsman committee and following consultation with the steering committee.

As under the existing Act, a detrimental action offence to protect PID makers is proposed in clause 33. The elements, however, have been substantially redrafted. Taking detrimental action against a person, suspecting, believing or knowing that they or a third person has, will or may make a PID, where the suspicion, belief or

awareness is a contributing factor to the taking of the detrimental action, is an offence. The proposed mental element for the detrimental action offence in the bill has been lowered from the threshold in the current Act. The bill requires that the making of the PID be a contributing factor to the taking of detrimental action instead of being "substantially in reprisal" for the disclosure. This implements recommendation 21 of the Ombudsman committee report.

Under the bill, agencies bear the onus of disproving detrimental action to the civil, rather than criminal, standard. That is on the balance of probabilities and, more likely than not, not beyond reasonable doubt. The Ombudsman will prepare guidelines providing detailed advice about this test and its application. The maximum penalty for the detrimental action offence is 200 penalty units or five years' imprisonment, or both. This is a higher penalty than under the existing Act and is considered to more appropriately reflect the objective seriousness of the detrimental action offence, while being consistent with the penalties for comparable offences in sections 93 and 94 of the ICAC Act.

In addition to potential criminal liability under the detrimental action offence, a person who takes detrimental action against another person may also be civilly liable to that other person for damages. The elements of this cause of action and the onus of proof are similar to the elements of the detrimental action offence under clause 33. There is no liability for detrimental action if the action constituted "reasonable management action", which is a concept I will explain shortly, or appropriate corrective action. Damages recovered may include exemplary damages, implementing recommendation 19 of the Ombudsman committee report. The bill clarifies that reasonable management action being taken in relation to a public official who has made a disclosure is not detrimental action.

The bill provides that the Supreme Court has broad powers to grant an injunction, including requiring a formal apology, restraining an attempt to terminate a person's employment or requiring reinstatement of a person. The extended scope of this injunction power implements recommendation 23 of the Ombudsman committee report. A public official who makes a public interest disclosure in relation to the making of the disclosure does not incur civil liability, including liability for breaching a duty of secrecy or confidentiality, does not incur criminal liability and is not liable to disciplinary action. The proposed availability of an undertaking implements recommendation 10 of the ICAC committee's report.

The bill also proposes three new protections and remedies for public officials making PIDs. First, clause 36 provides an ability for a PID maker to claim damages from an employer for the detrimental action of an employee in connection with their employment. Secondly, the bill introduces new risk management provisions. Clause 61 requires agencies to take steps to assess and minimise the risk of detrimental action being taken against a person as a result of the PID. Clause 62 provides an ability for a maker of a PID to claim damages from an agency for loss arising from an agency's failure to minimise the risk of detrimental action. Thirdly, clause 38 of the bill provides that a person who institutes proceedings to recover damages for detrimental action or for an injunction relating to such action is generally not liable to pay costs to the other party, implementing Ombudsman committee recommendation 20.

Part 4 of the bill requires every agency to have a PID policy and procedures published on its website. Part 5 of the bill sets out how agencies are to receive and deal with voluntary PIDs. When dealing with PIDs, agencies must have regard to guidelines published by the Ombudsman and may consult the Ombudsman or another integrity agency in relation to dealing with the PID. Part 6 of the bill contains provisions to ensure appropriate oversight of the PID scheme. The PID steering committee is continued as under the existing Act, with the exception that the Privacy Commissioner will be included as a member, implementing recommendation 9 of the Ombudsman committee. Clause 74 of the bill implements recommendation 17 of the Ombudsman committee by enabling the Ombudsman to deal with a dispute in connection with a disclosure by conciliation. I thank the Ombudsman for agreeing to provide this very important service under the proposed Act and in relation to the PID scheme. Finally, clause 89 of the bill provides that a joint committee of members of Parliament is to review this Act as soon as possible five years after assent. This concludes my comments on the proposed new Public Interest Disclosures Act.

Clause 2 of the bill provides that it will commence on the day that is 18 months after the date of assent or an earlier day or days to be appointed by proclamation. The Ombudsman has indicated in his special report to Parliament that he supports the commencement clause in the bill, noting that "a considerable amount of work will be required before it can be commenced and come into force." The Ombudsman indicates that this time is required to allow the Ombudsman's office to establish a team, to develop and to issue comprehensive new public and agency guidelines and templates, and to roll out new reporting, notification and conciliation functions. The proposed commencement provision provides the New South Wales public sector with a critical date by which the reforms must commence, while enabling the steering committee a degree of flexibility to advise the Government

that necessary work prior to commencement has been completed and that the Act should commence prior to the expiry of the full 18-month period.

The Government will work with the Ombudsman to ensure that his office receives appropriate resourcing to deliver on the promise of these reforms. The Ombudsman's office has the Government's full support to do everything that is necessary to properly implement and operationalise these most important reforms. These matters will be properly considered as part of the process for the 2022-23 New South Wales budget. The Government is committed to ensuring whistleblowers receive appropriate protections. This bill preserves and enhances a culture of reporting serious wrongdoing and other misconduct in the New South Wales public sector and in our community generally. I thank the members of the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee for contributing their time and expertise to the development of the bill. In particular, I acknowledge the work of the steering committee's chair, the Ombudsman, Mr Paul Miller, PSM. I thank the staff at the Parliamentary Counsel's Office for their skill and diligence in undertaking this substantial and complex drafting project. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (21:01): Members will be gratified to hear that, as the Attorney General has just given us the Public Interest Disclosures Bill 2022 chapter and verse, I will completely truncate much of what I was going to say. The bill has already been read for the second time after former Minister Harwin introduced it in the other place, where it originated. I begin by thanking all the brave members of the public service and government workers—I say "brave" because they must be brave—who have taken it upon themselves, often at great risk, to make complaints under public interest disclosure legislation over the past years and decades because they saw things going on in their public service workplaces that they thought ought to be reported. I must say, as a local member, that too often since 2011 government workers have come into my office and complained to me that they felt fearful when doing so and that among employees, particularly in the Health portfolio under a former Minister and the Transport portfolio under a former Minister, there was a culture of fear of speaking out.

It is absolutely true to say that, when it comes to public interest disclosures, you need governments to foster a culture within organisations of encouraging those sorts of disclosures. You also need a proper legislative framework. When I was police Minister I remember Commissioner Andrew Scipione, who was a fine commissioner, said to me that the Police Force at that time had a culture that encouraged and rewarded officers for being vigilant and, if they saw something wrong within the force, they were not afraid and were encouraged to come forward and report it. That made for a better police force, and it still does. That philosophy applies equally in every government department.

It is true to say that you either believe in transparency or you do not. In my time in Parliament, I have spoken many times about transparency. Shining light into dark places protects taxpayers' money, protects the rigours of government, protects efficiencies and is to be encouraged. As I said, there are really two aspects to it—cultural and structural. We either believe in transparency or we do not. The Opposition and I believe in transparency. I was going to speak about the provisions of the bill but I will not do that now. The Opposition supports the bill, as we did in the other place. We believe that it is essential that public officials who make a disclosure exposing serious wrongdoing in a public sector organisation are adequately protected. I have just gone through why that is the case.

We recognise that the bill is the first substantial change to the existing Act since brave Independents in this place forced the Fahey Government to do it 27 years ago. The stated objective of the bill is to provide a culture and legislative framework in which public interest disclosures may be made. The Opposition believes that is essential to the proper functioning of a democratically elected government. We hope that the amendments embodied in this new framework will foster a culture and encourage people to come forward, because without proper and adequate protections, there is a highly significant risk that serious instances of corruption, maladministration and waste will not be revealed and therefore will not be addressed. That leads to corruption in government processes—not in the ICAC sense but corruption of good government processes.

There are costs for everybody if systems do not work and there are hidden costs which are harder to detect when systems are not working. That is what the bill seeks to combat. As the Attorney General said, although at the time of its enactment the original Act was a leading piece of legislation, it was drafted way back in 1994 and as a result it is now out of step with community expectations and needed modernising. The bill is not perfect but it does go some way towards modernising the Act. It is a product of multiple inquiries and many hard years of deliberation. In the course of one of those inquiries the committee found that existing protections were too narrow and unclear and that there is a significant public interest in increasing the protections available to people as the current lack of protection deters people from making voluntary disclosures, thereby standing in the way of preventing and exposing instances of improper conduct. That is a clear statement of the problem. It is good to see

that almost all of the recommendations from the various inquiries have been implemented in the bill. It is much clearer now and less convoluted than the existing Act and it sets out a modern legislative framework for managing information disclosed by public officers.

The bill specifies conditions under which a disclosure is a voluntary public interest disclosure; that is, where the person disclosing honestly believes on reasonable grounds that the conduct shows or tends to show serious wrongdoing. In those instances the person disclosing will receive protections under the bill. Importantly, the definition of "public officials" is expanded in the bill to make it more broad in respect of who can make a voluntary disclosure by expressly including statutory officers as well as contractors, subcontractors and volunteers. Vitaly, the bill makes it an offence to take detrimental action against a person based on suspicion, belief or awareness that the person or another person has made a public interest disclosure, and protects persons who make public interest disclosures from detriment and liability in relation to the making of the disclosures.

When the bill was introduced in the other place, the Opposition supported referring the bill to a short committee inquiry, which was conducted by Portfolio Committee No. 1. It was clear from that committee's report that there remained existing concerns about the bill. Those concerns were well outlined in the report. I will not go through them now. They informed the approach that the Opposition took by way of amendments in the other place. A number of amendments were passed in the other place and we believe that the bill is now better for that. However, some of the key amendments were not passed. They related to the threshold for disclosures made to members of Parliament and to journalists. We say that those provisions stand in contrast to prospective disclosures to other recipients specified in the bill.

Under clause 26 other disclosures are classified as voluntary public interest disclosures if the person disclosing is doing so honestly and on reasonable grounds and believes that the disclosure shows or tends to show serious wrongdoing. Honest and reasonable belief in that instance is a significantly lower threshold than substantial truth. We do not agree with the Attorney General in that regard but we realise that is a fight that we did not win. The portfolio committee inquiry report recommended that removing the additional threshold so that an official who reports to the media will be protected, provided they believe honestly and on reasonable grounds that their disclosure showed or tended to show serious wrongdoing, was a better way to go.

The Opposition view is that these high thresholds and additional requirements did not meet the previously stated objectives of the bill and that they did not promote a culture in which public interest disclosures were sufficiently encouraged. Overwhelmingly, the impression given by stakeholders, however, was an eagerness to pass the bill and to streamline the disclosures process. Stakeholders were very clear to our members in the other place who undertook substantial consultation with them that they wanted this bill and its updated approach to disclosures, and Labor has heard that clearly. We were disappointed that the Minister in the other place essentially put the proposition that if the Opposition amendments were passed, the Government would simply not proceed with the bill. So we had no choice. We lost that fight but we did get some wins and we believe that we have improved the bill. It is a step forward.

I again recognise the work of certain people: the Hon. John Graham, who led for the Opposition in the Legislative Council; and Adam Searle, who did a great deal of work, as he always does—indefatigably so—on committees and who has been a leading reformer in this area for a long time. I thank the Attorney General for his constructive engagement with the Opposition and other members who contributed to the committees whose extensive inquiries have led to these reforms. The Opposition supports the bill as it appears in this place.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (21:11): In reply: I thank the member for Maroubra for his contribution to the debate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

TATTOO PARLOURS AMENDMENT (STATUTORY REVIEW) BILL 2021

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

*Community Recognition Statements***TRIBUTE TO WALTER SELLERS**

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (21:12): Vale, Walter Sellers, who passed away at 85 years after a life dedicated to family and community. Walter was born in Maitland, attending Horseshoe Bend Infants School and going on to work in the railways, owning and working in a number of businesses, including Maitland Retravision, and retiring in 2002. Walter was a charter member of the Lions Club of East Maitland in 1974, serving as president of the club four times, and was on the board for many years. Walter served in district cabinet and was a district governor. Walter established a pool for Mai-Wel, started the Lions Club County Fair, and of course his signature event, the Australia Day Ball in the Mall, raised over \$237,000 for local charities over 20 years. He was a member of Maitland Repertory Theatre and helped form the Maitland Variety Club. In 1991 Walter was nominated as Maitland Citizen of the Year. He served on Maitland's Australia Day committee and hosted many of Maitland's Australia Day ceremonies as MC. Walter was a valued Australian who made an extraordinary contribution to our community. My condolences go to his wife, Rosalea; their four children, Susan, Bruce, Jennifer and Todd; 17 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Vale, Walter.

RIVERSTONE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR MONA SIDHU

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (21:13): I acknowledge the contributions of Mona Sidhu, the 2022 Riverstone Local Woman of the Year. Mona has been an educator for 16 years and has used her skills at the Khalsa Punjabi School, where she strives to make the Punjabi language accessible to the next generation of the Punjabi community in western Sydney. Mona has developed a free website providing useful resources to supplement the learning of the Punjabi language in both the classroom and at home, and hosts workshops to provided additional support to educators and students adapting to new learning environments. Mona founded a women in employment program where she has mentored women in the Punjabi community hoping to join or rejoin the workforce. She also has a keen focus on providing support to families who are experiencing mental illness and bullying. I congratulate Mona Sidhu.

PENINSULA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:14): I welcome the recently formed Peninsula Residents Association to our community. I am sure it will become an important voice in the future development of decisions made for the broader peninsula community, especially given the legislation passed through the Parliament today. As a voluntary non-profit community group which aims to serve as a nonpartisan forum, the association will give the peninsula a collective voice on matters that directly impact the local quality of life to ensure that our area remains a fantastic place to live. The association is an example of our community's passion and commitment to the unique character of the area, advocating for planning decisions that are appropriate, adapted and beneficial to the peninsula and our residents. I again welcome the Peninsula Residents Association. I look forward to working with it in the very near future.

CANCER COUNCIL FUNDRAISER DENISE DAYNES

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (21:15): I commend the hardworking Denise Daynes and her team from the Cancer Council for the outstanding work they do to raise funds for the fight against cancer. In February I took part in dancing with the Stars of Sydney South West, and with my dance partner, Jade Kelly, we shook our pompoms to cheer on people to donate funds for a great cause. After many COVID delays, many hours of rehearsals and many aching, sore muscles, collectively the Stars of Sydney South West raised over \$147,000—the most money ever raised for a "Dancing with the Stars" Cancer Council event. I thank the Sapphires cheerleading team from the mighty Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs for sharing some of their tips on how to shake it. A big thanks to Sandra Fleeton and her Dance It dancers for their excellent high kicks and acrobatics, their dedication to dance and donating their time to ensure the event was successful. Even though we did not take out the disco ball, I give my sincerest of thanks to my dance partner, Jade Kelly, who is not only an exceptionally talented dancer and choreographer but an all-round great human.

COCKTAILS FOR A CAUSE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (21:16): I congratulate The Rio, a small bar in Summer Hill, on hosting Cocktails for a Cause, a heartwarming fundraiser to support research into Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophies. These are genetically inherited disorders and mostly affect boys. They are characterised by muscular weakness and degeneration. While medical advancements have improved quality of life and the speed of regression, there is still, sadly, no cure. Many in the community are unaware of these disorders and events such as the fundraiser held by The Rio not only help improve research but also raise awareness. The Rio raised over \$3,200 and locals can still make a donation. I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the whole Rio team and thank the sponsors for the night: Philter Brewing, Mextrade Australia, Poor Toms, Willie the Boatman and

CDK9. I also thank the excellent musicians and performers who kept patrons entertained throughout the day. I congratulate The Rio on caring for our community and on its successful Cocktails for a Cause.

COWRA FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (21:17): Hot on the heels of Harmony Day, the Cowra community is coming together to celebrate the 2022 Festival of International Understanding with the theme "To honour/respect country". I recognise Cowra council and coordinator Meredith Burton for pulling together a fantastic program for the festival, which focuses on Cowra's unique place as the home of reconciliation. I am also very pleased the New South Wales Government has lent support through the Summer Night Fund Program. I also take this opportunity to congratulate those involved in the festival's youth ambassador program: Codie Thompson, Amelia Thomson, Charlotte Partridge, Olivia Parrish, Nat Mallon, Destiny Pepper, Charles Tuckfield, Henry Anderson, Louis Gough and Samuel Haeta. These young people have done a stellar job representing themselves, their schools and their clubs in aid of their nominated charities, including Cowra Meals on Wheels, Cowra Cancer Action Group, Cowra Neighbourhood Watch, Cowra Riding for the Disabled, Lismore regional conservatorium flood relief, Legacy and Lismore flood victims. I congratulate all involved.

PLATINUM PRE SCHOOL

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (21:18): I acknowledge the incredible work of Platinum Pre School in Randwick, which has recently donated \$10,000 to the Lions Club of Coogee to support people from across New South Wales to recover and rebuild from the devastating floods. Jo O'Brien, the owner of Platinum Pre School, has done an incredible job in not only raising the funds for donation but also putting in practice the values of the preschool. The kids at Platinum are taught to always be kind and to always help those in need, and this generous donation is a great display of leading by example. Jo and Platinum Pre School are shining examples of how local businesses in the Coogee electorate are supporting those in need. I thank them. Well done to Jo and the entire community of Platinum Pre School.

PENRITH SMALL BUSINESS MONTH BREAKFAST

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (21:19): I recognise and thank Gai Hawthorn and her team at the Penrith CBD Corporation for organising the Penrith Small Business Month breakfast, which was held recently at Penrith Panthers with the small business Minister, Eleni Petinos, in attendance. There was a fantastic turnout with representatives from over 170 local businesses. Funds raised at the event will go towards The Haven, a women's shelter in Penrith. Events like this can only be possible with the support of communities and other businesses. I thank the partners from the event—Western Sydney Business Centre, Witten Partners, Penrith Panthers, OnePointHealth and HR Success—and those businesses that generously contributed to the prizes: White River Design, Kingswood Florist, Penrith City Tyre and Automotive, Realty Homes, UFC Gym Penrith, itravel Penrith, Griddle Restaurant, Burger Head, The Royce, Jeffrey Eyles and Cookies Ice Creamery. I also thank the students from Penrith Selective High School for providing the fantastic music for the event.

GOODLIFE CHURCH

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (21:20): When the Wickham woolsheds burnt down earlier this month, hundreds of locals had to quickly evacuate the area. While many had friends or family they could stay with, some had nowhere to go. At the drop of a hat the Goodlife Church stepped up and turned its property into an evacuation centre. It provided a meal and somewhere to sleep for people and pets, as well as a base for emergency services and welfare teams. The church also hosted community meetings and drop-in information sessions, and was always happy to help with whatever was needed. Goodlife went above and beyond to assist, and made a stressful and hectic time much easier. Its efforts are truly appreciated.

WAYS SECONDARY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (21:20): Today I shine a light on my local Bondi high school WAYS Secondary, which is an independent high school offering alternative education for years 9 to 12 students. The school is oversighted by WAYS Youth & Family, which does an amazing job supporting our disadvantaged youth. WAYS Secondary graduated its first HSC student in 2016, and since then it has led to more. In particular I am gratified to congratulate two students: distinguished achiever Adele Perchey, who got top band results in Standard English, Standard Mathematics and Modern History; and Olivia Gudgeon, who got sixth in the State for Standard Mathematics. That is truly a remarkable achievement. I thank the excellent WAYS leadership team: CEO and principal Dr Terri Said, board president Leo Wassercug, and board members Bartley Melocco, Penelope Boyd, Ralph Joseph, Sophie Harvey, Sallie King and Yulia Tkachenko for the work they do for our disadvantaged local youth.

BLACKTOWN SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR KERRI MEYER-GLEAVES

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (21:21): I congratulate Mrs Kerri Meyer-Gleaves on becoming the Blacktown City Senior Citizen of the Year. Kerri is a tower of strength for the community, particularly her passion and support of the Blacktown Girl Guides. Kerri has been an adult member of Girl Guides NSW, ACT & NT for the past 47 years. She is the district manager at Blacktown Girl Guides and has assisted many of the girls. She mentors the girls and helps them to find solutions to their activities. Kerri has helped organise the Blacktown Girl Guides to support council events and fundraising activities. Funds raised have supported the young Guides to attend snow camps as well as domestic and international jamborees. Kerri is a very thoughtful person and always has the time to help the Guide leaders, support groups and parents in the district. She is a truly worthy recipient of the Blacktown City Senior Citizen of the Year award.

