



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday 31 March 2022

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Announcements	8863
Thought Leadership Breakfast.....	8863
Addresses.....	8863
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee	8863
Bills.....	8867
Residential Tenancies Amendment (Tenant Protections and Flood Response) Bill 2022	8867
Second Reading Speech.....	8867
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family Is Culture Review) Bill 2021	8870
Second Reading Speech.....	8870
Business of the House.....	8873
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Sessional Orders.....	8873
Bills.....	8874
Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2021.....	8874
Second Reading Debate.....	8874
Third Reading	8882
Motions	8883
Rural, Remote and Regional Health	8883
Electric Vehicle Charging.....	8890
Anzac Community Grants Program.....	8890
Members	8893
Member for Oxley	8893
Member for Albury.....	8893
Member for Coffs Harbour	8893
Announcements	8893
Girls Takeover Parliament.....	8893
Visitors.....	8893
Visitors.....	8893
Members	8893
Representation of Ministers Absent During Questions	8893
Question Time	8893
Essential Energy	8893
New South Wales Floods.....	8894
Flood Recovery Grants	8895
WestInvest Fund	8896
Parramatta Light Rail.....	8897
Apprenticeships and Traineeships	8899
Nurse Shortages	8899
Social and Affordable Housing	8900
New South Wales Floods Inquiry.....	8902

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Seniors Connectedness Programs	8903
Committees	8904
Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission	8904
Chair and Deputy Chair	8904
Public Accounts Committee	8904
Deputy Chair	8904
Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission	8904
Inquiry	8904
Business of the House	8904
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business	8904
Committees	8906
Committee on Children and Young People	8906
Membership	8906
Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission	8906
Membership	8906
Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption	8906
Membership	8906
Legislation Review Committee	8906
Membership	8906
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	8906
Membership	8906
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety	8907
Membership	8907
Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General	8907
Membership	8907
Public Accounts Committee	8907
Membership	8907
Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services	8907
Membership	8907
Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning	8907
Membership	8907
Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development	8907
Membership	8907
Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety	8908
Membership	8908
Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure	8908
Membership	8908
Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics	8908
Membership	8908
Reference	8908
Community Recognition Statements	8908
Matthew Reid and Walk for Terry Fox	8908

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Northern Power Cricket Club Pink Stumps Day	8909
Dalgety Show and Dalgety Show Society	8909
Ryan "whippet" Clark and Luke Stewart.....	8909
HSC Showcase and Alexi Caulfield	8909
Miles for Smiles Surfboat Rowers.....	8909
Australian Corrections Medal Recipient Cathy Petrovski.....	8909
Tribute to Barrie Ward.....	8910
NSW RFS Hawkesbury Catering Brigade.....	8910
Cystic Fibrosis Advocate Jess Ragusa.....	8910
International Women's Day Breakfast.....	8910
Nelson Bay RSL Sub-Branch President Mr John Tate.....	8910
Mount St Joseph High School HSC Results.....	8911
Transgender Day of Visibility	8911
The Meadows Public School	8911
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School	8911
Rotary Club of Albury	8911
Wagga Wagga Future Rural Women Scholarship.....	8912
Central Coast Local Business Awards.....	8912
Woy Woy South Public School	8912
De La Salle Catholic College Revesby Heights	8912
Port Stephens Local Woman of the Year Dr Sarah Bayley.....	8912
Coffs Coast Food and Wine Festival	8913
NSW Seniors Festival.....	8913
National Council of Women of Australia	8913
Rural Fire Service Association	8913
Lions Club of Coffs Harbour.....	8913
Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra	8914
George Centre Chief Executive Officer Michelle Stares.....	8914
St John Ambulance Australia	8914
Sawtell Bowls Club	8914
Private Members' Statements.....	8914
Multicultural Media Outlets	8914
Teacher Shortages.....	8915
Fuel Excise.....	8916
Cessnock Electorate Public Schools	8917
Tweed Coast Pro Surfing.....	8918
Rural Healthcare Services.....	8918
Mercy Partners.....	8919
Strathfield Electorate Road Safety.....	8920
Regional Road Safety	8921
Northern Rivers Floods.....	8922
State Emergency Service Volunteers.....	8922

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Lakemba Electorate Higher School Certificate Students	8923
Rural Fire Service Award Recipients	8923
Davidson Electorate Small Businesses	8924
Bingo Industries Waste Management Odour	8925
Cabbage Tree Bay	8926
Public School Funding	8926
Hawkesbury Electorate Floods	8927
Tuggerah Lakes Floods	8928
Wollondilly Electorate Floods	8929
Domestic Violence	8929
Bankstown Electorate Rail Services	8930
Camden Local Business Awards	8931
Domestic and Family Violence	8932
The Haven Amphitheatre	8933
Essential Workers and Affordable Housing	8933
Kendall Community OP Shop	8934
Blue Mountains Electorate Transport Infrastructure	8935
Galungara Public School	8936
Raise the Age Campaign	8937
Tuggerah Lakes Floods	8938
Vaucluse Electorate Wastewater Outfalls	8938
Lions Australia Seventy-Fifth Anniversary	8939
Port Macquarie Electorate Volunteers	8940
Tuggerah Lakes Floods	8941
Monaro Electorate Schools	8941
Moree Special Activation Precinct	8942
Staggered School Start Times	8943
Social and Affordable Housing	8944
Local Government Codes of Conduct	8944
Gosford Waterfront	8945
Members	8946
Calls to Order	8946
Committees	8946
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	8946
Membership	8946
Bills	8947
Home Building Amendment (Medical Gas Licensing) Bill 2022	8947
Returned	8947
Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022	8947
Returned	8947
Consideration in Detail	8947
Community Recognition Notices	8955

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Australian Jordanian Community Association 5th Graduation Event.....	8955
Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum Awards Night.....	8956
2021 NAPLAN Results	8956
Star Scientific.....	8956
Central Coast Surf Pro.....	8956
Grafton Sporting Car Club.....	8956
Michelle Wellard	8957
Glendore Public School Student Leaders	8957
Lambton Public School Student Representative Council.....	8957
Amity College.....	8957
The Wyong Roos	8958
Queen's Scout Toby Stone	8958
Sydney Catholic Schools Swimming Championships.....	8958
Essence of Asia Fundraiser – Khmer Community NSW Inc.	8958
Harmony Day 2022 – Verona School.....	8958
Hunter Workers	8958
Native Food Garden.....	8959
Bolwarra Landcare 2.0.....	8959
Share the Love Project.....	8959
Selection into Lower North Coast Football	8959
The Australian College of Educators Outstanding Graduate Award 2021.....	8960
Kim Jones - Griffith.....	8960
Resilient Tweed Community	8960
Sharon Curry.....	8960
Newroz Kurdish New Year Celebration	8960
Blue Ribbon Ball	8961
Bangladesh National Day Reception	8961
2021 Westfield Local Heroes	8961
Fikry H. Atalla	8961
Loud Shirt Day – the Shepherd Centre.....	8962
Elena Mulham Deniliquin.....	8962
Dr Nhi Nguyen	8962
Campbelltown Joggers Club.....	8962
Seaham School Parliament Opening 2022.....	8962
Patricia Cudmore and Betty Jacobs – Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards.....	8963
Milton Show	8963
Coralie Smith.....	8963
International Women's Day	8963
Bob Paterson.....	8964
Anna Barwick – 2022 NSW Premier's Woman of the Year Award.....	8964
Phoebe Vimpany – the Minister's Student Council	8964
Nicole Alexander – the Last Station.....	8964

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Kate Horrobin	8964
Stop Cruise Ship Pollution.....	8965
Michael Douglas and Neil Reynolds – Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards	8965
Gene Mills Inducted into Shearers Hall of Fame	8965
Emma Muller Nawic 2021 NSW Regional Woman of the Year.....	8965
Farewell to Temora Librarian Ros Langford.....	8965
Peta Lawrence.....	8966
Ky Willott	8966
Marilyn Cousins.....	8966
Winston Mall Children's Centre Anzac Community Grant.....	8966
Mary's House and the Daisy Centre.....	8966
Willoughby Wildcats AFL Club.....	8967
Chatswood Chamber of Commerce.....	8967
Rod Holdsworth, Mark Lloyd and Adam Buckley.....	8967
Resilient Lismore Helping Hands.....	8967
Student Leadership Day – NSW Parliament House	8968
Tenterfield Bumblebees New England Rugby Season	8968
Endeavour Sports High School.....	8968
Superintendent Brett Standaloft.....	8968
2022 Miranda Local Woman of the Year	8969
Portrait of Harmony	8969
Heritage College Year 10 Geography Class	8969
Harmony Day 2022.....	8969
Macarthur Anglican School Agricultural Show Team	8969
Mount Annan Christian College Hices Debating Team	8970
Bondi Chamber of Commerce – International Women's Day	8970
We're Better Than That Campaign	8970
Clovelly Crocs Season Launch.....	8970
Kenneth Coleman 2022 Heathcote Senior's Local Achievement Award Recipient.....	8970
Pat Kennedy Heathcote Senior Local Achievement Award Nominee	8971
Sandra Bourne Heathcote Senior Local Achievement Award Nominee	8971
Charlotte Nash	8971
Dilpreet Kaur	8971
Hugh Harrold	8971
Balmoral Touch Football Academy Charity Drive for Tonga.....	8972
Mosman Art Walk 2022	8972
Mosman Local Rows the Atlantic for Charity.....	8972
High Risk Management Correctional Centre.....	8972

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 31 March 2022

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

The SPEAKER: I thank all those members who, on the back of a late finish last night, fronted up for the Thought Leadership Breakfast this morning with special guest former Prime Minister Tony Abbott. Thank you to all those members who participated in that excellent forum this morning.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Addresses

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE

Debate resumed from 30 March 2022.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (09:47): It is a great honour to continue my speech on Her Majesty the Queen. The clerks have almost been playing bingo with the amount of times I can mention steam trains from Thirlmere. I know the member for Lakemba is a big fan of Thirlmere. I took him there and we saw Cedar Creek Orchard. He got some non-alcoholic apple cider and absolutely loved it.

Mr Jihad Dib: Yes. Delicious.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: It is absolutely delicious. As we know, the Speaker is going to London shortly and this will be the last couple of speeches on the address before we hand it over to Her Majesty. It is a great honour, as Her Majesty's Whip in this House, to speak on her glorious reign of 70 years. Some of my republican friends on the other side of the aisle ask me, "Nat, how can this be? You're an Irish Catholic and you're there backing the Queen." I am a constitutionalist and I think the monarchy is one of the greatest forms of leadership that we have ever seen. Many Prime Ministers have visited Buckingham Palace. The Queen has dealt with many issues during her reign. In World War II she was a motor mechanic and she still likes to get the tools out, although perhaps not now due to her age. I remember seeing images of a Rover at Balmoral with a broken axle and the Queen knowing exactly what was wrong, "It is a broken back axle. Get it fixed up. I was a mechanic in World War II."

Yesterday I talked about the societies and organisations that the royal family are either patron or president of, over 3,000 organisations. The Queen also performs important ceremonial duties such as conferring Australia Day honours, recognising Australians who have demonstrated outstanding service or exceptional achievement. As I said yesterday, I fully supported former Prime Minister Tony Abbott bringing back knights and dames. I think the member for Sydney enjoyed my calling him Sir Alex Greenwich. I know that the member for Heffron enjoys his nickname, Baron Hoenig. Every time I see him I say, "Baron, how are you?", and he says, "Well, thank you."

Mr Jihad Dib: He would love it. I think they are making him a new badge right now.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: He does love it. Yes, a badge is getting made in my office as we speak. My electorate of Wollondilly recently celebrated many diverse Australian individuals who received an Order of Australia from the Queen, all of whom have made excellent contributions to their community and beyond. Each year on Australia Day Australians stop to see who has made the list to recognise their fellow citizens. It is well known that the Queen never misses an engagement or commitment to one of her patronages, and other members of the royal family follow the example of her leadership.

Many Australians are inspired by her amazing stamina to calmly carry on despite obstacles and critics. The family is key to the long-serving institution. Passing down customs and traditions from one generation to the next, often on the public stage, is what makes this family so remarkable. The Queen has endured the ups and downs of family life with grace and humility. She has demonstrated a deep faith and respect for the constitutional tradition she was born into and clearly takes seriously her responsibility to pass this on, as indeed her father taught her by his faithful example. What a great man he was.

Australians have deep respect and affection for Her Majesty the Queen. She is a constant presence in an ever-changing landscape in Australia of drought, storms, floods, fires and now the recent COVID pandemic. She is a symbol of wisdom, strength and endurance and a role model of service and self-sacrifice. At the same time, we all feel we know the Queen personally. We cared for her at the passing of Prince Phillip and we were worried about her when she contracted COVID last month. Thank God she has recovered. On this anniversary, I thank the Queen for her service to the people of New South Wales and her patronage of various groups over the years. Her service to the Commonwealth and Australia has been exemplary.

I am proud to say that the gift from the people of New South Wales personally delivered to Her Majesty by the New South Wales Agent General in London was a bottle of gin, distilled in Australia and crafted by the award-winning Joadja Distillery in the Southern Highlands. We all know that Her Majesty likes her gin. A bottle of the good stuff is coming from the Southern Highlands to Buckingham Palace, and probably Balmoral and Windsor. We have also been successful in getting a Southern Highlands brew at the bar in Parliament House, so us southern highlanders are taking over. We get in everywhere. I toast Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the longest reigning British monarch in history and the first-ever British monarch about to celebrate a platinum jubilee. It is a remarkable record and achievement from a remarkable woman. God save the Queen.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (09:54): I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak and express my warm congratulations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at this time of celebration of the platinum jubilee of her accession to the throne. I express our appreciation for the ongoing dedication that Her Majesty has displayed in the leadership of the Commonwealth of Nations as well as her abiding commitment to Australia and its people. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was born on 21 April 1926 as the then Princess Elizabeth. On 6 February 70 years ago, her life changed as her reign began as the Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Commonwealth of Nations that span the globe. On her twenty-first birthday, the then Princess Elizabeth and our future Queen said in a broadcast from South Africa:

I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

Looking back on the faithful and dedicated service of Her Majesty, I can say with great confidence that she has fulfilled her vow in every way possible. In past jubilees of silver, gold and diamond, there was nothing but the utmost joy and happiness across all the Commonwealth nations. They were celebrations of the dedication of her life to service and reminders of unity. We looked back on all the history we have shared. We all commemorated these occasions with bunting, visits, gun salutes, flags and commemorative stamps. Our Queen's platinum jubilee is more poignant. As much as Australians love a celebration—any excuse for one is always a bonus—with great sorrow our Queen stands alone this time as she has farewelled her beloved husband, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, after nearly 73 years together. In that moment of great sadness, when she was frail and fragile, our Queen remained as strong and stoic as she has always been. With all the leaps and bounds, including a world war, the Windsor Castle fire, the marriages of her three eldest children and the passing of her husband, our Queen is still a beacon to us all. At 95, Her Majesty still continues to passionately be devoted to her service and dedicated to her vow.

This jubilee is one of gratitude and one to reflect on the good life we have as free people of Australia. It is a moment to reflect on the Queen's seven decades of selflessness and dedication to the values that sustain us and make us Australians. It is a moment to remind our Queen that she does not stand alone this jubilee. We as Australians are always in support of her reign. Our Queen of every day and every hour makes us proud to be one of the first Commonwealth nations to celebrate her platinum jubilee. To honour our gratitude on this memorable occasion, monuments around the country have been illuminated in the royal purple, including the Sydney Opera House, Queen Victoria Building and more. This is a jubilee for Australia to remember the Queen, to reflect on the joy and the sorrows of her faithful dedication for seventy years, and to reflect on all the challenges, hurdles and changes for the better. As we look back on seven decades of service, we honour Her Majesty, her duty to the throne and her dedication. On behalf of the residents of the Camden electorate, I offer my sincerest congratulations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on her platinum jubilee.

A lot of members have spoken in this place about the Queen, but I am not sure whether any have spoken about how the Queen will be celebrating her jubilee. The Queen's platinum jubilee in 2022 will include yearlong celebration throughout the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and around the world as communities come together to celebrate the Queen's historic reign. On 6 February this year Her Majesty the Queen became the first British monarch to celebrate a platinum jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the realms and the Commonwealth.

To celebrate that unprecedented anniversary, events and initiatives will take place throughout the year, culminating in a four-day UK bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June. The bank holiday will provide an opportunity for communities and people throughout the United Kingdom to come together to

celebrate the historic milestone. The four days of celebration will include public events and community activities as well as national moments of reflection on the Queen's 70-year service. In addition, initiatives including The Queen's Green Canopy and the Platinum Pudding competition will create a lasting reminder of the Queen's jubilee. The Queen's private estates will also join in with special jubilee-themed events, offering more opportunities for members of the public to celebrate the historic milestone.

To mark Her Majesty's platinum jubilee, a nationwide baking competition sets out to find a brand new pudding dedicated to the Queen. The Big Jubilee Lunch and Fortnum & Mason invited applications from UK residents aged eight and over to create the perfect Platinum Pudding recipe. The competition is now closed, and five finalists will be announced in due course. Each finalist will prepare their pudding for an expert judging panel including Dame Mary Berry, Monica Galetti and Buckingham Palace head chef Mark Flanagan. The winning recipe will be made available to the public, and the pudding will be enjoyed at Big Jubilee Lunches during the jubilee weekend and by generations to come.

The Queen's parade Trooping the Colour is on Thursday 2 June. Over 1,400 parading soldiers, 200 horses and 400 musicians will come together in the traditional parade to mark the Queen's official birthday, usually held on the second Saturday in June. Beginning at Buckingham Palace, the parade will move down The Mall to Horse Guards Parade, joined by members of the royal family on horseback and in carriages. The parade will close with a traditional RAF fly-past, watched by the Queen and members of the royal family from the Buckingham Palace balcony. Tickets for that incredible spectacular are available to the public, and applications for the ballot were open until the end of February.

The United Kingdom will continue its long tradition of celebrating royal jubilees, weddings and coronations with the lighting of beacons to mark the platinum jubilee. Over 1,500 beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK overseas territories. To celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee, beacons will also be lit for the first time in each of the capital cities of the Commonwealth countries. The principal beacon will be lit in a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

On Friday 3 June a service of thanksgiving for the Queen's reign will be held at St Paul's Cathedral, and further events will be announced in due course. On Saturday 4 June Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by members of the royal family, will attend the derby at Epsom Downs. The BBC will stage and broadcast a special live concert from Buckingham Palace that will bring together some of the world's biggest entertainment stars to celebrate the most significant and joyous moments from the Queen's decades-long reign. The Queen has been a beacon herself throughout the Commonwealth of Nations. I acknowledge the service that she has provided to those nations, including Australia, and the joy that she has brought many residents throughout Australia, including in Camden.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (10:04): On behalf of the people of Willoughby and the citizens of New South Wales, I add my congratulations to Her Majesty the Queen on the celebration of her recent platinum jubilee. I do so in support of the motion moved in this House by the Premier on 23 February 2022, which conveyed congratulations to Her Majesty on the completion of the seventieth year of her reign, sincere congratulations upon the anniversary of her accession, appreciation of her service and assurance of our loyalty and our good wishes for her continued health and wellbeing. I commend the Premier for moving the motion, and I express my appreciation and that of my community to Her Majesty for her 70 years of distinguished, lifelong service to Australia and the Commonwealth of Nations. As early as 1947, a 21-year-old Princess Elizabeth pledged:

... my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

Seventy-five years later, she has remained steadfastly true to her word. For most of us alive today, the Queen has been the great constant of our age and popular memory. In a world of flux, where leaders and heads of state come and go, the Queen has remained seemingly impregnable, like a steady rock amid the raging rapids. The sheer longevity of her reign is impressive by any measure. Since 1952 her reign has eclipsed that of 20 New South Wales Premiers, from Joseph Cahill to Dominic Perrottet, and 16 Australian Prime Ministers, from Robert Menzies to Scott Morrison. By way of international comparisons, her reign has spanned that of 14 US presidents and seven popes. As I have previously said, openly and proudly in the public square—and, indeed, as I have pronounced on national television—the Queen is, without doubt and by far, the world's most enduring leader and stands out among every leadership figure of the past century.

Upon the death of King George VI on 6 February 1952, a young Princess Elizabeth succeeded her father as monarch of the United Kingdom and head of the Commonwealth. Following her father's own remarkable example of servant leadership, the Queen has served her people with distinction and extraordinary dedication. Throughout her long reign, she has brought her personal touch of dignity, class and professionalism. Combining

faultless decorum with personal charm and good humour, the Queen has endeared herself not only to her subjects but also to billions of admirers around the world.

Until his passing in April last year, the entirety of the Queen's reign was accompanied by her husband, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. In the 74 years of their marriage, Prince Philip was her rock and confidant, and the two enjoyed a remarkable partnership in both the public and private realms. In addition to having been the longest serving royal consort, Prince Philip was an iconic figure in his own right, famous not only for his dry wit and charm but also for founding the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Almost a year after his passing on 9 April 2021, we again salute the Duke of Edinburgh for his extraordinary service to the Commonwealth and to Australia.

Like many great leaders, the Queen has deftly blended the old with the new, as both a traditionalist and a moderniser. At the same time as exemplifying the old-fashioned values of faith, family, patriotism and personal stoicism, the Queen has reflected modern sensibilities in her dedication to advancing racial tolerance, care and compassion—including for the natural environment. As heir to the House of Windsor, she has honoured centuries of inherited tradition by remaining faithful to the customs and mores of the British monarchy. In so doing, she has given Britain and the world an acute sense of history and continuity in being part of something more enduring than the present day. However, at the same time she has appreciated that the world has changed beyond recognition since the middle of the twentieth century. From attending the funerals of common folk to volunteering to pay income taxes, she has adapted the protocols of the monarchy to the present age with aplomb and good grace.

Her balance of the old with the new is no more evident than in her role as head of the Commonwealth of Nations, in which she presides over continuity and change. Serving as an exemplary stateswoman, she has preserved the traditional ties of history and kinship between former British colonies while also navigating change as many member States transition to full independence. Shortly after becoming Queen, she revitalised the mission of the Commonwealth. In her 1953 Christmas Day broadcast, she envisioned this international community as one "built on the highest qualities of the spirit of man: friendship, loyalty, and the desire for freedom and peace". Officiating at most Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings and Commonwealth Games, the Queen has given inspiration, cohesion and enduring purpose to this incredibly diverse association of nations.

It was a special coincidence that my first day in this Parliament was Commonwealth Day. I was proud and delighted to see the stunning display of Commonwealth flags and to be part of events and ceremonies, including a terrific lunch that is a magnificent annual tradition. Known to regard Australia as one of her favourite dominions, the Queen's affection for Australia and its people is abiding and enduring. As Queen, Elizabeth II has made 16 visits to Australia—her first in 1954 and her latest in 2011. Her 1954 visit captivated the nation; an estimated three out of four Australians saw her at least once as she crisscrossed the continent on her 58-day tour. During each subsequent visit the Queen has attracted the affection of Australians from all walks of life, generations, backgrounds and communities.

For almost three-quarters of a century, the Queen has stood above the political fray as a focal point of unity and an adornment to our public life and polity. Officiating at national occasions—from the opening of the Sydney Opera House in 1973 to the opening of the new Parliament House in Canberra in 1988, which was a very special day for our nation's capital—the Queen has been interwoven throughout Australia's modern history. During occasions of national celebration and mourning—from the Sydney 2000 Olympics to the Black Saturday bushfires of 2009—the Queen has always spoken movingly to the national mood. Her heartfelt words of congratulations and condolence have comforted, inspired and encouraged millions of Australians in equal measure. Without intervening in Australian domestic politics, at times the Queen has acted as a subtle voice of conscience for the nation.

During her 2000 visit, the Queen gently encouraged the nation to reconcile itself with its Indigenous inhabitants. In more recent times she has awakened us to the responsibility of caring for our natural environment. The Queen has a special relationship with our city and State, having visited Sydney and New South Wales on almost all her tours. Her connections with the New South Wales Parliament are personal, having officiated at its opening on two occasions: once in 1954 on her inaugural Australian tour and again in 1992. I have seen footage and photos spanning many decades of Her Majesty's visits among the people of Sydney's North Shore, where I grew up. Those visits always brought forth rousing, widespread and genuinely heartfelt applause, and expressions of goodwill and support, across the community. I recall proudly offering and receiving a wave from Her Majesty during her 2011 visit.

I acknowledge the many Australian people and organisations that have supported, engaged and educated people about the Queen and her special role in our country, including the Australian Monarchist League, Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, the Australian Nationhood Foundation and the Constitution Education Fund Australia. By virtue of not only her pre-eminent place in our constitution but also her grace, dignity and lifelong dedication to our country, the Queen of Australia is a national treasure in her own right. I join with all

members of this House in offering Her Majesty our hearty congratulations on this most remarkable milestone of 70 years as Queen and head of the Commonwealth of Nations.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (TENANT PROTECTIONS AND FLOOD RESPONSE)
BILL 2022**

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from 24 March 2022.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:16): On behalf of The Greens, I continue my second reading speech on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Tenant Protections and Flood Response) Bill 2022. The bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to provide for two things. The first is increased protections for all tenants across New South Wales and additional protections for tenants in flood-impacted areas. The second is increased minimum standards for rental properties, which protect renters from living in conditions that are detrimental to their health. The bill inserts two additional fit-for-habitation requirements: A property must be free of mould and have adequate waterproofing.

Last week I explained how the bill addresses the urgent need to increase protections for tenants in flood-impacted areas. The bill introduces a ban on most evictions for at least 12 months and increases caps on rent increases to protect vulnerable renters and stop greedy opportunists from profiting from the flood crisis. This week many communities in the Northern Rivers and across northern New South Wales are facing further catastrophic floods. We are watching the same rains come down, the same waters rise and the same roads disappear. I recognise the trauma, hurt and pain that has been inflicted on those communities. I also recognise that the flood crisis has only just begun. Again I acknowledge all members in this place, and their staff, who have been impacted by the floods for their work in addressing the impacts of the floods in their communities. Right now their priority is looking after their suffering communities: finding accommodation; facilitating access to food, water and education; and making sure that the trauma is not too heavy a burden on them.