CAMDEN RSL MURAL

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (21:22): Camden is blessed with many veterans who call Camden home. I could not think of a better way to acknowledge them than by an eye-catching, one-of-a-kind Anzac Day mural. I commend the work of Annette Clissold from the Camden RSL Sub-Branch, who applied for the grant through Camden Council, and the sub-branch itself, which contributed to a memorable piece of art and history. The club commissioned a stunning Anzac mural on its street-facing wall, which was brought to life by artist Dave Thomas. I acknowledge president Iain Richard-Evan, vice-president Con Diomis and all sub-branch members who keep the Anzac spirit alive in Camden.

KING ABDULLAH II SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (21:23): I offer my personal congratulations to His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan on the celebration of his sixtieth birthday. On 9 June 2022 His Majesty King Abdullah II will celebrate the twenty-third anniversary of his ascension to the throne of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I take this opportunity to commend King Abdullah II for his exemplary leadership and achievements in the Middle East over the past 23 years. Since his ascension to the throne, King Abdullah II has led Jordan in a reform and development approach to its political, economic and social fields. During his leadership, King Abdullah II has faced a number of challenges due to often volatile and conflict-ridden neighbouring countries. Despite this turbulence, Jordan is known as a nation that promotes peace and security. I especially acknowledge the positive impact His Majesty's leadership has had on refugee families through his decision to open the Jordanian borders to Palestinian, Syrian and Iraqi refugees. In the electorate of Prospect we have a significant and vibrant Jordanian community. I look forward to continuing to assist our Jordanian community in New South Wales and abroad.

CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITORING SUBSIDY INITIATIVE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (21:24): The type 1 diabetic constituents of Heathcote who qualify congratulate the Federal Government for investing in Dexcom G6 continuous glucose monitoring for eligible Australians participating in the CGM initiative. The device reads blood sugars and alerts a list of phone numbers that the person's blood sugars have dropped or spiked, allowing for urgent medical intervention. I request that the device be made available to every Australian who has type 1 diabetes, an estimated 200,000 people across Australia. I plead with health Ministers from all States to lobby the Federal Government, as our health Minister has, for every person with type 1 diabetes across Australia to have access to this game-changing device.

SEAHAM PUBLIC SCHOOL PARLIAMENT OPENING

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (21:25): Last week I had the pleasure of attending one of my favourite occasions of the year, the opening of the school parliament at Seaham Public School. This year was particularly special after COVID prevented so many in-person school events over the past two years. I can genuinely say that the future of Port Stephens is in safe hands when I watch our future leaders performing in their school parliament. Their parliamentary team would hold its own right here in this Chamber. I acknowledge the "Governor-General", or school principal, Mr Partridge; and the school's teachers, or Senators. I congratulate the Speaker and the school's Ministers and shadow Ministers: Dali Bobako, Billie Drew, Lila Foot, Kayla Kennedy, Hayden Edwards, Charlotte Bacon, Sam Burey, Andrew Stapleton, Lachlan Pascoe, Sofia Vella, Milly Bridge, Flynn Imber, Shelby Griffiths, Mia Laver, Larni Kennedy and Aidan Crowley. The future leaders of Port Stephens are shining in Seaham.

BRIERFIELD SCHOOL BUS DRIVER WARREN WEICK

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (21:26): It was a somewhat emotional day when the community of Bellingen finally pulled together the vision to celebrate their beloved bus driver and local legend Warren Weick, who has been driving the Brierfield school bus for 40 years. There were pictures of the buses over the years, stories and tears sharing and celebrating what "Wazza" means to the many locals gathered. As the stories showed,

Warren is so much more than a bus driver to the community. Over the past four decades he has gone above and beyond, caring for our children and our families. I do not know that Warren will be driving tomorrow, as the rain falls dreadfully over the Bellingen shire. But Warren has been a vocal supporter for council's road maintenance program, which is particularly important because over the past four decades it has needed strong local advocacy. While we immediately think of roads, Warren understands that bank slashing and overhead branch clearance are also immensely important so buses can safely travel along the roads. I congratulate Warren, who is an absolute character, on his longstanding commitment to the Bellingen community. I sat with him and his beautiful wife at the Bellingen Show last year. Our region is blessed to have so many generous people like Wazza.

ST PIUS X HIGH SCHOOL

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (21:27): Yet again, I am here to talk about people in my electorate who have incredible heart. The students at St Pius X High School in Adamstown have shown their support for the people of Ukraine by raising funds for Caritas, a Catholic humanitarian organisation committed to working alongside the world's most vulnerable people. It is on the ground in Ukraine supporting families displaced by the conflict. A thousand St Pius X students came together in Ukraine's national colours of yellow and blue to form the country's national flag on 24 March. Along with raising funds, the school took the opportunity to remind its community about the importance of caring for those less fortunate. The school's commitment to supporting its neighbours across the globe during the humanitarian crisis is inspiring to the rest of the community. I absolutely applaud all the students, teachers and staff at St Pius X High School in Adamstown for the work they have done.

WAUCHOPE ROTARY CLUB AND NEVILLE PARSONS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:28): I congratulate Neville Parsons from the Wauchope Rotary Club for recently celebrating 40 years of service to Rotary International. A remarkable man who epitomises the Rotary motto, "Service above self", Neville was acknowledged by district governor David Mayne on 22 February for his incredible contribution to Rotary and to our local community, spanning four decades. In order to describe all of Neville's achievements and roles since joining the organisation in 1981, I would need to request a considerable extension of time for this contribution. Neville became president of Wauchope Rotary Club in 1984-85 before re-standing in 2002-03, in 2011-12 and most recently in 2017-18. He has also served as secretary for three terms and treasurer from 2015, a position he still holds today. In 1998-99 Neville was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow, the first of multiple Paul Harris Fellow accolades for his outstanding work within the organisation and his efforts promoting world peace. At the 2011 Wauchope Rotary Changeover, Neville was presented with a Paul Harris Sapphire Pin acknowledging his long legacy of service. Neville also served as district governor for district 9650 in the 2009-10 Rotary year and is now the incoming district governor of district 9660 for 2022-23.

TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION AND MICK FORBES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (21:30): Congratulations to the Newcastle and Northern Sub-Branch secretary of the Transport Workers Union, Mr Mick Forbes, on his 20 years of service to the members of the New South Wales branch of the TWU. He has been a member of the TWU since 1984, when he began working for Comet Transport in Newcastle. He took up an activist role as a co-delegate in 1996, then as head delegate in 2000. In 2002 he was elected a member of the Newcastle and Northern Sub-Branch executive committee and later the branch committee of management, finally becoming Newcastle and Northern Sub-Branch secretary in 2009. Mick is a really strong advocate for transport workers, initiating meetings with bus companies, elected representatives and workers on important industrial, safety and community issues. I commend Mick for 20 years of advocacy for transport workers' rights and thank him for his particular focus on and commitment to championing the rights of the members of the TWU. I have been a proud member of the TWU for over a decade under Mick's leadership, and I thank him for his leadership of our local sub-branch.

ANGEL FLIGHT VOLUNTEER DONALD PALMER

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (21:31): I take this opportunity to recognise a community member who has reached a significant milestone that deserves our appreciation and thanks. Orangeville resident Donald Palmer has clocked an impressive 100 volunteer flights for Angel Flight. Mr Palmer flies for the charity fortnightly as well as giving presentations in country communities to spread awareness of its fantastic service. Angel Flight is a charity that coordinates non-emergency flights to assist people in rural and remote areas to access specialist medical treatment that would otherwise be unavailable to them because of the vast distance and high travel costs. Volunteers like Mr Palmer give so generously of their time and expertise to make that wonderful service possible. Although those who have been helped by Mr Palmer are from far and wide, I thank him on behalf of the Wollondilly community for his service to those in need.

ACTION ON HOUSING OLDER WOMEN

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:32): I extend my humblest gratitude to the members of Action on Housing Older Women, an initiative of the Elderslee Foundation, for their tireless work in finding solutions for older women affected by homelessness. I am impressed to see that in just 12 months since their forum Creating Collaborative Housing Solutions: Focus on Central Coast Older Women, members have worked on a number of initiatives to provide safe and secure housing for older women on the Central Coast. The initiatives include working on a partnership with Women's Community Shelters and Pacific Link, developing a housing access fund, ongoing networking and advocacy meetings and repurposing Jack Aldous House at Peninsula Village into studio apartments for older women. Hopefully, they will pull that one off. With the cost of housing on the Central Coast skyrocketing and the housing system in crisis, with rents up by an average of 40 per cent and availability sitting at less than 1 per cent, that role is certainly to be commended. I thank members for their tireless work helping such a vulnerable part of our community.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION GOULBURN EVENING BRANCH

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (21:32): I recognise the Country Women's Association Goulburn Evening Branch. On 28 February the branch celebrated its twenty-first birthday after celebrations were rescheduled last year due to COVID-19. The first meeting of the branch was held in November 1978, but it unfortunately closed in the late eighties before being revived in the year 2000. The CWA evening branch has had many successful fundraising events over the years, including fashion parades, open gardens, high teas, evenings of education and guest speakers, as well as the famous Devonshire teas and cake stalls at the Goulburn Show. Mr Temporary Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Country Women's Association Goulburn Evening Branch on its twenty-first birthday. Happy birthday.

NATIONAL PREMIER LEAGUES NSW AND NATHANIEL BLAIR

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (21:33): Congratulations to Nathaniel Blair, who has made his National Premier Leagues NSW soccer debut at just 17 years of age. To crack the semi-professional level of any code is an immense achievement, but to do so at 17 is quite unheard of. To then score a goal just six minutes into one's debut is incredible, but it is all in a day's work for Nathaniel. I am so proud of this talented young man, who is now one of two high-level soccer players to have attended high school in the inner west and to have played their junior game for the Marrickville Red Devils. The other, of course, is Tim Cahill. Like Tim, Nathaniel dreams of one day going on to play for the Socceroos. With his efforts and commitment so far, I have no doubt that he can absolutely do so. Congratulations to Nathaniel. He has inspired another generation of young inner westies—so many more Marrickville Red Devils—to strap on their boots and follow their dreams, and we will be cheering for him all the way.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE FLOODS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (21:34): I commend and thank the organisations and volunteers who came together and helped the Hawkesbury community through the February and March 2022 floods. Recognition must go to the Hawkesbury Police Area Command, NSW State Emergency Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire and Rescue, Australian Defence Force, Service NSW, Anglicare, Salvation Army, Richmond Club, Castle Hill RSL and Merroo Christian Centre. I thank mayors, councillors and staff from Hawkesbury City Council and The Hills Shire Council for their contributions during such a difficult time. I also thank the many volunteers who came forward in this time of need to help their neighbours. I thank the community volunteers who organised and delivered food hampers for those in need. Those volunteers include Fiona Germaine, Karen Stuttle from Mountain of Joy in Kurrajong Heights, and Linda Strickland and her team from Hawkesbury's Helping Hands. We are grateful for their combined efforts in helping the Hawkesbury community through such a difficult time.

ROTARY CLUB OF BRISBANE WATER DEMENTIA CAFE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:35): It was absolutely fabulous to join a great team of community members to support the joy and challenges of those living with dementia. This loving group meets on the second and fourth Monday of every month at Umina Country Women's Association Hall. Rotary Club of Brisbane Water president Cherie Simpson and members have built an innovative cafe that meets a need in our community and provides a framework to address common feelings of isolation often experienced after a diagnosis of dementia. The cafe is designed to be a safe and informative social get-together, offering experts and ideas to assist people living with dementia to have dignified social interaction, while also helping carers to stay connected and engaged. Its Valentine's Day meeting this year was particularly beautiful. Demonstrations of love and companionship were the order of the day. It is an innovative group. I suggest people from across our community join in if they feel the need or can assist in any way.

GOULBURN TABLE TENNIS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (21:36): I recognise Goulburn Table Tennis. Despite the current COVID-19 challenges, the Southern Country Teams Championships were a great success. Over 41 competitors from across New South Wales and 20 teams across two divisions flocked to Goulburn, resulting in some hotly contested rivalry. While our Goulburn locals placed fourth in the first division, the community had wonderful representation in the competition. I congratulate each player on their tremendous success. I recognise the efforts of Goulburn Table Tennis as an association and the players who participated in the Southern Country Teams Championships. I wish Goulburn Table Tennis all the very best for its 2022 season.

TRIBUTE TO RON COOPER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (21:37): It is with great sadness that I advise of the sudden passing of West Wyalong local Mr Ron Cooper. Ron was a dedicated and hardworking member of the community. Most of all, he was a great friend of mine. Always there to lend a helping hand, Ron was very influential in the communities he served. I sincerely thank him for everything he achieved in his lifetime. Ron served on many volunteer committees, including in his former role as president of the West Wyalong Lions Club. In 2019 his generous contributions were recognised when he was named the Bland Shire Local Citizen of the Year. He was a most deserving recipient. Ron's most recent work to make the community a better place for all was the reinvigoration of the Tivoli West Wyalong theatre, where he was chairman. I express my deepest condolences to Ron's daughters and their partners: Gillian and Stewart; Fiona and Stephen; Sallyanne and Andrew; and Courtney and Michael. I also extend my condolences to their families and to all those who loved him. The world is a darker place without Ron's bright light in it.

TRIBUTE TO RON COOPER

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (21:38): I join with the member for Cootamundra in acknowledging West Wyalong resident Ron Cooper. I knew Ron Cooper when he worked for the former member for Lachlan, and former Deputy Premier of New South Wales, Ian Armstrong. I last saw Ron at the memorial service for Ian Armstrong. Ron was a beautiful man who dedicated his life to his community. He would have loved being named Bland Shire Local Citizen of the Year. He did a lot of work for the Lions club. He was a decent National. He believed in our party and what we stand for—jobs, opportunities, economic growth and a future for regional New South Wales. Vale, Ron Cooper. I extend my deepest condolences to his family.

Private Members' Statements

SYDNEY CASINOS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (21:39): A recurring theme in representations from my constituents has focused on the impacts of Sydney's two casinos on the social and economic life of the city, and whether the Star and Crown serve chiefly as adornments to the Sydney Harbour foreshore providing meaningful jobs and entertainment experiences, or whether they stand as monuments to less edifying aspects of the human condition. In one sense, the enduring concern of my constituents is ironic because Sydney's casinos generate minimal impacts for my community. Pittwater enjoys high levels of employment and is a major tourist drawcard. As a generally more prosperous part of Sydney, Pittwater has relatively low rates of problem gambling. The well-documented social and economic damage caused by problem gambling disproportionately impacts those communities least able to absorb it.

When a Sydney casino was mooted during the original redevelopment of Darling Harbour, opponents warned that the ostensible benefits of the casino were illusory. They said that rather than creating new jobs and generating additional wealth the casino would, at best, merely divert jobs and transfer wealth or, at worst, destroy permanent, meaningful jobs and replace them with transitory employment offering limited skills development; displace existing live music venues; and destroy social capital, not to mention people's lives. Proponents of a Sydney casino championed its role in attracting foreign investment, and serving as a honeypot for international tourists and as a patron of the arts. It was claimed that a Sydney casino would create local jobs and generate tax revenues to support a range of important social initiatives. Indeed, when the Casino Control Act was introduced in 1992, tax revenues were expressly hypothecated to public health over the first five years of the casino's operation. On the introduction of that legislation, the responsible Minister declared:

The process of establishing Sydney's casino must also be above reproach.

The problem is that the process of running Sydney's casinos has been anything but. Following horrific media reports about criminal activities at Crown Casino in Melbourne, a series of consecutive inquiries—first in New South Wales, then in Victoria and most recently in Western Australia—has uncovered a veritable cesspit of

dishonesty, tax evasion, junkets, money laundering and extensive infiltration by organised crime. Basically, everything we were warned about turns out to be entirely true.

Whether it was Patricia Bergin in New South Wales, Ray Finkelstein in Victoria or Neville Owen and Lindy Jenkins in Western Australia, all the independent inquiries heard similar evidence of disgraceful behaviour, which they variously described as dishonest, unethical, exploitative and illegal—and that is just Crown. Regulators have only just started investigating similar conduct at The Star, and evidence of the same practices, or worse—if that were possible—is already emerging. Each of those inquiries will have significant impacts on the regulatory environments faced by casino operators. Those impacts will generate a cascading series of consequences that should cause us to pose an existential question about the future of casinos in New South Wales.

Stronger regulation will impact profitability, and lower profitability will adversely affect all of the wider benefits that have justified the continuing operation of New South Wales' two casinos. Revelations of tax evasion also completely undermine the argument that casino operations are justified on the basis of the revenue they provide to support wider social and community benefits. Now is the best and, I would argue, the only time to ask the question: Are the illusory and ephemeral benefits of Sydney's casinos worth the proven harm—the deceit, the crime and the destroyed lives? Some 30 years ago, the Minister responsible for the introduction of the Casino Control Act promised:

The casino development in Sydney will be above reproach, as will its operator.

A generation later that promise is exposed as a forlorn hope. The definition of madness is to do something repeatedly and expect different results. I know what it is like to go up against a casino operator. Perhaps it is time for our community to rise up against them.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (21:44): I return with my humble working-class economist series for 2022 to demonstrate two important economic concepts: (1) moral hazard, and (2) opportunity cost. Moral hazard generally describes a scenario where one party takes on additional—or some would say excessive—risk knowing that another party will bear the economic/financial consequences. A perfect example, of course, is the global financial crisis, caused by dodgy bankers selling even dodgier financial products to the public, which inevitably led to systemic risks to the financial system, only for governments around the world to bail the banks out. Another example of moral hazard can be found in procurement contract management by this Coalition Government. How is it that the Government signs a contract to have project X built for an agreed price with a private company or companies, but when market conditions change or when the company misprices its tender or miscalculates its risks, the Government pulls out the taxpayers' credit card and puts a few extra billion dollars on it, on top of the \$100-plus billion already on the State debt?

The Government's attitude is "No problem; anytime. You made a billion-dollar mistake on your contract estimates or miscalculated your market risk or your cost increases? Poor you. Don't worry about it. Uncle Dom will fix it up and whack it on the public debt for your mistake." I am not talking about a one-off budget blowout of \$100 or \$200. I am talking about billion-dollar doozies: the \$2.2 billion blowout on the City and Southwest Metro; the \$1.7 billion overspend on the CBD Light Rail; nearly \$3 billion in extra costs on the Metro West; the \$1.4 billion costs surge on the M6 Stage 1, WestConnex Rozelle Interchange and Sydney Gateway road projects; and \$1 billion on the new intercity train fleet. This list is by no means exhaustive. An agreement is signed for a product to be delivered for an agreed price. Just because one party to a contract gets it wrong does not mean the other party picks up the bill. This does not make sense because it just does not make sense.

How can members of the Coalition Government keep a straight face when they claim to be good economic managers? Their repeated mistakes make it clear that the public cannot trust the Government to safeguard public funds from astronomical contract variations. The Government will blame changing market conditions for cost overruns. That is an issue for the contracted company to manage and to solve. Why does the taxpayer have to wear the financial consequences for a private company's risk-taking behaviour when things do not work out or when they have mispriced their tender? However, private industry cannot be blamed for taking advantage of an ill-informed and incompetent Government that is unable to manage contracts and procurement processes.

This humble working-class economist has serious questions for the Government. Why is the onus not on construction firms to get their original costings correct? Why has the Government failed to include safeguards in major project contracts to protect taxpayers from cost blowouts? What oversight will be put in place to ensure that taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for further budget blowouts? Why does the Government simply get out the taxpayers' chequebook when construction firms ask for more money? Contract mismanagement has serious repercussions for the State budget and for local communities everywhere; hence I turn to the second economic concept, opportunity cost. When the Government oversees budget blowouts, there is less money to fund much-needed services and infrastructure.

There is a long list of projects and initiatives in my electorate of Macquarie Fields that could have easily been funded by the \$10 billion in budget blowouts I referred to earlier, including lifts at Macquarie Fields railway station; toll relief for motorists; new, upgraded and air-conditioned schools; extra bus services; energy rebates for households; more nurses and doctors in our hospitals; and extra support classes in local schools. I am sure every Labor MP and Independent MP could easily add to this list. Members of the Government like to beat their chests and pretend they have a record of strong economic management. A look at the facts paints a very different and disturbing picture. Cost blowouts and contract mismanagement hit taxpayers hard. The opportunity costs for communities everywhere are enormous and growing, in particular for communities in our regions. New South Wales taxpayers deserve nothing less than money well spent. Stay tuned, colleagues, for this humble working-class economist's next analysis of the Coalition Government's mismanagement and failures.

WERRIS CREEK GOLF CLUB

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (21:48): At the heart of many communities sits an asset that means so much and is used by so many. It is community run, community led and community maintained. It is a place to get together, a place to spend your weekend, a place to have a good meal and be in good company—and a place to swing a golf club. Along the historic railway line in north-west New South Wales, in the town of Werris Creek, that asset is the golf club. The club has been around for 90 years and boasts a beautiful, picturesque nine-hole golf course. It hosts events which bring the community together, like the rock'n'roll night on 19 March, which raised money for young Mikey Hausfeld, a three-year-old local boy who is suffering from cancer. And then there is the community New Year's Eve get-together, with live entertainment and fireworks, as well as the usual rounds of midweek and weekend golf. The community comes together at events like these and that is why the club is so important to Werris Creek.

The Werris Creek community is a community who supports each other, who are there for each other, and who are always ready to chip in to make a difference. That is why it was so devastating for them when the January 2020 floods damaged so much of the infrastructure of the golf course, including all the bridges and the culverts. The loss of these particular infrastructure assets became a huge problem. The double whammy of having to pay to replace the bridges and the loss of so many events due to COVID meant that the Werris Creek Golf Club faced a very grim future. The loss of the golf club, which is run by volunteers and keeps the community vibrant, would have been far too much to bear for Werris Creek. That is why it was a massive relief for all when it was announced that \$47,831 in New South Wales government funding would be making its way to the club from the Community Building Partnership fund.

The funding has put an end to the uncertainty. I pay tribute to Jann and Warrick Moore and all of the board, all of the volunteers, and all of the loyal golfers and community members who have kept the dream alive, kept fighting for this funding and kept knocking on my door. I know just how thrilled they were to get the news that the funding had come through to repair their beautiful golf course. Once this work is done and the course is back to top shape, it will be the perfect place to hold the 2022 Women's NSW Sand Greens Championship on Saturday 22 October and Sunday 23 October. This is a great coup for the club. Women golfers from all over New South Wales will come to Werris Creek and challenge this beautiful course. It will also be a great boost for the town, with accommodation already close to being booked out. Congratulations to the club committee for taking on this event. I am sure it will be a huge success, with plenty of support from our friends at Golf NSW. I look forward to visiting the course yet again, and in particular to the Women's NSW Sand Greens Championship on Saturday 22 October and Sunday 23 October, at beautiful Werris Creek.

THE GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (21:52): The Great Koala National Park is back on the agenda of a number of councils in the Oxley electorate, and it is a timely reminder to look at the history of the concept and at why the park will not improve koala habitat nor improve our forest estate. I remind the House that Australia is a net importer of timber—a national disgrace, surely. The National Parks Association [NPA] initially proposed the conversion of 175,000 hectares of former farming land—that is, State forest—to national park to establish the Great Koala National Park [GKNP] in the Coffs Harbour hinterland in 2014. A report prepared by the University of Newcastle outlined purported economic impacts and environmental benefits of the creation of the GKNP. However, the analysis had fundamental flaws, including the failure to account for the existing and potential benefits of State forests from an economic, tourism and ecological perspective. Studies conducted by Professor Brad Law show that koalas actually can and prefer to live in State forests.

The report claimed an array of potential economic and environmental opportunities would arise from the proposed park. I point out that such benefits never accrued in the river red gum forests on the Murray River or in the Pilliga National Park, communities that have now become wastelands in terms of jobs and opportunities because tourists did not arrive to visit the koalas. Many of those purported benefits are purely speculative and, in any case, the report fails to explain why it is necessary to create a new national park to achieve them. Our koalas

live beautifully and in peace in our State forests, and the scientific evidence is there to back that. For example, it has been demonstrated that the stringent protections for their threatened species and their habitat in New South Wales State forests are effective, and these forests are already very popular tourist and recreational destinations. In fact, the State forest is where koalas' preferred food is—younger trees, regenerated and very important to ecosystems.

The report acknowledged the recent science showing that koala occupancy is the same in State forests as in national parks but ignores this in its analysis. I would argue that there needs to be more work done to show that there could be a preferment of koalas for State forests rather than national parks. I would encourage State forests and national parks to join their scientific research, to be independently analysed and to consider the facts of that argument. The New South Wales Government is serious about the sustainable management of our State forests, including managing the future of our iconic koala. It has made, and is continuing to make, substantial investment in proving their conservation status. The reality is there are now 2.4 million hectares in the conservation estate in our region—land that has been set aside specifically as habitat for our fauna and flora. Given that, why haven't we seen a significant increase in the number of koalas in our national parks? We have set aside enormous amounts of estate for their benefit.

The timber industry has access to just 400,000 hectares of State forest in northern coastal New South Wales and only 1 per cent to 2 per cent of this is used in any one year. Large areas of koala habitat are kept in corridors throughout these forests. Moreover, New South Wales laws require pre-harvest checks for koalas and timber harvesting is diverted away from where they are present. In layman's terms, you cannot log where there is a koala. And so it should be. In addition, field survey work by New South Wales government agencies has found there is a high koala occupancy in the forest estate. The harvested areas of forest regenerate and, through professional scientific management, will continue to provide timber and habitat into the future.

Between the Hunter and Tweed Rivers there are 27 timber mills, which directly employ more than 750 people—blue collar workers—including a large number of Indigenous workers. Those people work hard and contribute to their communities. They provide incredible furniture, beautiful floorboards, pallets and mining props and a whole range of activities. Many people on the ground know that the national park estate has not been the cure-all for koalas, and that is the major point. Threats to our koala population are from urbanisation, wild dogs, disease, eucalypt decline and wildfire. Koalas need good managed habitat, not more tenure and lines on maps. While ecotourism is offered as an alternative to those jobs, the reality in other parts of the State has proven that that has not worked. We need to work together on the best solutions and stop being a net importer of timber for this country.

COUNCIL MERGER POLICY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (21:57): As I have said before, the New South Wales Government's controversial council merger policy is in crisis, with 20 amalgamated councils losing \$1.03 billion in three years and ratepayers facing hikes in rates and cuts in services. The merger of the former City of Botany Bay Council with the City of Rockdale Council had no logical rationale. It has been an abject failure in providing services to the community. With potholes, flooded stormwater drains, not enough parking, knee-deep grass, off-leash dogs running wild in local parks and snap decisions to change parking arrangements that have been in place for 50 years, the service has been appalling. There has been a drastic decline in service standards due to the amalgamation and a refusal by many in council and government to recognise or be accountable for that decline.

Complaints of poor customer service and a reduction in service standards flood my office. Botany Bay and Rockdale have no shared community of interest. They are separated by an airport and have vastly different service standards and rate structures. The only reason the Liberal Government organised this merger, and that of other disastrous, blind-sighted, ill-thought-out local government amalgamations, was and is political. In Liberal areas such as Woollahra, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney and Willoughby, planned council amalgamations were shelved. In the former Botany Bay and Rockdale council areas the merger went ahead in 2016. This was despite an overwhelming majority of residents—over 90 per cent—participating in a plebiscite and voting against amalgamation.

As a result of the merger, there are grave cultural and governance issues at Bayside Council, which seem ingrained and intractable despite the best efforts of the elected mayor and councillors. I expressed my outrage at the decision of the Liberal and Independent councillors on Bayside Council prior to the election who approved a plan to raise council rates for residents in my electorate who reside in the former City of Botany Bay. My residents have seen their rates rise by between 28 per cent and 51 per cent in the middle of the worst pandemic and health crisis in a century, while the rates of people who lived in Rockdale were reduced. The merger hit residents of Mascot, Eastlakes and Rosebery particularly hard. They have been burdened financially with the rates passed on to other residents living in the Rockdale end of Bayside. This is an example of the inverse Robin Hood morality. Rather than taking from the rich and giving to the poor, the merger took extra from some of the people hardest hit

by the pandemic and used their money to offset the costs of other communities and suburbs they shared nothing with.

However, the full brunt of the Liberal's decision to amalgamate Botany Bay residents with Rockdale was felt by my local residents during last year's harsh COVID-19 lockdown. At 5.00 p.m. on Thursday 12 August 2021, Mascot, Eastlakes and Rosebery were placed under a harsh lockdown, preventing residents from leaving their homes without a reasonable excuse. That included visiting loved ones and partners. Workers were prohibited from going to work if their workplace was in an area of concern and their employment was not deemed essential. Elderly residents were too afraid to walk across Gardeners Road to access shops and essential services metres from their homes because they feared they were breaking the law. The reason Bayside was an area of concern was because of high case numbers in Banksia, Bexley and Rockdale—suburbs south of the airport, at the Rockdale end. The main reason Mascot, Eastlakes and Rosebery residents got tied up in the harsh lockdowns, when some of those suburbs had zero cases, was because of the Liberals' dogmatic determination to bring these two councils together.

It was a different story, however, in Penrith. The Liberal Government, which is desperate to hold on to that seat and protect their own in Stuart Ayres, only placed suburbs into lockdown—not the whole council area. My attempts to get the Minister for Health and the then Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, to offer the same consideration for Bayside, which would have excluded Mascot, Eastlakes and Rosebery from the harsh lockdown, fell on deaf ears. Local residents and businesses could have been saved a great deal of pain and anguish had the New South Wales Liberal Government listened—listened to me, listened to the community and pulled the plug on amalgamating the City of Botany Bay Council and the City of Rockdale Council.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (22:02): The town of Morisset and surrounds has some \$1.2 billion of private investment in a number of large and exciting projects being placed at risk due to the appalling lack of investment in public roads and infrastructure in the area. Work has recently begun on a project named Cedar Mill. It is a redevelopment of land that once housed Morisset Golf Course but will now deliver a 30,000-person capacity outdoor concert venue attracting world-class events, as well as a family-orientated water park set among a host of new community facilities, including cafes and restaurants. Work is also about to start on an over-55s village on another part of the site, which I understand will be the largest of its type in Australia. Just down the road, work on a 26,000 square metre retail centre is also about to start. A few kilometres away, plans have been submitted for a \$700 million luxury hotel and apartment project at Trinity Point, while residential developments in the Cooranbong, Morisset and Wyee area will soon add 4,500 new homes to the mix.

All of this is happening around a road system, including State road B53, that is hopelessly inadequate. Areas like Morisset are home to a large population of people who commute to Sydney, the Central Coast and Newcastle for work. Notwithstanding the single-lane traffic issues in the Morisset township, they all funnel out to the M1 motorway via Mandalong Road. At peak times, traffic queues can stretch back to the M1, so we can only imagine how much worse it will get.

There is a plan to alleviate the issues on Mandalong Road, but it is currently devoid of State funds. In short, it will require \$40 million to widen the stretch of Mandalong Road between the M1 and Morisset. That includes a new and bigger roundabout at the intersection of Gateway Boulevard, and the same at the intersection of Wyee Road, to provide left-turn lanes into all feeder roads. The project has a \$20 million commitment from the Federal Opposition, with the Federal Government hopefully matching that commitment in the coming weeks. There is also a commitment of \$5 million from the local council via developer contributions. That leaves a \$15 million to \$20 million gap, which I am hoping will be filled by the State. It is, after all, a State road in one of the State's fastest growing regions.

I have discussed the issue with the Treasurer and Minister Farraway with a view to the project being included in the upcoming budget. I have been encouraged by their responses, but I cannot stress enough the need to move quickly on the issue. The benefits of unlocking the development potential at Morisset are enormous, and much of them hinge on our capacity to fix the problems with roads. Some 20 kilometres north, on the B53, we have a growing problem at Speers Point. The roundabout at the intersection of Five Islands Road and The Esplanade is a major bottleneck at peak times. I am told that Transport for NSW has been considering a number of options for the Speers Point roundabout, and the most likely solution may not require a huge investment from the State. The installation of traffic metering lights would go a long way to controlling traffic flows in the morning and afternoon peaks.

As I said in the Chamber again only last week, Lake Macquarie is facing a number of difficult challenges over the coming years, not the least of which is the closure of Eraring Power Station seven years ahead of schedule. If we are to have any chance of attracting new industry, meeting housing supply demands and creating the

thousands of new jobs that will be required as the power industry transitions away from coal, we need to see far better levels of investment in local roads and infrastructure than we have seen from successive governments over the past few decades.

I will be clear that the current road issue at Morisset would cost the State about \$20 million to fix, and the one at Speers Point would likely cost about \$6 million, but they would facilitate more than \$1.2 billion worth of private investment. Investment in State-owned roads in Lake Macquarie has been left to fail for too long. That area has been a huge source of revenue for the State over recent decades, and it can continue doing that for decades to come, but it needs investment now. Billions of dollars worth of private investment is waiting in the wings at Morisset right now. We cannot afford to lose that in Lake Macquarie, and neither can the State of New South Wales.

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY HOUSING

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (22:07): The past few months of La Nina have been incredibly difficult for the people of New South Wales. Most obviously, floods in the Northern Rivers and across Sydney have devastated communities. A less visible problem has been the scourge of mould. Local residents have reported mould blooming across walls and ceilings, dotting furniture and even hiding in cupboards and crevices. We know mould spores can kill. They are known to trigger allergies, respiratory infections and asthma. There is evidence that mould can also impact a person's mental health. Children and older people are most at risk, as are those with underlying or existing health issues.

We also know that mould can have a disproportionate impact on low income households and in households where tenants rely on others to effectively manage it. That is particularly true of renters and people living in public and community housing. Recently many renters have called my office exasperated, saying they warned their landlords and real estate agents for months about persistent mould issues, only for those calls to fall on deaf ears and for gigantic blooms to appear with the recent heavy rains. Some landlords unhelpfully tried to manage the problem by painting white over the mould, which might have put the issue out of sight but has not fixed the problem because the mould and damp returned.

The Australian Rental Housing Conditions Dataset suggests that up to 27 per cent of Australian renters report issues with mould in their homes and a further 21 per cent have general problems with damp. Given that one-third of people in New South Wales rent, managing the issue of mould in rental properties must be a clear priority for the Government. I have been concerned by the number of calls I have received in my office about the difficulties that tenants in public and community housing have been having. Most of those people are vulnerable residents in my community. An elderly woman explained that she had started seeing white spots throughout her kitchen and bedroom, and she tried to manage it herself with clove oil and a dish rag. She explained that she was going to try to stay on top of it, but she came to my office asking for assistance, with a waterfall cascading down the external walls of her apartment whenever it rained. The gutters need urgent replacing.

A tenant in seniors housing let me know that she had been waiting for weeks for a response to her requests for maintenance and help, explaining that mould had crept across her floors, walls and ceilings and that part of the ceiling in her complex had collapsed in the recent wet weather. She was understandably angry, and she explained that many of the residents in her complex are elderly and sick. She suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and is extremely susceptible to illness or infection from mould. Reportedly she responded to a letter from contractors that she had received, asking for residents to contact them about flood damage. She was then told that mould, guttering and replacing damaged carpets was not their responsibility. Are we expecting an 80-year-old resident to do that work?

Most disturbing of all is the story of a young Indigenous woman living with her three children in Marrickville. She lives with a disability and is a survivor of family and domestic violence. The youngest of her three children has a significant respiratory illness and has missed a significant amount of school on account of being sick. The property she and her family live in is infested with mould, and she has been trying for over a year to be transferred to a property that better meets the needs of her family, particularly her youngest daughter. We want to make sure she has the chance to get better and get to school. The good news is that, with the support of specialist NSW Health workers and social workers, the carpet was recently replaced with linoleum. Unfortunately, that has not fixed the problem, both for her daughter's health and the building overall. I have again asked the Minister to urgently assist the family and to transfer them to a suitable property. It frankly is not good enough.

The Government has a duty of care to protect the vulnerable people that it houses. We know members opposite cannot control the weather, but they can ensure that people living in public and community housing have properties that are properly managed. Public and community housing tenants are often the most vulnerable people in our community, experiencing complex social and health challenges whilst also having less financial capacity to manage pervasive mould. They are also unable to deal with the maintenance themselves. That must be done by

contractors. Many of the stories I am hearing from my community are simply unacceptable. I urge the Government and the Minister responsible to ensure that they deal with the problem as a matter of urgency.

NORTHERN DISTRICTS LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (22:12): Recognising extraordinary achievement encourages and inspires more of the same. That is also true for businesses. For small businesses, it is often hard work and quality community integration that separates local businesses from the crowd. Thus, recognition goes a long way. To that extent, the Northern Districts Local Business Awards has been a long-prized and respected institution within our community. In February we were able to celebrate the amazing local businesses from across Ryde on their success in the Northern Districts Local Business Awards. In the automotive category, Basha Autohaus West Ryde, where no job is too small or large when restoring a vehicle back to factory condition, took the title.

For anyone looking for a coffee hit, The Missing Piece Cafe in Macquarie Centre was the winner in the cafe category, with divine coffee and all-day breakfast and lunch available. If you fancy a dessert, KOI Dessert Bar was the winner in the bakery/cake business category. Owner and cake connoisseur, the legendary Reynold Poernomo, who appeared on *MasterChef*, creates cakes and delicacies that are, in the words of Reynold himself, masterfully made for moments that matter. For all of our little ones in Ryde, Rise Early Learning on Epping Road, with its aim to connect to the natural world and acknowledge all of the learning opportunities found outdoors, won the early childhood services category. That is important in engaging with and developing young minds. We have all bought a pair of shoes that are low quality and uncomfortable. It makes us appreciate quality shoes and the difference they make. C de C Shoes in the Macquarie Centre took out the Fashion award with its keen focus on quality leather, craftsmanship, individual style and comfort.

For fitness enthusiasts and those looking to stay active, The Fitness Edge health and aquatic centre in the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club won in the Fitness Services category, with swim and personalised fitness classes available for all. In keeping with a healthy lifestyle and nourishing our bodies, The Growers were on top of the Fruit and Vegetable Shop category, providing beautiful produce in a range of varieties from eastern to western fruit and vegetables. We all know the feeling we get after a good haircut. The Hairdresser award went to Cut & Comb Hairdressing in West Ryde, with over 40 years of professional experience and service from Carl and the team. Ray White North Ryde took out the Real Estate Agency award, with their passion for customer service and trying to ease the stress and worry that can be experienced when buying and selling a home.

The Small Animal Specialist Hospital in North Ryde, which we are most privileged to call local, was the Most Inclusive Employer winner, providing a variety of specialist and emergency veterinary care for our furry friends at their times of greatest need. The Goodstart learning centre in West Ryde was a winner for the Access and Inclusion category, providing a boutique care environment for children where the focus is on laying the foundations for better lives through great early learning experiences. Last but not least was Pharmacy 4 Less in Top Ryde, which took out the Pharmacy award and the top prize, Business of the Year. The award could not go to a more deserving business, renowned for its exceptional customer service and for always being there to assist with all of our pharmaceutical needs. Indeed, I went to Top Ryde Pharmacy 4 Less and they helped me out with mascara for the Batman outfit that I needed to wear for my cousin's party.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Too much information.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Yes, it is too much information, but they were very good. I thank Maria and Catherine for helping me with the make-up. I congratulate and recognise all of the local businesses that were nominated. The community's recognition of those businesses is a testament to their commitment, passion and dedication to their work. We are privileged to live in a community with such a diverse range of services and businesses available to us at our fingertips. I take this time to thank each and every one of them for their services to Ryde. Finally, the mayor of Ryde, Jordan Lane, and I have been visiting local businesses in the area to inform them of and discuss the \$5,000 Alfresco Restart rebate. We have had great feedback thus far. Outdoor dining has become a more popular choice in the time of social distancing. The alfresco rebates could not come at a better time. I know the weather has not been great, but blue skies await.