It is up to all members now to do the work in this Chamber to support those communities and to recognise that the broader housing crisis that has been escalating in the region will be even greater as a result of the floods. This Greens bill responds to the flood crisis by addressing the rental crisis up north. I have outlined the details of the additional protections required for renters in the flood-impacted zones in particular. I will now focus specifically on the second aspect of the bill—the proposed protections for renters across the State. The bill makes amendments to minimum tenancy standards, which will benefit those in flood-impacted zones but will also assist with providing additional protections for renters across New South Wales.

The Greens are calling for the provisions relating to a landlord's general obligations for residential premises in section 52 of the Residential Tenancies Act to include a requirement that rental premises are both mould-free and have adequate waterproofing. These provisions strengthen the existing requirements for rental properties not to be subjected to significant dampness with respect to floors, ceilings, walls and supporting structures, and to include adequate ventilation, plumbing and drainage as determinants of the property's fitness for habitation. In my experience, both as a renter and as an advocate for renters over many years, I can confidently say that the existing regulations are not making homes fit for habitation.

Even at the best of times, poorly insulated, poorly ventilated, leaky and stuffy rental properties are prone to mould outbreaks that cannot possibly be controlled by the measures available to individual tenants. The recent rain events and catastrophic flooding have made matters even worse. So often I hear from renters who struggle to get their landlords or real estate agents to address mould issues. They are forced to live in houses that ruin their clothes, ruin their furniture and make them sick. If the landlord does do anything to fix the problem or the real estate agent does step in to help, the tenant is made to feel as though they should be grateful that someone has come to finally address the mould issue in their home.

Some tenants told me they were forced to live in unsafe properties while they waited and waited for action to be taken on mould in their homes. Some were evicted because they asked for action to have the mould removed. Some copped rent increases when it was finally cleaned up, while others got sick and moved out. Some tenants spent thousands of dollars trying to sort the problem out themselves. Let me take a moment to put some tenants' statements on the record—and there is no shortage of these stories. A tenant from Dulwich Hill wrote:

Our rental property would seep water under the skirting boards when it rained and it would be about mopping it up all night. Furniture and walls went mouldy, and we were told by our real estate agent, "It's not that bad. It only happens with bad rain." "That's what contents insurance is for", they said. They started ignoring our calls and emails, so we just had to move out.

Let me take a guess at what happened then. No doubt, the landlord then put the property back on the market, hiked up the rents and then another family faced the same issues. Another tenant wrote:

We ran dehumidifiers constantly and scrubbed every weekend, but it came back overnight. My partner lost his sense of smell and taste, I couldn't sleep, my asthma was off the charts, and they just offered to paint over it.

Another wrote:

I was told by the real estate agent it's something I need to manage and deal with myself. Fast forward to now and mould covers the ceiling, the window sills, the toilet and whatever else is damp. It is impossible to get rid of myself.

Another wrote:

There is mould in my place. It was there when I moved in. The landlord says it's my fault and said we have to pay for removal. We've cleaned it, but it's taken all the paint off. My old property triggered my eczema, gave me nose bleeds, asthma, you name it. We didn't realise what was causing it until we left.

Another wrote:

I have mould rotted through my bedroom wall. It rains on the carpet. There is a mushroom colony growing in the corner of my ceiling.

Think about that for a minute. These are not people who allow mushroom infestations to grow in their wardrobe. We are talking about people who rent often older properties in the inner city or inner west of Sydney who have no ability to force a landlord to take action to address these dampness issues and ensure their homes are free from mould. This is not an issue of their doing. This is an issue with the property that they are renting. They are paying exorbitant rents and landlords are failing to act when it comes to mould issues. There is only one way to make landlords act. They will not do it out of the goodness of their heart, because landlords are basically only interested in making more profit. The way that we make landlords do these things is by putting these obligations in legislation and saying to them, "You must ensure that your rental property is free from mould. You must ensure that it's waterproof. It is not okay for rain to come down in the middle of someone's lounge room onto the carpet. It is just unacceptable for that to happen."

Landlords have been allowed to get away with these things because the New South Wales Government refuses to stand up to them. The Government is more interested in taking big money from property investors than it is in standing up for the rights of families who are living in mould-infested homes as a result of their landlord's inaction. One tenant wrote:

I lost thousands of dollars' worth of furniture, clothes and shoes, and all the real estate agent would do was ignore us.

Another wrote:

My housemate and I had moved out of our rental a few weeks ago after reporting the growth of mould some time ago and our landlords are not doing anything to resolve it. This ended up with my housemate developing horrible respiratory symptoms and ending up in hospital.

None of this is okay. None of this is reasonable. This has to change. Every rental property should be mould-free and the law needs to ensure that landlords take responsibility for making sure that is the case.

Let us take a minute to think about why the New South Wales Government might be reluctant to force landlords to act responsibly. Maybe it is because the Government has been known to be the worst landlord in the State, based on the poor condition of public housing in New South Wales. It is well known that there is a lack of maintenance carried out on public housing in this State. Maybe the State Government does not want to stand up to protect renters' rights because then it will be forced to take action to ensure that all public housing properties are mould free. After the recent rain and floods, many homes are currently infested with dangerous levels of mould. That is something that tenants did not cause and which they should not be responsible for fixing. That is why the bill amends the minimum rental standards to include the requirements that a property must be mould free and waterproof to be deemed fit for habitation. The bill protects renters from living conditions which are detrimental to their health.

Last week I touched briefly on the provision in the bill that puts an end to no-grounds evictions, except under specific circumstances. I will go into more detail on that now. The Greens are putting the abolition of no- grounds evictions on the table once again as an urgent and necessary amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act. We are not alone in calling for an end to unfair evictions. This measure was endorsed by around 100 peak bodies and housing organisations who partnered with the Everybody's Home campaign back in 2018. At that time we all hoped that the New South Wales Government would make what Dr Chris Martin, a research fellow at the University of New South Wales' City Futures Research Centre, said would provide "the single biggest reform of most benefit to tenants." There is also the bonus that it costs absolutely nothing. The Government can introduce a

significant housing reform that will improve the lives of so many people in this State and it will cost zero dollars. Has the Government done it? No.

Dr Martin has also provided research to show that the rate of no-grounds evictions occurring in tribunals in New South Wales and Victoria is more than half that of similar evictions in the United States of America. He calls this an "eviction crisis". No-grounds evictions or unfair evictions are one of the most problematic and unjust provisions in the New South Wales Residential Tenancies Act. They have two impacts. The first is that when tenants complain or raise concerns about maintenance issues, to avoid fixing those issues, the landlord instead gives the tenant an eviction notice and boots them out of their home. So if your oven is broken, or your gas does not work, or you have mould growing in your cupboard because there is a leak and you say to your real estate agent, "I really need you to fix these things", the landlord can issue you with an eviction notice for complaining and then put the property back on the market—without having fixed the oven, without having gotten rid of the mushrooms or the mould in the cupboard—and charge more rent to new lot of people, who then go through the same cycle.

Why is that an issue? It is an issue for two reasons. The first reason is that people are displaced from their home. The second reason is that the report by the Tenants' Union of NSW, *Eviction, Hardship, and the Housing Crisis* shows that the cost of being forced to move is really high. The average cost of a move for renting households in New South Wales ranges from \$3,215 for a single person or household in Greater Sydney through to \$5,400 for a family household in regional New South Wales. Imagine having to bear these costs repeatedly, as happens frequently to renters who have no protections from unfair evictions. I know that the New South Wales Government loves a voucher—right? Minister Dominello loves giving out vouchers through the Service NSW app—Active Kids vouchers, Creative Kids vouchers, a voucher to take your kids on holiday, a voucher to take your kids to a movie. Well, I have an idea for a new voucher. What if the New South Wales Government each year gave every renter in the State a voucher—\$3,215 for a single person or \$5,400 for a family—to pay for the cost of having to move home every year because the Government is failing to act to end no-grounds evictions in this State? If you worked out the cost of that voucher scheme versus ending no-grounds evictions, it would make a lot more sense to just end no-grounds evictions.

We want tenants to have security in their homes. It is good for our communities and good for our society. It is not good for children to have to move schools every couple of years because their families have to move to a different rental property. It is not okay for older people to have to move away from their connections to community centres and community gardens to find a new place to call home. The bill also includes guidance to tribunals to prevent retaliatory evictions, which we know are common, as landlords simply throw tenants out if they seek repairs. The system as it stands now is completely biased towards landlords, and that absolutely needs to change. Tenants are treated like second-class citizens—easily dispensable money earners for landlords. This is capitalism at its worst. The bill also seeks to limit rent increases across the State because, if we do not cap rents now, they will continue to rise to the point where people are unable to pay those rents.

I note that as I am speaking I can hear the nurses and midwives outside this Parliament protesting, because the right to protest should be a fundamental human right. I remind the Government of that after last night's debate. The nurses outside are protesting because they want fair patient-to-staff ratios, but they are also protesting because there is an outrageous cap on public service wages in this State. We say that if the State Government wants to cap wages, then there is one simple thing it can do as well: peg rents at the rate at which it is raising public service wage caps. The bill seeks to ensure that rents cannot increase in the State more than the public sector wage cap increases. That will make sure that there is some alignment between the wages people are getting and the rents that they are paying.

We know that inflation is hitting people hard. A full-time nurse, quoted on the ABC's 7.30 program, recently said that her income after expenses was not enough to live on and she now has to work on weekends. Recent data reveals that some 40 per cent of renters in some Sydney electorates are suffering financial stress, with some extraordinarily high percentages, including that between 65.1 per cent and 76.5 per cent of renters are financially stressed in a handful of key New South Wales and Victorian electorates. Under these conditions rents cannot continue to rise, and The Greens are willing to put rent caps on the table because nobody else will have that conversation. We are not scared to stand up to landlords. We are not interested in big developer donations. We know that families and people who live in rental properties are doing it tough and that landlords are adding to this problem. The New South Wales Government is providing a protection racket to landlords, because it knows that it is the worst landlord in the State, managing all of the public housing property as badly as it does.

We have to do better. We know that in 2019, women over 55 made up the fastest growing group of homeless people in Australia. Figures from the Older Women's Network and the Australian Human Rights Commission show that there has been a 55 per cent increase in women aged between 55 and 74 seeking assistance for homelessness in the last decade. Many in the Chamber have spoken strongly over the past weeks about the

tragedy occurring as a result of the floods. The amendments in the bill go a long way to assisting not just those vulnerable victims in those catastrophic flood regions but also renters across the State who are crying out for help. I hope that Labor will look at the bill and provide a backing for it, and I hope that we are making clear the fact that renters need to be front and centre of the focus in the lead-up to the March 2023 election.

People should know that no-grounds evictions need to end. It is clear from recent events in our State that we need to act. I urge the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Fair Trading and the Minister for Homes to acknowledge the level of crisis that renters in this State are facing and to take crucial steps to implement solutions. The Greens have done this work. We have drafted the legislation. We understand renters' rights and what renters need. I have been advocating for this since 2014, before being elected, and working in consultation with peak housing and advocacy groups. The bill is fair and it is urgent. Ministers have come and gone, but we are here. This is what people who rent in New South Wales need, and they need it now.

I really believe that it is time for the New South Wales Government to act. It is clear that the growing level of the housing crisis in this State can no longer be ignored. It is clear that the climate crisis is turning into a housing crisis. And it is clear that the nonstop rain across our community has created a significant amount of mould and damp problems in our houses. I urge all members of this Chamber to look at the bill. I urge the Ministers responsible to take a moment to look at the bill, and to feel free to take parts of it, particularly the flood response elements, and bring it back as a Government bill if they want to. This urgent reform is needed. We need an end to no-grounds evictions. We need to ensure that the fit-for-habitation requirements include a mould-free waterproofing of all properties across the State. We need a ban on any evictions in flood-impacted areas across the regions. And we need a cap on rents to finally end the exorbitant prices that people are paying, so they do not have to make the choice as to whether they can feed their children, whether they can buy medicine or whether they can pay their rent this week.

Debate adjourned.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (FAMILY IS CULTURE REVIEW) BILL 2021

Second Reading Speech

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (10:36): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I advise the House that the following members will co-sponsor the bill in the Legislative Assembly: the member for Barwon, the member for Sydney, the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Balmain and the member for Ballina. I seek leave to table two letters advising of the co-sponsors of the bill.

Leave granted.

Documents tabled.

Mr GREG PIPER: I am pleased to introduce into the Legislative Assembly the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family Is Culture Review) Bill 2021, containing a set of landmark reforms to child protection laws in New South Wales. The proposals in the bill are all based on the recommendations of the *Family is Culture* report, authored by leading First Nations academic Professor Megan Davis. It emanates from a bill introduced by Mr David Shoebridge that passed through the Legislative Council and gained support across the House but not from Government members. The report that was a trigger for the bill was commissioned by the Minister for Health as the Minister responsible at that time, and it was delivered to the Government in October 2019. The report made 126 specific recommendations to reform the child protection system for First Nations children and more than 1,000 recommendations relating to individual cases. It described catastrophic rates of removal of First Nations children by the child protection system, poor outcomes and a failure to recognise the harm of removing a child from their family and from their culture.

First Nations children are still being taken from their families and separated from their culture and country. The Stolen Generations did not end in the 1950s, 1960s or even the 1970s. They are real and they are still happening today. It is heartbreaking, but Aboriginal children today are 11 times more likely to be taken from their families than non-Aboriginal children. That is an extraordinary figure. They are not twice as likely or three times as likely but 11 times as likely to be taken from their families. I feel shame and alarm when I read those figures, and I feel a great urgency to do something about it. I would feel even more shame and alarm if every member in this Chamber did not share the same concern. The current system is clearly not working.

First Nations children removed from their families and placed in out-of-home care are more than 15 times as likely to be in youth justice supervision than those who are not. We know that dramatically increases the likelihood of that child growing up and ending up in adult incarceration. As then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said

when he delivered the apology on 13 February 2008, he committed us to "a future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again". We had a national apology but little has changed. It is an ongoing theme for our First Nations people, and it remains a great shame to our country. Contemporary data published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* today references Closing the Gap data and the historic 2020 national agreement between the Federal and State governments. It says:

The agreement also pledged to reduce the rate of children being placed in out-of-home care by 45 per cent in the next decade, but that figure has gone up from 54.2 per 100,000 kids in 2019 to 57.6 in 2021.

How can that be the case? How can we have allowed that to occur? However uncomfortable it might make some members feel, it is up to us to step up and do what needs to be done. The Government's own report has found alarming failings, yet we have had to drag the Government to the table to change the law. The risk of condemning another generation of First Nations children to trauma and suffering is increasing. We know the harm this causes, but still nothing has been done. Since the *Family is Culture Review Report* was delivered in 2019, the Government has continued to kick the reforms down the road and further into the future. When the bill was first read in the other place by Mr David Shoebridge, the Government said the earliest it could possibly start looking to make the required changes would be 2024. That is another two years down the track and another two years too late for a problem we have known has been urgent for decades. We know that change is essential.

I have had discussions with the Minister and her staff about this, but the most compelling thing to me is that this report, which was requested in 2016 and handed down in 2019, is not going to be fully acted on until 2024. I note that the Leader of the House is in the Chamber, and I thank him for being here. He was previously the Minister in this space. I acknowledge that we have had a succession of Ministers through this space, and that is not easy. We have had the Hon. Brad Hazzard, Mr Gareth Ward, the Hon. Alister Henskens and now the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, so I appreciate that there has been disruption in that process, but that is not a concern of these children and their families. The Government has to be able to manage that. The Family is Culture report is a government report. It was commissioned by the Government, and the report's author was given unique access to the files and systems of the State protection system.

I acknowledge that the Minister responsible for this matter, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, is in the Chamber. I thank her for taking an interest and for being here for this second reading speech. This is a deeply complex area of law and policy, and the expert knowledge and evidence gathered as part of this process led to the final report, which had tangible and achievable recommendations to do something important and end the ongoing stolen generations. Megan Davis's foreword reflects the love at the heart of why this change is so important and so urgent:

This Review and the important recommendations contained herein are the result of the courageous advocacy of the Aboriginal men, women, aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers whose children, relatives and kin have been removed from their families in NSW. This Review is a manifestation of the deep love they hold for the many jarjums they have fought for and continue to fight for, who are at the centre of this review.

The bill was developed following the extensive consultation undertaken for the Megan Davis report, which in turn considered the deep knowledge and practical expertise of the sector. There was then an extensive consultation process on the bill with families that have engaged with the child protection system over generations, as well as the broader sector and relevant peak bodies, including AbSec, the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies [ACWA] and the Aboriginal Legal Service. The current bill is a result of this consultation and work within the Parliament to address clarifications and questions asked by other members. These laws have the broad and deep support of First Nations families and the sector. They are asking for these changes to be made.

The bill seeks to amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to specify that, when decisions are being made about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and young people, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Young Person Placement Principles must be applied. These principles recognise the importance of young people being brought up in their own family; decision-making with community representatives and participation of the child and their family; and placement principles and the importance of connection. The new principle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family support means steps need to be taken to provide family support services and other programs that help families keep kids with them and on country. This requires the Minister to report on this and table in Parliament a plan that sets out the steps taken to provide family support services, as well as measures taken to promote self-determination and meaningful participation.

The bill also empowers Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, or ACCOs. The Coalition has previously promised to transition all Aboriginal children in out-of-home care to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations by 2022. That is a key recommendation of the Family is Culture report, but the Government is failing to deliver on its own promise. Right now, despite the Government's hollow promise and a vague indication that it might get to new legislation two years from now, more than three quarters of Aboriginal children in

out-of-home care are in State care or that of non-Aboriginal organisations. I will acknowledge further the Government's intentions later in this speech.

The bill specifies that the Children's Court must not make a final care order unless it expressly finds that the permanency plan has been approved by a recognised Aboriginal community-controlled organisation where such an organisation is available. This gives substance to the Government's promise and is a matter where modest refinements will be considered in committee to deal with situations where there is no ACCO reasonably available. New section 93AA requires that the Children's Court consider the Aboriginal child placement principles and the principle of self-determination in all of its reasoning when making decisions regarding First Nations children. New section 83A extends the restoration time for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child from a maximum of 24 months to a maximum of 48 months. This recognises the distinct structural and economic disadvantages faced by many First Nations families. This aspect of the bill gives families the most important thing that we can deliver right now: more support and more time to stay together.

Out-of-home-care providers are too often failing to maintain contact with families. That means mothers, grandmothers and family are not able to maintain relationships through regular visits and contact. That is why the bill explicitly requires permanency plans to say how they will support continuing contact with the child's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander family, community and culture if a child is removed. Children have a right to know their families and to understand their identity and their culture, and that must be prioritised, especially if they are put into care. Members who have read the Uluru Statement from the Heart might remember that it mentions how child removal rates tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. It states:

This is the torment of our powerlessness.

It is time for the New South Wales Parliament to step in and do what needs to be done. We need to stop taking these children. We need to support families to stay together. We need to make sure that we end the stolen generations. I absolutely accept that this type of reform is extremely difficult to navigate, but it is critical to address the very important issues identified in the Family is Culture review. No element of the bill has been drawn from thin air. All of it has been drawn from the Family is Culture review—that is, the review this very Government requested. I have had meaningful discussions with the Government and the Minister for Family and Communities, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones. No-one, particularly not me, comes from a place of bad faith in this area. There is no bad faith from the people in the Government whom I have spoken to about this, but it is imperative that we address this issue. This is not an issue that we can easily continue to defer, because every deferral—whether it is a day, a week, a month or a year—means that more people are in this situation.

The Minister is in the advisers' area, and I know that she has real concerns about the bill. I say to her and the Government that this is a genuine, heartfelt attempt to address a pressing imperative. I note the commitment the Minister has made to me and others that the Government will bring forward a bill that addresses the heart of this issue and, indeed, has a broader remit in what it delivers. I understand that the draft of that bill may well be before the House by the end of July. The Minister intends for that bill to be brought to Parliament and proceed through all stages to assent by the end of 2022. I thank the Minister and the Government for that, but would it be impertinent of me to mention that the original intention was for many of these matters not to be addressed until 2024? I will be very pleased that if the bill before the House does nothing else, it brings this imperative to the Chamber and before the Government.

I strongly support that bill's intentions across the board. But if it fails, then the bill before the House must be supported. I believe this bill warrants approval, agreement and passage through this House, and assent in its own right. How that will work out remains to be seen. I certainly hope we can do it. To be totally honest, discussions are ongoing. We are having those discussions. I do not think there is one Aboriginal person—one person represented by the bill—in this House to represent themselves, their families and their culture. While it is a privilege for me to be able to do so, it is also something of a burden. I have many friends in the Aboriginal community, but I do not think I can do justice to their cause.

The bill is a significant step forward in improving outcomes for First Nations children in this State. If we are ever going to start turning back the shameful tide of the number of First Nations children currently in out-of-home care in New South Wales, we need to act now, not two years from now when there will be new members sitting on the Government benches who may well have other priorities. Every year that these legislative reforms are delayed, more First Nations children and young people are likely to be removed from their families and perhaps experience the long-term and intergenerational harms that the Family is Culture review identified and urged us to fix. I encourage members to read the Family is Culture review if they have not done so already. I assure members it is not an easy read, not just because of its voluminous nature but because of the very material embodied in it. It contains facts, statistics and empirical data, but it is all about people. It is about children, families and culture.

I am not one of the experts who formulated the review, but I am prepared to listen to them. I have read the Family is Culture review recommendations and come to the same conclusion that I believe any other fair-minded person would arrive at: We need to listen to the Aboriginal Legal Service, AbSec, the Women's Legal Service NSW and the First Nations people in our own communities. I reflect once again on a number of matters that have concerned people and that will be subject to amendments when we get to that stage. Some genuine concerns have been raised but I think there were bad-faith statements about the intention of the bill, including comments that implied the bill was not about the interests of children. No-one involved in this space would not want children's welfare—not just their immediate welfare, but also their lifelong welfare—to be the primary focus of the bill before Parliament.

That is what the bill is about: making sure we focus on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are still being impacted by a system that has not done justice to those needs. I hope that this House and the Government can find a way to listen to those needs and respond in a timely manner. This cannot wait. I thank everybody who has been involved in bringing the bill forward. I thank Mr David Shoebridge, his staff in The Greens office and his Greens NSW colleagues, all those who co-sponsored the bill and everybody who has lent their support to it. I know there is a lot of support out there that has not been spoken about, but in many ways that is because this is such a complex matter. It is very hard to understand. The Minister and the former Minister understand the issues, and we need to work together to find a solution. With those remarks, I wholeheartedly commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: SESSIONAL ORDERS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (10:59): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for business before the House to be interrupted at 12.15 p.m. on Tuesday 10 May 2022 for consideration of general business notice of motion No. 3328 relating to proposed sessional orders standing in the name of the member for Heffron.

In effect, the motion proposes a change to question time by reducing the length of answers to questions from five minutes to three minutes, requiring answers to questions to be directly relevant, and providing for there to be about 16 questions or an hour of question time. It does not say it, but I intended by the motion that two of the eight non-government questions would be allocated to the crossbench. Since I gave notice of this motion on Tuesday morning, there has been productive discussion between the Leader of the House and me and the crossbench members. I express my appreciation to the Leader of the House for the courteous and productive way in which the Government has approached my proposal. The essence of the motion I propose to move on 10 May has been agreed to. There needs to be some discussion between now and then about what precisely needs to be in sessional orders. The Government proposes that those orders ultimately become standing orders, together with the sessional orders that were changed last week. The Opposition agrees to that.

I envisage an agreement between the Government, the Opposition and the crossbench when the House returns on 10 May. That time will be needed for the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Assistant Speaker and the Speaker's panel to formulate draft rulings about what constitutes directly relevant answers at question time. The other issue that needs to be addressed that the Leader of the House genuinely raises is to ensure that, because answers have to be directly relevant, points of order taken during question time are not needless and not taken only to disrupt an answer. I envisage that there will be substantial changes to the way in which question time operates. The Leader of the House wishes to be cautious in that respect. I appreciate the support I have had from the crossbench, The Greens and the Shooters for this reform.

Some other discussions are taking place with the Leader of the House about a further change to standing orders that needs to be considered in respect of the member for Kiama. The House heard the Opposition's position and the commitment made by the Leader of the Opposition, which was that this matter would be referred to the Privileges Committee of this House. There have been productive discussions between the Government and the Opposition and some members of the crossbench in relation to it. The Opposition leader did say that, if the Government does not do it, the Opposition will. But the Government is being extremely receptive to that.

Some details need to be worked out. There are complex constitutional issues. There are also some conventions in relation to the membership of the committee that the Leader of the House has raised and that must be resolved. But I do envisage that those matters will be resolved today, which is the timetable that has been set. I am extremely appreciative of the courteous way in which the Leader of the House has dealt with these matters and the cooperation extended by the Government. It seems to make for a better functioning of this House in that environment.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (11:04): The suspension of standing orders motion that has been moved is agreed to. I do not need to take time away from private members' day by saying anything more. I appreciate the cooperation of the member for Heffron.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:04): By leave: I thank the Manager of Opposition Business and the Leader of the House for their approach to dealing with improvements to question time. We want improvements not only in the length of questions and the direct answering of questions but also in the conduct of other members during question time to make sure standing orders are not used in a vexatious or disruptive way. This motion allows time for some of those matters to be ironed out. I thank all members for their collaborative approach towards this.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE) BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 24 March 2022.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:05): While it is clear already from previous contributions that the Government will not support the Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2021, I acknowledge the positive intent and the thinking that has gone into why we would debate such a proposition. I think that all members were frustrated over the course of the lockdowns when we were not able to function as normal and we had important issues to represent our communities about. Matters of great significance needed to be aired and presented to this forum, which is the decision-making forum of the State. So I understand why we have had a proposition of this kind put to us in an attempt to allow members to fulfil their obligations. However, there are some real challenges with finding the appropriate and right response. This bill has not met all of those challenges, firstly because the pathway to its construction has not involved sufficient consultation and engagement with relevant stakeholders to understand all of the ramifications of changing the manner in which MPs do their work in this place. Some of the triggers in the bill need to be looked at to see how they would actually work.