GOULBURN PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (22:17): I inform the House how delighted I am to have officially opened the Goulburn Performing Arts Centre on Friday 25 March 2022. It was also a great privilege to represent the Premier at this event. Through Create NSW the State Government is prioritising the arts and cultural practice of regional New South Wales with a range of initiatives and funding. On behalf of the Goulburn electorate, I thank the Government for the contribution of \$4.5 million through the Create NSW Regional Cultural Fund. The project began six years ago with a community vision and

the beginning of planning, before construction commenced in December 2019. The \$18.95 million project has taken just over two years to reach completion. Importantly, the new theatre building incorporates the original town hall, designed by E.C. Manfred, which was built in 1887.

The Goulburn Performing Arts Centre is an adaptive reuse of Goulburn's historic town hall, which now houses a cafe and box office, with the council chambers converted into a wine bar and boutique performance space known as the Meeting Place. The glass atrium connects to the 400-seat, state-of-the-art proscenium arch auditorium, which includes wheelchair seating and a hearing loop. There is a fly tower, a counterweight fly system, lighting bridges, an opera pit, four dressing rooms, a band room, a green room, a workshop and a loading dock. The building also features the 10 players, characters that highlight the Indigenous and European history of the site, which has been of significance throughout Goulburn's history. In the past the site has been an Aboriginal meeting place, a police lock-up, a jail, a courthouse, a community centre and a town hall, among other uses. The players—war nurse, trapdoor, performer, mechanic, citizens, prisoner, fireman, mayor, town clerk and the meeting—are displayed around the building, alluding to the significant uses of the site throughout time.

It was a wonderful evening, with invited guests and dignitaries enjoying a wonderful performance called REeNTRANCE, a celebration of cherished memories, combined moments and the continuation of building momentum into the future, brought together by various community groups and individuals. The New South Wales Government has played a part in funding and support not only for the construction of the performing arts centre but also with \$245,000 from the Creative Capital fund toward the purchase of a grand piano, additional lighting, sound and portable technical gear for outreach performances across the region. Up until now the Goulburn electorate lacked a professional standard performing arts facility. This has constrained Goulburn's development in the arts, tourism, conference, events and hospitality sectors. The flow-on effect has impacted the region's ability to attract and retain employment opportunities and investment in the performing arts industry.

It also meant that there were limited opportunities to support development and gain exposure for our local artists. The Goulburn Regional Performing Arts Centre has revitalised the historic old town hall into a state-of-the-art performing arts centre for the region. I expect that this significant milestone will transform the cultural life of the Goulburn region through the many upcoming and prospective performances by international, national and State companies. Our local schools and arts groups also have an exciting venue to perform in that is close to home. Funding support such as this from the New South Wales Government is remarkable, particularly as a boost for regional areas like Goulburn, as it ensures that everyone across New South Wales has access to quality arts and cultural infrastructure and experiences. I congratulate the Goulburn Mulwaree Council for the delivery of this wonderful project, the Goulburn Performing Arts Centre.

BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (22:21): Blacktown got a lot of mentions in Parliament today. It started with notices of motions this morning and went through to the public interest debate and debate on the Greater Cities Commission Bill 2022. Under the new redistribution, my electorate now includes Colebee up to Townsend Road and further up to Eastern Creek. That was previously part of the Riverstone electorate. The new area I will be servicing has interlinking issues with the suburbs of Marsden Park and Riverstone, and the residents aspire to have access to transport, schools and quality education. The members for Londonderry and Mount Druitt and I often meet community representatives to discuss the social and physical infrastructure needs of the area. Community members discuss the lack of public transport. They are forced to use motor vehicles for work, education, recreation, sport and other social activities. Therefore, they are forced to use toll roads, as the distance to get anywhere in Sydney is quite long and requires a toll if they want to get there and back home faster.

Local Liberal members seem to think we are living in some form of nirvana and that we have never had it so good. The people of the west can rightly ask: Is this the best that it gets? The local Liberals think so. The Liberal member for Riverstone said earlier today that the achievement of being part of a 12-year-old government was providing six new schools, a police station, a couple of arterial road upgrades, an improvement to the waste treatment plant and a hospital rebuild that we all should be happy with. Over the 12 long years the Government has been in office, some 110,000 people have moved to Blacktown city. That is the population of eight Hunters Hill councils. That is 3.5 times the growth anticipated for the Northern Beaches Council over the next 25 years.

The Liberals, reflected by the member for Seven Hills and the member for Riverstone, never seem to stand up in this place to argue for more resources for our local area. The member for Riverstone is happy that there is a new Riverstone police station that has been built in a one-in-100-year flood zone. He is happy that six schools have been built. But, on day one, demountables were brought in to accommodate the school population as planning was not adequate. He seems to be happy that the Rouse Hill hospital has been previously announced twice and then cancelled each time—the following year, the year after the election—and that the current proposed glorified medical centre, not a hospital, has been moved out of Blacktown City and his electorate. The Liberal member for Riverstone originally told the public that Rouse Hill would get a top-tier hospital. Now it has turned into a

suburban hospital. He said at a local public meeting, "Let's get something built." Liberal MPs are happy to announce a new, shiny building in Blacktown, the new hospital there, but lack the resources to adequately staff maternity, cancer and emergency wards.

Liberal MPs seem to be satisfied by the lack of air purifiers or air-conditioning units at schools or the presence of onsite asbestos. Upgrading major State roads across Blacktown City is estimated to cost \$5 billion. That is \$263 million a year for the next 19 years, but we get only minimal funding. The design has not even begun on Bandon Road in Riverstone, which is the flood mitigation route and a major arterial road. The Richmond Road four-lane upgrade built a few years ago is already way beyond capacity. After seven years of promises this Government made about Prospect Highway being built, we are still waiting. It is only half the project it was originally scaled for.

I do not expect Liberal members to speak against their Government, but being a sycophant and singing the Government's praises is not what the local community expects or wants to see. Social housing, public transport, roads, schools, tertiary education, health facilities and social support services are all important issues for a community where over 10,000 people a year are moving into Blacktown City. Blacktown City is an important region and has many challenges and wonderful success stories. It is the role of the seven MPs to work together in identifying opportunities for our residents, not be sycophants of the Government.

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOODS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (22:26): I acknowledge the devastating impact of the floods in the Northern Rivers on our communities and, in particular, the impact on the Ballina electorate. When the Prime Minister said a few weeks ago that it is normal for communities to rescue themselves in the first 72 hours of a natural disaster, we were gobsmacked. We did not know that we had to save ourselves and that we needed to become villages of doomsday preppers if we were going to withstand climate change. If that is the case and that is the future of disaster response and adaptation under climate change, then the Government should at least resource our people so they can adequately prepare and be appropriately compensated for doing that rescue work in times of crisis. On the first day of the floods, ordinary citizens were turned away. We understand the complexities of that, but it is time to talk about empowering local communities.

I offer my heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives in the recent floods. I also acknowledge the devastating impact and suffering of the estimated 20,000 individuals and families who lost their homes and the many thousands whose homes and businesses were flooded by this extreme weather event. I commend and thank all members of our emergency services who risked their lives to rescue people in our community while they and their families were also impacted. Hundreds and hundreds of volunteers and personnel across the emergency services agencies, as well as Australian Defence Force personnel, have come to our area to assist us in recovery. I thank them all. There were countless local heroes, whose names often were not known, who rescued our people when others could not. I know that everyone in this place has been humbled and is in awe of the way in which people in our communities have helped each other and rallied to provide food, shelter and support.

I note that the member for Coffs Harbour is in the Chamber, and he has also experienced this in his electorate. Community organisations and individual citizens made sure that people were rescued and supported when all the telecommunications in the area were down. The incredibly generous mud army and the hordes of people from outside the area came to give their time and energy to assist our communities. I also thank the Ballina electorate office team for their incredible service to our community through these extremely difficult times. I thank the Premier and the Minister for Flood Recovery for their action and engagement and for the financial assistance our communities are receiving from both the State and the Commonwealth. However, we do our communities a disservice if we only acknowledge their ongoing trauma from this recent flooding and fail to address the root cause of it. We do not shy away from the fact that the extreme weather events experienced in the past few years in our region—catastrophic bushfires and supercharged storms leading to horrendous floods—are the impacts of climate change.

The communities of Mullumbimby, Ocean Shores, South Golden Beach, New Brighton, Ballina, West Ballina, South Ballina, Wardell, Pimlico, Cabbage Tree Island, Main Arm, Upper Main Arm, Wilsons Creek, Upper Wilsons Creek and Huonbrook have experienced, on the back of the Black Summer bushfires and the floods of 2017, the extreme weather events we have been warned about for several decades as our planet warms. We are living in the pages of a dystopian novel, in which our failure to mitigate climate change, and to support communities to adapt to climate changes already occurring, is causing untold suffering. What has been laid bare is the hollowing out of social services, the gentrification of our region and the hardening of the divide between the rich and the poor.

We already had a lean mental health service and a housing and homelessness crisis resulting from a lack of housing affordability and rampant short-term holiday letting. Now those needs are beyond the pale. A lot of gaps in and failures by government agencies have also been laid bare. I want our communities to have their voices heard through the Premier's inquiry. That is before we can even begin to have the conversation, the most difficult of all, about managed retreat from flood-prone and bushfire-prone areas and adaptation to future extreme weather events. Our social infrastructure and connectivity as a community were found to be intact and very strong. I know that we will grow back stronger, and I will do everything I can to assist that recovery.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (22:31): I reflect on the contribution by the member for Ballina. I acknowledge the work she has done on behalf of our community in the past month. Having toured both her electorate and the neighbouring electorates of Lismore and Clarence, I acknowledge how difficult it is to be a local member in those circumstances, when so much of your community has gone through such a traumatic event. Tonight, as we speak, Coffs Harbour is experiencing some severe rainfall that will lead to flooding in some areas. Like most people in this State, I wish it would stop raining for a little while. It does lead me to reflect on some comments made a few weeks ago regarding the number of volunteers we have in our SES. Compared with the RFS, the SES has far fewer volunteers. Just like after the bushfires, when we saw a lot of people choose to sign up to the RFS, I hope that able-bodied people are able to sign up to the SES and contribute in a meaningful way when we inevitably have more floods.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (22:32): A glance at Mackenzie Anderson's social media showed a 21-year-old woman who loved hanging out with her friends, a bit of a dance and some time at the beach and, most of all, a woman who loved her young son. Mackenzie Anderson's social media also showed a young woman who had faced domestic violence, who had lived in fear, and who was trying to keep herself and her son safe. On the weekend, Mackenzie Anderson was murdered at her Newcastle home. The man accused, who has been refused bail, is her former partner. Police allege that, just before the day Ms Anderson was killed, this man breached an apprehended domestic violence order on the Central Coast. He had recently been released from prison for a previous assault on Ms Anderson. According to Destroy The Joint, Ms Anderson is the fourteenth woman in Australia to be killed through violence this year. That is more than one each week. If this rate continues, 60 women will have died by the end of the year. That is more than last year and more than in 2020.

The majority of these women are killed by men who are known to them and that should not be happening. We are supposed to be putting an end to domestic and family violence; we are failing. That is not to say there have not been reforms. Survivors of domestic and family violence are now able to give evidence in court remotely so they do not have to be in the same room as the person who has harmed them. Juror education has been improved so they can understand why survivors may not contact police straightaway. The law also now recognises that threatening to harm or actually harming animals is a form of intimidation as perpetrators often use beloved pets to coerce their victims. These changes are good but they are also the low-hanging fruit.

The majority of people who experience domestic and family violence are female. For a woman to be able to separate from a dangerous partner or to leave an unsafe situation she needs to have somewhere safe to go. In a problem that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic, domestic violence and homelessness services are not just at capacity, they are beyond capacity. Last financial year Nova for Women and Children in Newcastle, which provides crisis accommodation for women at risk of homelessness, assisted 1,655 women. It is not the only organisation in Newcastle providing the service, and still it assisted an average of 32 women each week. If we cannot give women somewhere safe to go we have fallen at the first hurdle. I say the first hurdle because there are many on the path out of domestic and family violence. If we can give women somewhere safe to go but we cannot keep them safe there, we have failed. When abusers can continue their harassment, we have failed. When perpetrators keep making bail, we have failed. When dangerous men continually breach apprehended domestic violence orders, we have failed.

This evening Mackenzie Anderson, alongside others who have experienced domestic and family violence, is being honoured in a march along the Newcastle foreshore. Organised by advocacy group What Were You Wearing?, this march is highlighting that the rates of gendered violence are trending in the wrong direction. Why are they trending in the wrong direction? Because we are failing. Fourteen women have been killed in this country in the first 12 weeks of this year as a result of violence: a 39-year-old woman and her six-year-old daughter in Victoria; a 45-year-old woman in South Australia; a 68-year-old woman in Queensland; a 19-year-old woman in Parramatta; a 41-year-old woman in Victoria; a 46-year-old woman in Queensland; a 52-year-old woman in Victoria; a 61-year-old woman in Queensland; a 26-year-old woman in South Australia; a 36-year-old woman in Victoria; a 60-year-old woman in Greenacre; a 74-year-old woman in Queensland; a 26-year-old woman in Western Australia; and, finally, 21-year-old Mackenzie Anderson in Newcastle. We can sit in this Chamber and

pat ourselves on the back as we pick off the low-hanging fruit and make reforms that are far too slow, but until we can keep women safe what we are doing is not even close to good enough.

HAWKESBURY RIVER OYSTER INDUSTRY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (22:37): This evening I bring to the attention of the Minister for Agriculture the dire situation of the oyster and fishing industry on the Hawkesbury River. Firstly, our fantastic oyster farmers, caretakers of river health, need additional support from the Liberal Government above and beyond what is being offered. Just so the Minister knows, Pacific oysters do not live more than three days in the freshwater that is rushing down the Hawkesbury River as we speak. Sydney rock oysters can only survive approximately two weeks before they have to open up and drink again and drown in the freshwater. We have Akoya pearl oysters on the Hawkesbury, and they fare even worse. They drown in the freshwater in even less time.

The 2021 floods destroyed a significant stock of the Hawkesbury River oysters, the majority of our Pacifics, 95 per cent of our Akoyas and a large percentage of Sydney rock oysters, and 2022 has been worse. During the 2022 floods we did not have what we traditionally know as a low tide. Many of our oyster farmers stood waist deep and even deeper in the water to rescue their oysters from the freshwater coming down the river and take them further out to the mouth of the Hawkesbury. Unfortunately, they have to be positioned under the water at the little Porto Bay. They cannot be put at the top level where the fresh water is; they have to be attached in the salt water. Not enough area is built as a protection area for the oysters down there.

It is a devastating time for our oysters. The Minister needs to understand the context of this disaster for Hawkesbury River oyster farmers. The QX virus hit the Hawkesbury River in 2004, impacting 23 Hawkesbury River oyster farmers and resulting in the loss of 50 jobs in the area. This was followed by \$3.1 million of clean-up support over three years, which provided immediate long-term assistance for oyster farmers to get back on their feet. The support included—and this is what the community is asking for this time—fee waivers and grants to restock the estuaries with QX-resistant healthy spat, which is a type of juvenile oyster. Less than 10 years later the Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome virus hit the Hawkesbury River, wiping out all of our Pacific oysters. In 2018-19 the Hawkesbury area was hit by the fires, which were very distressing for our oyster farmers and their families. In 2020 there was a flood situation that was not due to a natural disaster but it still caused significant damage to the oyster stock. The catastrophic 2021 floods wiped out close to every akoya, most Pacifics and a significant number of the Sydney rocks. Since then, because the Warragamba Dam has been full, it has been releasing fresh water, which has meant that oyster farmers have not been able to care for their oysters. As a result, not a single oyster has been sold in the community since 2021.

In the past 20 years the Gosford electorate has gone from 80-plus oyster farmers to 17. I fear for the future of this important industry unless we do something more than what the Minister is offering at the moment. These farmers have experienced disaster after disaster. To continue to be farmers, they have had to diversify and take on other jobs. Most of these are in the oyster industry, at a fish shop or at an oyster tasting area, and some are even in tourism, which, of course, has been hit hard by COVID. At the moment the criteria to access government grants requires applicants to be primary oyster farmers, but these farmers cannot afford to be because they have not had success in farming but they still want to see the industry survive.

The Government needs to make sure that these oyster farmers have access to grants to recover, plan and futureproof their industry. Akoya farmers are in the worst predicament because they need six years to reach food and oyster production. I have a whole bunch of rejection letters for grants and opportunities from the Government to oyster farmers. Our fishing industry is also in a dire circumstance, with suicide concerns after the last reform, the information on which is due back tomorrow. However, most of these fishers are dealing with flood circumstances now. I call on the Minister to extend the ability for fishers to provide feedback on the first batch of their EFT fishery proposals. In closing, even before this year's floods, I filled out a letter of support for mental health support for our oyster farmers on the Hawkesbury River. They are in a dire circumstance and we need to do something more if we are going to continue to support these oyster farmers into the future.

Bills

GREATER CITIES COMMISSION BILL 2022

Returned

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

MAJOR EVENTS AMENDMENT BILL 2022**Returned**

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

MOTOR SPORTS BILL 2022**Returned**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments, including an amendment to the short title. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later time.

*Community Recognition Notices***JOHN STOFFELS – CRONULLA SENIOR OF THE YEAR**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate John Stoffels on being awarded 2022 Cronulla Senior of the Year. For 50 years John has been a volunteer for local community sport and fundraising in the Sutherland Shire. John has been a driving force across football, softball and golf, actively involved in fundraising to provide a better experience and facilities for players. John's service to sport started with the Sutherland Shire Soccer Football Club, now the Sutherland Sharks Football Club, including as president. It continued with the Sutherland Shire Softball Association, where he was president for more than a decade. More recently he has been involved with the Sharks Social Golf Club, where he has served as president for almost 10 years. John has driven fundraising for the families of fallen or ill veterans in his role as Chair of the Woollooware Golf Club's Legacy Committee, which has raised more than \$1 million for Legacy over the years. John has made a huge contribution as a tireless volunteer.

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL GEORGES HALL FUNDRAISER

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—Across February and March, New South Wales has been battered by record-breaking rainfall and storms, which resulted in severe flooding across the State and specifically in the Northern Rivers region and parts of western Sydney. The St Mary's Primary School Georges Hall school community demonstrated their generosity by organising a bake sale to raise funds for flood-affected communities. I was delighted to attend St Mary's SES fundraiser on Friday 18 March 2022, which raised funds for St Vincent de Paul Society's flood appeal. I take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate the Principal Ms Monica Palmer, students, teachers, staff and P&F of St Mary's Primary School Georges Hall for proudly raising \$6744 for flood-affected communities. I would also like to thank the NSW SES Bankstown Unit for treating the students of St Mary's to a wonderful demonstration, and of course for their invaluable efforts in assisting our community during the recent weather events.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY COMMEMORATION AT THE GREEK COMMUNITY CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—On Friday March 25th, the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW hosted a commemoration of the Greek Independence Day at the Greek Community Club in Lakemba. Greek Independence Day is a significant occasion for Greek Australians and Greeks all around the world. It marks the beginning of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, and celebrates the establishment of Greece as an independent and sovereign nation. The celebration of Greek Independence Day offers a great reminder of the everlasting connection between the Greek and Australian people. There is no doubt that the Greek culture has immense influence, and it is important to acknowledge the dynamic contribution the Greek community have made to our society in Australia and particularly in NSW. I would like to recognise the Board of Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales, President Danalis Harry, Secretary Tsilmos Michael, Vice President Karteris Ourania, Treasurer Belerhas Chris and the rest of the Executive team for their efforts. I take this opportunity to wish the Greek Community a happy Greek Independence Day.

PAKISTAN ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA – PAKISTAN DAY EVENT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—On Wednesday 23rd March, the Pakistani Community celebrated Pakistan Day. Pakistan Day is a significant day for the Pakistan community all around the world. Pakistan Day commemorates the 'Lahore Resolution' of 1940, also known as the 'Pakistan Resolution' which led to the formation of Pakistan as a sovereign and independent nation. The Pakistan Association of Australia hosted its Pakistan Day event on March 25th at the Emporium Function Centre in Bankstown. Pakistan Day provides a great opportunity to recognise and appreciate the important relationship that Australians and Pakistani people share. The Pakistani community have introduced many wonderful aspects of their culture to Australia including

their customs, traditions, song, art, dance and cuisine, enriching our society. I would like to recognise the Board of Pakistan Association of Australia, President Farhat Jaffri, Vice President Ahmad Jamal, General Secretary Hamid Saroha, Cultural Secretary Farah Khan, Patron-in-Chief Abbas Rana, Information Secretary Rukhshanda Zaman, Treasurer Zulfiqar and the remainder of the Board for their efforts. I wish the entire Pakistani Community across Australia a happy Pakistan Day.

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING DAVIDSON CITIZENS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Further to recent CRSs regarding local award recipients, it was my pleasure recently to host a morning tea in honour of local Davidson constituents, who have been recognised for their service, both within the local community and internationally. John Balfour OAM and Chris Stanley were both recipients of NSW Government Community Service Awards for 2021, while Human Rights lawyer Alison Battison was recognised as the Davidson Local Woman of the Year for 2022. John and Chris have both contributed strongly as volunteers within Davidson electorate, especially through the RSL and Scouting movement respectively, while Alison continues to be a strong advocate for refugees, the displaced and those fleeing oppressive regimes. All three are extremely worthy recipients of their awards, and I congratulate them all once again.

HEARTY COMMUNITY WAVE FOR 'WAZZA'

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley)—It was a somewhat emotional day when the community of Bellingen finally pulled together the vision to celebrate their beloved bus driver and local legend Warren Weick, who has been driving the Brierfield school bus for 40 years. There were pictures of the buses over the years, stories and tears, sharing and celebrating what 'Wazza' means to the many locals gathered. But as the stories showed, Warren is so much more than a bus driver to the community. Over the four decades he has gone 'above and beyond, caring for our children and our families'. Warren has also been a vocal supporter for council's roads maintenance program, particularly important because over the last four decades this has needed strong local advocacy. And while we immediately think of roads, Warren understands bank slashing and overhead branch clearance, so their buses could safely travel along the road is immensely important. My congratulations to Warren, an absolute character, for his long standing commitment to the Bellingen community. Our region is blessed to have so many generous and kind people, and it's heartily nice to see them recognised.

WARATAH PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Waratah Public School on their appointment. Waratah Public School is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. Led by Principal Mat Freeman, the outstanding staff at Waratah Public School work alongside the parent and student body to uphold their motto "Success for Every Student, Every Day" by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind hearted students at Waratah 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 Waratah Public School's values. I congratulate the 2022 Student Leaders, School Captains Paige Gallagher and George Waskett, School Leaders Ella Di Donna, Isabella Wheatland, Sam Metcalf and Noah Edwards 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 Waratah Public School.

MACQUARIE COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Macquarie College on their appointment. Macquarie College is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. Led by Principal Rohan Deanshaw, the outstanding staff at Macquarie College work alongside the parent and student body by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind hearted students at Macquarie College 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 Macquarie College's values. I congratulate the 2022 Student Leaders, Senior School Captains Georgie Westerman, Jehiel Pillay, Mia Trigg and Andile Ndlovu and Junior School Captains Leila Wishney, Meredith Walsh, Scarlett Wicks and Jonah Tomlin 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 Macquarie College.

ASHRAF ABDELBAKY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Premier's Multicultural Community Medals and Honour Roll pay tribute to the many outstanding people who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to promote social cohesion and harmony across our state. One local man was the recipient of the All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Language Services Medal. Congratulations to Ashraf Abdelbaky. This award recognises the achievements of an interpreter or translator for the role they play in ensuring that the community of NSW has access to essential information and services. Ashraf has been an interpreter in the Newcastle community for the last six years. He has participated in many programs at an academic level and for the broader community. Ashraf has championed mental health awareness training for the Arab community and he is currently working with STARTTS, the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and with the Hunter New England Health Local Health District as a bicultural worker helping to deliver important COVID-19 messaging to the Arab community about vaccines and testing. He has also worked on a translation book club initiative in the Wallsend library for the Arab community. Thank you Ashraf for all your amazing work in our community.

BRETT ATKINS AND STEVE WISBEY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—In 2020 the residents of Camden were not the only ones who were devastated when the iconic Up Stairs at Fred's was destroyed by a fire. Owner Steve Wisbey was heartbroken when he lost not only his business, but also antique and quirky items gathered for the popular venue, and something that couldn't be replaced was a World War I era photo of his great-grandfather Fred. A local photographer, Camden's very own Brett Atkins spend a year painstakingly recreating that image using his photographic know-how stitched together and reconstructed the image based on various photos taken inside the venue before the blaze. Earlier this month, Brett presented Steve with his restored photo. Thank you Brett for this priceless gesture.

COURTNEY SCHONELL

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Congratulations to Courtney Schonell of Narellan Vale who has been selected for the 2022 Australian Hockeyroos Team. Courtney, at only 21 years old was previously selected to play in the Hockeyroos team in 2021 and is looking forward to heading back to Perth to train with the team for the current season. Courtney has her sights set on the upcoming Hockey World Cup in July and the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Once again, I congratulate Courtney on this incredible achievement and I wish her all the best with her journey in the Hockeyroos team.

THE WEBBER'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I send my sincerest congratulations to Mr Michael and Mrs Joan Webber who on Friday 8 April will celebrate their 50th Wedding anniversary. Their commitment, love and friendship towards one another throughout the years is commendable. May this be a very special anniversary as you look back on all the happy memories you have shared in your marriage together. I wish Michael and Joan a wonderful time as they celebrate this milestone on a well-deserved trip away together to the mountains next week. Once again, I congratulate you both on this wonderful occasion.

FOODBANK VISIT 2021

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—Today I acknowledge the great work that the volunteers and staff at Foodbank NSW and ACT do every day. Speaker, once a year my staff and I head over to the Foodbank facility in Glendenning to help pack Christmas hampers and food supplies for those in need. Foodbank runs an enormous operation to feed thousands of people every day. In 2020 alone, they supplied over 12 million kilograms of food to 860 agencies in NSW and the ACT, accounting for over 22 million individual meals. This massive effort has seen hundreds of volunteers put in over 72,705 hours of work, packing and shipping food from over 18 million generous donors. Speaker, tackling the issue of hunger is an important task for government and the private sector to address, which is why the work that Foodbank does is so crucial to our charity organisations. I would like to thank CEO John Robertson, a former member of this House and thank all the volunteers who have helped out. I look forward to coming back next year to lend my support once again.

LEBANON CARNIVAL 2021

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—For as long as I can remember, I have had the privilege of attending the Cedars of Lebanon Folkloric Groups' Lebanon Carnival. Last year, I attended their 44th Anniversary Celebration at Granville Town Hall where attendees were treated to Lebanese live music, dances, drama and folklore. Speaker, I have spoken regularly about Elie Akouri

in this House, and I would once again like to thank Elie for his organisation of this event. Like many community groups and events, the Lebanon Carnival faced the challenge of ever-changing dates due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Given these ever-evolving challenges, the resulting event was even that much more impressive. Speaker, the Cedars of Lebanon Folkloric Group was established in 1977 by Elie who was a teacher and choreographer of the Lebanese Dabki dance. Like many successful migrant stories, Elie migrated alone to Australia speaking little English but had a head full of dreams and determination. The group seeks to keep the community social and connected through Lebanese folkloric Dabki dance to all ages and cultures. Speaker, I congratulate Elie and his team on their 44th Anniversary and look forward to attending the 45th and beyond.

THE PROBUS CLUB OF MORTDALE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I acknowledge and celebrate 25 outstanding years of the Probus Club of Mortdale. Last year, I had the opportunity to attend the Club's annual Christmas Luncheon which also marked their 25th Anniversary celebration. Speaker, I highly encourage anyone in my electorate who is interested in Probus to contact the Mortdale Club team, particularly Secretary Colin Bishop, should they want to join. Speaker, the benefits of Probus speak for themselves. The Club provides retirees with the opportunity to connect socially, which has become increasingly important given today's current climate. Across Australia and New Zealand, Probus boasts tens of thousands of members which are offered a range of activities including day outings, trips or just quick catch ups. Speaker, one of the main themes raised at the Luncheon was the notion of friendship. Many of the attendees noted to me that Probus had provided them the opportunity to develop new friendships. Many of them also said they learned a new skill, explored new interests, or developed new hobbies. I thank President Jeanette Baker for her invitation to the Luncheon and her organisation of this wonderful celebration.

100 YEARS OF THE HARDEN HAWKS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I wish to congratulate Harden Hawks football on the incredible milestone of reaching their centenary and the night organised to celebrate this achievement. This night had been a long time in the planning, after being rescheduled 3 times due to COVID-19, more than 200 people gathered together to celebrate in style. Special guests who covered 7 decades of experience regaled those in attendance with stories of past glory and triumphs. The Hawks were able to secure the presence of football great, Paul Sironen, whose experience playing for the Tigers, NSW and Australia made for some very happy football fans in the crowd. Trophies, old newspaper articles, game day programs and memorabilia delighted football die-hards and helped make this night one to remember for country football fanatics. The committee and volunteers who worked so hard to ensure this night went ahead without a hitch deserve a huge thank you and congratulations on such an exceptional event. I would like to once again congratulate Harden Hawks football on this achievement, 100 years and a huge night to celebrate it are no small feat.

LOCAL ART WORKS ON DISPLAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I extend a huge congratulations to a diverse range of local artists who are featured in the latest Bland Shire Council Foyer Art Gallery Exhibition. The new exhibition includes work from 11 local artists; Barbara Last, Lorraine Williams, Christopher John Haworth, Taylor Clemson, Sherrie Clemson, Ruth Logg, Rowan Porter, Esther Petrie, Claire Wishart, Catt Zellar, and Gabriella Cumming. The Bland Shire Council is commended for running another successful art exhibition in the upstairs foyer of the Council Chambers. These exhibitions enable the creative local artists of the Bland community to showcase their works and have them relished and viewed by all. I thoroughly enjoy visiting the Bland Shire Council Chambers when I get the chance to view the creative works of locals. The foyer always looks fantastic and bright. We surely do have very talented people within our local community. Congratulations once again to the local artists and I look forward to seeing your artworks very soon.

GUNDAGAI HIGH SCHOOL DONATES SCHOOL UNIFORMS TO TONGA APPEAL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to recognise the generous contribution that Gundagai High School has made to the Salvation Army's Tongan appeal. The school has donated dozens of uniform items to help support the recovery efforts in Tonga following the severe volcanic eruption and tsunami on 15 January. I am pleased to see the school taking part in such a worthy cause and supporting those in need following the crisis. Clothes are a basic necessity and something we often take for granted but not by the people of Tonga who I'm sure will be greatly appreciative of the donation as they recover from the recent disaster. It is important that as a community we show our support to those in need through difficult times which is exactly what Gundagai High School has done through

this initiative. I thank Gundagai High School for their kind donation to the worthy cause for which they should be very proud of.

CARRAMAR PUBLIC SCHOOL – HARMONY DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Carramar Public School celebrated Harmony Day on Thursday, 24th March 2022 with all students wearing orange, the colour of Harmony Week. On this day, students were encouraged to reflect on what cultural diversity is and to celebrate all different cultures and nationalities. Harmony Day 2022 theme is 'Everyone Belongs' and students were encouraged to recognise and appreciate the importance of including and respecting all cultural and linguistic backgrounds here in Australia. Students were treated to orange gelato in honour of the Harmony Day colour thanks to the support of Art of Gelato Gelateria. I acknowledge the efforts of Carramar Public School in making Harmony Day 2022 extra special for the school community and I commend their efforts in celebrating cultural diversity.

PAKISTAN DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On 23 March 2022 the Pakistan Australia Association and members of the community celebrated the Pakistan Resolution Day. The Pakistan Australian Association [PAA] hosted the celebration in NSW parliament with many parliamentary colleagues in attendance to celebrate the occasion. I thank Hugh McDermott MP: State Member for Prospect for hosting the event in conjunction with the PAA. The day marks the time in history when the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution was set by the Muslim League which established an independent federation in Pakistan 23rd March 1940. This day was a defining moment in Pakistani history. I congratulate all involved on a successful event which celebrates an important time in Pakistan's history.

KURDISH NEW YEAR

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On Monday 21 March 2022 the Kurdish community of NSW and around the globe celebrated Newroz, Kurdish New Year. To mark the occasion the Federation of the Democratic Kurdish Society in Australia and the Parliamentary Friends of Kurdistan hosted a cultural event in the Jubilee Room of NSW Parliament. The event celebrated Newroz with traditional Kurdish music and dancers. I would like to thank the Co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends Jamie Parker MP and Stephen Bali MP for organising the event in conjunction with the Federation of Democratic Kurdish Society Australia. I congratulate all involved on a very successful celebration of Kurdish New Year.

MACARTHUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—With the soccer season now officially kicking off, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and efforts of the Macarthur Football Association. One of the fastest growing associations in Sydney, the Macarthur Football Association oversees competition for 23 member clubs across Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly. With 11,000 registered members, the Association continues to attract young and upcoming players across the region to one of Australia's most popular sports. I would like to thank all the parents, carers, coaches and volunteers who help make the games and the season a success. I would particularly like to acknowledge Macarthur Football Association Chairman, Darcy Lound, for his ongoing commitment to promoting soccer in south-west Sydney and providing opportunities for everyone to participate. After two difficult and disrupted years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many families and young people are looking forward to kicking a ball and scoring a goal this season. I wish the Macarthur Football Association and its teams a fabulous season ahead and trust players across the region enjoy a successful competition. Let it be a season of fitness, friends and, above all, fun.

ANNAMARIA WOOD

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—After a long and stellar career in the disability sector caring for local families, Annamaria Wood has retired to spend more time with her own family. Annamaria's retirement comes after 26 years at the helm of Disability Macarthur in Minto, and a further 46 years in the industry. A passionate advocate for people with disability, Annamaria credits her migrant parents for instilling in her the value of hard work. It is through her hard work and under Annamaria's leadership that Disability Macarthur established itself as a wonderful community asset. When Annamaria arrived at Disability Macarthur, there were fewer than 10 staff and the annual funding budget was between \$700,000 and \$800,000. Annamaria's ability to connect with local families and the wider Macarthur community helped the organisation grow exponentially until it had an annual budget of around \$4 million (prior to the introduction of the NDIS). Over the years, Annamaria has made a difference to the lives of local families and her enduring legacy will be one of upmost care and dedication to the local disability sector. I wish Annamaria all the best in her future endeavours.

MATHOURA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Mathoura Public School for the high-quality rural education it provides to its community. The School has been selected as one of ten ambassador schools thanks to its exceptional success in NAPLAN, literacy and numeracy targets, school growth and exemplary attendance rates. Thanks to the dedication of staff, the School is now an example to others state-wide, with teaching and learning programs providing the opportunity for students to achieve and exceed their learning goals. I thank and congratulate the staff and students of Mathoura Public School for their outstanding achievement and recognition at a state level.

JAN LAWLER

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Jan Lawler of Balranald. Jan came to the area as a governess, before meeting her husband Peter and raising three daughters. Jan was instrumental in founding Balranald's "Meals on Wheels" in the late 1970's, and was an inaugural member of both CanAssist Balranald and Balranald Inc. Jan was part of a group that instigated the Balranald Pony Club, and over 15 years she took on several key roles in the Club. During this time, she also assisted many young riders to state, national and international level competition. All the time never forgetting the needs of the not so competitive members. Jan, a talented artist, has won several national awards for her drawings and paintings, and was a founding member of Balranald Arts and Craft. Hosting many successful exhibitions and workshops in the Gallery, Jan never tires of her commitment to the community, and recently held an after school arts and craft program for children. Jan is a valued member of the Balranald community, and I thank her for her many contributions.

MIDDLE HARBOUR YACHT CLUB SUCCESS AT SYDNEY 38 NSW CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise women of the Middle Harbour Yacht Club on their success in the Sydney 38 NSW Championships. The all-female crew of Calibre, skippered by Liz Charles, were predominantly Middle Harbour Yacht Club members. Calibre took out fourth overall on countback after scoring 2-4-3 results on day two. This is an extraordinary result for a new team in this class. I want to congratulate skipper Liz Charles and her entire crew for this excellent result. The crew consisted of Tracy Richardson, Celine Rumbelow, Caitlin Worsley, Danielle Brown, Catherine Thornton-Rofe, Kylie Twible, Gemma Radsall, Michelle Tait, and Teresa Lane. Well done to each of you. This is a great outcome for yourselves individually, for the Middle Harbour Yacht Club, and for women in sport. Thank you to Club Commodore and Director Peter Lewis, and the entire Board, for your continuous work supporting the Club. Your strong administration contributes significantly to the success of the Club overall and results such as this. Your strong leadership provides excellent opportunities for men, women, and youth in sailing along with the work you do in the wider community.

MOSMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOSTS 'REBUILD, RECHARGE, RENEW' SEMINAR

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise the Mosman Chamber of Commerce for all the work they do for our community, and congratulate them for hosting the recent 'Rebuild, Recharge, Renew' seminar. This seminar was organised by the Mosman Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the NSW Government. Local businesses had the opportunity to hear from a host of key note speakers for expert advice and strategies on how to reinvigorate their business and get back on their feet following the tough past couple of years due to COVID-19. Speakers included the Minister for Small Business, the Hon. Eleni Petinos MP, and the NSW Small Business Commissioner, Chris Lamont. It was a great event and I was glad to attend. I want to thank the President of the Mosman Chamber of Commerce, Tamara Keniry, for championing this seminar and leading the Chamber with dedication and passion. Tamara's commitment to supporting local businesses is truly inspiring and she deserves to be commended for her long-standing service to the North Shore community. I extend my thanks to the entire team at the Chamber who work tirelessly with Tamara to deliver better outcomes for our area.

MOSMAN HIGH RISING SPORTS STARS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise the recent sporting success of a couple of students from Mosman High, Luca Zucchiatti and Lili MacPherson. Luca, who is in year 7, competed in the NSW Junior Track Cycling Championship in February where he won gold in every single one of the available state event categories. This now makes him the 2022 Under 13 NSW State Track Cycling Champion. Congratulations Luca! What an amazing achievement. I am sure you no doubt trained extremely hard to earn these results, and best of luck for all of your future cycling endeavours. I know we can expect great things. Lili MacPherson, who is in Year 11, competed in the athletics NSW State Junior Championship in February in the Girls Under 18 Javelin. Lili threw a whopping 40.35m which placed her 1st in the entire state. Congratulations Lili on these excellent results, you should be so proud I wish you the best of luck for Nationals which are currently taking place. Thank you to the school staff, community, and parents who have supported Luca and Lili through their sporting endeavours. It is amazing to see students from local schools performing so well.

JAKE AND LAURA MCCALLUM

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I thank and acknowledge Jake and Laura McCallum of Emu Heights for hosting their first Emu Heights Christmas Fundraising Appeal. Their home was well decorated for the Christmas season and included falling snow, a sleigh and a letter to Santa station. Local residents were invited along to join this celebration and at the same time to make an online donation for the Children's Cancer Institute. It is pleasing to note that this appeal raised over \$1,000.