The bill itself is relatively short. It inserts a few of what it calls interpretations rather than definitions into the Constitution Act 1902. That should ring some sort of bell in itself. We are talking about amending the Constitution Act. While that does not require a referendum in this instance, it should alert members to the fact that we are changing something fairly fundamental and very significant in the way the State operates. We should be extra cautious. We should use an abundance of caution in the way in which we proceed if we amend the Constitution Act and the way in which this Parliament and democracy in this State operates. It would imply the need for significant consultation and thought about the implications of each of the mechanisms proposed. The bill proposes to change a heading from "definitions" to "interpretations" and insert what are called interpretations into some clauses of the Constitution Act to specify how questions are resolved in this House and how a quorum is established. There is an interpretation to be inserted about each of those, which says:

... during a specified period due to a public emergency, including a public health crisis, natural disaster, major accident, civil disturbance or act of terrorism, and—

that is the scenario painted as the trigger for this Act—

- (b) a majority of the Members of the House have requested remote attendance of the House be permitted under this section during the specified period.

The declaration of whether that threshold has been met is proposed to be placed with the Presiding Officer. Do we have a public emergency, a public health crisis, natural disaster, major accident, civil disturbance or act of terrorism? It is not defined in the legislation and it will be placed in the judgement of an individual Presiding Officer and the question of whether it is triggered will be for a majority vote of the House. Being a member of the Government, and until recently a member of the party with the majority of the House, I would have thought that would have been a reasonably comfortable proposition to people sitting on this side. It strikes me as a little curious that members of the crossbench or Opposition would feel that comfort. Normally it is the usual circumstance that the Government has the majority in the House. What looks like a protection in fact might really be an outsourced decision of the Executive of the day. In reality that is how majorities are normally determined in this place. I would wonder whether members of the crossbench and Opposition ought to be careful what they ask for when proposing such a threshold, such a mechanism.

I recall at times during 2021 expressions from the Opposition that they would have liked to recall the House sooner, or sit more, or do something other than the Government proposed. This threshold would leave that decision to the Executive and the Opposition and crossbench would be as impotent as we were in 2021 to change that outcome. I wonder whether that is the best mechanism or the only mechanism to put in place, or even whether a time frame, a time limit, a sunset clause should be put on such a mechanism so it could not persist indefinitely. There is nothing about that in the bill as is currently proposed. I am teasing out some of the implications that should be considered before we look to go down such a path. I do not think sufficient thought has been given to some of these dimensions of a decision of this kind. The last thing any of us would want would be an indefinite decision for this Parliament to sit remotely and to deny members the opportunities that come from being physically in this place, being able to engage across the Chamber, and being able to engage in formal situations as well as formal deliberations which allow democracy to really work.

The noise outside reminds me of that. The reason those people are outside today is because we are here inside today. That is the point of a protest at Parliament House. It is a physical place where the intent is to influence the decision-makers in their consideration of policy and public process. Do we dilute that? Do we take away some of that capacity of the members of the public to interact with us if we move to remote operation of this Parliament? I know it is designed only for "emergency use", but I think it is a fair question nonetheless to ask: Has that dimension been thought through? Is that what we really intend to achieve? I think that the people outside would be sceptical about a proposal that would make it easier for a government of the day—and I do not cast aspersions on current incumbents in particular positions—that may find it more convenient to go to remote control, to keep members away physically from each other. As I say, I do not cast aspersions on anybody.

Mr Jamie Parker: Don't give the Premier any ideas, will you.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: Any intent. If we are going to make this change to the Constitution Act, it is grave and significant and lasting in its effect. It would be a risky proposition if we did not somehow circumscribe the capacity to operate that way in stronger terms than are in this bill. I recognise the goodwill here. I recognise that we want members to be engaged, even in extreme circumstances and in situations that are challenging. We do not want members to be excluded. None of us wants that. I believe none of us felt great last year when we could not do our normal jobs, at least certainly not in the way that we have become used to doing. It was an extraordinarily difficult time. I reflect that even when we did attend Parliament, some of us could not be in the Chamber as often as we wanted. There was a quota system for members in the Chamber, and many of us sat up in our offices watching on the screen and not really engaging as much as we would have preferred.

We need to find better ways to operate and I absolutely accept that the discussion should be had. I do not think the answer we have in front of us is sufficiently fully developed or sufficiently protective of the interests of members and of the communities they represent for us to proceed in this manner at this time. We need to tread very carefully when we tinker with the way in which democracy operates. We need to be very thoughtful and very mindful of all of the possible ramifications and bring on board all of the inputs from people who may be affected or have a perspective to share before we change the way this Parliament operates. On that basis, the Government does not support the bill. Our opposition is not through any lack of interest in members being able to participate at times of crisis—quite the opposite. We need to find the best way to do that and I do not think at this stage this bill represents that best solution. The Government does not support the bill.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:16): I speak briefly in support of The Greens Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2022 and thank them for bringing the legislation to this place. I acknowledge the work of Mr David Shoebridge in drafting the legislation with his Greens colleagues. We know that David will soon be leaving this place. Let us hope that he is able to leave this place modernising it and that he brings the same approach to the Federal Parliament should he be successful, and I personally hope that he will be. This power should only be used very rarely in emergency situations, and that is the test that is in the legislation. It is envisaged that this will be a new way in which Parliament would sit, but a rare way that Parliament would sit in extreme emergencies.

Indeed, yesterday during debate on the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, the Attorney General alluded to the fact that that legislation may be needed at times to protect Parliament, implying that there would be times in which it would be unsafe for members to attend Parliament. In those circumstances—what was alluded to as a potential coup—it would be important for us to be able to sit remotely. The Presiding Officers serve at the pleasure of the House, they are elected representatives of the House and history shows that they often have the trust of the House. We would expect the Presiding Officers to be able to make that decision appropriately. I thank The Greens for bringing the bill to the House. This is a power that can only be used very rarely and over the past two years we have seen circumstances where it would have been helpful, for the passage of laws or providing governments with emergency powers, for the Parliament to sit remotely. The bill has my support.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:18): The Government does not support the Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2022, which was introduced in this House by the member for Balmain. I indicate that I have worked closely with the member, especially over the past three years as the former Government Whip, and I have the utmost respect for him. To put this legislation in context, I want to outline my experiences especially over the past two years during the unforeseen global pandemic. We serve at the pleasure of the people of New South Wales in the oldest Parliament in the country. The sheer physical nature of this building presents challenges to its occupants, those who work here every day—including the fantastic Hansard team—and the members, who are temporary custodians.

Because of the physical size of this building and the nature of its limitations, there were constraints that we had to work through during the past two years. I was in an interesting situation because I was the Government Whip and I am a regional member. I note that the member for Port Stephens and the member for Tamworth are in the Chamber and that Madam Temporary Speaker is the member for Wallsend. One of the concerns we had was going into unknown territory. People did not understand the consequences of the virus, how it could be spread to start with, the infection rates or anything else.

As I said, one of the concerns with this building is the physical limitations of the Chamber itself, let alone moving around the building safely. We do not have the luxury our Federal colleagues have of vast chambers where members sit huge distances away from each other. This Chamber, by its nature, is combative and close. It presented physical challenges to ensuring the safety of members during what was an unknown period. I wrestled with that as an elected member. First and foremost, we want to be in this place being the voice of the people we represent, no matter where in New South Wales we are from. But at the same time we do not want to put our own electorates at risk. Many MPs, especially regional ones like myself, had to grapple with whether we came to Sydney, which was a COVID hotspot.

We all remember when the member for Northern Tablelands contracted COVID. That is a good example. He did not even know he had it. We saw what happened over those next few days. Members had to go into isolation for 14 days. The greater concern to regional members was the fact that we could come to Parliament to do our jobs and then potentially take COVID back to our communities. We did not know the situation at that time. We had to make decisions as a Parliament. I note the incredible work done by both presiding officers and also the Clerks. I sat on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee. There were a lot of discussions about how to keep our members and, by implication, our communities safe in what was unknown territory.

Part of the issue we have to focus on is the fact that legislation does not change the physical compromises that we have to make when we are in this building. In the past week, more than a dozen members of this place have tested positive. They tested negative one day and positive the next. Luckily, the impacts of Omicron are a lot less severe than those of Delta. But we have seen how quickly it can spread in the building. We jokingly used to say during the flu season that you would be sitting in the Chamber and one person would start sneezing and coughing and you could literally see it physically moving around the room.

Mr Alex Greenwich: I've had my flu shot.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I know the member for Sydney has had his shot. We have our shots because of the physical limitations of where we work. I do not believe changing legislation to force that is the right way to do it. This Parliament—the oldest Parliament in Australia, and a very traditional one—pivoted and accommodated the needs of pretty much everybody to try to make them feel safe and to keep their communities safe. Again, we fell foul of the physical limitations of this building. I congratulate Mark Webb and the rest of the team in the Department of Parliamentary Services, and Carly Maxwell, who is sitting in the Chamber right now. I spent many hours with her working through the nuances of how to make this building deliver for the people of New South Wales without compromising their safety at the same time. I note that Carly Maxwell is behind a mask at the moment. The Clerks do an incredible job.

Ultimately, the presiding officers made very tough decisions. As the member for Sydney quite rightly said, they have the trust and faith of the members of this place. Having sat in the chair, I know the responsibility that comes with it. The last thing a presiding officer or someone sitting in the chair wants to do is shut down debate. At the same time, they have to make sure that debate happens safely. Even now, we come masked up into the Chamber during question time every day because we know we are potentially putting each other at risk. That does not even include the people who have to work with us. We come from all around New South Wales so we need to take those things into account.

I congratulate the Parliament. During the Christmas break there was a lot of unseen work in this place to upgrade technology. Members will remember that we are working in a building that has been functioning for more than 160 years. The things that we have gone through and have done were never even envisaged. But the fact is that we can now contribute online. Sure, it was a little clunky to begin with. There was no digital voting when

I started in this place. I have to say, as former Whip, one of the best things that we have done is implement that digital voting system. The technology is evolving. The building creates its own challenges by its very nature and its age, but it has adapted, as it has done for more than 160 years. It will continue to adapt. We, as custodians of this place, helped push those changes in a respectful way.

I sat in that committee with the Speaker, the Opposition Whip, the Manager of Opposition Business, the Leader of the House and the Clerks. It was a collaborative effort to work out the best potential safety outcome. It was not a decision made by former Premier Gladys Berejiklian or Opposition Leader Chris Minns; it was a decision made by the people who have to work in the building every single day—the Clerks. The presiding officers also looked at the risk assessment and how to ensure that democracy could continue, albeit in an abridged version. We saw that happen. We are now seeing opportunity. With the natural disasters occurring in the Northern Rivers as we speak, the member for Lismore could be back in her electorate but still make a contribution to this place. Twelve months or two years ago, that would not have been possible.

We have seen how this building and this Parliament learns to adapt and adopt new technologies. But it is about responsible implementation. You do not do it because you can do it; you do it because you need to. You do it because that will provide better outcomes in the long term. We have seen changes in even something as simple as the way we now walk through the Chamber and vote. For more than 100 years we sat in this room to vote, waiting for the answer. The Westminster parliament is 1,000 years old. It has had the walk-through for a lot longer than we have had. We have seen adaptation as technology improves. One of the things I found as the former Whip was that parliamentarians desired to get back into the building and speak at this or that lectern as soon as possible without putting themselves or their communities at risk, because we owe our communities a duty of care as well.

There was an outcry on the Central Coast when protests were being held in Sydney. The Central Coast was on the verge of coming out of lockdown. The numbers were good. The infection rates had dropped during the Delta wave. People were doing the right thing and following the health advice. It was making a difference. Then we saw the protest in Sydney. Almost everybody on the Central Coast knew straightaway what the net outcome of that was going to be. Those people decided to put their ideology before everybody else's safety. The 360,000 people who did the right thing knew full well that they were about to stay in lockdown because 1,000 people decided to go walkabout in Sydney and put everybody else at risk.

We, as parliamentarians, made conscious decisions about whether we would or would not attend this place. A lot of people wanted to be here but realised it was the wrong thing to do because they could potentially put their own communities at risk. On the Central Coast we saw the Sydney protest. Sure enough, 14 days later the numbers started to spike on the Central Coast. We stayed in lockdown for another four or five weeks. At the same time it was about keeping our communities safe. One of the things that I have found since being elected in 2015 is that we approach our roles in this place with professionalism. [*Extension of time*]

I am pleased that the Assistant Speaker is now in the chair, because he also sits on that standing orders committee and took part in the conversations we had around this place and the decisions that we collectively came to to ensure we had a functioning but safe Parliament. We did not need legislation to do that. Yes, it was not perfect and at times it was a little clunky. But Parliament reacted to the situation and still provided a voice of democracy. Committee hearings still took place. Members could still make contributions safely from their electorates during a once-in-a-century pandemic. That was all done in a very short space of time. I have to acknowledge the great work done by the team at Parliament, which had to jury-rig a 160-plus-year-old building to make it digitally compatible. That work will continue. We are seeing the rollout of technology in our electoral offices. Soon people will have the ability to make contributions to committees from the electoral offices of regional members.

Those are the sorts of opportunities that technology brings in this place, and it will continue to do so long after we have gone. The people who have stood in the Chambers before us could never have envisaged what we have gone through and the changes that we have made, even in the past two years. But the voice of democracy has continued. As an MP, I still have the ability to make my contributions. If I made the decision that I really wanted to come into this place, I could. But a lot of us made the decision not to do so for the safety and the protection of our communities and because of what we saw happening in Sydney and the surrounding suburbs.

While I commend the member for Balmain for bringing the bill to the Chamber, from my experience, I think it is unnecessary. The Constitution Act is there for a reason. We need to give Parliament the ability to continue to evolve naturally, because it is uniquely placed to evolve during times of crisis or difficulty. Even the building itself was never meant to be a Parliament, but it is the oldest Parliament in this country, in which we are all incredibly proud to serve. Everybody who walks into the Chamber is humbled by where we are and why we are here, but the past two years have given members time to reflect on how we can continue to do things better. One of the best things that MPs can do is talk to members of the standing orders committee, because that

information goes straight to the Presiding Officers. It is up to us to drive changes in technology and deliver flexibility.

I question the validity of voting remotely, because it is a member's job to come into this place to be a voice for New South Wales. Yes, members can make contributions remotely but the right to walk through the doors and vote is sacred and members should have to be in the building to exercise it. I am one of the first to adopt technology, but the tradition and history of this place are just as important. The right to walk through the doors of this Chamber and represent Sydney, Mount Druitt, Prospect, Tamworth, Oxley or Castle Hill is sacred. While I commend the motion of the member for Balmain, I do not support it. We must continue to develop the parliamentary system and the way we work collectively, because that is how we will continue to make this Parliament the unique and special place it is.

It is a great voice of democracy, and we have thousands of people outside cheering us on today. They obviously loved the contribution by the member for Riverstone, which was interrupted by the cheers of thousands. That makes this place what it is. I was pleased to serve on the committee with the member for Lake Macquarie and Ms Maxwell and help make changes that gave this place the ability to proceed safely through uncertain times. People, including members, were scared for various reasons, so we made the right decisions. We have had an excellent outcome, and we are seeing the technology continue to improve. But it is also important to remember why we are in this place—our reasons for being here and why we all stood for election. That is why I cannot support the bill. The Parliament will continue to grow and develop in the decades and centuries to come.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (11:32): The Government does not support the Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2021, for the very good reasons my colleagues the member for Riverstone and the member for Gosford have outlined. Section 22H of the Constitution Act 1902 provides:

The presence of at least 8 Members of the Legislative Council (in addition to the President or other Member presiding) shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Legislative Council for the dispatch of business.

Section 22I of the Constitution Act provides:

All questions arising in the Legislative Council shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the Members present ...

The Constitution Act makes similar provisions for the Legislative Assembly. Section 32 (1) of the Constitution Act provides:

The presence of at least twenty Members of the Legislative Assembly, exclusive of the Member presiding, shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the said Assembly for the dispatch of business.

Section 33 (2) provides that all questions are to be decided by the majority of votes of members present. The bill would insert a new subsection into section 3 of the Constitution Act 1902 that provides:

For sections 22H, 22I and 32, in relation to ascertaining a quorum for, or determining a question in, a House of Parliament, a Member of Parliament is taken to be present at a meeting of the House if the Member attends the meeting remotely using an audio visual link in accordance with—

- (a) the Standing Rules and Orders of the House ...

However, those provisions would only have effect if:

- (a) it will be impracticable for Members of the House to meet in person during a specified period due to a public emergency, including a public health crisis, natural disaster, major accident, civil disturbance or act of terrorism, and
- (b) a majority of the Members of the House have requested remote attendance of the House be permitted under this section during the specified period.

The Government acknowledges the importance of parliamentary representation and oversight during times of crisis. However, there is a number of existing oversight mechanisms of the Parliament that have continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, including while parliamentary sittings have been adjourned. Committees have continued to function, hold inquiries and provide oversight. When Parliament does not sit for any reason, it allows more time for parliamentary committees to perform their important scrutiny functions. For those reasons, the Government does not support the bill. While the Government welcomes scrutiny and supports measures to improve the functioning of the Parliament, an amendment to the Constitution Act to allow parliamentary proceedings to occur via electronic means is a significant step that requires careful and full consideration of its necessity and its impact.

We have moved the boundaries in many areas of life as COVID has given us the ability to shift the dial on a range of things. As I have said previously in this Chamber, the innovation of many of our public servants and the speed with which they have changed practices across New South Wales, particularly in the service area—our apps and our check-ins—have improved the way we can do business. This morning I was having a conversation with one of my local superintendents, who said that a challenge in policing is the amount of paperwork our police

are forced to do. It can take up to three hours to do the paperwork required for an apprehended violence order, and having up to 20 per cent to 30 per cent of our police officers off the beat at any one time is a real challenge. What are we doing about using technology to make that process quicker and sharper?

Someone showed me recently that I can compose voice memos and email them on my mobile phone at a very quick pace. I am not the greatest at adopting new technology and sometimes it just burrs up when I come near it, but there are ways that we can do our jobs better. We can do that in many areas of public life, and COVID has shown how we are able to do it in this Parliament. COVID has led the way in a whole range of areas. We need feet out on the streets—cops on the beat doing more important things. Getting the paperwork right for court is absolutely essential, but we must find a way to ensure that police morale is not affected by a particularly time-consuming process.

I know that is a deviation from the substance of the bill but, in essence, I am saying that technology has been an incredible friend to us during COVID. No-one in this place wants to go back to the way that divisions were held before. The division system has changed for the better, and we changed it so quickly and so efficiently. There is the capacity for virtual voting and audiovisual links, but I think it is a step too far and too quickly for us to do it all completely remotely. But we do now have the mechanisms to operate like that. I love the fact that The Greens are always pushing the Parliament to do things before everyone else has done it, but the Government is moving with more speed and less haste. That is one of the reasons the Government is not supporting the bill. Members have a big responsibility to protect our precious democracy—if only all the countries of the world had what we have, the planet would be a much better place. While Government members acknowledge what the member for Balmain is trying to achieve, we have accomplished an enormous amount in a short time and we need to protect what we have.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (11:39): I make a contribution to debate on the Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2021. As previous Government members have indicated, the Government does not support the bill. I draw members' attention to the provisions of a number of Acts regarding members' legislative responsibility to attend Parliament House. I will go through those in some detail because it is important in light of the bill before the House. Section 22H of the Constitution Act 1902 states:

22H Quorum

The presence of at least 8 Members of the Legislative Council (in addition to the President or other Member presiding) shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Legislative Council for the dispatch of business.

In addition, section 22I of the Constitution Act requires that "all questions arising in the Legislative Council shall be decided by a majority of votes of the Members present". The Act makes similar provisions for the Legislative Assembly. Section 32 (1) states:

32 Quorum and determination of questions

- (1) The presence of at least twenty Members of the Legislative Assembly, exclusive of the Member presiding, shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the said Assembly for the dispatch of business.

Section 32 (2) provides that all questions are to be "decided by the majority of the votes of the members present". All those legislative provisions specifically highlight the presence of members in the House, whether that be the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council. The bill inserts new subsections in section 3 of the Constitution Act 1902. New subsection (2) states:

- (2) For sections 22H, 22I and 32, in relation to ascertaining a quorum for, or determining a question in, a House of Parliament, a Member of Parliament is taken to be present at a meeting of the House if the Member attends the meeting remotely using an audio visual link in accordance with—
- (a) the Standing Rules and Orders of the House, ...

However, new subsection (3) provides:

- (3) Subsection (2) has effect for a House of Parliament only if the Presiding Officer of the House has declared that—
- (a) it will be impracticable for Members of the House to meet in person during a specified period due to a public emergency, including a public health crisis, natural disaster, major accident, civil disturbance or act of terrorism, and
- (b) a majority of the Members of the House have requested remote attendance of the House be permitted under this section during the specified period.

COVID has created problems for this Parliament and across the world. I commend the Government and the Parliament, in particular, and all those involved in its day-to-day operations for their role in ensuring that the Parliament's processes and conventions continued in an appropriate manner so that legislation could be passed and everyday matters that affected the people of New South Wales could be attended to appropriately. That enabled us to continue to acknowledge the efforts of people in our communities pursuant to the standing orders

of the House by way of private members' statements and community recognition statements. Those processes continued throughout the pandemic, which has been one of the most difficult periods in our generation.

Communications technology—whether the internet, computers, tablets, phones or notebooks—played an important role in keeping members informed and allowing the processes of the House to continue. However, that occurred under specific conditions. It is to be hoped that we never have to go back to that. We hope that we are now on the other side of COVID and are leaving the pandemic behind us. However, I note that just over a year ago we thought we were through it, but we were not. It continues to affect our communities. The current strain is much more contagious but, thankfully, much less lethal. Over the past 12 months the loss of life has not been as serious. We certainly hope that remains the case. But we also hope that we get to a point where no lives are being lost or put at risk, where our hospitals are not filling up with people and we can go forward. The pandemic has been an incredible shock to the world. I commiserate and sympathise with anybody who has been ill or lost loved ones.

The bill provides for members' virtual attendance at Parliament. Attending Parliament is our job; it is what we signed up for. The people of New South Wales expect us to go to work each day. Why? Because they get up each day and go to work. I acknowledge the tyranny of distance in this country and this State. Last night I had conversations with members who represent electorates in the furthest reaches of the State and whose travel time to attend Parliament and return to their families is five hours each way. That is difficult. Many people sign up for difficult jobs because they want to do those jobs to achieve what they want to achieve. As I said, the people of New South Wales expect their elected representatives to go to work and represent them in this place.

I believe strongly in tradition. I have spoken previously in this place about the origins of our democracy. I firmly believe that members need to be at work. I am not casting aspersions on anybody's views. Ideally, this Parliament exists to address all views. I acknowledge the genuine sincerity of the member for Balmain in introducing the bill to the House. He seeks to alleviate some of the problems of the tyranny of distance that I have mentioned. However, the member for Balmain and certain Opposition members have been critical of what this Government has done to restore businesses following the downturn in economic activity in the city. One of the great problems faced by those businesses has been people working from home. There has been a massive downturn in the economic viability of businesses in this great city of Sydney. It is wonderful to see them coming back.

This Government has invested in an incredible way. I think I mentioned in a previous debate that the New South Wales Government has injected something like \$40 billion in funding to address COVID-related issues. Every member of this place knows that \$40 billion goes a long way to paying for some serious infrastructure—it builds a lot of highways, a lot of rail lines and a hell of a lot of hospitals. To make that enormous contribution from our budget to ensure the health and safety of our communities, and to provide for businesses and to keep people in employment when they could not go to work during the pandemic, was absolutely vital. We were in the strong economic position to be able to do so because of the Government's sound financial management. [*Extension of time*]

The point I make is that the decisions that need to be made for the people of New South Wales need to be made here. If members of this House are critical of the Government in terms of saying that it is not doing enough for the viability of businesses, that it is not doing enough to promote economic activity by encouraging people to come back to the city, then how can they sit with the irony of the bill and say, "But we, the elected people, can stay at home. It's all right for us to stay at home and work remotely"? How can they say, "We want people to go back to shop, to dine and to participate in all of the businesses across this wonderful city. But we, the legislators, the people who make the rules, can sit at home, comfortable, with a little rug around our knees, having a hot toddy or a cup of tea, in front of our computer, and make all of the decisions on behalf of the people of New South Wales"? How can we justify saying, "We don't want to travel the distance to come to Parliament House to do our job"?

I have pointed out that the Government acknowledges the importance of parliamentary representation and oversight during times of crisis. However, a number of existing oversight mechanisms of the Parliament have continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, including while parliamentary sittings have been adjourned. Committees have continued to function, hold inquiries and provide oversight. When Parliament does not sit for any reason, it allows more time for parliamentary committees to perform their important scrutiny functions. As I have said, if we expect people to come to this great city—and it is the greatest city in the greatest country in the world—to support the economic viability of the businesses, I think the very least that we as members of Parliament can do is to turn up for our jobs each day. We should participate in supporting not only this Parliament and the views of the New South Wales public but also local businesses. We should have a cup of tea, dine and stimulate economic activity. We should lead by example. That means turning up for work here each day. I reject the bill and stand by the Government in not supporting it.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (11:52): The Government does not support the Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2021. While the Government welcomes scrutiny and supports measures to improve the functioning of Parliament, amendment of the Constitution Act to allow parliamentary proceedings to occur by electronic means is a significant step requiring careful and full consideration of its necessity and impact. Section 10 of the Constitution Act states:

The Governor may fix the time and place for holding every Session of the Legislative Council and Assembly, and may change or vary such time or place as he may judge advisable and most consistent with general convenience and the public welfare, giving sufficient notice thereof.