AUSTRALIA DAY OAM HONOURS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I congratulate and recognise the local recipients of the Medal of the Order of Australia in this year's Australia Day Honours. Ms Jessica Fox OAM for service to sport as a gold medallist at the Tokyo Olympic Games 2020. Mr Barry Roots OAM for service to secondary education. Major Ken McKay OAM for service to veterans, and to history preservation. Dr Harry Pope OAM for service to medicine through a range of roles. My congratulations to these recipients and I thank you for your contributions to our community.

KISAN NAMA BY HARKIRAT SINGH SANDHAR

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Tuesday 22 March 2022, it was a pleasure to attend the book release of Kisan Nama by Harkirat Singh Sandhar, at The Parliament of New South Wales. Kisan Nama is a conglomeration of photos, articles and various news clippings on the peaceful Farmer's agitation against 'farm laws' in India. This agitation ran over a year and saw over 700 people lose their lives in an attempt to protect their communities and livelihood. The people who lost their lives during this resistance included young children to ninety-year-old veterans. Kisan Nama depicts a deep respect for the people who lost their lives during this challenging phase of Indian farming history. The book is bilingual in Panjabi and English languages. The images used in the publication have been chosen from a vast pool of more than 80,000 images. Harkirat Singh Sandhar is a distinguished author in his own right, who regularly writes publications for the Punjabi News Daily in Punjab. He is also a proud organiser of the Vaisakhi Festival in Blacktown, Western Sydney. Congratulations to Harkirat Singh Sandhar on a successful book launch and thank you for raising awareness of the farmer's protest.

THE PARRAMATTA COLLEGE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Friday 25 March, it was great to tour an outstanding and award winning Educational Institution, The Parramatta College. This local community college educates High School graduates in practical courses to help equip students for entering the workforce. The Parramatta College offers a range of courses in Business, technology, leisure, lifestyle and languages. I congratulate The Parramatta College for winning the "Most Outstanding Education Service" award as part of the 2021 Parramatta Local Business Awards, which was held at The Epping Club on Monday 14th February 2022. The Parramatta College also won this award in 2017. The Parramatta College has faced unprecedented challenges in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, thanks to the support of our community, they have continued to educate and advise our local High School Graduates entering the next stages of their lives. Thank you to The Parramatta College for giving me a tour of the wonderful facilities. It was a pleasure to meet with their CEO Monique Knight, their educators, students and staff. I commend The Parramatta College for their integral work in educating young people in our Western Sydney community.

MEETING WITH THE AUSTRALIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Thursday 24 March 2022, it was a pleasure to meet with Dr Michael Jonas, President and Dr Sarah Raphael, General Manager, Filling the Gap, of the Australian Dental Association at the Parliament of New South Wales. We had a productive discussion about the issue of oral health in NSW. They brought to my attention the issue of low oral hygiene, which statistics show is a growing problem in Western Sydney and rural NSW. Dr Jonas and Raphael explained how oral health is an important component of good overall health which contributes to lowering the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Improvements in the oral health of our community has the potential to have a significant impact on the chronic disease burden that costs our society in health expenditure, loss of work/school participation and overall wellbeing of our citizens. I commend the Australian Dental Association for their work in raising awareness to the issue of oral hygiene and I am looking forward to working with them in the future to improve the oral hygiene of the constituents of the Electorate of Prospect.

LORELLE RING 2022 HEATHCOTE SENIOR'S LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINEE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I take this opportunity to recognise Mrs Lorelle Ring as she was nominated for the Heathcote 2022 Senior's Local Achievement Award. For at least seven years, Mrs Ring has volunteered her valuable time and services as Caretaker of Clifton School of Arts. This involves showing prospective hirers around, cleaning up after events, ensuring lawns are mowed and neatly maintained. She dedicates two days of her week to chauffeuring elderly and others in need of support to appointments. In addition, Mrs Ring volunteers at a community food kitchen, providing meals to underprivileged people in the community including families. Mrs Ring is a selfless individual, she always undertakes her volunteer activities with enthusiasm and enjoys interacting with the community. I congratulate Mrs Ring on her nomination in the Heathcote's Senior's Local Achievements Award and thank her for her service in our community.

NEW JUNIOR SURVEYOR LIFEGUARD TOWER AT STANWELL PARK BEACH

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—On Friday I visited Stanwell Park Beach to view first-hand the recently delivered Junior Surveyor Lifeguard Tower. Unfortunately I was unable to view the new tower up close due to the damp and raining weather conditions we continue to experience across the state. However I appreciated the opportunity to view the new equipment from a distance in the comfort of Stanwell Park Surf Life Saving Club. The tower model is elevated, portable and the cabin contains polarised viewing glass. This provides local lifesavers and lifeguards with enhanced visibility to detect hazards in the ocean including swimmers in distress, monitor beach conditions and detect sharks. It also protects lifesavers and lifeguards from the elements whilst they undertake their vital role of patrolling our beaches and keeping us safe. Ultimately, this new tower will improve beachgoer safety. This safety equipment was funded under our Shark Observation Grants Program and is a great addition to Stanwell Park Beach. I look forward to supporting our local lifesavers and lifeguards in the future.

MUSWELLBROOK RSL CLUB - CLUBSNOW AWARDS FINALIST

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I congratulate Muswellbrook RSL Club on being a finalist in the 2022 ClubsNSW Clubs and Community Awards. Muswellbrook RSL is vying for the Fostering Grassroots Sport Award for ongoing support of the Muswellbrook Eagles Football Club. The awards recognises the outstanding social contributions made by Clubs in their local areas and across the state with Muswellbrook among 11 finalists in the Fostering Grassroots Sport category. The RSL-Eagles partnership has been in place for eight years and includes support for senior and junior teams. The RSL Club provides monetary and in kind support for the football club with the Eagles returning the backing by holding post match gatherings and events at the club and a golf day at Muswellbrook Golf Club. Muswellbrook RSL is the only club in the Upper Hunter electorate to be a finalist at this year's awards. The 2022 ClubsNSW Clubs and Community Awards winners will be announced at the International Convention Centre, Sydney on Thursday 26 May 2022.

ANNAMARIA WOOD

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—I have said it countless times before that we are so lucky in Campbelltown to have a plethora of people who dedicate their time to helping others. Whether that be through paid roles or voluntarily, there has never been – and will never be – a shortage of people willing to lend a hand to those in need. One of those people in Annamaria Wood. Next month Annamaria will leave Disability Macarthur after 26 years at the organisation. The outgoing CEO's resignation is an enormous loss for our community here in Campbelltown. In saying that, Annamaria's contribution during the last quarter of a century will certainly not be forgotten by the many, many people that she has assisted. Chairperson of the Disability Macarthur board, Paul Blyton, summed it up best when he said: "She will be greatly missed not just by our organisation and the community, but by the many families she has touched and has made such a difference in their lives." On behalf of the community of Campbelltown I would like to say a huge thank you to Annamaria for all that you have done in the past 26 years.

PENNANT HILLS QUEEN'S GUIDE AWARDEES

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—The prestigious Queen's Guide Award was presented to three senior guides from Pennant Hills recently. Pennant Hills' senior guides Carina Tucker, Anastasia Dunne and Emma Forbes went through a series of set challenges in each of the seven fundamentals of Guiding, which are: Promise and Law, Guiding Traditions, Service, Outdoors, World Guiding, Patrol System and Leadership Development. As part of the process Carina researched the timeline of the formation of Girl Guides in Australia, Anastasia researched the formation of the initiation of the WAGGGS World Conferences and Emma researched the history of campfires in Guides and how they have changed over the years. Under normal circumstances, to achieve a Queens Guide Award is an outstanding achievement. However, to do it during a pandemic period is truly impressive. Congratulations to these three young ladies. It is clear to me that

Carina, Anastasia and Emma will all be outstanding leaders in their community with whatever path they chose to take in the future.

STEWART BELL, FROM BEROWRA FLOWERS SAYS GOODBYE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—In March 2022, Berowra Flowers permanently closed its doors. After 24 years, as the much loved owner/operator of the business, Stewart Bell, has gone into retirement. Stewart originally opened his first florist shop in Chatswood in the 1970s, before relocating to Berowra Marketplace Centre in 1998, as Berowra Flowers. In 2013, he relocated the business down the road to a new shop in the refurbished Berowra Village Shopping Centre, where he traded for the past nine years. For nearly a quarter of a century Stewart Bell and Berowra Flowers, were very much a part of the Berowra community. Whether it was for school formals, Mother's Day, Daffodil Day, Valentine's Day, births, deaths, marriages, ANZAC Day or any other special event, Stewart was always there to create his beautiful and high quality floral arrangements. On behalf of the Berowra community, all the best in your retirement.

ABORIGINAL KNOCKOUT

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—After the uncertainty of COVID-19 and two postponements the 2022 NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout is set to go ahead. The Shoalhaven City Council have officially announced the Knockout will be hosted in the Shoalhaven. Entering its 50th year the event brings together more than 150 Aboriginal Rugby League teams in celebration of Aboriginal culture through the sport of Rugby League. The Nowra rugby park will also see some upgrades prior to the upcoming event. Five different fields will be brought up to the standards of the NRL with a third field added to Rugby Park. The four day event is set to attract over 50 thousand people and will be a great boost for our area all whilst uniting our local community. The South Coast is looking forward to the outcome of the knockout. With many locals participating it is great to see many represent their community with the event being broadcast both nationally and internationally showcasing the facilities of Bomaderry Oval and Nowra Rugby Park. A huge thank you to all involved in making this event happen, I look forward to hearing the turnout of the knockout and wish all player the best of luck.

WAGGA WAGGA BLACK DOG RIDE

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—More than 190 riders took to the roads around Wagga Wagga recently for the annual Black Dog Ride. On the third Sunday of March each year, a Black Dog Ride "one dayer" is held in every Australian state and territory in an effort to ensure mental health and suicide prevention is spoken about across the country. In 2021 wet weather impacted the number of riders, but organiser Graham "Bear" Falconer was delighted that sunny skies brought out an impressive group of riders this year. The event's three lead riders for 2022 were Lee Buxbury, Nerolie Falconer and Sandra Maliner with Col Neyland at the tail. Bear, a long-time organiser of the ride, says he has seen real change in community attitudes towards mental health in recent years. He credits events like the Black Dog Ride for helping make positive change. Riders in the Wagga Wagga one dayer certainly added their voices to the country-wide effort to amplify a national message of hope, awareness and prevention. I want to commend Bear and Nerolie for their continued hard work on this great event and thank every rider who took part. Let's keep that important conversation going.

BALLINA LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the outstanding success of Ballina Little Athletics and their dedication to fostering the talents of the Shire's young athletes. The club has focused on inclusion and development in a non-competitive environment, establishing a culture that has sparked a boost in State athletics nominations and medal placings. Particularly noteworthy is the rate of young female participation: five young women were among six athletes who took part in track and field events at the State Championships in Sydney on March 19. Attending the championships were Katie Smith (U14 Long Jump, Triple Jump, 200m Sprints); Ava Delaney (U15 Discus, Javelin, Shot Put); Stella Du Plessis (U11 High Jump, 400m Sprints, 200m Sprints); Ayla Kowalczyk (U11 100m Sprints, Long Jump); Bella Delaney (U13 High Jump, Discus); and Chad Atkins (U14 High Jump, Shot Put). The team represented Ballina in 16 events, achieving great results and many personal bests, despite it being the first time for some at State level, and having endured many training night cancellations in the lead-up to the event due to extreme weather conditions. Their commitment and resilience is laudable and I wish them the very best for the future.

WAGGA WAGGA VIGIL FOR THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE AND PEACE

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—The Wagga Wagga community came together as one at a recent community prayer vigil for Ukraine and peace at the Victory Memorial Gardens. It was a sombre evening, where we each took the opportunity to hold in our hearts those who have lost their lives as a result of the Russian invasion and to show support for Wagga Wagga's Ukrainian community. Members of the Wagga Wagga Multicultural Council, San Isidore refugee committee and many of Wagga Wagga's religious groups helped to bring so many

concerned residents together to publicly share their call for peace in Ukraine. I was honoured to add my voice to those of Federal Member for Riverina, Michael McCormack and Wagga Wagga Mayor, Councillor Dallas Tout, who shared the community's wish for peace and unity across the globe. During the vigil, community members held up Ukrainian flags as a gesture of solidarity and held a minute's silence for the lives lost during the invasion. Ukrainian Wagga Wagga resident Larissa Burak brought her traditional Ukrainian bandura stringed instrument and sang a hymn to those fighting for Ukraine's freedom. She later performed Ukraine's national anthem.

URANQUINTY EVENING CWA BRANCH

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—As most of us know, some of the best conversations in life take place at the kitchen table over a cup of tea. And when it comes to making scones to accompany that tea, members of the Country Women's Association are some of the dabbest hands around. So when we want to talk about mental health, who better than the CWA to handle that "sconversation". In February, I was part of a great Q&A-style panel discussion on mental health, held in Wagga Wagga by members of the Uranquinty evening branch of the CWA. It was a pleasure to join my fellow panellists, Danica Leys, Leanne Sanders, David Post, Jenivy Sewak, and moderator Bronwyn Boyle. I would also like to thank Aunty Cheryl Penrith, and the many elders who were in attendance, as well as Steve Matthews from Riverina Bluebell, Federal Member for Riverina, Michael McCormack, and Wagga Wagga Mayor Dallas Tout. Mental health remains a really challenging area. We, of course, need more services, but also we must do more as a community to prevent and to help. This discussion was an important part of that process, and I commend CWA members for organising it.

ALEX MCHARG'S ROTARY MAJOR DONOR AWARD

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I want to acknowledge the significant fundraising efforts by Rotary Club of Singleton On Hunter club member, Alex McHarg. Mr McHarg was recently presented with the Rotary Foundation's Annual Fund major donor award for a project started when he was District Governor of Rotary District 9670 in 2008-09. The District 9670 Immortal Pin was Alex's response to a request from the Chair of the Rotary Foundation to promote the Permanent Fund (Endowment Fund) of the Rotary Foundation. A gift to the Endowment Fund has the goal of being the gift that kept on giving. Only the earnings of the Gift are spent on the Rotary Foundation's humanitarian work with the gift itself never spent but remains invested. The gift of \$100 to invest in an 'Immortal' has proven to be a wonderful boost to the Rotary Foundation Endowment Fund. As another well-known Singletonian and former Rotary District Governor, Gerard McMillan, told the recent presentation event recognising Mr McHarg's initiative – the Immortal Pin has raised over \$100,000. Alex, thank you for your contribution to Rotary, the Rotary Club of Singleton On Hunter and ensuring the ongoing contribution of service clubs to the community.

SCHOOL LEADERS HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)—Today I acknowledge Thomas Ah tong, Georgia Finlay, Olivia Bertapelle, Benjamin Chin, Sarah Cliff and Ruby Egan-Brown who have been named as the 2022 Holy Spirit College leadership team. Being named as a school leader after being elected by their peers is a testament to their dedication, hard work and demonstrated ability to be a leader. Each of these students works exceptionally hard and have been highly involved within their school community throughout their time at the school. I am confident that they always strive to do their best with their studies and extra curricula activities. Each of them will spend 2022 acting as role models for their peers. These students have thrived even though they have faced a number of hurdles during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have no doubt that they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I congratulate Thomas Ah tong, Georgia Finlay, Olivia Bertapelle, Benjamin Chin, Sarah Cliff and Ruby Egan-Brown on their achievement and wish them all the best for their final year of high school.

SCHOOL LEADERS KEIRA HIGH SCHOOL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)—Today I acknowledge Molly Rigby, Geordie McCarthy, Lauren Sheppard, Kelly Jessep and Maddison Toll who have been named as the 2022 Keira High School leadership team. Being named as a school leader after being elected by their peers is a testament to their dedication, hard work and demonstrated ability to be a leader. Each of these students works exceptionally hard and have been highly involved within their school community throughout their time at the school. I am confident that they always strive to do their best with their studies and extra curricula activities. Each of them will spend 2022 acting as role models for their peers. These students have thrived even though they have faced a number of hurdles during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have no doubt that they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I congratulate Molly Rigby, Geordie McCarthy, Lauren Sheppard, Kelly Jessep and Maddison on their achievement and wish them all the best for their final year of high school.

SCHOOL LEADERS PLEASANT HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)—Today I acknowledge Isla Pearce, Billy Anderson, Gisele Bezbradica and Samuel Issa who have been named as the 2022 Pleasant Heights Public School leadership team. Being named as a school leader after being elected by their peers is a testament to their dedication, hard work and demonstrated ability to be a leader. Each of these students works exceptionally hard and have been highly involved within their school community throughout their time at the school. I am confident that they always strive to do their best with their studies and extra curricula activities. Each of them will spend 2022 acting as role models for their peers. These students have thrived even though they have faced a number of hurdles during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have no doubt that they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I congratulate Isla Pearce, Billy Anderson, Gisele Bezbradica and Samuel Issa on their achievement and wish them all the best for the year.

KAREN THROSSELL: THE CRIME OF NOT KNOWING YOUR CRIME

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—Karen Throssell's recent book, titled *The Crime of Not Knowing Your Crime*, subtitled *Ric Throssell Against ASIO* is an impressive and important work. It is a work of creative non-fiction that combines poetry and prose. It deals with ASIO's extraordinary treatment of her family and especially of her father Ric Prichard Throssell, himself the son of one of Australia's greatest novelist Katherine Susannah Prichard, and Hugo Throssell, VC. That VC medal was sold to raise funds to campaign for peace. Despite being cleared by the Petrov Royal Commission and emerging entirely unscathed from the Venona transcripts, Ric Throssell was hounded unfairly all his life as a spy by people, who, in his daughter's words, were "small of brain, slight of heart". This deals with an important part of Australia's lost WW2 history. This book goes part way to redressing a wrong. It also provides interesting lessons for contemporary Australia.

LISMORE CITY UNIT STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE – FLOOD HEROES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to place on the parliamentary record my deep thanks, commendation and admiration for our incredible Lismore City Unit State Emergency Service [SES]. Made up of outstanding community volunteers our local SES unit went above and beyond during recent catastrophic floods in Lismore. Operating with limited resources in an unprecedented flooding event. Through not just this flood, but all extreme weather events in our community the SES is there, putting their lives at risk to save others in our community. During the morning of the 28th of February flood the SES volunteers were out in boats, saving countless people stuck on the rooves. The SES are there in the rescue phase but also there for the recovery. Giving their all for our community despite many being flood affected locals themselves. Right now as we speak they are out in our community rescuing locals again. Led by North Lismore local Unit Commander Lacy Loloa and Deputy Northern Zone Commander – Superintendent Mark Elm the unit have been stretched to the limit recently but have never wavered in their commitment to our community and helping us in our darkest hour. I thank them all.

MURWILLUMBAH UNIT STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to place on the parliamentary record my deep thanks, commendation and admiration for our incredible Murwillumbah Unit of the State Emergency Service. Compiled of outstanding community volunteers our local SES unit went above and beyond during recent catastrophic floods in Murwillumbah and surrounds, operating with limited resources in a catastrophic flooding event. Through not just this flood, but all extreme weather events in our community the SES is there, putting their lives at risk to save others in our community. The SES are there in the rescue phase but also for the recovery. Giving their all for our community despite many being flood affected locals themselves. Right now as we speak they are out in our community, again. I'm working with the local SES leadership and volunteers to secure a much needed new Murwillumbah SES headquarters. They need all the resources they can get. Led by Unit Commander Jack Frost and Deputy Northern Zone Commander – Superintendent Mark Elm the unit is stretched to the limit recently but have never wavered in their commitment to our community and helping us in our darkest hour. I thank them all for their service.

KYOGLE UNIT STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE – FLOOD HEROES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I place on the parliamentary record my deep thanks, commendation and admiration for our incredible Kyogle Unit of the State Emergency Service [SES]. Compiled of outstanding community volunteers our local SES unit went above and beyond during recent catastrophic floods in Kyogle and villages. Operating with limited resources in a cataclysmic flooding event. Through not just this flood, but all extreme weather events in our community the SES is there, putting their lives at risk to save others in our community. The SES are there in the rescue phase but also there for the recovery. Giving their all for our community despite many being flood affected locals themselves. Right now as we speak they are out in our community rescuing locals again. Led by Unit Commander Debbie Castledine and Deputy Northern Zone Commander – Superintendent Mark Elm the unit have been stretched to the limit recently but have never wavered

in their commitment to our community and helping us in our darkest hour. I thank them all for their incredible service.

MOUNT TUMBARUMBA MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I congratulate the cycling enthusiasts of Tumbarumba in NSW, who are preparing to build a bike trail and hiking network in the heart of Mount Tumbarumba Recreation Park. This project will be a significant boost for tourism in the area, providing opportunity for those who like to cycle and for those who prefer to hike the hills. Signage will display cultural, historical and environmental information to help visitors get the most out of this community owned asset and recreation hub. I thank the local organisations, individuals, committees and volunteers, including Tumbarumba 2 Kokoda, The Tumbarumba Historical Society, Mountain Landcare, Tumbarumba RFS, Tumbarumba Bendigo Bank Branch, and in particular Cycle Tumbarumba, for their passion, enthusiasm and dedication to this exciting project at Tumbarumba.

SAM TAIT- PARA-OLYMPICS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I want to congratulate a tough and talented Mittagong local, Sam Tait, who competed in the 2022 Beijing Winter Paralympic Games representing Australia. The alpine skier had a rough start to the games, having a fall in the Men's Downhill Sitting event and then again in the Super-G Sitting event. Despite the disappointments, Sam remained positive and got right back up on the slopes. Although he was not able to secure any medals this time round, he is already setting his sights on the next Paralympic games to be held in Italy. And we support him in spirit every step of his journey. Sam has learnt to rely on challenges, as you don't become a Paralympic athlete by taking the easy road. At 22, Sam broke his T11 vertebrae in a motorcycle accident in Wollongong and became a paraplegic. After an intense three month rehabilitation, Sam pushed himself to get back into his skiing, albeit in a sitting position. He has now competed in an impressive two Parra-Olympic games and can be very proud of what he has achieved. I congratulate Sam on his efforts and wish him every success in Italy!

SMALL BUSINESS MONTH

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—As you would be aware, March is small business month, with the theme this year being Rebuild, Recharge, and Renew. It is obvious small businesses need our support more than ever before, after an incredibly tough few years. In my electorate of Wollondilly, there are nearly 8,000 small businesses that cover a range of industries, from construction, manufacturing and technical services, to agriculture, retail, health care, and education. These businesses and the locals that run them are the life-blood of our community, and are what give the Wollondilly Shire and the Southern Highlands their unique streetscape and character. The Wingecarribee Small Business Month Launch was unfortunately cancelled due to ongoing severe weather in my electorate, but despite this setback the Wingecarribee Shire Council and the Southern Highlands Business Chamber continue to do fantastic work to ensure small businesses in Wingecarribee are supported and are able to hit the ground running in 2022. I extend my thanks to Wingecarribee Council and the Southern Highlands Business Chamber for all they are doing to support small businesses in the Southern end of Wollondilly.

UNIQUE FOOTPRINT

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Southern Highlands Charity Unique Footprint held their annual fundraising rally and dinner on the 19th of March of this year. The event began with teams racing around the Pheasant Wood Circuit in Marulan, fighting to be named Rally Champion. There was also a prize for the Best Dressed Car, so the rally was certainly colourful! The rally was followed by a beautiful three-course meal at the Mittagong RSL, where local band 'Eclipse' entertained guests, and amazing raffle prizes were won and auctioned off. The mission of the charity is to build houses that are specially designed to fit the needs of adults who have unique abilities. It is their hope that in this way, 'forever homes' can be built for people with additional needs, rather than just finding them temporary accommodation. Unique Footprint does extraordinary work and I congratulate them on such a successful event!

BONNET BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Bonnet Bay Public School on their appointment. Bonnet Bay Public School is a warm and welcoming community where students are encouraged to pursue their passions and full potential. This year, Stage 3 have been busy working on their 'passion projects' where students get to develop their artistic and creative skills including origami, crochet, animation, wood carving and jewellery. Students also enjoyed cheering each other on at the swimming carnival and uplifting their peers during 'You Can Do It' workshops where they unpacked what it means to be confident. Leading by example is the 2022 leadership team who truly embody the values of Bonnet Bay Public School. I congratulate School Captains Zachary Tong-Rogers and Sienna Faulkner along with Vice Captains Jack Shanks and Zoe Peterson on their successful appointment.

To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud, and I look forward to seeing the opportunities they embrace throughout the year. I commend the student leaders from Bonnet Bay Public School on their success and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

COMO PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Como Public School on their appointment. Como Public School is a small school with a rich history spanning 100 years. Led by outstanding Principal Nicole Gilmore, the school has remained a vibrant cornerstone of our local community. This year, students have launched themselves into Term 1 by learning new skills and celebrating their peers achievements at the school swimming carnival. Students also took part in Clean Up Australia Day and went on environmental incursions hosted by the Georges River Environmental Education Centre. Leading by example is the 2022 leadership team who truly embody the values that make Como Public School such a caring and exciting place to learn. I congratulate School Captain William Keyes, Vice-Captain Charlotte Goacher, Sports Captain Nathaniel Sherry and Student Representative Council Members Samuel van Breda, Jake Hughes, Samuel Dewhurst, Zoe Nailer, Olivia Leggett, Hazy Sterritt, Matilda van Breda, Johnathan Dewhurst, Olivia van Breda and Connor Curtis on their successful appointment. I commend the student leaders from Como Public School on their success and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

SCOUTS NSW – SERVICE FOR GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY AWARDS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Today I acknowledge recent local recipients of the Scouts New South Wales Service for Greater Western Sydney Awards. On Sunday March 13 I attended the annual 2021 Awards presentation for the Greater Western Sydney Scouts Association to recognise the fantastic community contribution made by 62 adult members of Scouts New South Wales. Over my many years in this place, I have always been pleased to be associated with the Scouts New South Wales organisation. Scouts are an integral part of many communities across the State, and I am lucky enough to have many local troops in the Electorate of Seven Hills – including groups at Winston Hills, Kings Langley and Baulkham Hills. The adult recognition award seeks to acknowledge members of local groups who have been tenacious volunteers in their respective communities across Greater Western Sydney for many years. The Scouts organisation places heavy emphasis on their volunteer spirit, leadership, outdoor recreation and inclusivity. These traits are reflected by their members in the community. I thank the Scouts New South Wales organisation and wish all its members nothing but the best for all future endeavours.

NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS STATE DRAMA AND DANCE ENSEMBLES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I take the time today to acknowledge and congratulate local students who have been recently selected to take part in the New South Wales Public Schools State Drama and Dance Ensembles. Each year the New South Wales Government hosts the State Dance Festival in conjunction with the State Drama Festival. Talented artists, actors and other creatively gifted from across the State are encouraged to audition for these events. These students undergo rigorous workshops and rehearsals in preparation for their respective events. Many students from across the Electorate of Seven Hills have already been accepted to represent their schools. I particularly congratulate year 10 Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School Drama student, Mitchell Ridge, and Model Farms High School drama student, Liam Conell on making the Senior Drama Ensemble team for 2022. It is fantastic to see such a wealth of talent being developed in the local community. I wish our local students participating in this year's Drama and Dance Ensembles the best of luck.

NEWTOWN NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL 2022 LEADERS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate and acknowledge Newtown North Public School and their 2022 student leaders on becoming representatives and playing an important role in the school community. The 2022 SRC leaders at Newtown North Public School are Edie Nielsen, Sam Loane, Macy Hodkinson-Smith, Harriet Prodham, Elliott Rodger and Maya Yoshikawa. All of these students have been working hard to represent the ideas and wellbeing of all students at the school. Taking on the responsibility of being a representative is a way of contributing to the strength and connection of our community - whether at school, in our neighbourhoods or around the world. I look forward to the great work that Newtown North Public School student leaders will continue to do throughout the year - and thank them for the differences they will make both to their school's community and to our electorate of Newtown.

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS P&C

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate Newtown High School of Performing Arts P&C on their successful Community Building Partnership Grant. This grant will be used for the installation of a safety PA, intercom and bell system. Newtown Performing Arts is an

important part of the Newtown community, excelling in academic and artistic studies, and the P&C works tirelessly to help the school and its students thrive. Our public schools rely on the contributions of parents, carers and the school community for so much - and it is wonderful to see the contribution made by Newtown Performing Arts' P&C. In these challenging times, I acknowledge and thank the parents and carers for all their hard work, as well as the teachers and administrative and support staff for all they do for our next generation.

JOANNA SHULMAN

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate and acknowledge Joanna Shulman, Redfern Legal Centre's outgoing CEO, for contribution and dedicated service to our local community and across NSW. Joanna has led the Redfern Legal Centre over the past 12 years - a centre which offers legal support to vulnerable communities and individuals in need of support. As the Chair of the Board stated "Jo has deftly steered the Centre through periods of great instability, overcoming sector-wide limitations imposed by the threat of successive funding cuts and short-term contracts. Her work to diversify funding has resulted in our services not merely surviving, but growing, and continuing to thrive Jo leaves RLC in a formidable position. RLC has more staff and pro bono volunteers on our books than ever before, which is a direct result of Jo's leadership in diversifying the Centre's funding portfolio to include a mix of corporate, government and philanthropic sources." I thank Joanna for her hard work and lasting impacts the Redfern Legal Centre will have on our community as a result of her efforts - and wish her all the very best for her future endeavours.

RON GRIFFITHS AND RUSSELL SULLIVAN – CRONULLA NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Ron Griffiths of Caringbah South on being named a finalist in the 2022 Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. Ron has given many years of dedicated service to Lilli Pilli Football Club, the largest in the Sutherland Shire. He prepares kit bags for every junior and senior team for the start of competition and keeps every team equipped throughout the season. Ron is also a long time coach and is currently running the over 35As team. He is a highly appreciated volunteer at Lilli Pilli Football Club. I congratulate Russell Sullivan of GyMEA on being named a finalist in the 2022 Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards for decades of dedicated volunteering at the Port Hacking Open Sailing Club, Yowie Bay. Russell is the club's Rear Commodore and always available to lend a hand with any job that needs to be done. He has also encouraged members of the community to try sailing and coaches adults and children in learn to sail classes.

PETER TURBET – CRONULLA NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Peter Turbet of Cronulla on being named a finalist in the 2022 Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. Locally, Peter has been volunteering with Sutherland Shire Council Bushcare since 1997, where he helps at six Bushcare groups. His work helps protect vital areas of bushland containing endangered ecological communities and threatened species, and he contributes to the collection and maintenance of essential biodiversity data. Peter performs important bush regeneration and weed control activities that keep the bush healthy and reduce the impacts of weeds and other threatening processes. He works strategically with a number of groups to protect and enhance the important bushland of the Sutherland Shire. Peter has also volunteered and worked for the Fred Hollows Foundation for many years. Peter has catalogued Aboriginal history as the author of two extensive books, "The Aborigines of the Sydney district before 1788" and "First frontier: the occupation of the Sydney region 1788-1816".

MELANOMA MARCH

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)—I would like to acknowledge all those that took part in the Melanoma March in Manly on Saturday. 1300 Australians Die each year due to Melanoma and the Melanoma March raises vital funds for research. For the last 2 years the Melanoma March has been cancelled due to COVID, despite the rain on Saturday, hundreds turned up to take part. The Melanoma March in Manly was started back in 2012 and was organised by Mr James Economides and his wife Michelle to honour their son Michael who died from melanoma. Special thanks go to Fiona Ward and Jen Benfield who were the top fundraisers for the event this year in Manly.

MOREE BASED CUP WINNER – AH WELL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Moree based horse racing team that produced a spectacular Quirindi Cup win by five year old mare, Ah Well. Proudly owned by Les Quinn and trained by Peter Sinclair, this is Ah Well's first big win after placing third in recent races. Completing the team are stable manager Amee Hobday and apprentice Jacob Golden. This team know and love their horses. In the case

of Ah Well's win, Amee knew that Ah Well would overcome her slow start and try her hardest, weaving through the field to take the lead. Les Quinn loves to win but more than that, loves his horses. Peter Sinclair is a well-known veteran trainer and his love of horses is his life. Jacob just loves the whole show. That's what it takes to produce a winner. I congratulate Peter, Amee, and Jacob on the fine preparation of all their horses. I commend Les Quinn and the many horse owners whose love of the game supports the racing industry without which the racing industry would not exist.

ARMIDALE'S NASHOS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Armidale National Servicemen's Association sub-branch for producing National Servicemen in War and Peace, a first-hand account provided by local Nashos of their service to Australia. This book features service men and women who served between 1951 and 1972 in Borneo, Vietnam, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Australia, affectionately known as the NASHOS. More than 15,000 served in the Vietnam War where some 200 died and more than 1,200 were wounded. This historical book edited by Eileen Dawson includes the realities of war, accounts from World War II, the Vietnam War and the overseas conflicts. Archived newspaper articles describing war-time events adds historical interest that may enlighten present generations unaware of the magnitude of the sacrifices Australian men and women have made. I congratulate President Barry Dawson who acknowledges designer Steve Black for the book's striking imagery and the professional content to media veterans Lu Danieli and Gary Fry. I commend the Armidale National Servicemen's Association sub-branch for this important and memorable literary achievement.

THELMA MCCARTHY AM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I offer my condolences to the family of fierce Armidale community advocate and World War II veteran Thelma McCarthy AM, who passed away over the weekend, at age 97. The wife of former Member for Armidale and then Northern Tablelands Bill McCarthy, Thelma was a formidable social justice campaigner whose passion, forged during the bombing of Darwin, saw her become one of the first women to join the Royal Australian Air Force – posted to Canberra in 1942. Thelma's exemplary service as wireless telegraphist was vital in keeping the lines of communication open at the height of hostilities in the Pacific region and saw her promoted to the rank of Sergeant. In addition to her appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia, in January 2020 Thelma was awarded Life Membership of the NSW Branch of the Labor Party, a fitting tribute to her years of dedication to the party she loved and her community. Thelma was beloved by all in Armidale. For me she was at once a harsh critic and of enormous support. Thelma epitomises all that is worthy about public service and the importance of social conscience and duty. She will be sorely missed.

PIP MCINTOSH

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police)—I would like to congratulate Pip McIntosh on being named a life member of the Bathurst Bulldogs Rugby Union Club. Pip's association with the club dates back to the 1980s as a player and it lives on as strong as ever to this day. A loyal Bulldog, Pip has enjoyed premiership success with the club as a player and coach, beginning his time with the club in the 1984 colts side and just this year coached his daughters' senior women's team to a title. One of his fondest memories on the field include bagging a try in both colts and first grade grand finals on the same day, as well as the 1984 first grade premiership. He has also served on the club's committee as vice-president as well as being a long time coach over a period of time spanning a decade. Pip will be stepping back from the women's coaching role in 2022, but still intends to remain heavily involved in the club that he loves. Well done Pip McIntosh, you are indeed one of the Bathurst sporting community's quiet achievers and your success is an example of how hard work pays off.

THE PRACTICE-BUNDANOON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)—Today I formally recognise the contribution of The Practice-Bundanoon to the community. The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges that we as a community have not only faced - but risen to. Without the tremendous effort from The Practice-Bundanoon throughout this pandemic, particularly for their contribution in the momentous vaccination effort - we would not be in the position that we are today. Mr Speaker, I also wish to publicly acknowledge, thank and praise The Practice-Bundanoon for their actions. The sheer dedication and hard work of each and every person - Doctor, Nurse, Pharmacist, Health Administrator and Staff or Volunteer – who supported our community in a medical capacity is indefinably appreciated. Thank you for your service.

YASS MEDICAL CENTRE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)—Today I formally recognise the contribution of Yass Medical Centre to the community. The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges that we as a community have not only faced - but risen to. Without the tremendous effort from Yass

Medical Centre throughout this pandemic, particularly for their contribution in the momentous vaccination effort - we would not be in the position that we are today. Mr Speaker, I also wish to publicly acknowledge, thank and praise Yass Medical Centre for their actions. The sheer dedication and hard work of each and every person - Doctor, Nurse, Pharmacist, Health Administrator and Staff or Volunteer – who supported our community in a medical capacity is indefinably appreciated. Thank you for your service.

\$6800 FOR RAISED FOR BREAST CANCER

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Ebony Goldsack (Event co-ordinator) and Janelle Day (Treasurer) of Oakland's Cricket Club for the work of the Club in raising \$6,815.30 for the McGrath Foundation from its Pink Stump Day in February. It is the fourth event by the club since 2019, raising more than \$29,776.00 in total so far. The inspiration for the Oakland's event was when an office bearer was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018, prompting the club to host the event as an act of emotional and financial support. The Oakland's community has made this into a fun day with six teams competing in a modified cricket challenge game. Everyone wears pink to acknowledge the cause. The generosity of the community and sponsors was outstanding. I thank everyone involved for demonstrating true support for a local member of the community living with a diagnosis of breast cancer.

ALBURY HIGH SCHOOL DEBUTANTE BALL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate the Albury High School Debutantes who made their debut at the Albury Entertainment Centre on the evenings of Friday 18th & Saturday 19th March 2022. With the pandemic in place the restrictions led to a number of cancellations and postponement of the event in 2021. Debutante Balls have been around for many years and for many generations. These evenings are truly a special moment for young women and their partners to share with their families, friends and the community. The success these Balls now obtain would not be possible without the strong partnership of the community with local organisers. I would like to thank the Bella Debutante Co-Founders and owners Mrs Bronwyn Robertson and Miss Natasha Polkinghorne for their efforts, patience and hard work organising this event. I would also acknowledge, the debutantes and their partners, family and friends. This was truly two evenings of formality and fun. Wishing you success and achievement throughout 2022 year.

GREG REID

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police)—It is deserving that Greg Reid, a stalwart of Bathurst Bulldogs Rugby, has been made a life member of the club. A former player, administrator and past president of the Bulldogs, Greg has been a driving force in ensuring the club's status as a powerhouse of Central West rugby. Under his watch, the club has taken home club championships and numerous premierships as well as creating pathways for women to take up the sport. Greg has also been heavily involved in the development of the Bulldog's new home ground, Anne Ashwood Park, into a facility that is the envy of other clubs across the competition. He was the school captain at Bathurst High School in 1988 and the following year started playing rugby league with the St Patrick's Club until crossing over to rugby union in 1996. It was the start of a long and distinguished playing career with the Bulldogs, the elusive winger taking home the first grade premiership in his retirement season in 2010. As an administrator, Greg served on the club's committee from 1999-2020, including the last three years as president. Congratulations Greg Reid, an ornament to the game and a true gentleman.

STREETWORK

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I wish to recognise and commend the extraordinary work, essential service and enormous contribution of StreetWork to at-risk youths, families and the local community in Willoughby in beyond. Based in Willoughby, their program of prevention and early intervention strategies has transformed the lives of hundreds of young people, through positive role modelling and practical support. StreetWork's goals based mentoring program is an important initiative in breaking the cycle of destructive influences and behaviours, and their dedicated team of volunteers are critical to this success. I would particularly like to thank StreetWork's CEO Helen Banu for her long-serving leadership of the youth focused not-for-profit organisation. I also recognise its volunteer board of directors including many local residents in Willoughby. The nurturing of our vulnerable youth is vitally important work for our community and state. Thank you and well done StreetWork for improving the lives of affected teens and helping to provide them with the same pathways and opportunities as their peers.

ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIA

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to recognise the steadfast commitment of the Armenian National Committee [ANC] of Australia, which has an office in my electorate of Willoughby, to promoting awareness and action on the ongoing crisis and consequences of Armenians suffering the fallout of the Nagorno

Karabakh conflict. There are approximately 150,000 people living in the Republic of Artsakh and the ANC's support for them is both admirable and appreciated. The ANC's mission to foster awareness in support of a free, united and independent Armenia is currently highlighted by the war in Ukraine. The ANC has various programs that operate on a local and national level, including the Armenian Relief Fund of Australia, The Armenian Relief Society, and the Armenian Youth Federation of Australia. As a Friend of Artsakh, I support the right to self-determination of indigenous Armenians in the Republic of Artsakh. The Armenian community is a significant contributor to the fabric of our community, and I acknowledge their contribution and stand in support with the Armenian National Committee of Australia.