Parliament therefore needs to sit in accordance with the commission of the Governor for that session, including as varied. The Constitution Act also refers to the "presence" of members. The sections proposed to be amended by the bill relate to the minimum number of members required for a quorum and the determination of questions in the Legislative Assembly, under section 32, and the Legislative Council, under sections 22H and 22I.

To constitute a meeting of the House, the Constitution Act requires the "presence" of at least eight members exclusive of the member presiding in the case of the Legislative Council, and at least 20 members exclusive of the member presiding in the case of the Legislative Assembly. Questions are decided by the majority of the votes of the members present other than the member presiding, and when the votes are equal the member presiding shall have the casting vote. The bill would insert a new subsection in section 3 of the Constitution Act 1902 providing that, for the purposes of sections 22H, 22I and 32, in relation to ascertaining a quorum for, or determining a question in, a House of Parliament, a member of Parliament is taken to be present at a meeting of the House if the member attends the meeting remotely using an audiovisual link in accordance with the standing rules and orders of the House. That sounds very much like something the fictional Sir Humphrey would say. However, those provisions would only have effect if the Presiding Officer of the House has declared the following:

- (a) it will be impracticable for Members of the House to meet in person during a specified period due to a public emergency, including a public health crisis, natural disaster, major accident, civil disturbance or act of terrorism, and
- (b) a majority of the Members of the House have requested remote attendance of the House be permitted under the section during the specified period.

However, it is not clear that the impact of the bill has been fully considered, nor is it clear whether it has been drafted with the benefit of considered legal advice—I note the Attorney General is in the Chamber—including as to whether the bill, as drafted, would achieve its intended purpose of enabling parliamentary proceedings by electronic means. Further, it is not clear what consultation has been undertaken, including with the Presiding Officers and the Department of Parliamentary Services, as well as the Procedure Committee.

During the virtual sittings of Parliament held in October last year, I recall there were problems on the first or second day with the connection—there were a few little internet crashes here and there. As Government Whip, I know the importance of keeping this place running. Scheduling members to speak on matters remotely from their electoral office can be problematic—especially in areas like mine, Wollondilly and Tahmoor, where the mobile reception is not the best. Obviously, we needed to adapt sitting arrangements during the pandemic, as we needed to adapt everything else in our lives such as checking in, wearing face masks, restricting ourselves to within a five-kilometre radius of our homes, and limiting the number of visitors to our homes. We would never have imagined three or four years ago that we would need to do such things. The pandemic really has turned the world upside down. The Government does not support the bill.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:58): In reply: I acknowledge those members who have made contributions to the debate on the Constitution Amendment (Virtual Attendance) Bill 2021. I acknowledge the member for Vacluse, the member for Summer Hill, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Terrigal, the member for Oxley, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Riverstone. I acknowledge the role of Mr David Shoebridge in the other place, who brought this bill to the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council considered the bill in great detail to ensure that it could be as strong as possible. I think it is important to put on record the parameters around the implementation of virtual attendance should the bill be passed.

We have heard members speculate about what the thresholds are, so I will highlight the important thresholds contained in the bill. The appropriate checks and balances to ensure that powers cannot be misused include two key sections. Firstly, remote attendance provisions will operate only if the Presiding Officer of the House—in this case it is the Speaker and in the other place, the President—has declared that a public emergency exists and that as a result it is not safe or practical for members of the House to meet in person. That incredibly high threshold needs to be passed for the Presiding Officer to determine that in those extreme circumstances virtual attendance is permissible.

Not only does the Presiding Officer, who would be from the party with the majority in the House, have to make that determination but there is also the definition of a public emergency. It is not just that someone is inconvenienced or has to be redirected, or that there was an illness or some other issue. It has to be a public emergency—that is, a public health crisis, a natural disaster, a civil disturbance or an act of terrorism. We are talking about the highest level of public emergencies. That would allow for the triggering of the bill. The critical safeguard of a sunset clause has been included in the bill. There are statutory reviews, including of bills, but this bill includes the sunset clause that will see the section repealed five years after commencement. So if there is an issue or problem, the bill specifically allows for its repeal.

In the few minutes I have remaining, I will identify a few absolutely critical points. COVID changed the way that our governments work and the way that we do business. The alarming situation, expressed by the Leader of the Opposition—and I thank him and the Opposition for their support—was that scrutiny and oversight were not available during the pandemic period, when the Executive basically ran the show with extraordinary sweeping powers. The Opposition and the crossbench—The Greens and others—committed to work with the Government but, quite frankly, struggled with some of the Government decisions. While we tried to collaborate with the Government, there was not the capacity for the type of oversight that was required. Most importantly, the Parliament would have had the opportunity to pass laws, which could have been scrutinised by the Opposition, the crossbench and all members. We did not have the opportunity to do that because we could not meet physically in the House. That is so important because in those times of crisis we need more democracy, not less. We need more oversight, not less. We need more scrutiny, not less.

Some members have lamented the fact that a virtual sitting would not have all of the elements that are so important for the functioning of our democracy. We agree. The question is not whether we have regular sittings or virtual sittings; the question is whether we have no sittings or virtual sittings. The bill would provide, when there was no opportunity to sit, that we could sit, vote, have quorum and so on. The Government could always call for a quorum if it felt like it did not want to bring something on. There are so many safeguards: The Presiding Officer, whose party would have majority support in the House, has to agree; and there has to be a public emergency for the virtual sitting to proceed.

I conclude by acknowledging that the United Kingdom Parliament, the Brazilian Senate, the Argentinian and Chilean parliaments and the G7 can meet remotely with virtual attendance, but it is too hard for New South Wales Parliament. Just because our system did not allow for virtual sittings for the past 200 years does not mean we should not take the opportunity to do so. We must acknowledge the key point that while members could appear virtually, they did not count for quorum and could not vote. The Government does not mind listening to members on Zoom, saying "thank you very much" and patting them on the head. But if members cannot vote, they are not able to really exercise their voices in this Parliament. We can see at the moment, when the numbers are tight, that we must ensure that members can not only participate but also vote. Otherwise, the Executive will just run the show. That is an important democratic safeguard. It makes sure that we can make that call between no sitting or virtual sitting; at the moment we only have one choice: no sitting or no sitting. We are saying that we should have the other opportunity.

I note that speakers addressed the technology matter. The technology issue has been resolved. We have the technology. That sounds like a quote from somewhere: "We have the technology." It is important that we have that parliamentary scrutiny. The last point before I conclude is that during COVID there was, in general, goodwill. That is important. We do not think that governments are nefarious and evil, and that the Executive will try to take full control in all circumstances. That is not our view. We do not believe that will always be the case. The bill is not meant to address that. The bill is meant to address the genuine shortcoming in the arrangements we have today. I am sure that if virtual attendance were allowed, the Government would have allowed it and the Opposition would have supported it because it was calling for it as well. We want to have that opportunity, but only in the most extreme situations. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: It should be noted that this is the first piece of legislation that has passed both Houses of Parliament under the name of The Greens. I congratulate the member for Balmain. It is certainly an achievement to be marked.

*Motions***RURAL, REMOTE AND REGIONAL HEALTH****Debate resumed from 24 March 2022.**

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:07): I seek leave to amend the motion by omitting the word "creation" from clause (3) and inserting instead the words "active consideration".

Leave granted.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: The healthcare challenges facing rural New South Wales are daunting. The health of rural people is poorer than that of city people. Providing health care in rural areas is not the same as providing that health care in the city. The tyranny of geography and distance means that what works in the city does not always work in the bush. Even though the problem has been known for decades, access to health care continues to be a major concern for rural communities in our State. The time has come for a shake-up, a radical new approach. We have to stop tinkering with the system that just is not up to it. That is why I am moving this motion. We need to think differently and act differently. We need to let rural communities set the agenda for their healthcare services rather than have them dictated to by a city-centric bureaucracy. We need a separate department for rural health.

Death rates are 40 per cent higher for rural people. Potentially avoidable death rates are up to 2½ times greater for rural people than for those living in urban areas. The burden of disease is greater in rural and remote areas. On top of this, rural areas are unique. The way services are provided is different. Whether it is the skills needed of rural professionals, the nature of small hospitals, the heavy load placed on our transport services or the difficulties of providing community health because of the distances, services need to be configured differently.

Health services are a fundamental part of the economic fabric of rural communities and these communities value these services. A local hospital can be the heartbeat of a town or region, but there has been little progress in improving regional hospitals. The New South Wales health system is highly regarded, but it is based in the city and remains city-centric in its thinking. Governments have been working for decades to improve rural health. There have been workforce plans and strategies at State and Federal levels, task forces and committees, but it has not been enough. We have to do more, especially to make sure that we have the health professionals we need to provide the services our communities demand. It is true that infrastructure has improved, particularly under this Government, but communities are saying, "What is the point of a new building if there is not sufficient staff to provide the services?" We now have a Minister for Regional Health, so rural health has a general but no army. The Minister needs the backing of experienced health bureaucrats to get real change.

A department of rural health based in the regions would focus on the unique needs of rural New South Wales. This department must be based in the regional and rural areas. Without feet on the ground in these communities, the decisions that are made will be out of touch. The Government must know the impact of its decisions on those affected by them. It is not about creating extra bureaucracy; that is the last thing we need. It is about getting existing health staff to focus on very specific issues of rural health. It is about making sure that there is a part of the Government that owns the issue of rural health. The Government has created the Department of Regional NSW, which has brought together a range of functions and agencies, with a clear regional presence on the ground.

What would a department of rural health do? There are at least four specific areas it should focus on. The first priority is workforce. We must ensure that we have the nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives, doctors and allied health staff to provide the services we need. More and more we hear of health services struggling to get staff and to stay open, whether it is in Bourke, Warren, Deniliquin, Yass or at the Griffith Base Hospital maternity ward. The list goes on. Regularly hospitals are without medical cover after hours or services are covered by expensive locums who cannot provide the same level of ongoing care as resident doctors. We hear of nursing shortages that threaten ward closures, of queues to access allied health services and of long trips to Sydney because there are no outreach services.

I realise that there are challenges getting staff. The workforce in rural areas requires a unique set of skills. There is so much pressure to stay in metropolitan centres but as a nation, we have more medical graduates per head of population than almost any other western nation. We have communities where there are GPs, but they do not work in the hospital. We have universities that graduate many nursing and allied health students. Surely we can find a solution. It needs a clear focus and sustained effort, and that will only come from a department that has this as its key goal. The second role would be one of advocacy. There needs to be a strong advocate in the department that would be responsible for checking government decisions that impact on rural, remote and regional areas. For example, the decision to centralise coronial autopsies in Newcastle caused suffering and distress to rural people. No-one thought about the impact on rural residents. It clearly should have been a consideration.

The third priority would be to safeguard existing services in rural areas and to look at options for expansion and improvement. This means that we do not close maternity or surgical services and we start looking at how to bring services back. Instead of asking what can we cut, the focus would be on what services can we expand. District hospitals should be able to sustain the services that are needed, like birthing, surgical, emergency and palliative care. And it is not just about hospital services. Rural and remote areas desperately need better mental health services, drug and alcohol services and addiction services.

Finally, the fourth priority for such a department would be to work with the Commonwealth. The effort that is put into cost shifting should be used to work together with the Commonwealth. The rural health inquiry has shown that rural health is lagging and that there is a lot more the Government needs to do to improve it. The submissions to the inquiry mirror many of the experiences of my constituents. We must do better. We need real action. We need a part of the government that owns this issue and that we can hold specifically accountable. We need a radical rethink and a new approach. We need a department of rural health.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:14): I welcome the opportunity to speak to this motion, and I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing it before the House. The member is well aware of my respect for him and his regard and passion for health matters. I also welcome the member's amendment, and I note that the Government will be supporting it. Firstly, I speak to the inquiry. It is important to ensure that we have feedback loops in any system, and we should seek a system where there is ongoing improvement based on that feedback. NSW Health recognises the important work of the inquiry and the many statements made by community members and healthcare colleagues who serve regional New South Wales.

NSW Health has been engaging closely with the inquiry, has reviewed all of the publicly available submissions and has observed or sent witnesses to each of the inquiry's 15 public hearings. While the issues arising from the inquiry are complex, NSW Health will draw on the experiences outlined through the inquiry. As I said, any system requires feedback loops, and we should not shy away from that. We should be making sure that we are engaging with that feedback and utilising it to improve our system. I welcome the member for Wagga Wagga acknowledging the Minister for Regional Health in his motion. Minister Taylor is passionate about regional health. She comes from a regional health background and her focus is very much on improving regional health outcomes.

The member for Wagga Wagga spoke about having people and a health system that is accountable for rural health and has a lens on regional health. Minister Taylor is very much focused on that. Fundamentally, we need to ensure that our focus is on driving outcomes through service improvements on the ground that matter to all patients, staff and the New South Wales community. As I speak to the concept of a standalone regional health department, we need to ensure that is our intent and that our focus is on those outcomes. It is important to acknowledge several important aspects of the current design of the New South Wales health system that add benefit to the system. That it operates as a truly statewide system is a strength. From networked paediatric services to statewide public health surveillance, our local health districts work together to ensure that health care is delivered across boundaries.

Having a cohesive health system across the State is important in making sure we are able to maintain clear and consistent oversight of patient outcomes and experiences, safety and quality, workforce distribution and capital investment. Local health districts are devolved decision-makers operating within a consistent and focused system. This balance aims to ensure that local health districts and hospitals are able to be flexible and responsive to their local communities, while also remaining transparent in their outcomes and accountable to the standards of care applied across the State. No system is perfect. In that regard, NSW Health acknowledges that there are challenges in the delivery of regional health care, as there are in every jurisdiction in Australia. This morning the media reported concerns with emergency departments in the Victorian health system. Many of the challenges in the delivery of regional health care were evidenced in submissions to the upper House inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales.

We can consider structural changes to machinery of government, but we need to be alert to not just potential benefits but also pitfalls. The member for Wagga Wagga mentioned growth of bureaucracy as one potential risk. There are other pitfalls, such as fragmentation, duplication, the potentially weakened management of healthcare delivery, and silo cultures, which are a big concern of mine. We potentially consume resources—like time, money and energy—in creating a second health department, without delivering service improvements on the ground that matter to patients, staff and the community. Ultimately, we need to give consideration to reforms, but we need to seek to deliver service improvements on the ground for the New South Wales community.

Earlier this week I welcomed the opportunity to visit the University of New South Wales. I thank the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Attila Brungs; the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health, Professor Vlado Perkovic; the Director of Precincts and Strategy, Dr Zoe Terpening; and in particular Professor Rebecca Ivers, Head of the School of Population Health. Of particular note and relevant to this debate was the discussion with Professor Ivers at the new flagship research centre for future health systems, funded with an investment from the

Ian Potter Foundation. The centre seeks to work in collaboration with other stakeholders to develop, test and implement solutions which address critical issues for the Australian health system.

I mentioned this to the member for Wagga Wagga, and I would welcome the opportunity to work with the member to meet with the University of New South Wales. At the end of the day, it is about having a focus on our health system and how we can improve that health system. This is in the background around ongoing commitment to regional, rural and remote communities. The 2021-22 budget is \$8.5 billion, a \$330 million or 4 per cent increase compared with the 2021 annualised budget. It is a significant budget. It is a significant program. We have to keep moving forward. I note the appointment of a regional health Minister and the importance of having a focus and lens on regional health. Certainly the machinery of government should be part of that, but the focus should be on outcomes for the New South Wales community.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:21): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing the motion to the House. I will take any opportunity to speak about rural and regional health. I am here for that over and over again in this place because despite the lovely words that have been said by the member for Albury today, I cannot help but hear platitudes, not purpose or action. There is a continuing disparity of outcomes for people living in rural and regional New South Wales when it comes to health. The member for Wagga Wagga has outlined that and I have outlined that a number of times in this House previously, and nothing changes. The Labor Opposition has had to fight to have the rural and regional health inquiry that the member for Albury mentioned and that NSW Health is apparently working hand in hand with. We only have that inquiry because the Opposition fought for it. The Government did not want it.

Then when we did finally get it, over 700 people across New South Wales made submissions. They are all raising their voice, saying that this Government must do better and that the situation for people living in rural and regional New South Wales is not adequate. A number of people are leaving Sydney and other major cities across Australia to live in rural and regional New South Wales. When they get there, if they fall ill, break a leg or suffer some health misfortune, they might want to see a doctor. If they lived in Sydney, they would pick up the phone and make an appointment, and they would probably get one the next day. But in rural and regional New South Wales, particularly in the area that I live in—and I know it is affecting communities everywhere—they pick up the phone and they cannot get an appointment for weeks. That is just to see a GP, who is the gatekeeper to other health services. If someone wants to see a psychologist or a psychiatrist, they will probably have to be online and talk to somebody from Tasmania, in seven, eight or 12 months' time.

That is the situation for people living in rural and regional New South Wales. We do not have doctors. We do not have doctors in the hospitals when people turn up. We do not have specialists. There are significant issues that must be addressed and the disparity in health outcomes has to change. All those people that were sick of lockdowns in Sydney and wanted the life of living in rural and regional New South Wales are going to have their eyes opened when they need to access health services that are just not there. Members in this place decriminalised abortion for women, but do they think women in living in rural and regional New South Wales can access those services easily? Some are still having to travel to South Australia to access those services.

There is a dire need for a greater focus on rural and regional health. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing this motion to the House, so that we can again put a spotlight on the disparity and on the need. I cannot help but mention that the only hospital in Port Stephens, Tomaree Community Hospital, has had no additional resources for years. The nurses stand up there every day, often without a doctor, and people in my community are sick of it. The Government has to start focusing on people outside of Sydney.

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (12:25): It is tremendous to see that New South Wales has its first ever Minister for Regional Health, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor. Most would know that before her time in Parliament, Bronnie was a nurse with NSW Health for 20 years, working mainly in cancer care and based primarily in southern New South Wales. The new portfolio ensures a focus on regional health needs and the unique requirements for rural and regional health care delivery, which is so important and so significant. However, a standalone regional health department is not the answer. Bespoke strategies and a dedicated focus on priority actions will be required to respond to the unique challenges that we face in New South Wales, with a focus on the community and the regional workforce. NSW Health is committed to enhancing responses to regional health issues while preventing system fragmentation.

It is also acknowledged that there are challenges in delivering the full range of services in regional health systems. That is not new information. NSW Health is committed to responding to the inquiry and continuously improving services to rural and regional communities as a whole system. But as we look at addressing areas of concern that have arisen from the inquiry, it is important that we get the full picture, and that is that thousands of people have very positive experiences as patients, family members and consumers of the New South Wales health system. For example, the Bureau of Health Information provided an insight into the thousands of patients admitted to one of 98 small, rural public hospitals between July 2019 and June 2020, and 95 per cent of those patients said

that the care they received was very good or good. Around nine in 10 patients said that they were treated with respect and dignity. Around eight in 10 patients said that health professionals always explained things in a way they could understand, and of the patients who received telehealth services after leaving hospital, 92 per cent said they benefited from these services.

There has been significant capital investment by the New South Wales Government in rural and regional health, and I can attest to that. While a quarter of the New South Wales population lives in rural, regional and remote areas of New South Wales, about a third of the overall capital expenditure is going to rural and regional health infrastructure in 2021-22. Of the 46 hospital redevelopments or upgrades underway just this year, two-thirds are in rural and regional areas. Over 110 health capital works projects have been completed in rural and regional New South Wales since 2011.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): Order! The member for Monaro will be heard in silence.

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL: This amounts to 65 per cent of the total 170 projects completed in the State. The investment into regional and rural infrastructure in New South Wales is highlighted by the fact that of the 46 New South Wales hospital redevelopments or upgrades currently underway or commencing in 2021-22, nearly two-thirds are in rural and regional areas in New South Wales. Rural and regional health districts have received almost the same increase as metro districts in recurrent budget expenditure since 2011. They have received a 45.2 per cent increase compared with 45.9 per cent for metro areas. There has also been a significant workforce investment of \$2.8 billion over four years from 2019, which will result in an additional 8,300 frontline hospital staff, including 5,000 nurses and midwives.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:29): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing this much-needed motion before the House. The Opposition—not the Opposition; I mean the Government—

Mr David Harris: They'll be the Opposition soon.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: They will be. The Government must be deaf and blind to the protest out there. I will start with an incredible quote from our Premier. He said, "I believe, whether it is metropolitan Sydney or regional New South Wales, this State has the best health system in the country." That is incredible. You would think it is from *The Betoota Advocate*. Right now in Griffith there is a rally of everyone coming together from all five shires around, because Griffith Base Hospital is going through a crisis. That crisis has been going on for years and years. Griffith Base Hospital is being downgraded even though the Government is building a new hospital. The staffing levels at Griffith Base Hospital are appalling. The maternity section is on the brink of being closed, which means that women who are having babies will have to go to Wagga Wagga to give birth. Wagga Wagga is a two-hour drive from Griffith. If you are in Hillston, it is a three-hour drive. From Roto, it could be a four-hour drive.

But babies do not wait, so the people in that maternity ward are working under incredibly tough conditions out of the goodness of their hearts. They are absolutely exhausted. They are trying to maintain their teams within that hospital. They are trying to keep it all together for the people in the Griffith region. However, this Government is not listening to the people out there. I know a woman who is having a baby in August. As part of the process of having a baby, you can have lessons on parenting and giving birth. But, because we are so short on skills, she must pay \$450 to a private provider to have those lessons. She asked about having those lessons in Wagga Wagga, but she was told, "You're not a patient of Wagga. You can't have them." That is the situation in Griffith.

I am absolutely appalled by this Government not listening to the call for improved staffing ratios from the nurses who have been protesting. This is the second protest, and the protests will go on. The inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales received over 700 submissions. One of the first jobs I did as a member was to go to the Hon. Greg Donnelly, the Chair of the committee undertaking that inquiry, and say, "What do we have to do to bring an inquiry up?" He said, "Thank you for bringing that to our attention. This inquiry has really highlighted an absolutely appalling system. After hearing all the evidence, I am absolutely heartbroken at what is going on in the bush." Government members may be living under a rock, but we are not. We need staffing and services returned to our areas. The centralisation of services is not working. It may be great for Albury, but it is not good for Griffith. We would like Griffith to be a health precinct in its own way. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga. Clearly, given he is a doctor, he has more knowledge than the member for Albury and understands the situation in Wagga Wagga.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (12:33): I acknowledge and thank the member for Wagga Wagga and indicate my strong support for his motion and for the sentiment that lies behind that motion about the creation of a dedicated department of rural health to support our State's first ever Minister for Regional Health. I love what the member for Wagga Wagga said about the new Minister: that we have a general and now

we need to now give her the troops. I agree wholeheartedly with that. Healthcare delivery and workforce challenges in rural and regional areas, and in remote areas in particular, have changed dramatically in the past two decades.

The public health system is rigid. That is not a criticism; it is only reflecting that NSW Health is such a large organisation and New South Wales is such a geographically large and dispersed State. The nature of the workforce, in terms of medical staff, practitioners, GPs, specialists and frontline nurses, has changed dramatically in the past decade, and the rigid system has not adapted quickly enough to those changes. Everyone acknowledges that those challenges are now being laid bare. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed those challenges, and that has been borne out by the evidence in the inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales.

So many good people work in our health system. The solutions can be found and worked on. But first the problem must be acknowledged. It astounds me that some people, particularly in some of our local health districts, still refuse to even acknowledge that there is a problem. Instead of saying, "We have a problem. Let's all work together to fix it", they say, "Let's put shields together and put our heads in the sand and pretend it isn't there." The member for Wagga Wagga is on the right path. There has been significant investment; no-one can argue about the significant investment in health infrastructure and facilities in the bush. That has been one of the hallmarks of this Government over the decade. But my very strong message is that, now that that investment has been made by the taxpayers, a similar and equivalent investment, not only financial resources but also acknowledging the changes in workforce pressures, resources and focus, must be made to match the standard of the wonderful new facilities that have been built.

I have said in the House before and will say again that my electorate is a classic example of rundown district hospitals that have all been upgraded or rebuilt or are under reconstruction at the moment, but there is no point in having the shiny new bricks-and-mortar facilities, new operating theatres, new birthing suites—the full kit and caboodle—unless you have the appropriate levels of staffing to deliver those services. At the end of the day, the community is not too interested in bricks and mortar. Quite rightly, members of the community are interested in the services for themselves and their families and loved ones.

We should still fight tooth and nail to ensure that every person in rural and remote areas can be treated as close to home as possible, among their family and support network. It leads to better value for the taxpayers and, unarguably, better health outcomes. I support the motion of the member for Wagga Wagga. It is essential. I am so happy to have a Minister for Regional Health. I have absolute confidence in Minister Taylor, but we need to make sure that the resources are allocated and that some of the cultures are changed. That might involve breaking down some of the old, arcane structures of some of the local health districts. In my district, Hunter New England, some of that toxic culture is pervasive.

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (12:38): By leave: I was thrown in here rather suddenly when walking into the Chamber. But the motion is about an issue very close to my heart. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for the Northern Tablelands and the member for Murray for their contributions. If anyone has a lived experience of the subject of the motion, it is me, with my 19 years as a rural visiting medical officer in obstetrics and gynaecology in the Eurobodalla. I support the idea of a dedicated department of rural health. I will tell members about my lived experience. We have buildings and buildings and buildings. It is like we are building the Tower of Babel. We have structures that do not function. I will give an example, starting with the South Coast. Milton Ulladulla Hospital was one hour north of my maternity service. The maternity unit closed in 2016. Now women must either drive one hour north to Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital, or one hour south to Moruya District Hospital.

As a previous speaker said, babies do not come when they are planned. The only thing a man could probably compare a contraction to is being stimulated by a cattle prod. So that gives them some idea of having a contraction every five minutes and trying to get to the hospital. It is not safe. People laugh and trivialise about babies being born in cars before they get to hospital. It is a terrible experience. Those women are traumatised by that experience. If a baby comes quickly, that is fine. If a baby cries when it comes out, it is healthy. But what about the ones that do not? These people have been deprived of rural services. It happens all over the State.

The thing that sustained the Eurobodalla over 19 years was the development of rural procedural general practitioners. A district general hospital is run by a basic number of specialists but backed up by procedural GPs in obstetrics, anaesthetics and accident and emergency. That is the foundation of rural medicine. Without a dedicated department of rural health with a specific emphasis on rural education, we will not have a sustainable rural health force. Our community is deprived from specialised accident and emergency surgery to restrictions due to intensive care services, which requires people to leave the area and travel for one hour, two hour or three hours for basic things like surgery simply because of their body mass index or associated medical comorbidities. People also have to travel those distances for lack of radiation oncology services.

The way to develop it is to have a department of rural health emphasising the training for procedural general practitioners, which then sustain people like myself. In my previous role I could only do my job by having these people back me up. It goes without saying that this is an absolute necessity for the regions in rural New South Wales. But that is not being delivered at the moment, despite all the statistics and figures that we have heard. That is not the lived experience of people—the 700 submissions to the inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales, which the Minister for Women, Regional Health and Mental Health said in budget estimates hearings should be put into context. Seven hundred complaints relative to the number of presentations. It is not relative, it is not comparing like with like due to the severity and consequences that occurred with those lived experiences in that rural, regional and remote inquiry.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:42): By leave. I acknowledge the new member for Bega and thank him for his contribution. It is very valuable to have people from all walks of life in the Chamber who can draw on their past lived experience. I extend that acknowledgement to the member for Wagga Wagga, which I have done many times. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for moving the motion. I know that rural health is an issue that is particularly important to him. As a former GP he understands this area probably better than most. I also acknowledge the contribution of the member for Port Stephens.

When I was at university and living in Sydney I could get a GP appointment the same day or at least the next day. Getting a GP appointment in rural areas now can mean that often you are cured or better before you get your appointment. I acknowledge that there is a problem, but it is not purely a problem that can be resolved by the State Government—especially general practice. General practice is a very complex area of health, which is overseen by the Federal Government. They are private businesses, often where GPs make their own personal decisions about where they want to live and raise their families.

In the 1990s New South Wales had a Rural Health Directorate. That was followed by a Rural Health and Direct Services Division, which oversaw 23 district health services. They were eventually replaced by eight area health services. If the past tells us anything it is that investing resources into changing bureaucratic structures does not necessarily change health outcomes, whereas investing in people, culture and infrastructure and redoubling our efforts to communicating and engaging with clinicians and communities will. The New South Wales Government is committed to making changes that will deliver real outcomes across the whole State, particularly to people in rural and regional New South Wales. That is why we now have the first ever dedicated Minister for Regional Health. However, the challenges of delivering the full range of services in regional health settings, as identified by the upper House inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales, must be acknowledged.

NSW Health is committed to responding to that inquiry and to continuously improving services to rural and regional communities. Despite the attention that the inquiry received, it failed to highlight the incredible care that most people receive in our regional, rural and remote health facilities. There are various patient surveys. For example, in the emergency department survey, 89 per cent of patients rated their overall care as very good or good; and in the adult admitted patient survey, 95 per cent of patients admitted to hospitals said their care was very good or good, compared to 94 per cent in metropolitan hospitals. Indigenous patients had significantly more positive experiences than Indigenous patients in urban hospitals. Rural and regional health districts have had a budget increase of approximately 45 per cent more than the last Labor budget in 2011. Importantly, the New South Wales Government has continued to invest in capital infrastructure. Members have acknowledged that we have built these great new hospitals. The next challenge is funding them and the staff. That is also something NSW Health is committed to.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:46): By leave: I thank Dr McGirr for moving this important motion and I acknowledge the expertise of Dr Holland, the new member for Bega. This Parliament is a better place because we have people of their expertise contributing to our decision-making. I lived in the electorate of the member for Murray for five years—in Griffith, Merriwagga and Hillston—and my wife's family now has a house in Wagga Wagga. I have some lived experience of the challenges of rural and regional health. When I was first elected to Parliament I had a discussion with Morris Iemma, who had previously been a health Minister and was then Premier. He told me that we needed a balance. That we could have a lot of mediocre hospitals and facilities or we could have some really good ones, but the key issue was about staff and services. It was about making sure that where we had the infrastructure we were able to provide services that met the needs of the community. That has always remained very true for me.

When Labor was in government we upgraded Wyong Hospital, and that included a new maternity ward. I acknowledge that a third upgrade of that hospital has just been completed and the Coalition Government has provided a lot of new services. But the irony is, although we got a brand new maternity ward at Wyong Hospital—even a bath for water births—it has virtually never been used. It has never been able to be staffed. We share services with Gosford Hospital and every time they have the correct number of staff someone retires. So Wyong

Hospital has never operated at capacity, which is a real challenge for our community. The hospital is sitting there basically empty—it was used for COVID patients during the pandemic. Women still go to Gosford Hospital to have their babies, unless it is a very low-risk birth and the midwives take over. Recently I checked in with the CEO of Wyong hospital and, despite all recruitment efforts, there are currently 200 staff vacancies that cannot be filled. It is a real crisis.

I take on board what both doctors have said in the House about a department dedicated to ensuring properly trained people to work in regional and rural New South Wales. Unless we can attract staff, having the best facilities in the world makes no difference because those services simply cannot operate. We know through negotiations with the Federal Government that it is extremely difficult to get more GPs. When people cannot access primary care services in the private sector, they head to emergency. That puts more pressure on our emergency departments and a huge pressure on our nurses. As the member for Northern Tablelands said, we need to start addressing this problem differently. I support his comments. We cannot keep doing the same things over and over again. People's lived experience tells that those with low-level problems are probably all right in our system, but when things go wrong in rural and regional New South Wales, they can go very wrong very quickly because of the tyranny of distance. I again thank Dr McGirr for moving the motion. It is an issue that we all need to focus on. As the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I note that health services is a huge issue in that area. As a parliament, we need to do better.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:50): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Albury, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Monaro, the member for Murray, the member for Northern Tablelands, the member for Bega, the member for Coffs Harbour and the member for Wyong. I will make some remarks about their contributions. The member for Albury made a very considered contribution. I acknowledge his genuine commitment and professional approach to this issue. He argued that we need a statewide system and that one system across the State provides strengths. It is the same argument I have heard for 20 to 30 years: "Leave it to us in the city and the big hospitals. You'll be all right. We've got a hub-and-spoke model." Of course, with a hub-and-spoke model, it is great if you are in the hub, but it is lousy if you are out on the rim of the wheel. The thinking in the big cities is simply: "We'll sort your problem. We'll send services out to you." That is not what we want and not what we get under the current system.

The member for Port Stephens made the very important point that rural people do not want platitudes anymore, they want purpose. I believe a separate department of rural health will bring that. The member for Monaro highlighted the new portfolio and the new Minister, but that means nothing without specific support. She highlighted figures of increased investment by the Government and the positive opinion surveys. About 20 to 25 years ago, I remember the Labor Government making the same arguments every year about increased investment and positive opinion surveys. It does not reflect what is happening on the ground in rural communities. I thank the member for Murray for the passionate description of her electorate and particularly the very real issues facing Griffith, which must be a priority. I support her advocacy for her electorate.

I particularly thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his contribution and his description of the system as large and rigid. He said that we need to break down the archaic structures. I agree. The current system is beyond tinkering with. We need to make a genuine effort to acknowledge and work on the issues. I thank and congratulate the new member for Bega, who related his lived experience and described in vivid detail how women wanting to give birth are impacted when maternity services in the country are shifted and structures do not function. I congratulate him on making that contribution. The member for Coffs Harbour made some important points. He talked about the existence of a rural health directorate 30 years ago. I remember that. When I first started working in Wagga Wagga as an emergency physician—not as a GP—in the 1990s, there was a rural health directorate. It was abolished; we have not had one for 30 years. Despite the increased infrastructure spending over 30 years, services have declined in rural communities, which is a sad fact and part of what I am addressing.

The member for Wyong quoted former Premier Morris Iemma, whom I remember very fondly because he visited my electorate. In fact, I drove him out to Griffith on one occasion when I was in a senior role. I had a very good chat with him. He had just had twins at the time. He made the point that there has to be a balance. I am not sure that I agree with that. We have lots of good hospitals, and we need to make sure they keep being good hospitals. I think the argument "We cannot get staff, so we have to ration services" is a lousy one. We should be saying, "We have these services, let's get the staff to run them and meet the needs of rural communities." We need a rethink, a new focus and more action. That is the reason I brought the motion, which I commend to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.**ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING****Debate called on and adjourned.****ANZAC COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM**

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (12:55): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the Government and Minister for Veterans on the Anzac Community Grants Program which provides funding for projects that commemorate and educate New South Wales communities about the service and sacrifices of current and former military servicemen and servicewomen.
- (2) Notes that on Thursday 10 February I joined the Minister for Veterans to announce \$1,000 under the Anzac Community Grants for Milperra Public School for a mural in their Centenary Garden to remember and commemorate our Anzac veterans.
- (3) Recognises and thanks current and past servicemen and servicewomen for their service and tireless dedication. This art will be a reflection of their dedication and the commitment the community of East Hills has to supporting our veterans.

This is a timely motion, as Anzac Day is fast approaching. The Anzac Community Grants Program provides small grants of up to \$2,000 for a range of projects in New South Wales communities that commemorate the service and sacrifices of current and former military servicemen and servicewomen. In the most recent funding round, more than 50 communities across the State, from Alstonville in the north and Howlong in the south to Gol Gol in the Far West, have received funding to commemorate veterans. Milperra Public School in my electorate of East Hills has received a grant. I congratulate principal Sarah Casuccio, students, the P&C and staff on their vision to create a mural that remembers the Anzacs and allows future generations and new students to learn of their history.

The school seeks to have a dedicated mural remembering the Anzacs showcased in the high-traffic area opposite their centenary garden. The mural will be a striking image that students, teachers, parents and other visitors will see. It will be a reflection of the dedication and commitment the school has to supporting members of the veteran community. It will also be used as a part of learning and special events to educate future generations of students that attend Milperra Public School and their families. Milperra Public School was built in 1918 as a soldier settlement school for the children of returned servicemen. The school has a unique history and in 2018 celebrated its centenary year with a series of events, including learning more about school history through a student-made memorabilia room as well the establishment of the centenary garden.

The school currently has dedicated areas, gardens and plaques in memory of the fallen soldiers in the world wars which are used on commemorative occasions such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. Wreaths are placed in these areas during ceremonies on these days and there is a minute's silence. The dedicated centenary garden is used as an outdoor learning area and a space for reflection. It has a mini Harbour Bridge, plaques and an area that is utilised to learn about history and special events. We are thankful for the sacrifices made by current serving members and those from over a century of service. This art will be a reflection of their dedication and the commitment my community has to supporting our veterans. The addition of a dedicated Anzac mural will further complement the school's dedication to honouring veterans as well as recognising the community's history as a soldier settlement. The mural will be showcased in a high-traffic area where everyone visiting the school can see it.

An artist has been booked, and the aim is to start the mural during the coming school holidays. The mural will then be completed in time for the school's Anzac Day service, which is scheduled for Wednesday 27 April 2022 when term two resumes after Anzac Day. The motion noted that the event where the grant was awarded to the school was attended by the Minister for Veterans, David Elliott. I also acknowledge two local veterans who attended with the Minister and me, John Shields of Picnic Point and Ray Devnie of Padstow. John Shields has been a regular visitor to schools in the local area on commemorative occasions, often relaying his experiences in the Vietnam War to students. Many suburbs in the East Hills electorate were first settled by the families of ex-servicemen who were given affordable government housing. Many streets in Milperra and other suburbs have military connections, being named after famous Australian personnel and battles fought. Amiens Avenue in Milperra was one of the first five streets laid out in the Soldiers Settlement in 1917, with the AIF serving in Amiens, France, in World War I. The origin of the name "Armentieres Avenue" was the street name of the war service home.

In late 1914, following the retreat from Mons and the battles of the Marne and the Aisne, the German and Franco-British armies tried to outflank one another in the so-called "race to the sea". A series of head-on clashes followed as the two mighty armies flung themselves at one another. The two most notable of those battles were at Armentieres in October 1914 and further north at Ypres in October and November 1914. During the Battle of Armentieres the 1st Battalion, which had only recently arrived in France, successfully held the line in the

Bois Grenier-Rue du Bois sector against repeated German assaults. Bapaume Place is named for one of the objectives during the Battle of the Somme. In 1918 the Second Battle of Bapaume was part of the second phase of the Battle of Amiens, the British and Commonwealth attack often taken to be the turning point in the First World War on the Western Front and the beginning of what was later known as the Allies' Hundred Days Offensive. Improved armoured support and artillery bombardment weakened once-impregnable positions and helped the Allied forces tear holes through the trench lines.

Beatham Place was named for Robert Matthew Beatham, VC, who was awarded his Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice when he dashed forward, taking on heavy machine gun fire, to facilitate an advance and prevent major casualties. Once he had secured one point, he dashed forward again alone. He died under machine gun fire on his second attempt. Albert Borella, VC, served in Gallipoli, on the Western Front and in Villers-Bretonneux. He was awarded a VC for leading his platoon to successfully capture an enemy machine gun and take control of an enemy trench and dugouts. Borella Road in Milperra is named after him. The motion commends the commemoration of our World War I history through the Anzac Community Grants Program.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:02): I thank the member for East Hills for moving the motion to acknowledge and debate this very important issue for our veterans, and I am delighted to make a contribution to debate on behalf of the Opposition in my capacity as shadow Minister for Veterans. The grants are very important because we need to keep telling the stories of our veterans and the service of our people through the generations. This year marks the anniversary of quite a number of memorable events during our very proud and rich military history. With the House's indulgence, I take members through some of them.

We are all taught in school about the two world wars and a select few battles, but some others are just as important. In March and April this year there were, and are, several significant anniversaries marking those historic events. It is 80 years since the Fall of Singapore, and we remember those who were captured and who made the ultimate sacrifice during that seriously cruel and harsh time. I was delighted to visit the museum in Singapore during a very short visit to remember and acknowledge our Australians on that eightieth anniversary. The eightieth anniversary of the sinking of HMAS *Perth* was also marked on 1 March. The 160-metre light cruiser was originally named HMAS *Amphion* and commissioned into the Royal Navy in 1936. She consisted of eight six-inch guns, eight four-inch dual-purpose guns, eight 21-inch torpedo tubes and a number of automatic anti-aircraft weapons. She carried a Seagull V aircraft for reconnaissance missions. Of the 686 company on board *Perth*, which included four civilians and six RAAF personnel, only 218 were repatriated.

On 4 March it was also 80 years since another Royal Australian Navy vessel, HMAS *Yarra*, was sunk following a battle with Japanese destroyers. Just a month later on 9 April 1942, HMAS *Vampire* was sunk by Japanese forces in the Bay of Bengal off the coast of Colombo. HMS *Hermes* of the Royal Navy was with HMAS *Vampire* at that time and they were both attacked. The *Vampire* captain, William Moran, and seven crew lost their lives during that battle. British hospital ship HMS *Vita* rescued 590 survivors from the *Vampire* and the *Hermes*. Australian shores were not immune during World War II. On 3 March 1942 close to 90 people were killed when Broome in Western Australia was bombed by Japanese air forces. On 14 March 1942 the Australian base on Horn Island, about 800 kilometres north of Cairns, was also bombed by Japanese forces. More than 150 personnel and about 80 civilians were killed.

Eight days later, on 22 March 1942, Japanese aircraft bombed Katherine, resulting in the death of one person. Two days after that, Japanese forces bombed Port Moresby in an attempt to cut off shipping to eastern Australia. Just over 10 years later, on 6 April 1952, the Royal Australian Regiment arrived in Korea and remained there for 17 months. This year 11 April marks the 105th anniversary of the unsuccessful attempt by the 4th Australian Division and 62nd British Division to penetrate the Hindenburg Line during the First Battle of Bullecourt on the Western Front. The Hindenburg Line was the last and strongest German defence and was made up of three well-defended trench systems. As a result of the battle on 11 April, more than 1,000 Australians became prisoners of war, which was the largest number during a single action in World War I. There were also 3,000 casualties—men who paid the ultimate price.

This year 21 April will also mark 105 years since the formation of the Imperial War Graves Commission. Later renamed the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it is responsible for erecting and maintaining war memorials and cemeteries. Last, but certainly not least, 28 April this year will mark 70 years since Australia ratified the peace treaty with Japan and the official ending of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. Towards the end of 1948 Australia had assumed responsibility for the largest role in the occupation force, and it was the first time that Australia was involved in military occupation of a sovereign nation it had defeated in war. Australia's primary role was to enforce the terms of the unconditional surrender that was signed on 2 September 1945.

Those are just some of this year's commemorations, which highlight the importance of those grants and memorials so that we will never forget. I am delighted to have a very rich and proud military history in my

electorate. It stems from the Ingleburn army camp as well as our very active RSL sub-branches, which have worked hard and passionately over a very long time to provide veterans with the support they need. The member for Camden, who is in the Chamber, would be aware of the involvement of the Australian Light Horse in Menangle. I have attended the site of the Light Horse camp in Menangle with the member for Camden and the member for Wollondilly to mark the importance of that precious place. We are lucky to have it in our region. I know the member for Camden will agree. I thank the member for East Hills for bringing this motion to the House and for the opportunity to acknowledge something so special to us all: the service of veterans to our great nation. I thank the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:09): I thank the member for East Hills for bringing this excellent motion to the House. I also thank the member for Campbelltown for his contribution and for his service to our country. I am the very proud great-grandson of a Light Horseman who was a member of the 9th Light Horse Regiment. Like most people back then, he lied about his age to join up. I am also the very proud grandson of two members of the RAAF who served during World War II. As the member for Campbelltown and the member for East Hills articulated so eloquently, the ANZAC Community Grants Program provides an excellent opportunity for organisations right around New South Wales to ensure that we show the proper respect, admiration and gratitude to those who have served this nation. Many of them have paid the ultimate price for the freedoms that we enjoy every day.

Recently three Central Coast organisations received grants under the program. One of them, a company called Fix Events in my electorate of Central Coast, runs the excellent Avoca Beachside Markets. It has secured funding to run an Anzac Day concert in conjunction with the excellent organisation Soldier On, the Rotary Club of Kincumber and the outstanding Gosford RSL. I give a shout-out to Greg Mawson of Gosford RSL Sub-Branch. Every Anzac Day he does an amazing job at the Gosford dawn service. That will be a fantastic event for people on the Central Coast to attend. Anzac Day is the most honoured day on the Central Coast, when everybody in our region gets together. From dawn to dusk, services are held from one end of the coast to the other. I attend the Terrigal dawn service, which is probably one of the most moving and breathtaking services anywhere in the nation. Surfboats roll up to the beach, usually to the sound of gunfire, based on what happened at Gallipoli. It is an incredible dawn service.

I acknowledge the great work of the Terrigal Womeral RSL. I will have the honour of catching up with George Craven, who is well into his nineties. Since 2015 I have attended every Anzac Day dawn service with George, who is an incredible man. It is an honour to stand with him on Anzac Day. Funding has also been secured by the Operations Jaywick and Rimau Memorial Committee. Operation Jaywick was the Royal Australian Navy's incursion into Singapore Harbour. They trained on the Hawkesbury River—we have all seen the well-known Krait. All their training was done round the Central Coast. A memorial in Point Claire commemorates operations Jaywick and Rimau. Rimau was the incredibly unsuccessful attempted second incursion in Singapore in which most members lost their lives. I have visited that excellent memorial multiple times and taken part in the service held there. I acknowledge the great work done by the community and congratulate it on securing the funds for the service this year.

The third grant recipient is the Ourimbah Lisarow RSL Club in The Entrance. I was there a few weeks ago. It runs a fantastic Anzac Day. The money it has secured will help to fund a better-quality sound system for the event. As we know, quite a few of the returned service people are getting on in years. A good sound system is important to ensure that everyone is able to hear and enjoy the service. Anzac Day is one of our most spiritual and holy days on the Central Coast, which is honoured by everybody from one end of the coast to the other. Incredible dawn services will be held at The Entrance and Terrigal. A beautiful twilight service will be held at the MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club. I commend the member for East Hills for her excellent motion.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:13): I thank and acknowledge the member for East Hills for bringing this motion to the House. I welcome the Government's funding for projects that commemorate our service women and men, and would always welcome more. As an ex-serviceman, I am aware of the long history of sacrifices made by people in the military. My family has a tradition of service going back several generations. After leaving school, I joined the army at 17 and served in 6 RAR, or Royal Australian Regiment. By then it had a rich history, known for its role in the Battle of Long Tan. My father was a veteran of the Korean War, having served in the Battle of Kapyong. He did not talk much about his experiences; he was old school and believed what happens on tour stays on tour. He may never have talked about it, but certainly he never forgot it. My grandfather fought in World War I and World War II, and many relatives are currently serving or have served previously in the armed forces.

Wars change people, families and communities in some ways that are obvious but in other ways that have taken a long time to understand properly. Many communities have waved their men and women goodbye as they went off to war. Some they would never see again; some—I would suggest most—came back changed. Those

young people signed a blank cheque to go overseas to protect our way of life, not knowing what the consequences would be. Sometimes those consequences were dire. In World War I, Australia was one of the few nations that did not conscript fighting forces.

Debate interrupted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Members

MEMBER FOR OXLEY

MEMBER FOR ALBURY

MEMBER FOR COFFS HARBOUR

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Oxley, the member for Albury and the member for Coffs Harbour all the best for their upcoming birthdays and hope they have some wonderful celebrations planned.

Announcements

GIRLS TAKEOVER PARLIAMENT

The SPEAKER: Yesterday I spoke of the Girls Takeover Parliament program. I warmly welcome students from Loreto Normanhurst and Loreto Kirribilli who are watching question time remotely from within Parliament House today. As I mentioned yesterday, the students are shadowing a number of members as part of the New South Wales Girls Take Over Parliament program. The girls participating are Isabella Tesoriero, Piper Anderson, Isabel Deakin, Sarah D'Mello, Emily D'Souza, Nina Flanagan, Zoe Gelagin, Josephine Leete, Victoria Nink, Sahara Stewart, Polly Yard-Smith, Abigail Wood, Ivana Antony, Hannah Frith, Avery Benbow, Lauren Meaney, Tahlia Moses, Georgia Taylor and Shania Pimenta. Thank you to the members who have accommodated those students.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the guests of the member for Oatley who are watching question time remotely from within Parliament House today: Stephen and Kerrie Bible from the Connells Point Progress Association, Karen Branch and Sarah Roberts from the Connells Point Sailing, and members of the Resourceful Australian Indian Network.

I also acknowledge the guest of the member for Monaro, Councillor Narelle Davis, Mayor of Snowy Monaro Regional Council, who is watching question time remotely. I understand that Councillor Davis is the first female mayor in Monaro's history.

I welcome all those guests to Parliament House, albeit remotely, for question time.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: On behalf of Mr Paul Toole: I inform the House that in the absence of the Minister for Health, the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government will answer questions today in relation to his portfolio.

Question Time

ESSENTIAL ENERGY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:19): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. The previous member for Bega has supported the sale of country electricity assets and the Minister for Agriculture has refused to rule out the sale of country electricity assets. On Tuesday the Government voted against ruling out further privatisation of electricity assets. Will the Minister now rule out the sale or long-term lease of Essential Energy?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:20): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I point out that the Liberal Party and The Nationals have provided record investment in our communities right across this State. Whether that be investing in roads, bridges, hospitals or schools, the Coalition Government has improved the services and facilities that communities across New South Wales need.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Over the next four years, the Government is investing \$110 billion in infrastructure. Building infrastructure ensures that our communities are strong and livable. This Government has a track record of delivering for our communities. According to recent economic figures, New South Wales is the number one State in the country. That did not happen under Labor, because under Labor the New South Wales unemployment rate was at its highest. The Labor Party turned its back on communities in this State. Those opposite did not know how to build anything. Now the people of New South Wales have a strong State. The New South Wales unemployment rate for February 2022—which was released this week but the Treasurer was not here to share it—was 3.7 per cent. That is the lowest New South Wales unemployment rate since 1978. It is down from 4.2 per cent in January 2021.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The unemployment rate for New South Wales is lower than the Australian average of 4 per cent. The Government's track record shows that it is building infrastructure in this State. As I said, whether that is building hospitals, schools, roads or bridges, the Government's investment is making a difference. Yet the Leader of the Opposition comes into this place and talks about his 100-day plan. It is 300 days since he made that announcement and we have still not seen the plan that Labor has for this State. That is because the Opposition does not stand up for New South Wales. I do not know what the Labor Party actually stands for. I do not know who those opposite represent.

Labor turns its back on the people of regional New South Wales. Labor members cannot come in here and tell us they care about the bush. They do not care about the bush; they ignore the bush. I remember the Right to Farm Bill 2019—a bill standing up for farmers and supporting our agricultural sector. What did Labor do? Labor members voted against the Right to Farm Bill. Labor members do not stand up for those in the country and do not represent regional New South Wales. On this side of the House we will continue to invest in this State. Our programs, like recycling assets, have ensured that we have built the projects needed in our community. On the Government side of the House, we will continue to invest in projects that matter to the people of this State and we make no apologies for the work that we do as the Liberals and The Nationals.

NEW SOUTH WALES FLOODS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (14:24): My question is addressed to the Acting Premier. Will the Acting Premier update the House on the flooding and weather events on the mid North Coast and the Northern Rivers?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:24): I thank the member for Oxley for her question. While there has been a lot of focus on Lismore and the communities in the Northern Rivers, there has been widespread flooding in communities in her own backyard as well. I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for the work that she has been doing in keeping her community updated about flooding in and around her area. There has been widespread flooding around the Bellingen shire, Kempsey and Macksville. Even last week in Wauchope, we saw an incredible drop of rain—around 160 millimetres—in a very short time.