ODYSSEY HOUSE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to recognise the significant service that Odyssey House in Chatswood provides to those suffering from addiction to alcohol and other Drugs. Substance dependency is a significant contributing factor to many harmful and self-destructive behaviours, that affect not only the suffering individuals, but their families, the local community and greater society. Odyssey House helps people rebuild their lives by offering community programs and residential programs, as well as the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment [MERIT] program. Odyssey House has a dedicated team of case workers who provide support to clients by helping them find positive ways forward in the challenges they face in their lives, as well as practical measures such as counseling, mental health services and family and parent support programs. I acknowledge the exceptional work that Odyssey House does to assist people with their dependency issues and rebuild their lives with a positive future path going forward from their substance addictions.

EMMA SMITH

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I wish to recognise Ms Emma Smith on being awarded the NSW Government Community Service Award for her volunteering efforts with the not for profit, Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency. Emma is a busy full time university student who dedicates her spare time to volunteering. She has been volunteering with MECA for some five years, assisting with their youth mentoring program, designed for disadvantaged high school students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are at risk of dropping out. As a mentor, Emma helps to build their confidence, skills and reinforces the importance of education for a brighter future, she is also instrumental with her assistance to the Homework Support Club. A well-deserved Award.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was honoured to attend the International Women's Day Breakfast hosted by the Parramatta Cumberland Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Committee on the 8th of March, 2022, to celebrate women working within the social, health and community welfare service sector. The Committee was established over 20 years ago and works to reduce domestic and family violence and improve the safety and status of women experiencing violence in the Parramatta and Cumberland Local Government Areas. I spoke to several brave women who worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to improve the safety and health of their community members, prioritising others' welfare over their own. It was a privilege to celebrate them and bring recognition to their perseverance and continued efforts in supporting those around them. I especially enjoyed listening to the guest speaker, Australian journalist, presenter, and comedian Jan Fran, known for her work on LiSTNR's 'The Briefing' podcast and ABC's 'The Pineapple Project' podcast, as well as Channel 10's 'The Project' and SBS's 'The Feed'. Thanks again to the wonderful committee members of the Parramatta Cumberland Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Committee in hosting an important event.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY HIGH TEA

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was privileged to attend the International Women's Day High Tea organised by the Engage, Challenge, Grow initiative on 9 March 2022. As the first ever woman to represent the Granville electorate, events such as these really resonate with me. This is because International Women's Day reminds us women are contributing drivers of our society and celebrates the achievements which have been reached. The IWD theme this year is Changing Climates: Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow - a theme that recognises the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are working to change the climate of gender equality and build a sustainable future. Thank you to ECGT for their invitation to attend as the Guest of Honour and thank you to the organising committee for coordinating a marvellous and successful celebration of IWD. I acknowledge the many people who attended and it was marvellous to meet face to face again after 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic. My congratulations to the organisers for a successful event.

JOANNE KENNAIR

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Today I would like to recognise the talented Joanne Kennair who works in the art of dressmaking. A Glenmore Park native, Joanne's interest in dressmaking began almost 20 years

ago when she started to alter her own clothes and repurposing outfits to give them new life. Her inspiration for dressmaking came about under unfortunate circumstances, losing a close loved one, Joanne wanted to do something special in their memory and the perfect opportunity arose at school. Joanne was drawn to textiles and ambitiously took on her first project which was to design and create a ragdoll and dress. She has kept this project to this very day. Joanne learnt the basics at school and soon enough was gifted a more advanced second-hand machine and overlocker with which she got creative through self-learning. I want to congratulate Joanne on her talent and wish her the very best going forward.

MANUEL MARQUES SIDAROUS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Today I would like to recognise a talented local junior footballer who will be competing with the Australian U10 team at the 2022 Juventus Academy World Cup. Manuel Sidarous is about to embark on the trip of a lifetime when he competes in Italy in June later this year against some of the best footballers in the world. After a careful selection process, trialing among the best in front of coaches from Italy and in front of Australia's very own Socceroo's coaching legend Rale Rasic, Manuel was chosen to compete overseas pointing to a very promising future in football. Manuel has a very hectic schedule for a 9 year old, he trains daily, has added strength and conditioning training to his regime and plays games on both Saturday and Sunday. To top it all off, Manuel is also an Honor student, who excels at school, receiving his School's Academic Excellence Award. This is a huge effort on the part of Manuel and I want to also recognise the support that his family is providing him to allow him to enjoy the sport he so passionately engages with every day. Congratulations Manuel.

BRITTANIE SHIPWAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Brittanie Shipway is one of Mulgoa's most talented performers and now playwright. Brittanie has written her first play which will debut for the first time at the Ensemble Theatre in Kirribilli in May. The idea for her play originated on Mother's Day in 2020 during the first lockdown. Brittanie and her mum were on a bushwalk and during their conversations it got Brittanie thinking about her Mum and the generations before her and the lives they lived outside of parenthood. The next day, Brittanie sat down and began to write the first draft of her play. It was completed in three days and after sharing it with friends, she was encouraged to apply for funding to have the play workshopped. The play was so good that nearly every grant she applied for, she was successful, from Australia Council for the Arts to Create NSW. The play, called "A letter for Molly", will be shown at the Ensemble Theatre in Kirribilli in May and I cannot wait to see the work of art that Brittanie has come up with be put on display for all to see. Congratulations Brittanie on a wonderful achievement.

PETER SULLIVAN HEATHCOTE SENIOR LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINEE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to congratulate Peter Sullivan who was nominated for a Heathcote Senior Local Achievement Award. Peter has been a member of Garie Surf Life Saving Club [SLSC] since 1956. He has served the Club both as a patrolling member and Patrol Captain and has required many educational certificates to pass on his skills to other members. He has also worked tirelessly to organise and assist in fundraisers. Peter holds Surf Life Saving's 30 Year National Patrol Service award, SLS 50 Year Long Service Award and is a Life Member of Garie SLSC which is the highest award their club can bestow. He is also a member of Burning Palms SLSC and has competed in their March Past Team at Metropolitan, State and National Levels and holds a National Title. I commend Peter on his outstanding commitment to the community.

CASS ANNUAL VOLUNTEERS LUNCHEON

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I take this opportunity to recognise Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS] who recently held their Annual Volunteers luncheon. Held in Hurstville, the function was dedicated to CASS's hard-working volunteers; many of whom stepped up during the recent lockdowns. I highlight a new initiative launched by CASS to support those in need of mental health services throughout the community. Run by volunteers with training and supervision from professionals, the "H-Line Non-Crisis Hotline" commenced operation in early November last year and provides emotional and mental support for Mandarin and Cantonese speakers. In doing this, it seeks to break down cultural and linguistic barriers - hoping to reach those in the community who may initially be hesitant to seek support. During the lockdown, volunteers in our community were the glue that held us together, and I thank them again for their selfless contribution, hard work and generosity.

AUSTRALIAN-LEBANESE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN HSC 2021

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—It was my pleasure to attend the Australian-Lebanese HSC High Achievers 2021 event this week. Held at Rockdale Town Hall and hosted by the Cultural Forum Sydney, the event recognises students who received high ATAR results in last year's HSC exams. I acknowledge the hard work, dedication, and diligence of many students from Kogarah High School, Al Zahra College in Arncliffe, Sydney Technical High in Bexley and Trinity Grammar in Summer Hill. Cultural Forum was created in 2014 to support

Australian-Lebanese youth with a focus on education and schooling. The organisation fosters partnerships with local schools that hold a high percentage of Australian-Lebanese students and works with teachers and parents to identify and address challenges that face them. I thank Sam Hobdallah, Hussein Wehbi for putting on a terrific event, and wish all the students the best of luck in their future endeavours.

MARJORIE BRAY - 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—My best wishes are extended to Ms Marjorie Bray who will celebrate her 100th birthday next month. Marjorie has spent her entire life in the St. George area, raising her family with her husband and remaining in the same home for more than 70 years. Marjorie and husband, Eric, were keen golfers and longstanding members of the Beverley Park Golf Club. With the passing of Eric some 15 years ago, she began volunteering at St. George Private Hospital until the beginning of the pandemic. Her family credits Marjorie for being part of a generation that gives generously which in turn has fostered many lifelong friendships. I wish Marjorie and her family good health, happiness and peace of mind for the future.

NICOLE BARBER NOMINEE LWOTYA

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I congratulate Nicole Barber who was a nominee in the 2022 Local Woman of the Year Award. Nicole has been a Dietitian in the Maitland Community for 12 years. During that time Nicole has been involved in local sporting clubs and running seasonal produce workshops with Amorelle Dempster. Nicole has also facilitated a number of community talks with local business groups and chambers on nutrition topics including nutrition for runners, and nutrition for mental concentration. In addition to this Nicole has delivered presentations at Fertility Conferences on Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. Nicole's passion is helping others find their pathway with food, so that it is seen as a way to enable better health. She also declares that she wants to help other women to restore their own perspectives on food and to rebalance that important relationship in a positive frame. I commend Nicole on her work to help to improve the everyday life of our community members.

NIKKI COUSINS LWOTYA NOMINEE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I congratulate Nikki Cousins on her recent nomination for the Local Woman of the Year Award 2022. Nikki is the Owner, Director and Senior Occupational Therapist at Action OT, an East Maitland based clinic that provides Occupational Therapy services to clients with disabilities. Nikki's three young boys proudly assist her when volunteering in the community as a Rotarian with East Maitland Rotary Club. Within Rotary, Nikki is the Youth Director and serves on committees including the Youth Exchange Committee and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. She is also an active committee member of East Maitland Swimming Club. Nikki was instrumental in setting up the first regional Freedom Wheels bicycle clinic in the Hunter Region under the leadership of the charity Solve-TAD, which enables children with disabilities to ride adapted bikes. In addition, Nikki also founded A T Fridays, a free weekly online segment that showcases adaptive aids for people with disabilities. I congratulate Nikki on her nomination, and I thank her for the wide range of volunteer roles that she performs within our community for the benefit of all.

TANEAL FORBES LWOTYA NOMINEE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Taneal Forbes is a disability support worker, completing a Diploma of Community Services. In 2017, Taneal made the courageous decision to bring her ailing Nan into her family home so that she could be surrounded by familiar faces and family. During this time Taneal's Nan was diagnosed with terminal bowel cancer and required additional care and support. Taneal provided this without question, despite having two young children and a newborn, and her husband away working. Sadly Taneal's Nan passed away in 2021. This event was made somewhat easier for Taneal by knowing she had been able to fulfill her Nan's wishes to stay at home with family until her final days. Taneal has continued to be a role model to her family and her community delivering care and compassion while seeking to improve her skills and qualifications. I commend Taneal for her strength of commitment in caring for her family and others in Maitland. I congratulate her upon her nomination for the Local Woman of The Year Award, and I look forward to seeing her career progress as she continues to contribute to our community.

TEAM BROKEN HILL RIDE FOR SICK KIDS

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—I would like to recognise the efforts of Mark Craven, Tim Ferguson, Judd Carpenter, Nigel Lawrence and Nick Mann who rode more than 1,000 kilometres along the Great Ocean Road from Melbourne to Adelaide, as part of the South Australian annual Ride for Sick Kids. The Broken Hill Team raised \$103,849 for Adelaide's Ronald McDonald House where at least 30 Broken Hill families with sick children have been supported in the past year, many of whom the team know personally. Often in the bush access to essential health care comes with additional costs of accommodation and travel. Without charities and events like this, many families would be separated during medical emergencies and chronic illness. The team thanked the

community of Broken Hill for their generosity and I add my heartfelt thanks to each of these gentlemen, for their tremendous stamina to complete such a ride.

TEGAN ROBERTS

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Pitching an idea to develop a genetic bank for farmers who are forced to de-stock during drought has won Bourke local, Tegan Roberts a \$7,000 grant through the AgriFutures Australia program. For Tegan this means ramping up her genetic banking project from an idea to reality. Having endured the lengthy drought that saw many farmers sell off their valuable flocks, Tegan has begun working on a system to store genetic material so farmers can breed quality animals and get back on their feet quickly. Using Tegan's technique of storing genetic material and embryonic transfer, farmers can re-stock using fairly ordinary animals but produce the same quality of stock they lost during the drought. "The drought will enable me to further my studies into the process, and hopefully help me establish a facility in Bourke that could service farmers in the region and right up to southwest Queensland." The genetic banking facility would help producers weather local conditions and develop better breeding outcomes for sheep and goats, which are becoming more profitable. I congratulate Tegan on her initiative and the support and resilience this will provide to our rural primary producers.

VALE WILLIAM 'BILL' EDWARD POOLE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I note the passing of former Hastings Shire Council president William Poole on 8 March 2022 at the age of 96. The late William Poole or 'Bill' as he was fondly known by so many was born in the local village of Kendall on 6th April 1925. At just nine years of age, Bill commenced his fishing career on a five metre rowing boat, often spending regular intervals on the ocean. Bill, his father and siblings constructed all the fishing trawlers back then, naming them Moana, Moana 2 and Florence. Bill retired as a fisherman in 1978 aged 44. During his employment years Bill was also involved in the first Laurieton Fishermen's Co-op development and was elected as a Director in 1949, serving as Chairman for 13 years before finishing in this role in 1971. He was a delegate for the Australian Fishing Industry Council, Director of Laurieton United Services Club, Rotary Club of Laurieton member and served as Councillor, Deputy President and President from 1974 to 1981. Bill married his sweetheart Marge and raised three beautiful children, Julie, Bill and Maureen. I pay respect to a life dedicated to community service.

NSW TRAINING AWARD NOMINATIONS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—The annual NSW Training Awards are here again recognising outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training sector. Today, I rise to acknowledge the nominees who have demonstrated values and virtues that signify ambassador qualities throughout their traineeship and apprenticeship. As we all know success is measured through the level of dedication and commitment to achieve an outcome. All of the students I mention today from Newman Senior Technical College have excelled in their school-based traineeship and apprenticeship to be nominated for the Department of Education's Training Awards. I congratulate the following students nominated for the School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year: Christopher Rajcany, Lukas Baker, Lucas Roberts, Rebecca Thresher, Dane Young, Jolie McKellar. Nominated for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year was Lincoln Thomas and I applaud his efforts in working hard to achieve his career goals. The VET in Schools Student of the Year nominations for 2022 are Mia Brookes and Matthew Booth who continue to impress and shine. Congratulations again to the nominees and I wish them all the success at the award presentations evening held on 10 June 2022.

HASTINGS MOTOCROSS YOUNG GUNS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I recognise Hastings young guns Kade Marshall, Carter Fergus, Maxi Harris, Machlan Slade and Matt Prott who have all qualified to ride in the NSW State Motocross Finals. The NSW Motocross Titles 'King of MX' is an annual event to determine the NSW State Motocross Champions. To have a gate at the final a rider must first attend a regional qualifier and attain a 'Golden Ticket'. As the first four across the line at Hastings Valley Motorway in the first qualifying round Maxi, Kade, Carter and Machlan all received the coveted Golden Tickets in the 50cc class. Matt Prott also from Hastings Valley Motorcycle Club earned his Golden Ticket by winning the 125cc class. The Hastings Valley Motorcycle Club and President Greg Harris are to be congratulated for organising the Motorcycling NSW qualifying event and for supporting these up and coming champions. Congratulations to you all and I wish you the very best of luck in the upcoming stages and finals.

ELIZABETH ALLEN OAM

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—Dubbo's Elizabeth Allen OAM was recently recognised for pioneering the Prostate Cancer Foundation

Support Group in Dubbo and was presented with the Max Gardner Award. According to Elizabeth 'wives of men diagnosed with cancer are lost in grief and terrified of the circumstances surrounding a cancer-stricken husband'. It was these circumstances and her husband John's diagnosis in 1996 that led to them co-founding the Dubbo support group. Elizabeth, with the help of John, have since then organised another six support groups across NSW forming part of the 130 groups across Australia. She has also been an ambassador of the Prostate Cancer Foundation since 2008 and is no stranger to volunteering in the community, especially the health sector. Elizabeth has been a member of the Dubbo Health council, on a number of hospital committees, executive member of the Macquarie Home Stay project, Quota, Angel Flight Earth Angel and Meals on Wheels. Volunteers are an integral part of the community, thank you for all that you do Elizabeth and Congratulations!

GEORGIA CAMPBELL

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—Growing up on a farming property west of Warren, agriculture has always been in Georgia Campbell's blood. Now a credit analyst at a rural bank in Dubbo, Georgia is passionate about breaking down barriers for women in the two traditionally male-dominated industries. It's this passion which saw Georgia named as a recipient of the 2022 NSW Rural Scholarship Program. She's excited about the opportunity to improve her confidence and leadership skills, and to learn from female leaders in other industries. Georgia hopes to continue to give back to her community, be an example to rural women that they can do anything they set their mind to, and even inspire the next generation of leaders in regional NSW. Congratulations Georgia – and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours!

THANK YOU SES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Over the last few weeks and months, our state has been unspeakably impacted by severe rain and ongoing floods. All across NSW, SES volunteers have been working around the clock to support their local communities. While the Inner West has been relatively fortunate, heavy rains and flash flooding have impacted thousands of residents and businesses and I pay particular respect and thanks to the resilient and hardworking local SES volunteers in the Ashfield-Leichhardt Unit and Marrickville Unit. As the worst of the wet weather hit, volunteers were putting their lives on the line to help their neighbours and fellow residents, clearing fallen trees, sandbagging homes and businesses, covering roofs that had blown open and unfortunately, rescuing vehicles from floodwaters. These heroes are the very best of us and I have had so many calls to my office praising their dedication and hard work. Thank you to all the SES volunteers in our local community. On behalf of the Inner West community, I extend my heartfelt gratitude and respect.

FAVERSHAM FAMOUS - THE RED RATTLER

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—As part of the Inner West Fest across the Inner West council area, the Red Rattler hosted an extraordinary program of eclectic music, dance and performance, Faversham Famous. Performers included Gaia Rising, Jannah Beth, Suara Dance, Cross Colors, Kings of Joy, Carter Jr, Ben Nitiva and more, all celebrating the creativity and energy of Faversham Street, Marrickville. Patrons were treated to delicious food by Koshari Korner, Egyptian street food. The event was supported by Inner West Council and curated by the exceptional Kween G in partnership with Venue Manager, Brooke Olsen. Following a difficult few years during the pandemic, The Red Rattler is going from strength to strength. They have attracted substantial grant money and with the lifting of restrictions, the doors are back open and the community able to get back to what we love: enjoying the very best in live music, performance and parties. I warmly congratulate Kween G, Brooke and all those on the Red Rattler Team for the fantastic success of the Faversham Famous project.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY 2022

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The 25th of March each year is Greek Independence Day, a date to commemorate the beginning of the War of Greek independence, and to reflect on the battle for liberty from the Ottoman Empire. All across the Inner West, Greek Australians were celebrating this important day, commemorating victory in the War of Greek Independence, and also taking pride in the extraordinary legacy of generations of Greeks to Australian history. The traditions brought to Marrickville and Dulwich hill by Greek migrants continue to thrive in many local institutions like the Greek Orthodox Parish of St Nicholas and the Hellenic Theatre, just to name a few. Last year, the Inner West Council renamed part of Marrickville Road "Little Greece" to acknowledge the contribution of Greek businesses to the area on the 200th anniversary of Greek independence. I especially acknowledge Clr Zoi Tsardoulis, who worked to ensure that the Greek flag is flying on every flagpole down the main street of Marrickville. I stand with the Greek Community this Greek Independence Day, and thank them for their remarkable and ongoing contribution to our multicultural, diverse community.

The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:45 until

Wednesday 30 March 2022 at 9:30.