While the situation has improved in some parts of the State, and we are starting to see some of those rivers coming down and water receding, we still face emergency situations in many parts. Last night in Lismore the river reached a level of 11.6 metres. It was back in 2017 that the river was at 12 metres, so last night was not far off that record. But I note that, whilst the rivers are starting to recede in some areas, other towns and communities are bracing themselves for flooding once the rainfall has gone. While there may be some blue skies in those communities, there is the real risk of further flooding in some of them.

We also know that there have been predictions of high winds, and that some parts of the State have got them. I remind people to be careful because the high winds bring the possibility of trees coming down in those communities that are heavily saturated already. There have been 20 evacuation orders in place and there are 11 evacuation warnings, impacting more than 30,000 people. There have been 45 flood rescues in the past 24 hours, including three overnight. That goes to show that the message is getting out there and that the community is listening. I thank the community and all the emergency services for their work. It has been a long journey over the last month and by working together we will ensure that we are able to get through this catastrophic event. Twenty evacuation centres are operating at the moment, with 528 people registered at them. I thank all our emergency services for their hard work, whether that is our police, SES, Fire and Rescue NSW, Rural Fire Service or all the volunteers and agencies that are involved in supporting those communities at this time.

We have also heard of incredible stories of dedication and sacrifices within those areas. I am sure those stories will be told long after the flooding events have passed. We spoke about some of those sacrifices during the

2019 bushfires and I am sure we will hear many stories from organisations like the SES and the volunteers about the work that they have been doing. In fact, some of those volunteers are members of not only the SES but also the RFS as well. Our SES volunteers and all of our community members have gone to extraordinary lengths. I will pick out just a couple.

I acknowledge two of our unit commanders in the Northern Rivers. In Woodburn, the Deputy Divisional Commander, Ashley Slapp, has worked continuously for the past four weeks as he helps rebuild his community despite being cut off from communications for an extended period of time. I also acknowledge Lacey Loloa, the unit commander of the Lismore City SES unit. She has been an inspirational leader to the volunteers based in Lismore. The unit has faced a lot over the past five weeks, having its own facilities inundated with floodwater, but Lacey has kept SES volunteers and community members in high spirits. Those people help keep our communities together and I am sure that all members in this place will join me in thanking them for their incredible work. Countless others like Lacey and Ashley are working in their communities as we speak. As a parliamentarian of this State, I sincerely thank them for the work that they are doing.

FLOOD RECOVERY GRANTS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:29): My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government. There have been 8,831 applications for your Government's flood recovery grants, yet yesterday it was confirmed that only 421 have been paid. It has been a month since the disaster started and fewer than 5 per cent of applicants have received any money. Will the Minister give a guarantee to the people devastated by floods that this grant money will be out the door by the end of this week?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (14:30): I thank the member for Londonderry for her question. I say from the outset how deeply committed this Government is to supporting the communities affected by the recent and ongoing floods. The impact over the past six weeks has been truly devastating and words cannot describe the destruction and heartache. I, like many other people in this Chamber, have been up there and seen the chaos and carnage that has been caused. To answer the member's question, the flood recovery small business grants program opened on 10 March and as of 8.00 a.m.—the member is broadly correct—8,800 applications have been lodged, of which around 57 per cent are from sole traders. To keep people informed, the information about the program can be found on the Service NSW performance dashboard every day. The member for Londonderry can check that every day, as can every other person in the State. We want to provide that level of information to the people of New South Wales.

Those grants opened less than two weeks after the Northern Rivers region was hit with severe flooding in late February. For context, that is 46 days faster than the same program following the 2017 North Coast floods and 21 days faster than the 2021 flood recovery grants program. The member for Londonderry quoted correctly a figure of 8,800 applicants. Based on recent flood recovery grants programs and, indeed, other support programs, we expect around 50 per cent of applications lodged to ultimately be approved. For example, of the 10,000 applications lodged for the March and November 2021 flood clean-up, 50 per cent were approved. The other 50 per cent were deemed outside the eligibility criteria, with applicants unable to provide sufficient evidence to substantiate the claims or where fraud was suspected. That means that, based on historical trends, the number of eligible applicants is likely to be around 4,400 so far.

I can confirm that as of 8.00 a.m., 1,293 applications have been finalised, being approved for payment or deemed ineligible. Of all the applications received, over half have been processed and require further information from applicants to be finalised. That often means that Service NSW contacts them and says, "Can you provide X, Y or Z, because that information was not provided in the application?" So in half the cases we are waiting for more information from the applicant. We have an obligation to ensure that taxpayer money is not being paid blindly to fraudsters and criminal syndicates. We have seen that natural disasters bring out the angels in our community. There are plenty of those—thank God for that. But they also bring out vermin, who seek to exploit the system. We learnt from the COVID disaster payments last year that organised crime has taken, and will take, advantage of government grant schemes if we do not put the right checks in place. Just last week the police charged a former member of the New South Wales Labor Party, Craig Thomson, for example, with multiple counts of attempted fraud in relation—

Ms Prue Car: Just pay the grants on time.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: No, this is serious.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: It is estimated that up to 20 per cent of applications in the microbusiness grants program may be fraudulent. One criminal syndicate alone is believed to have submitted 120 bogus

applications. The Government understands the need to get money out the door, and it is doing that as fast as possible, but it has to do it as safely as it can to make sure the money does not get into the wrong hands.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: It is a legitimate question, and I am trying to answer it as comprehensively as I can. The Service NSW manual assessments team has the capacity to process around 640 applications per day. There are currently 62 people working full time to manually assess the grant applications. In addition, there are 258 employees on the ground supporting customers to find assistance in recovery centres, which includes 40 new staff, 30 of whom are based in northern New South Wales so they have got an emotional connection to the issues at hand. [*Time expired.*]

WESTINVEST FUND

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on the WestInvest program that will deliver local infrastructure for western Sydney communities?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:36): I thank the member for Camden for his question. He is a strong advocate for his community, was able to serve his community on local government and has now transitioned to represent his community in this place.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Rockdale to order for the third time. The member may wish to excuse himself from the Chamber.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 14:36.*]

Mr STUART AYRES: The member for Camden understands that, as communities grow, particularly across western Sydney, governments have to invest in infrastructure. The report released by the McKell Institute, which was launched by the Leader of the Opposition, said that the Labor Government was the worst investor in infrastructure across the country. This Coalition Government is leading the nation on infrastructure investment, and it is announcing more infrastructure today, with the launch of the second stream of the WestInvest Fund. This is \$1.6 billion that will be going to 15 councils. It builds on the first stream of \$400 million being directly allocated to those 15 councils across western Sydney. Those 15 councils are Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Burwood Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, the City of Canterbury Bankstown council, Cumberland City Council, Fairfield City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, The Hills Shire Council, Liverpool City Council, the City of Parramatta council, Penrith City Council, Strathfield Council and Wollondilly Shire Council.

Across those councils, there will be \$1.6 billion invested in projects. It is crucial that members of the community are involved, and they already have been. The Have Your Say website has been open so that people can give us ideas about how we can shape the WestInvest program. We have already had 5,300 submissions through that website. Of those submissions, 31 per cent have been in the category of local traffic programs; 22 per cent have been about parks, urban spaces and green spaces; 17 per cent have been in the enhancing community infrastructure area; 11 per cent have been in the modernising local schools area; 11 per cent have been about revitalising high streets; and 8 per cent have been about creating and enhancing cultural arts facilities. That is just through the Have Your Say phase. The registration of interest process is open until 21 April, which means that community organisations, local councils, Aboriginal land councils, cultural groups and sporting clubs across the 15 councils are able to register their interest.

The Government will assess that registration of interest and invite those applicants to come through to the next phase, where projects will be selected across those 15 local government areas. This is a good example of the Government developing infrastructure, like it has done with WestConnex, creating value for the State and then reinvesting in people across western Sydney. These local government areas, particularly across the outer arc of western Sydney, are going to have to absorb population. Members on the opposite side of the Chamber spent their time in government cancelling projects like the metro and the Parramatta to Epping line. This Government has delivered on those things, on major roads, on major rail, and on new cultural and sporting infrastructure. It now wants to get a bit closer to the ground and engage with local communities to make sure that it is developing open green spaces and parks where people can gather.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: The Government wants to make sure that local cultural facilities are enhanced and communities are listened to about how schools can be made more accessible for community groups. It also wants to make sure that it is enhancing local, vibrant high streets, where there are so many fantastic small

businesses right across western Sydney. As work patterns have changed over the course of the past two years, we have seen how important high streets are. This is our Government's commitment to the future of western Sydney. It is building on an incredibly strong track record of larger infrastructure projects, and it is now getting closer to the ground. The Government is investing \$1.6 billion on top of the \$400 million that it has already given to councils. Coming off the back of this is another \$3 billion, where New South Wales Government departments will engage local community groups and councils. We will be delivering a total of \$5 billion across those 15 councils. *[Extension of time]*

The SPEAKER: I remind members that at least half a dozen members have been away this week with COVID. I have been asked to enforce the rules that have been put in place. I ask the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Cabramatta and the member for Drummoyne to wear a mask.

Mr STUART AYRES: The WestInvest program comes from the value that has been created by WestConnex. That project has improved travel times, connected western Sydney and made sure that families get to and from work faster. It allows small businesses to do more work. The Government has been able to recycle the value of that back into WestInvest. Members opposite have spent the past 10 years opposing WestConnex, and they opposed this \$5 billion investment in western Sydney. They have opposed every decision that we have made to create more capital and more value in the asset base for the citizens of this State.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: As we create that value, we are able to reinvest it in communities, which is particularly important for communities that are going to see increases in population. We do not want dormant suburbs at the end of long motorways; we want great communities where people can live, work and raise families. That is what WestInvest will be doing. We started with \$400 million going straight to councils. We are today launching the registration of interest for the next \$1.6 billion. I encourage every member across the Chamber, even if their leadership does not support WestInvest, to go out and talk to their communities—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: This is coming from the Minister who did not support—

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Ms Sophie Cotsis: —Canterbury-Bankstown, Bayside and Georges River, locked us down—

The SPEAKER: The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I place the member for Canterbury on two calls to order.

Mr STUART AYRES: I will go and cut all the ribbons on the projects in Canterbury, and we will leave the member for Canterbury behind.

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

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Blacktown left the Chamber at 14:43.]

Mr STUART AYRES: I will talk to all those great local community representatives who want to make sure that they participate in WestInvest. The message is clear: Get out and register your interest in WestInvest because this is the government that delivers for you.

PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:43): My question is directed to the Minister for Corrections. Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 is in chaos. This week the infrastructure Minister confirmed that the project will be delayed, yet the Minister for Corrections has written to local residents saying the project will go ahead. Meanwhile, the transport Minister has ruled the project both in and out at various times. Will the Minister come clean with the people of Parramatta about when exactly the Government will build the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2?

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (14:44): I thank the member for Bankstown for her question. Before I start, I send a big shout-out to Isabel Deakin from my office, who is shadowing me today. Well done, Issie; we got a question. It is a pleasure to get my first question as the Minister for Corrections. I am sure the member for Bankstown knows that transport questions should be directed to the transport Minister. However, as a passionate member for Parramatta, I am very happy to answer any questions about the Parramatta Light Rail. Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 is going fantastically well. It is a \$2.4 billion investment to give a world-class transport solution. It goes from the wonderful Westmead Hospital biomedical precinct—the largest in Australia—through to the Parramatta North Heritage Precinct and Parramatta CBD, then off it goes to Rydalmere and up to Carlingford. The Minister for Transport announced that 99 per cent of the track is now

complete. It even provides 1.5 kilometres of grassed areas between the tracks, to sympathetically integrate into the local environment.

Mr Anthony Roberts: A good local member.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I take that interjection.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The letter specifically tells the member's residents about Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 and that it will apparently be up and running next year.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant to the question.

Dr GEOFF LEE: We are very proud of the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1. Only this Government can actually deliver major infrastructure, and Government members are very proud.

Mr Stuart Ayres: They cancel, we build.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Exactly right. I thank the member for Penrith. Those opposite cancelled the Epping to Parramatta link, and now the Government is building the Parramatta to Carlingford link. As for stage two, we are still working through the details.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: But it doesn't say that in the letter!

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: The member for Bankstown is wrong. If she would like to table the letter, she can.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: If those on the opposite side of the Chamber think they are so committed, they should commit the money. You have crocodile tears. You come out to the electorate and say you support it. Put the money behind the deal! You are exactly wrong, member for Bankstown.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: If the Minister could answer his question through the Chair rather than shouting at members of the Opposition bench, the House might become more orderly.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair. I also ask the member for Bankstown to refrain from further theatrics.

Dr GEOFF LEE: As I was saying, we are very proud of stage one. It is delivering fantastic benefits. It will open in 2023.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order: I was trying to take a point of order before.

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

Ms Robyn Preston: Regarding the member for Bankstown, my point of order is that you cannot produce material and wave it at the table.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat.

Ms Robyn Preston: I was thrown out yesterday for two minutes and 49 seconds because I produced documents, like the member for Bankstown just did.

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Hawkesbury on two calls to order.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The Government is delivering stage one. We are very proud. It has great benefits. It is a world-class transport system, along with other projects in western Sydney. Members have seen it from my letter. I do not need to have a look at it; I wrote it. I am very committed as the member for Parramatta, and I will do everything I can to deliver it. I will do everything I can to continue delivering for the great people of Parramatta.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: I seek leave to table the letter.

The SPEAKER: It is not in order to do so.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: I think Geoff needs to see it.

Leave not granted.

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

APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:49): My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Training. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's skills-led recovery is helping hardworking apprentices and trainees get the skills they need for the jobs they want?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (14:50): I thank the member for his question and acknowledge his strong advocacy for skills and training in his electorate, including within some of his local schools, such as Seven Hills High School and Pendle Hill High School. They have engaged in the Educational Pathways Program, which is a great program creating stronger career pathways for high-school students by connecting them to skills and training options so that they can kickstart their careers when they leave the school gates. It is a significant investment by this Government that will turbocharge skills and training in western Sydney and, in fact, all around the State.

Thanks to the Government's focus on a skills-led recovery, the number of apprenticeships and traineeships in New South Wales is absolutely booming. The latest quarterly report by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research revealed last week that in the year to September 2021 New South Wales recorded a 77 per cent increase in apprenticeship and traineeship commencements in New South Wales. In the same period, there was a 91 per cent increase in females commencing apprenticeships and traineeships. They are huge numbers. There are more skilled workers and more skilled jobs.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: All of that has contributed to a record low New South Wales unemployment rate of 3.7 per cent. Through the policies of the Government, the unemployment rate is now 35 per cent lower than it was in 2010 under the former Labor State Government. TAFE NSW trains 80 per cent of the State's apprentices, and you can be anything you want at TAFE NSW. You can be a builder. You can be a baker. You can be a florist. You can be a flight attendant.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: It is all about getting the skills you need for the job you want. There is a course for everyone at every stage of life. For example, there is a great course for the member for Kogarah; he could enrol in a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management right now. It even includes a section on ethics and integrity. He will not need Huang Xiangmo to pay for it with an ALDI bag full of cash, because it is one of the courses that is eligible for fee-free and low-fee enrolment.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 73. The Leader of the House should not be permitted to cast those sorts of personal reflections across the House.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: There is even better news on top of that. It includes a section on the preparation of business plans, which would be a great course to break the writer's block of the Leader of the Opposition in his 100-day plan. It is now 300 days since he became leader. We saw one of the problems with his leadership last week. He went off in the media on a frolic, and the member for Heffron had to come into the Chamber and clean up the mess. That is not leadership.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I know the Minister has never been a jury advocate, but he should be generally relevant to the question asked.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's answer is tenuously linked to the question.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I suppose this will be the last question time where the general relevance rule will apply.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: There has never been a better time to study at TAFE. We have given it a record budget and invested in fee-free and low-fee courses. There has been a huge surge in the number of apprentices and people in training across the State. We have created record low unemployment. Labor keeps talking down TAFE. You could hear it while I was giving my speech today. We are investing in TAFE, which is the largest and best training organisation in Australia.

NURSE SHORTAGES

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (14:55): My question is directed to the Acting Premier. Our nurses are exhausted from working in wards with shortages of staff under some of the most challenging conditions we have ever seen. In my own local health district, Southern NSW Local Health District, four in 10 of the most critical emergency department patients are being forced to wait longer than is clinically recommended. Why will the Minister not conduct meaningful negotiation with the heroes of the pandemic?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:55): I thank the member for Bega for his question. He is absolutely right. I begin by acknowledging that on this side of the House we agree that nurses have done an extraordinary job. We in this place know that, over the past two years, it has been incredibly challenging for all of our healthcare workers. They have been on the front line, keeping our community safe across the State. I have said before publicly that we are committed to supporting them. I know that NSW Health, the Minister for Health and the Premier have met with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. They are not only working on a fair and reasonable outcome for the nurses but also on ensuring that patient care is still the number one priority. It is unfortunate that we have seen strikes that may lead to disruptions, but New South Wales has plans in place to minimise those disruptions.

Ms Prue Car: They are under so much pressure.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I hear the member for Londonderry calling out when we are talking about the importance of our nurses. I do not know why she wants to yell out when we are talking about the value they provide. NSW Health has consistently urged the union to comply with the orders that have been made by the Industrial Relations Commission.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will remain silent.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The member for Bega asked the question today. Why did the Leader of the Opposition not get up and ask the question? I will tell you why. He wants to criticise us in this space. But he has no policy around the nurse-to-patient ratio. He has no position. He is very happy for his members to go out there and be involved in a rally, but they have no direction. They have nothing to say on it. They say, "Well, we're in Opposition. We'll wait till we get closer to the budget before we actually have a position about it." If they were not so lazy, they could look at the budget papers and the forward estimates and work out how the Health budget will change over the coming years. But they have no position; they are lazy. They have no position on things like nurse-to-patient ratios, yet they come in here and criticise us. The party the member for Bega has joined does not stand up for regional New South Wales. The party the member for Bega has joined is the Labor Party—which is side by side with the unions in causing a year of chaos. The member for Bega has joined a party that is more interested in supporting unions than people across—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The Acting Premier is waving around a prop. He knows he is not permitted to wave a prop around in the Chamber. I ask that he be ordered to put it away.

The SPEAKER: The initial use of the prop was acceptable. The Acting Premier will now put the prop away.

Mr David Harris: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on the point of order. The member for Wyong will resume his seat. I call the member for Wyong to order for the first time. I call the member for Oxley to order for the first time. I call the member for Wyong to order for the second time.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Since we came to government in 2011, the number of full-time nurses and midwives in New South Wales has increased by almost 10,000. The New South Wales Government has also invested in a further 5,000 nurses and midwives, and from 2019 to 2022 another \$2.8 billion is going into our frontline staff.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Liberals and The Nationals are providing more nurses and more doctors across the State. This Government actually has a track record in building hospitals.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: If we left it up to those opposite to build a hospital, we would still be looking for the parcel of land. Look at Tweed, for example, where we are getting on with the job. That is reflective of what this Government does for our communities.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:01): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to improve housing affordability and supply in New South Wales?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (15:01):

I thank the member for Riverstone for his question, which is relevant to my portfolio, and the opportunity to inform the House about how the Government is improving the delivery of new housing in New South Wales. It pleases me to say that our goal to ensure that everyone has a home, no matter your circumstances or income and wherever you are in New South Wales, is proceeding as planned. We had a historical problem we needed to overcome. The lowest annual dwelling completions of the last 20 years was in 2008-09, when those opposite were in power. In fact, they left us with the lowest number of new dwellings per capita of anywhere in the nation. It gives me no pleasure to say that, as a result, there was a significant disparity between the demand for new homes and the number being built—an undersupply of some 100,000 homes, according to NSW Treasury.

In 2012 this Government acted swiftly to increase the supply of social housing in the State. Our community housing providers have grown from delivering 68 new dwellings in 2012 to some 3,300 dwellings last year. This sector alone is expected to contribute an additional 3,000 social and affordable homes over the next four years. The total number of social homes in New South Wales has increased by some 10 per cent over the last 10 years, to more than 154,000 properties. This has been achieved through a \$9 billion investment in the sector over the last five years by the New South Wales Government, compared with \$4 billion in Victoria and \$5.25 billion in Queensland. The Liberal-Nationals Governments in New South Wales have been pulling all the right levers. Since 1 July 2011 over 516,000 new homes have been built in New South Wales and over 581,000 homes have been approved.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: We have averaged over 51,000 new homes built every year in the State, which is 60 per cent higher than the figures we inherited. This Government is continuing to focus on increasing more housing supply and making homes more affordable for the people of this State. Our Government is the enabler when it comes to delivering upon these priorities. We are continuing to build a fairer planning system, rezoning private and government land for housing and making decisions faster so homes are built sooner.

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

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Wollongong left the Chamber at 15.03.]

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: We currently have some 75,000 homes under construction, which is more than any other State in the Commonwealth. On top of that, approval rates are 30 per cent higher than the 20-year average. In the year to December 2021, some 63,000 homes have been approved in New South Wales. But that is just the start. We are unblocking development pipelines so that almost 125,000 more new homes can be built to meet market demands. We have slashed the time taken to finalise planning proposals and our average assessment time is now almost 20 per cent below the target. As all members know, new housing needs infrastructure—which is why we are driving 350 projects with \$2.7 billion, most of these in high-growth areas.

The housing challenge is not happening just in New South Wales; it is a global issue. All of us in this place need to work together to alleviate the pressures for generations to come. We are also supporting the State's most vulnerable people and key workers in regional and remote New South Wales with Australia's largest social housing portfolio worth more than \$51 billion. Today the Australian Bureau of Statistics has confirmed that dwelling approvals continue to rise, including the number of apartment approvals in New South Wales. We know more needs to be done, which is why we are identifying new and sustainable housing solutions, including shared equity, build-to-rent and more innovative use of government land. We want to provide homes for everyone with access to diverse, affordable and resilient housing, and we are pulling all the levers we can to deliver that.

There has been \$29 million invested in housing for teachers and police in regional areas and the New South Wales Government will continue to use Housing 2041 as a guiding framework to shape targeted, responsive and collaborative cross-government solutions to help improve housing affordability. Everyone in our State deserves a safe place to call home and the Government will continue to collaborate with all levels of government, community housing providers and industry to achieve that. Right now the Government is looking at ways of increasing supply by further cutting assessment time frames and unlocking new housing through investment in infrastructure. We are working closely with local government to incentivise new development and deliver greater flexibility for all types of accommodation. *[Extension of time]*

Our focus is on boosting housing supply and improving housing access in the regions, all by building on recommendations from the Regional Housing Taskforce. Three key principles will underpin my decision-making and policy direction: probity, process and productivity.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Probity!

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will explain it to you at some stage. Process is very important in the planning system but it is not the only element. Productivity and probity are crucial to confidence in planning pathways. So, yes, we have a plan. As the Leader of the House mentioned, it has not gone unnoticed by those on this side that it has been 300 days since the Opposition announced it would come up with its 100-day plan. Not to worry, we will allow those opposite to borrow ours if it moves forward. As I have said before, to face these housing challenges all members in the House need to step up and do their bit—just as the Government is doing.

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

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 15:07.]

NEW SOUTH WALES FLOODS INQUIRY

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:07): My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery. With the flood inquiry announced and the terrible ongoing devastation on the North Coast of New South Wales, it is likely that the major focus of the flood inquiry will rightly be on coastal and Northern Rivers flooding. What assurance can be given that the inquiry will adequately examine emergency management arrangements in the west and Far West, including thin markets for volunteers and the intersection between Resilience NSW and other agencies?

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (15:08): I thank the member for Barwon for his question. Earlier this month the New South Wales Premier announced a review into the flood, with Acting Premier Paul Toole establishing the independent flood inquiry on Monday 21 March. The inquiry will examine and report on the causes of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from the 2022 catastrophic flood event. While the inquiry is independent, the terms indicate that the inquiry will look at flood events for the whole of 2022, which could include the flooding in the west. I encourage anyone who has been impacted by flooding across the State, including in the Far West, to contribute to the inquiry.

The review will ensure that New South Wales can quickly get on with improving its preparation for and response to flood risk, and the New South Wales Government has committed to considering all the recommendations of the inquiry. As many members in this place will know, no two floods are the same and there is no formulaic response, but when it comes to natural disasters we can never be too prepared. To that end, the inquiry will examine and report on the causes of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from this catastrophic flood event, which is not just confined to the Northern Rivers region but has now impacted on 58 local government areas across the State.

As the member for Barwon will know, I too come from a rural part of New South Wales, which is equivalent to the size of Switzerland—indeed, I know that the electorate of the member for Barwon is the size of Germany. We both understand the geographical pressures faced by our local brigades and units. I had the privilege of visiting State Emergency Service volunteers at Menindee, Wilcannia, Bourke and Broken Hill within my first month as Minister. During my visit western New South Wales was in the grip of a slow-moving flood event, which was by that stage in its third month. We have been rolling from one natural disaster to another over the past few years and, as a volunteer with the SES, I have seen firsthand the stress, strain and exhaustion this is causing our emergency services personnel, both volunteers and paid.

My main reason for visiting Menindee was to attend a recruitment drive for the local SES unit. I reflect on comments made on Tuesday in this place by the member for Coffs Harbour that there was a surge in RFS membership following Black Summer, and there are similar hopes for the SES following these weather events. It is genuinely my hope that right across New South Wales in the months ahead we will see a similar surge in SES membership. I acknowledge the efforts of the community in responding during the events of the past month. It has been exhausting for everyone and I acknowledge what those communities have been through. The New South Wales Government will stand with our emergency services personnel, especially the volunteers, which is why we moved so quickly to activate employment protections for volunteers to ensure that they cannot be unjustly fired from their jobs while volunteering in flood emergencies.

To further address the question from the member for Barwon, I clarify that Resilience NSW does not duplicate the role of emergency services such as the SES, RFS or any other combat agency. In a crisis the emergency services agencies remain the operational leads to save lives and protect property. During the response phase Resilience NSW plays a support role. It manages the welfare services functional area and provides personnel to run and oversee the State Emergency Operations Centre. Once the crisis has passed, Resilience NSW leads the recovery efforts and Resilience NSW takes the lead on emergency management policy for New South Wales and ensures the coordination and collaboration across the sector. I had the honour last week of meeting with the member for Barwon, and I look forward to continuing our discussions in the hope of improving our volunteering

rates and ensuring that emergency services are strong right across New South Wales, particularly in rural and remote areas.

SENIORS CONNECTEDNESS PROGRAMS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:13): My question is addressed to the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is keeping seniors connected across New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: I note that this is the last question. I have given members some leeway but I now ask them to contain themselves.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (15:13): I think we might need a little more leeway, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for East Hills for her question and for her passion, which I share, for ensuring seniors right across New South Wales live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives. In fact, I saw the member for East Hills and her passion for older people in action last week when we visited the East Hills Men's Shed. I give a shout-out to the East Hills Men's Shed, who are no doubt watching this at home on the World Wide Web. They are a brilliant group of seniors who provide connections and social engagement through craft work. They were making wooden bowls, tables and, of course, cabinets. I was able to talk to them about my family history. My grandfather was a cabinet-maker and my dad is a cabinet-maker. My cousin is a cabinet-maker. My brother is a cabinet-maker too. I am a politician.

Mr Rob Stokes: You made the Cabinet.

Mr MARK COURE: But I made the Cabinet! As I was saying, we are passionate about improving the lives of older people and ensuring that the Government is considering seniors in every decision it makes. A big part of this is making sure seniors are not left behind in our rapidly changing society. We need to do everything we can to ensure seniors stay connected so that they can keep contributing to our great society as they have been throughout their lives. But what does that look like in practical terms? We know that seniors were one of the demographics most impacted by the pandemic. That is why the Government has invested in over 50 programs run by councils, community groups and not-for-profit organisations across New South Wales through the Reducing Social Isolation for Seniors Grant Program.

Ms Yasmin Catley: List them.

Mr MARK COURE: I did during budget estimates. The funding helps create social environments where people can come together, meet new people and enjoy themselves. Every one of these 50 programs is helping us achieve exactly that right across the State. In fact, recently I was with the member for Holsworthy in western Sydney at the Liverpool Women's Health Centre, which is holding great regular craft-based group sessions thanks to this funding. In western Sydney, The Multicultural Network has been holding the Let's Get Talking Seniors program for multicultural seniors, with activities such as trivia, bingo and movies in their own languages.

Penrith City Council is delivering 10 Digital Literacy Mentoring Workshops for Isolated Seniors. These grants are just one of many examples showing how we are helping seniors stay connected. The brilliant NSW Seniors Festival kicked off last Friday and is on until 3 April. This is the largest festival of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, and maybe in the universe. The theme of this year is "Reconnect". Especially after the past two years of the pandemic, it is brilliant to see the NSW Seniors Festival back even better than before, with events taking place right across the State. One of the absolute highlights of the festival is always the Premier's Gala Concerts.

Ms Yasmin Catley: My mum loves it.

Mr MARK COURE: Your mum loves it. My father loves it. These free concerts attract up to 32,000 patrons to superstar performances over two action-packed days. We have all heard of the Hollywood A-list. There is no Will Smith or Chris Rock at the NSW Seniors Festival in Australia, but we have our own A-list, entertainers like Christine Anu and Shannon Noll. Of course, we have 25 per cent of Human Nature—Phil Burton. We have put in a budget bid for the other 75 per cent of Human Nature, so hopefully we will get them for next year as well. We are also live streaming the concerts to help reconnect—

Ms Prue Car: Why are you subjecting us to this?

Mr MARK COURE: This is important. This is the NSW Seniors Festival. You don't like the NSW Seniors Festival? [*Extension of time*]

But it does not end there. The NSW Seniors Festival Expo has over 30 exhibitors ranging from travel, lifestyle health services, entertainment, giveaways and workshops. And do not forget the annual comedy show, which this year includes Jean Kittson and many others. But wait, Mr Speaker, there is more. The New South

Wales Government is funding festivals right across the State. There is Shoalhaven City Council's Seniors Festival 2022 event. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council is running "Finding it in the bush"—is that true? I might just leave that there. I am sure it is a great event.

[Opposition members interjected.]

There are kids watching this. What are members thinking? Wagga Wagga City Council is hosting Rewind 80s Mixtape with some of Wagga's finest performers. Everything from art, sport, music, entertainment, technology plus more is on offer in local communities right across New South Wales. The Government has a strong record when it comes to delivering for seniors in New South Wales. It will keep working to ensure that they stay connected, healthy and happy. As Minister, I will continue to deliver on our vision for a healthy, vibrant and active ageing population in our State.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 30 March 2022 Dr Joseph Gregory McGirr was elected Chair of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission and Mr David Robert Layzell was elected Deputy Chair.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 31 March 2022 David Robert Layzell was elected Deputy Chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Inquiry

Dr JOE MCGIRR: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission has resolved to conduct a review of the Health Care Complaints Commission's 2020-21 annual report, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (15:23): I move:

- (1) The House to continue to sit after the conclusion of private members' statements to consider any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business, including the option for the Speaker to leave and resume the chair on the ringing of one long bell.
- (2) If any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business are received before or during private members' statements, business before the House is to be interrupted for the consideration of the messages forthwith.
- (3) The House to adjourn without motion moved.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:24): The Opposition supports the motion moved by the Leader of the House. For the information of members who want to leave, the motion is predicated upon the House receiving a message within a reasonable time. But members should be prepared for the House to return tomorrow if the other place takes a long time to deal with the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

The SPEAKER: That is for me to decide, but I will certainly take the sentiment of the House into account.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:25): By leave: On behalf of The Greens, I put on the record our concerns about what we are doing here. The motion is part of the attempt, as occurred late last night, to ram through the Roads and Crimes Amendment Bill 2022, which will impose \$22,000 fines and two years' imprisonment on people who engage in nonviolent direct action and protest. The Legislative Council will start considering that bill today, and the Government is attempting to ram it through so that the community, including community legal centres and a whole range of other organisations and groups, cannot be consulted. Forty-odd groups have signed a joint letter expressing their serious concerns about the bill, which members saw only late yesterday.

The was debated in this Chamber last night and shoved into the Legislative Council today, and the motion before us is to bring us back here at some point late in the night. We will literally pass the bill in the dead of night. There is no urgency to the bill. Members are cancelling their plans to go home to their families or to attend local community events tonight because the Government and the Opposition have come to an agreement to suspend standing orders to allow the bill to be rammed through today. The Labor Opposition is joining the Government and is complicit in rushing the law through.

Nobody has had time to properly consult with the community about this legislation. It was circulated in draft form to crossbench members just before question time yesterday. The copy that was provided to us still had "Draft: Cabinet in confidence" written on it. The version of the bill that was introduced in the House was different to the copy previously provided and included a whole suite of exemptions around industrial action, which no-one knew about before the Attorney General spoke. Less than 24 hours later, the Government is suspending standing orders so the bill can be put into law by the end of tonight.

I do not think anyone would agree that that is good process or is necessary. To make it perfectly clear, nothing in the bill will in any way prevent peaceful protest in the State; it will just increase the penalties so that people engaging in what the Government defines as "illegal protest" would be fined \$22,000 or imprisoned for two years. That is the legislation that members will be waiting around this evening to pass. I was here till very late last night, and I am absolutely determined to see that we do all we can to disrupt the bill.

Being here does not bother me, and I was going to stay and watch the debate in the Legislative Council anyway. But I remind all the members who are watching that the reason we are debating the motion is to pass a bill that the trade union movement; the climate movement; the student climate strikers, whom members supported last Friday; the Dying with Dignity folks outside; the peak body of community legal centres; and the Human Rights Law Centre have all expressed concerns about. The Government will rush it through without the ability for anyone to consult.

I put on the record very clearly that the numbers are very tight in this Chamber. If we were to test a genuine vote where the Opposition played its role as an opposition in the Chamber right now, I do not think anyone would be completely clear how the numbers would fall. I do not know if anyone knows where the member for Drummoyne is, but I would be feeling fairly nervous. If the Labor Opposition were an opposition that stood for the right of people to peacefully protest and not be exorbitantly fined or imprisoned as a result, the House would be able to block the Government from suspending standing orders right now. Instead, there is a unity ticket between Labor, the Liberal Party and The Nationals, all moving to get rid of protest in this State.

Ms Jo Haylen: That's not true, Jenny. You tested the numbers last night.

Ms JENNY LEONG: The unity ticket will see them all vote together to suspend standing orders to see the bill delivered.

Ms Jo Haylen: Who's your opposition here, Jenny?

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

Ms Jo Haylen: I fight Tories.

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

Ms JENNY LEONG: Albo does a good job of that, Jo.

Ms Jo Haylen: Wait till he is Prime Minister, Jenny.

Ms JENNY LEONG: It's all right, Jo. Do you think I want Morrison to be the Prime Minister?

Ms Jo Haylen: No, you do it every time, Jenny.

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

The question is that the motion be agreed to. A division has been called for. Under Standing Order 181, there being only four members against the question, I declare the determination of the House to be resolved in the affirmative. I direct the names of those members to be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Noes, 4

Mr A. Greenwich

Ms J. Leong

Mr J. Parker

Ms T. Smith

Motion agreed to.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) Pursuant to clause 2 of schedule 2 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, Mr Stephen Bruce Bromhead be appointed to serve on the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Mrs Leslie Gladys Williams.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) Pursuant to section 68 of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993, Mr Timothy Charles James be appointed to serve on the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission in place of Mrs Leslie Gladys Williams.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) Pursuant to section 66 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, Ms Wendy Elizabeth Lindsay and Mrs Nichole Lorraine Overall be appointed to serve on the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption in place of Mr Peter Bryan Sidgreaves and Mr David Robert Layzell.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) Pursuant to section 6 of the Legislation Review Act 1987, Mr Peter Bryan Sidgreaves be appointed to serve on the Legislation Review Committee in place of Mrs Leslie Gladys Williams.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) That Ms Gabrielle Cecelia Upton be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in place of Ms Felicity Lesley Wilson, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) That Mrs Shelley Elizabeth Hancock and Mr Nathaniel Gerard Smith be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety in place of Ms Wendy Elizabeth Lindsay and Ms Robyn Anne Preston, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) That Ms Felicity Leslie Wilson be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General in place of Mr Nathaniel Gerard Smith, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That pursuant to section 54 of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, Mr Stephen Bruce Bromhead be appointed to serve on the Public Accounts Committee in place of Mr Lee Justin Evans.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That Mrs Nichole Lorraine Overall and Mrs Melinda Jane Pavey be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services in place of Ms Wendy Elizabeth Lindsay and Mr Dugald William Saunders, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That Mr Adam John Marshall, Mrs Tanya Davies and Ms Robyn Anne Preston be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning in place of Mr James Henry Griffin, Mr Nathaniel Gerard Smith and Ms Felicity Leslie Wilson, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That Ms Felicity Leslie Wilson, Ms Robyn Anne Preston, Mrs Nichole Lorraine Overall and Mr Gurmesh Singh be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development in place of Mr Justin Paul Clancy, Mr Peter Bryan Sidgreaves, Ms Stephanie Anne Cooke and Mr Geoffrey Keith Provest, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That Mr Adam Sibery Crouch, Mr Raymond Craig Williams and Mr Geoffrey Keith Provost be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law And Safety in place of Ms Stephanie Anne Cooke, Mr Mark Owen Taylor and Ms Wendy Margaret Tuckerman, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That Mr Timothy Charles James, Mr Mark Owen Taylor and Mrs Melinda Jane Pavey be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure in place of Ms Eleni Marie Petinos, Ms Robyn Anne Preston and Mr Gurmeh Singh, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**Membership**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics have a membership of five members.
- (2) Mr Alexander Hart Greenwich be appointed to serve on the committee.
- (3) Ms Wendy Margaret Tuckerman and Mr Kevin Francis Conolly be discharged from the committee.

Motion agreed to.

Reference

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That following on from paragraphs (3) and (4) of its resolution of 24 March 2022 regarding the suspension of a member, this House provide the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics with the following terms of reference:

- (1) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics inquire into and report on:
 - (a) the options available to the House regarding the withholding of remuneration and other entitlements of a member suspended from the service of the House; and
 - (b) any other related matter.
- (2) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics report by 12 May 2022.
- (3) A message be sent to the Legislative Council informing it of the referral.

Motion agreed to.

*Community Recognition Statements***MATTHEW REID AND WALK FOR TERRY FOX**

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:40): Silverdale resident Matthew Reid is raising money for charity through his Walk for Terry Fox—To inspire our Kids. Terry Fox was a Canadian athlete and activist who, after losing his leg to cancer in his college years, ran across Canada in his Marathon of Hope and raised millions of dollars for cancer research. Matthew Reid was 13 years old when he first saw Terry Fox running on TV. Nearly 30 years later when Mr Reid was reminded of Terry Fox, the idea of doing his own charity runs and sharing Fox's inspirational story was born. On Monday, Reid started his walk at Glenmore Park High School. He will walk to the High Commission of Canada in Canberra, which he expects will take 10 days, walking 30 kilometres per day. He hopes to raise \$40,000 for the Children's Hospital at Westmead. Reid is speaking at approximately six schools along the way and hopes that by sharing Fox's story he can show kids how one person can have a huge impact. Yesterday the children at Buxton Public School heard Mr Reid speak and were fascinated by his story. I wish Mr Reid well on his unique and inspiring mission.

NORTHERN POWER CRICKET CLUB PINK STUMPS DAY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:41): I congratulate Northern Power Cricket Club on organising its McGrath Foundation Pink Stumps Day at Harry Moore Oval. I attended Pink Stumps Day, which is a day for cricket clubs, schools and workplaces to turn their cricket game pink, have fun and fundraise for the McGrath Foundation, while showing support for people in the community experiencing breast cancer. Last year over \$11,000 was raised. So far this year \$22,952 has been raised, which is a great effort. This year the local business community turned up to back the event through advertising, raffles and player sponsorship. Well done on arranging a great day for the community for a very worthwhile cause. I congratulate pink team captain Sam Eggleton and white team captain Renee Beattie.

DALGETY SHOW AND DALGETY SHOW SOCIETY

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (15:42): In my first community recognition statement in Parliament, I commend an outstanding Monaro community event and its organising committee—the Dalgety Show and the Dalgety Show Society. Dalgety Show was first held in 1945 to raise money for a memorial hall in honour of World War II soldiers. The show's picturesque site overlooks the iconic Snowy River and takes place annually on the first Sunday in March. Widely known as "the best little show in country New South Wales", thousands attend this standout community event of the year. The movers and shakers behind it are absolute powerhouses. President Julie Hedger leads an incredible all-female volunteer show society. The other fantastic members are Natalee Reid, Christine Glasson, Annie O'Keeffe, Kate Heeley and Trish Gerny. Countless more volunteers assist and essentially the whole town pitches in to support it. I thank wholeheartedly all involved in this fantastic ongoing community endeavour and very much look forward to the Dalgety Show 2023.

RYAN "WHIPPET" CLARK AND LUKE STEWART

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:43): I acknowledge the incredible achievements of Ryan "Whippet" Clark and Luke Stewart, who recently completed a gruelling 24-hour non-stop relay swim for charity. These local legends undertook the marathon swim at Bondi Icebergs and swam from 3.00 p.m. Saturday to 3.00 p.m. Sunday. This was the first step in their quest to swim the English Channel later this year, with the goal of raising \$100,000 for Ocean Heroes. Ocean Heroes is a fantastic not-for-profit aimed at improving the wellbeing of people living with autism, and their families and friends, through surfing. These funds will help Ocean Heroes to start its first chapter in New South Wales, bringing together the autism and surfing communities and creating a fun and inclusive environment. So far they have raised \$20,000 for Ocean Heroes and are well on their way to their goal. Congratulations to Luke and Whippet. I wish them the best of luck for their English Channel swim. They are inspirations to all of us.

HSC SHOWCASE AND ALEXI CAULFIELD

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (15:44): I recognise and celebrate the selection of Alexi Caulfield from Goulburn High School in the HSC Showcase. Each year, the HSC Showcase displays a selection of top major works of students across visual arts, performing arts and technologies. I am pleased to share that Mr Caulfield, performing on the recorder, has been selected to showcase his talent and creativity at ENCORE 2022. I am so proud of what Alexi has achieved—not only completing the HSC in a year like no other, but producing work of such high quality. The many hours Alexi spent planning, preparing and executing his major submission have certainly paid off. I congratulate Alexi and each of his educators at Goulburn High School who helped him to achieve such a feat. Alexi's efforts are to be congratulated.

MILES FOR SMILES SURFBOAT ROWERS

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:45): I congratulate the Miles for Smiles surfboat rowers who completed an historic 350-kilometre crossing of Bass Strait from Victoria to Tasmania in February this year. This unique crossing was completed in eight days. Their efforts raised over \$128,000 for The Humour Foundation, which enhances wellbeing through clown doctors who transform the hospital experience for children, families and staff. The crew of 10 included three members from the Bega electorate—Rob Pollock of the Broulee/Moruya Surf Life Saving Club, and Brendan Constable and Rod Patemore from the Narooma Surf Life Saving Club. All the rowers are to be commended for their physical achievement, but equally the charitable result for our vulnerable children. The Bega electorate congratulates our local surf lifesaving representatives and acknowledges their community spirit, which will benefit the children of New South Wales as a whole.

AUSTRALIAN CORRECTIONS MEDAL RECIPIENT CATHY PETROVSKI

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:46): I recognise Cathy Petrovski of Emu Plains, recipient of the Australian Corrections Medal in the recent Australia Day honours. Working with Corrective

Services for 10 years, Cathy has displayed a high level of commitment to her chosen field and made substantial contributions to the health, wellbeing and safety of staff, offenders and victims of crime. I congratulate Cathy on receiving this prestigious award and thank her for her contributions to Corrective Services in the Penrith community and across New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO BARRIE WARD

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:46): I recognise the late Barrie Ward, born 26 April 1934, who died on 13 November 2021. He was from Hughes Avenue in Lawson. Amongst his work and many interests, Barrie was a foundation member of the Lawson and Bullaburra volunteer bushfire brigades. He was captain of both for many years. Barrie was passionate about theatre, he sang in the church choir and loved singing at karaoke evenings with his friends in Lawson. On 18 January 1977 he was running late to work and did not make it in time to sit in his usual train carriage with his mate. That train was involved in the worst railway disaster in Australian history—the Granville train disaster. Barrie was one of the survivors. Over the years he underwent a series of surgeries, but he suffered bravely and always with a smile on his face. I extend my condolences to Barrie's devoted and loving wife, Val Ward, his children and his many friends and colleagues in the community. He was adored by them all. Vale and rest in peace, Barrie Ward.

NSW RFS HAWKESBURY CATERING BRIGADE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:47): I commend the efforts of the NSW RFS Hawkesbury Catering Brigade for feeding the many crews who were on the ground assisting with the 2022 flood recovery efforts. The catering brigade hosted sausage sizzles, and prepared and delivered delicious and healthy esky packs to hundreds of volunteers, fuelling them for the task ahead. I extend a sincere thanks to the local stores who donated food to the effort, including mixed fruit and hot cross buns from Oakville Harvest, loaves of bread from Woolworths at Windsor and Essential Breads, bananas from Riverstone Little Athletics, and meat from Pitt Town Quality Meats. It is essential that we recognise volunteers who give so freely to their communities in times of crisis. I also acknowledge the Ebenezer Rural Fire Brigade, the Oakville Fire Brigade, the Freemans Reach Rural Fire Brigade and the Hawkesbury RFS headquarters for allowing the catering brigade to commandeer their staging areas for food preparation.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS ADVOCATE JESS RAGUSA

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:48): I acknowledge the hard work of Jess Ragusa—a firebrand Coastie and passionate advocate for people with cystic fibrosis. Jess was born with cystic fibrosis, which affects the lungs and other organs. Recently Jess and her family discovered the life-changing medication Trikafta. The medication was not available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and was far too expensive—costing \$6,000 per week—for Jess to be able to afford to stay well. When I met Jess and her mum, it was hard not to feel the drive they both had to end this terrible financial burden on so many people with cystic fibrosis in our community. Jess took on the challenge and petitioned the Morrison Government, gathering 58,000 signatures. On Sunday the Federal Government decided to add Trikafta to the PBS. Thanks to Jess' strong advocacy and commitment, many sufferers of cystic fibrosis will not have to experience severe financial stress and hardship. Jess' actions should be recognised as a significant contribution to the many Australians suffering from cystic fibrosis. I hope to see much more from this empowering young woman, who put many flaky politicians on notice.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:49): Earlier this month I attended a breakfast celebrating International Women's Day held at the Pacific Bay Resort in Coffs Harbour. The breakfast was organised by the Coffs Coast Business Women's Network, the Zonta Club of Coffs Harbour, and the Business and Professional Women's Association Coffs Harbour. Finalists for the 2022 Coffs Coast International Woman of the Year award were Lorraine Penn, Sarah Poole, Jodi Wood, and the winner was Jade Naidu. Jade is the owner of Woolgoolga Performing Arts Studio, and told the audience her story. Jade and her husband, Jackson, sold their home to purchase the property that houses her business and told the audience, "Today is a win for the arts." Mali Tipping received the Zonta Young Woman of the Year in Public Affairs and the Southern Cross University International Women's Day scholarships were awarded to Taylor Slattery and Jessica McEvoy. I congratulate all the International Women's Day award winners and the organisers of the breakfast. Next year I hope that the event will have more men in attendance—it is not good enough that only 10 blokes attended the breakfast this year. Next year we will need to do better.

NELSON BAY RSL SUB-BRANCH PRESIDENT MR JOHN TATE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:51): I pay tribute to Mr John Tate, the long-serving president of the Nelson Bay RSL Sub-Branch who is passing the torch after an extraordinary 37 years at the helm. I thank John for his service to this country, to the RSL and to the community of Port Stephens. John was

conscripted in 1966, going on to serve in the Vietnam War and later in Papua New Guinea and Europe. He served in the military for 21 years and has been active in the RSL ever since. Leading the sub-branch for 37 years is an enormous legacy for the community of Port Stephens. His efforts also extended to serving as captain of the Soldiers Point Rural Fire Service brigade, volunteering with Legacy Australia, and being involved with a number of other community groups in Port Stephens. John's service with the RSL also highlighted the health impacts facing many veterans in our community, having had his own battles with cancer and Guillain-Barre syndrome that have led to relying on a wheelchair. Like many Vietnam veterans, he is concerned about the links between Agent Orange and the various health conditions those veterans have experienced. Veterans need strong voices like John's to advocate for them. I thank him again for his service to his country and community.

MOUNT ST JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL HSC RESULTS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:52): I congratulate the staff, students and leadership team of Mount St Joseph high school on their outstanding 2021 HSC results, with 25 per cent of their students being named as HSC Distinguished Achievers by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority. I acknowledge the school's highest performing students: Chloe Perantuono, who achieved an amazing ATAR of 99.55 and was named College Dux; Vittoria Albanese, who I had the pleasure of hosting for lunch here at Parliament House last year in her leadership role at the school, 93.65; Kirsten Batis, 90.30; Emily Borzycki, 91.20; Emily Dao, 96.80; Jade Flower, 92.35; Kate Kozlowski, 93.15; Lina Lam, an awesome 98.15; Andrea Lambrou, 92.15; Fiona Ly, 93.80; Tiana Lynch, 90.45; Justina Nguyen, 90.45; Michelle Le Nguyen, a fantastic 97.25; and Trisha Pais, 94.20. I congratulate the girls on their excellent results in what was the most challenging of circumstances to undertake the HSC.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:53): Today is Transgender Day of Visibility, a day when we celebrate the important contribution transgender and gender diverse people make to our local community. We raise awareness of the issues transgender people face, recognise trans and gender diverse experiences and achievements, and acknowledge the important work we still have to do to ensure dignity, respect and equality for all trans and gender diverse people. I acknowledge the important work being done by the Gender Centre, Trans Pride Australia, ACON through their TransHub, and other local organisations to support transgender and gender diverse people in our community. I warmly acknowledge all trans and gender diverse people living in the Summer Hill electorate and wish them all the very best for this Transgender Day of Visibility. I stand with them and thank them for the important and valued contribution they make to our community.

THE MEADOWS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:54): I acknowledge the terrific work of the staff, student leaders and P&C committee at The Meadows Public School at Seven Hills. It is great to have The Meadows Public back and I know the executive staff have had a great first term and are looking forward to the rest of the academic year. I congratulate the 2022 student leaders: Mann Jasani, Aiden Lazarus, Farida Awad, Trinley Wangmo, and Srivitha Korakatu Srinath. I also acknowledge the work of the P&C committee, particularly president Melinda Hutchinson, vice president Chanel Downing, secretary Megan Terry and treasurer Olwen Paul. I thank principal Scott Staveley for continuing to lead The Meadows Public School with such pride. It is a fantastic school in a fantastic community.

ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:55): I congratulate St Anthony's Catholic Primary School in Clovelly on its first ever school Run for Fun Colour Day. It was a fantastic day for all, with children running through obstacle courses, being sprayed with colour and surrounded by joy and fun at Burrows Park. This activity was part of the school's fundraising activities to raise money for a new playground. I congratulate the P&C on making this a fantastic event and I welcome the new principal, Anna Novak, to the school.

ROTARY CLUB OF ALBURY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:55): I acknowledge the great work done by the Rotary Club of Albury, president Rebecca Cooper and all the members. The Rotary Club of Albury has been active for many years, providing outstanding community service on numerous projects, often partnering with local charities and other groups. Its mission to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill and peace through fellowship of business, professional and community leaders has inspired generations of members to take positive action in our community. The club's spirit of service project has raised \$15,000 towards projects such as the Albury Wodonga Cancer Foundation, and in aid of the Cbag and Cplan launched in 2019. I thank the club for its continued dedication, for the hard work and leadership of its members, and for demonstrating the generosity that Rotarians show to our community and those in need.

WAGGA WAGGA FUTURE RURAL WOMEN SCHOLARSHIP

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:56): I congratulate Wagga Wagga's three successful applicants on the Future Rural Women Scholarship: Roseanne Powell, Harriet Mellish and Ruby Riethmuller. Ms Powell is a proud Wiradjuri woman of the Narrungdera Clan, who, along with her sister, has begun a new business, Prickly Lizard Events, which is an Aboriginal events, catering and community projects company. She is also the founder and president of the Wagga Wagga Aboriginal Women's Group. Ms Mellish, the Head of Strategy and Transformation for Coles' Meat Business Unit, notes that the COVID-19 pandemic required working long hours, developing and delivering plans faster than ever before. Ms Mellish hopes the scholarship will help to further establish her identity as a leader within the accessibility space, as a very important part of her life involves caring for and supporting her youngest daughter, who has cerebral palsy. Ms Riethmuller is the founder and director of Womn-Kind, a female-led youth mental health organisation on a mission to close the gap in effective mental health education and support for Australian girls. In 2022 Ms Riethmuller is hoping to see Womn-Kind level up its existing services to develop an app.

CENTRAL COAST LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:57): Recently the Central Coast held its 2022 Local Business Awards. The awards highlighted businesses that are nominated by their customers. Winners from across the Terrigal electorate were highlighted in a range of categories: Kincumber Post Cafe; 5 Star Swim School at Erina's education service; Cheers Sweetie's antiques, art, crafts and gifts; Singletons Butchery at Erina; Imagine@MacMasters Beach Early Learning Centre; Browse Events, which provides events services; Iland co., a fashion company; Saltwater Bar & Bistro at Avoca Beach, which is a restaurant; and Terrigal Electrical Services, which provides fantastic trades and services, and also started Free Trade Day, which has taken off across the nation. A huge congratulations to all the finalists and winners from across the Central Coast of the 2022 Local Business Awards.

WOY WOY SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:58): I love seeing school communities banding together to support school charities. The Woy Woy South Public School has a special day of twos on 22 February 2022 to raise money for the Kindness Factory, a not-for-profit organisation based in Australia and the United States. Its motto is to inspire all humans to play kind, have fun, stay connected with others, know when to reach out for help, exercise resilience, and treat themselves and the planet with dignity and respect. It warms my heart to see the students of Woy Woy South using their imagination and dressing up as many types of twos, including a tutu, twos on a clock, dice or cards or even wearing double clothing. I know that staff and students and even their families had lots of fun in preparation and on the day. The students raised a massive \$588 for this important initiative that will fund various community and school kindness programs, and along the way help raise their own awareness of the value of kindness. I congratulate everyone at Woy Woy South Public School.

DE LA SALLE CATHOLIC COLLEGE REVESBY HEIGHTS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:59): I congratulate the staff, students and leadership of De La Salle Catholic College Revesby Heights on their outstanding 2021 HSC results. I acknowledge the school's highest performing students: Michael Forrester, who received an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank of 98.35, and Antonio Mira, who received an ATAR of 97.3. I had the pleasure of hosting them in Parliament in honour of their leadership roles at the school. James Phung received an ATAR of 97.6; Daniel Aquilina, 94.75; Clyde Hua, 94.7; Michael Dawson, 93.45; Ryan Clarke, 93.4; Adam Taylor, 92.7; Matthew Kuk, 92.55; Liam Hewitt, 90.50; Tom Nguyen, 90.40; and Jacob Murry, who ranked tenth in New South Wales in design and technology. I congratulate them all on their achievements in what was the most challenging of circumstances to undertake the HSC and give a big shout-out to the dedicated and committed staff at De La Salle.

PORT STEPHENS LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR DR SARAH BAYLEY

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:00): I recognise Port Stephens Local Woman of the Year Dr Sarah Bayley. Dr Bayley is a practice principal and GP at the Raymond Terrace Family Practice. Through her hard work and dedication, Dr Bayley has made a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the Port Stephens community. Faced with the incredible challenges presented by a global pandemic, Dr Bayley and her team have repeatedly stepped up. They established the Raymond Terrace Respiratory Clinic to diagnose and manage COVID-related health issues. When vaccines became available, Dr Bayley's practice established a specialist vaccine clinic. Since then, Dr Bayley and her team have achieved the seemingly impossible: administering almost 50,000 vaccines to local residents while continuing to serve the community as a general practice. The efforts of Dr Bayley and her team allowed Port Stephens to achieve some of the highest vaccination rate across the Hunter region. Through her strong leadership, Dr Bayley has delivered services that have saved

people's lives. The value of her contribution to the community of Port Stephens is immense and immeasurable. I thank Dr Sarah Bayley.

COFFS COAST FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:01): The inaugural Coffs Coast Food and Wine Festival has received a \$225,500 funding boost from the New South Wales Government's Regional Events Acceleration Fund. I congratulate Amplify Events on this important funding injection for the festival, which will be celebrated across various local venues from 4 to 13 June. The Coffs Coast Food and Wine Festival will become a significant event on our social calendar and it will be a major drawcard for local foodies and visitors, who are set to spend up in local shops, cafes and businesses. The festival will be a mixture of dining sessions, workshops and digital experiences featuring live music and art installations to create an immersive, multi-sensory dining experience. The State Government funding will help take the festival and live music performances for each dining experience to the next level. I know that Amplify Events director Dave Mansfield and festival director Lindsay Russell look forward to presenting this exciting festival for our community.

NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:02): I acknowledge the NSW Seniors Festival, celebrating older people in New South Wales and giving them an opportunity for connection—which just so happens to be this year's theme. The Seniors Festival is the largest event of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and makes a tremendous impact on the lives of seniors across our State. Throughout COVID, seniors have been some of the hardest hit. While many of us were able to stay connected through online platforms, many older people were not equipped with the skills to do so. According to Relationships Australia, almost 20 per cent of older Australians were impacted daily by feelings of loneliness even before the pandemic. While up to date statistics are yet to be recorded, it is important to understand that these figures are most likely to have worsened since the pandemic. There are many things we can do to support the seniors in our lives. The Seniors Festival is a great reminder to give them a ring or pop in for a cup of tea. I know that they will appreciate it. I congratulate all those involved with the NSW Seniors Festival on another successful year of events.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:03): I commend the National Council of Women of Australia for its International Women's Day event, which was the only International Women's Day event that I was able to attend, due to the floods. It brought together a number of female-oriented women's groups under one umbrella, which was an amazing achievement for all of the groups that are part of the Bangladeshi community. Some of the groups involved were Fagun Hawa, Bangladesh Australia Fashion Association, Nobodhara Association, Probashi Bangladeshi Women's Association, Amader Kotha, Save the Women, Care for Humanity, Aborton Australia, Nrityanjali Dance Academy and Call Me Help. I say thanks to the girls. It was a great day and a wonderful event that they put on.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:04): I was delighted to attend the Rural Fire Service Association [RFS] Volunteers' Family Day at my favourite museum, the NSW Rail Museum in Thirlmere, which is the best museum in the world. As part of the event, a memorial train ride was held for an RFS member from the Shoalhaven, Garry Barton, who recently passed away. Mr Barton was a fellow steam enthusiast, and his dying wish was to have his ashes placed in the furnace of a steam train. His wish was granted on Sunday as family, friends and colleagues paid their final respects. The RFS represents the volunteers and staff of the NSW Rural Fire Service. It provides operational and welfare support, including sponsored training, educational scholarships, chaplaincy and counselling services. I thank the Rural Fire Service Association for its support. It was a wonderful day for RFS families.

LIONS CLUB OF COFFS HARBOUR

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:05): The Lions Club of Coffs Harbour is among 18 organisations statewide to receive funding as part of the New South Wales Government's \$1 million Investing in Women fund. Organisations like the Lions Club play a crucial role in our community in providing local women with the support they need. I am delighted that the Lions Club of Coffs Harbour has received \$25,000 for its Coffs Harbour Women's Shed Project. This initiative aims to run a number of workshops for women, run by women, such as basic carpentry, home maintenance, car and bicycle maintenance, self-defence, arts and crafts, and health and wellbeing. Online workshops aimed at reducing anxiety and stress and at building confidence for job interviews will be included. The Investing in Women fund is about ensuring women have the support, skills and opportunities they need, no matter what path they are on or what challenges they are facing. I celebrated this

exciting news last week at the Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore along with Lions Club of Coffs Harbour president Lexie Clark and members Gai Newman, Alex Miller, Chris Hansen and Rosemary Hansen.

KU-RING-GAI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (16:06): I recognise a brilliant musical ensemble in my local community, the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra, which will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary this year. The anniversary will be marked by four performances throughout the year, featuring outstanding young musicians performing classical and film music compositions. Since its inception in 1971, the orchestra has enjoyed an unrivalled reputation, delivering exciting and interesting music and community-focused programs for students and adults alike. I appreciate not only their excellent musical performances but also their focus on community. The orchestra is run by and for the community, reflected in its much-loved community projects, like the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition and Kids' Proms concerts. As a musician myself, and an avid fan of the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra, I personally appreciate their efforts in encouraging young people to learn and play music. I congratulate the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra on 50 years of service to Ku-ring-gai.

GEORGE CENTRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER MICHELLE STARES

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:08): I offer my congratulations to Michelle Stares, who has been appointed as CEO of a new specialist private hospital in Gledswood Hills. The George Centre, due for completion in 2023, is the first of its kind in New South Wales, offering private maternity and paediatric services, as well as other surgeries. The centre will boast five state-of-the-art operating theatres, four delivery suites, a special care nursery, a well-baby nursery and an onsite education centre. The centre will fill an important gap in available services, especially for expectant mothers in the Wollondilly and Macarthur areas. Previously, women wanting for private maternity care would have to travel outside the area, which is not only inconvenient but, in certain cases, medically unsafe. I congratulate Michelle on her appointment.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE AUSTRALIA

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (16:09): Active in Australia for over 130 years, St John Ambulance Australia is a charity dedicated to helping people in sickness, distress, suffering or danger. It provides a variety of services to the community and is the leading supplier of first aid services and training in Australia. There is no question about the important role it plays in each of our communities. For example, St John Ambulance Australia is currently reminding people about the importance of first aid following a potential surge in venomous snake and spider activity across the State. In my local community, residents are serviced by the Ku-ring-gai division. Pleasingly, it recently received a \$50,000 grant for a new mobile vehicle, which I supported through the Community Building Partnership program. I was privileged to present the cheque at Hillview Community Health Centre in Turrumurra on 18 February. I congratulate the Ku-ring-gai division of St John Ambulance Australia and hub leader Rob Lang on receiving this much-deserved grant. I commend their volunteers, who provide critical services in communities across Australia.

SAWTELL BOWLS CLUB

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:10): Sawtell Bowls Club is celebrating after two of its players secured an outstanding result recently. The club had a record number of four teams progress to the playoffs, with the grade 3 and grade 4 sides earning New South Wales flags. Also making history was club member Elaine Tindall, who became the first woman to win a State grade 4 flag in the new open gender section. Tindall was the sole female in the Sawtell grade 4 team that defeated Hazelbrook 66 to 40 in the final at Yamba on Sunday. Not to be outdone, Sawtell's grade 3 side overcame the soggy conditions in a rain-affected game at Northmead to beat Narrandera 62 to 42. The grade 6 team also pushed for history after triumphing in their zone 14 division. They played off in Maitland and, while they went through the first round of the sectional play undefeated, they were bested by the host club in the quarterfinal.

Private Members' Statements

MULTICULTURAL MEDIA OUTLETS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (16:11): The last time I spoke in this Chamber, I mentioned that we have a fantastic multicultural society in New South Wales, and I really do mean it. We have a rich mosaic of cultures living together harmoniously. Among the great qualities our society brings us, one thing that I am particularly fond of is our diverse media landscape. For almost every language and culture, there is a media outlet that provides its community with timely information to keep them informed about what is going on. I am not just talking about those hosted by the great SBS but also the newspapers,

magazines, websites, community radio stations and even community television stations that run parallel to mainstream media. Each of these outlets provide incredibly important information for culturally and linguistically diverse groups in New South Wales and across Australia. This has especially been the case over the past two years of the pandemic.

Every week since becoming Minister, I have joined a multicultural media forum with Dr Jan Fizzell of NSW Health to provide updates to numerous multicultural media outlets on COVID-19. While attending these online forums, I answer the burning questions of the media outlets that attend. However, these media outlets do much more than provide timely news and information to their audiences. They provide another way for people from diverse backgrounds to stay connected with their culture and language. Whether it be in Arabic, Chinese, Indian, Greek or one of the other 215 languages that are spoken in New South Wales, every publication has an incredibly important role in its respective community.

As Minister for Multiculturalism, I believe it is incredibly important to speak with these outlets on a regular basis. Since becoming Minister, not a week has gone by when I have not spoken with an outlet for a cultural group. This morning I sat down with *SBS Arabic News*, which is a locally produced program supporting those in the Arabic speaking community. Last week I sat down with *Desi Australia*, an online publication reporting for the Indian community across the country. I also sat down with members of the Chinese media the week before that. For me, these are more than just interviews and photo opportunities; I often meet with these outlets to learn more about their history and the work they do in the community. This week, for example, I had the pleasure of meeting the team behind *The Greek Herald*. From humble beginnings 96 years ago, the paper has evolved into an important part of the Greek community in New South Wales, especially for seniors.

Often when I am out and about in local communities and I stop at a cafe in the likes of Brighton-Le-Sands, Earlwood, Mortdale or Blakehurst, I will see a copy of *The Greek Herald* on a table, showing visible signs of having been read a number of times. That is a testament to how much people in the community value *The Greek Herald*. It covers local, overseas and community news, and carries classified advertising, TV programs and sports results. Beyond that, the paper is relied on heavily by many older Greek Australians, who find it a great way to stay informed and connected with what is happening in their community. *The Greek Herald* reaches and engages with thousands of people living in New South Wales and has an active membership, including cultural and religious leaders.

Until 2020 the paper was owned by Mr Theodore Skalkos, who passed away aged 87. Picking up their father's legacy, his daughters took on ownership and management of the paper. This week I had the pleasure of meeting them, the editor and the team who work so hard to publish the paper. For a small outfit, they certainly deliver a fantastic paper. Since taking on the running of the paper, they have made a number of changes to the business model, including bringing the paper into the twenty-first century by giving it an online and social media presence. That has enabled them to expand their readership beyond their traditional base. Now it is a paper that younger people can enjoy online, so future Greek Australians will continue to read the paper for many years to come.

I believe that is important in helping younger people, not just within the Greek community but in communities across New South Wales, to have a greater connection not only with their cultural heritage but also with their language. In fact, it is something that everyone can do if they are interested in learning a second language. Reading and writing go hand in hand with speaking. I feel it is incredibly important that we empower everyone to speak a second language, and using the media is one way people can do that. I cannot praise our multicultural media and its place in our rich multicultural society enough. I thank each and every provider for the role they play in keeping communities in New South Wales safe and informed.

TEACHER SHORTAGES

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:16): I speak about a significant issue impacting many of the schools that I represent in my western Sydney electorate and those across the State of New South Wales, and that is the chronic teacher shortage so many schools are experiencing right now. Teacher shortages in New South Wales have never been as acute as they are under the Perrottet Liberal Government. But what is the Government's response to the growing chronic teacher shortage throughout our State? Even though there is so much evidence that there are chronic teacher vacancies everywhere across the State, the Perrottet Government says, "There's nothing to see here." It keeps denying that the shortage even exists.

Documents obtained through a call for papers in the upper House last year revealed once and for all the true severity of the shortage facing our State. It is one of the most significant issues we face. The New South Wales education Minister completely denied the shortages, claiming they were a beat-up, even though there is so much evidence that there are shortages across the State. I and many of my colleagues, particularly in western Sydney, have spoken to many of these teachers directly. I spoke to many of them when we gathered earlier this

month in Penrith, and the message was clear: The New South Wales Government must fix the teacher shortages. I have heard the stories from those local teachers. One would think after the hell of the past two years we would realise just how much our educators do for our children, day in and day out.

Teachers are working to their absolute limits to cover shortages and deliver learning for students, but they are being let down by the Government. As a result, classes are constantly being merged. Some schools are even telling children in certain years not to turn up on certain days. Students are being locked out of their own schools because the Government will not address the teacher shortage crisis. Let us look at the facts. In greater western Sydney alone, there are more than 1,000 vacancies in our schools. What job is more important for the State Government than providing public education for our children in public, primary and high schools? How is it acceptable that the Government has allowed it to get this bad? There are severe teacher shortages in maths, technology and special education right now—some of the most important school subjects in New South Wales.

More than 50 per cent of full-time teachers are working more than 60 hours per week. They are more likely to retire early from the profession than their peers in other States, and there has been a 30 per cent drop in the number of students studying teaching. They are not even coming into the profession. Only half of those students graduate. The Department of Education has warned that student outcomes cannot be improved without having a sufficient supply of high-quality teachers available when and where they are needed. All the experts know that the single most important factor in improving student outcomes—and we need to improve student outcomes in New South Wales; standards are slipping constantly—is teacher quality. But without qualified teachers, our children are the ones who miss out. Our students are disadvantaged.

The result of the Government's failure to act is declining student outcomes. When we do not hire enough teachers, value the teachers who are in the system or give them the amount of time they need to do their job and have to merge classes because there are not enough teachers, our students suffer. This is one of the many reasons—but a very compelling one—that the New South Wales Government cannot be rewarded with another decade in office. Its decade in office thus far has resulted in this chronic shortage. Something is seriously wrong when the Government cannot provide enough teachers for our State schools. It is simply not good enough. Teachers and students in my electorate and across the State have a clear message to this decade-old Government: Fix the teacher shortages now for the sake of our kids.

FUEL EXCISE

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (16:21): While Pittwater's environment was shaped by nature, its development was fuelled by the automobile. Challenging terrain stymied early urban expansion, with access by steamer from Port Jackson via Newport or by stagecoach via the Rock Lily Hotel, next door to the Pittwater electorate office in Mona Vale. Distance and topography militated against track-based transport, with the tramline terminating on the flat land south of Narrabeen Lagoon. It was the postwar boom in mass car ownership and highway building that provided families with the freedom to move, and we have been enslaved to our cars ever since. Despite welcome initiatives like the B-Line bus and new cycleways and walking trails, Pittwater people depend on private vehicles to move around.

Sadly, our cars are not a luxury; they are a necessity. We are dependent on petrol-driven cars, and recent spikes in fuel prices have exposed our vulnerability and susceptibility to huge and unavoidable impacts on our cost of living. That is why the announcement of a significant cut in fuel excise in this week's Federal budget is welcome news to Pittwater residents. In the short term, the tax cut will help us absorb the shock of rapidly increasing petrol prices, and maintain our productivity and standard of living. However, the cut in fuel excise raises a couple of issues worth considering. First and most obviously, as the NRMA has warned, there is no law forcing petrol retailers to pass on the full excise cut, which raises the spectre of price gouging. Secondly and more profoundly, while a tax cut smooths supply over the next six months, it does not help us deal with the root cause of our addiction.

Our fundamental challenge is that we remain dependent on imported oil. It is our one intractable area of energy vulnerability. We are blessed with an abundant supply of local energy sources to meet our demand for stationary energy, a supply that has fuelled our national prosperity for generations. We have demonstrated a capacity to reduce our energy demand through efficiency in building design, the layout of our settlements, the standards we apply to appliances, and systems like the container deposit scheme to promote resource recovery and recycling. But we have found it supremely difficult to transition our motor vehicles from imported petroleum to homegrown electricity. The New South Wales Government is doing its bit. It has committed to transitioning our bus fleet to locally manufactured electric vehicles over the coming decade and has introduced a range of incentives to encourage people to choose electric for their next car purchase, as well as starting a shift toward road user charging, which is a more equitable and sustainable method of road infrastructure financing.

It therefore raises the question of whether the fuel excise cut, while helpful in the short term, represents a missed opportunity for the future. The fuel excise cut will cost the Federal Government \$2.7 billion because of lost revenue from foreign oil companies. It does not hurt the big oil companies at all. In fact, it helps them by masking our vulnerability to the escalation in the global price of the products they sell us. The Federal Government has committed that the road funding, which is traditionally supported by the fuel excise, will be maintained by using other revenue. But doing so removes the opportunity for those funds to subsidise the transition to a sustainable local fuel to power our vehicles. Rather, it subsidises a continuing dependence on an unsustainable imported fuel. Temporarily cutting the fuel excise is a benefit to petrol vehicles at the cost of electric vehicles, thus undermining the value of subsidies introduced by the New South Wales Government to encourage transition to electric cars.

I have always felt that the real challenge of government is to better position our economy and society to confront the future, rather than being merely to transact business as usual. We are in the midst of a season of dramatic socio-technical change. Right now, business as usual is a strategy for taking us backwards. I cannot help thinking that, whilst welcome locally, the fuel excise cut does not help to answer the fundamental long-term problem. As more people inevitably opt for electric vehicles, the fuel excise will become a more regressive form of taxation, payable only by those who cannot afford to make the transition. If we are serious about decarbonising our economy, reducing our dependence on foreign oil and creating a fair system for road infrastructure funding, we need policies to encourage transition to sustainable vehicles, rather than more subsidies to perpetuate reliance on unsustainable ones.

CESSNOCK ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:26): In the past couple of weeks there has been some commentary in this place about western Sydney and the trials of delivering public education and the education facilities—let us not mix the words up and make them fancy—delivering schools to western Sydney. That is an important issue. The population growth numbers that have been thrown around this Chamber for some of the local government areas are mind-boggling for a member who comes from a regional area. Blacktown in the next 20 years will have a population growth that is four times bigger than the population of my entire LGA. However, there being conversations about western Sydney does not mean we should not be talking about the educational needs—that is, schools—in regional areas also.

Today I will speak about four schools that are required in the Cessnock electorate to provide for the growing population in our area. We are putting together, as quickly as we can bring them to market, greenfield sites to provide new housing and that is bringing families which are by and large young. Of course, when you go into a small existing village with a small existing school or a medium-sized school that might be at capacity and then surround the village with another 1,000 or 2,000 or 5,000 homes, the existing school is not big enough to cope. So a decision needs to be made about whether to build a new school or to expand on the existing footprint. If you have plenty of land to expand on, you might contemplate expanding. But, if you have already maxed out the space you have, then you must be considering building a new school.

I will speak about the need for a public school in Cameron Park in the first instance. Today I will not talk about a future high school. Cameron Park is a relatively new residential area. It is about 15 years old and has some 5,000 homes. As is always the case, the developer promised from the outset a school in the future. Eleven years ago, when I was campaigning to try to come to this House and doorknocking throughout Cameron Park, every second door I knocked on had young children behind it. They wanted to inquire about where their school was because they were essentially promised a school, and rightly so. You would think a school would come with that many new houses. The two local public schools, which are not too far away, Edgeworth and Edgeworth Heights, are beautiful, wonderful schools that are doing amazing things. But they have demountables on site. They are both bulging at the seams because of the current student population. Cameron Park continues to march on and expand. It will have another 2,000 or 2,500 homes in the foreseeable three to five years. So we need a new school for Cameron Park. I have been asking that question for 11 years.

I move on to Heddon Greta and Cliftleigh, which are similar greenfield sites, where there will be some 1,500 new residential lots, occupied primarily by young families. That is who generally moves into these areas. They are going to Heddon Greta and Gillieston Heights. We already have the amazing Kurri Kurri Public School, which is bursting at the seams, with more than 800 students in that little public school. They simply need another school facility. So a new school is required out there at Heddon Greta and Cliftleigh. I would welcome the Government having conversations about acquiring the necessary land there before we are forced into trying to retrofit a school. The greenfield sites have the capacity for land to be purchased early by the Department of Education. We can centralise the schools into terrific spots for bus routes and population growth in those areas. But we must act. We cannot sit on our hands and do nothing.

Finally, I speak about two schools that are needed out at Huntlee and Branxton. We need a Huntlee public school. We have more than a thousand new homes at Huntlee. The entire population of Branxton used to have 900 homes. We have put another 1,000 homes on top. The beautiful little Branxton Public School was already busting at the seams, with six demountables there, and can take no more. Of course, those students who are in primary school will need a high school. The students who are at Huntlee and Branxton at the moment have to transfer across to Rutherford Technology High School, which is also busting at the seams. So they are going to need a new high school in the foreseeable future. Good planning would see us do it early, not late. I encourage the Government to consider this in the upcoming budget.

TWEED COAST PRO SURFING

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:31): As we in this place know, the Tweed has experienced dark days and distress due to the record-breaking floods, as has much of the New South Wales east coast. But, last Sunday, the focus was on salt water and surfing for the Tweed Coast Pro, which is back on the North Coast, thanks to the New South Wales Government's Regional Events Acceleration Fund. This world-class event is part of the regional qualifying series, from where top-rated surfers go on to compete for the world title in the international championship tour. The event attracts the country's best surfers and gives tourists an even better excuse to visit the Tweed coast and spend money in local shops and cafes and with accommodation providers. Last year the New South Wales Government partnered with World Surf League and Tweed Shire Council to stage the Tweed Coast Pro as a specialty event, and it was such a huge success, with over 10,000 visitors, that the momentum continued on to this year. The Tweed Coast Pro is a major event on the competition calendar, and the New South Wales Government's funding helps to create a bigger and even more exciting event each year.

The Tweed Coast Pro was one of the final events in the 2021-22 Australian qualifying series and was broadcast to a global audience. The qualifying series is a significant step in the career advancement of Australian and New Zealand professional surfers. I was thrilled to see it return to the Tweed coast thanks to a grant from the Regional Events Acceleration Fund. Some big names in surfing were competing, but I was delighted to witness Tweed's own Sierra Kerr take out the Tweed Coast Pro junior event with a very impressive performance. Sierra also made the quarterfinals in the senior grade, which is quite an achievement for a 15-year-old and a great encouragement for local youth involved in any sport, especially grommets, who are younger surfers. I say that for our landlocked people out west, who may not know what that meant. I congratulate Sierra on her winning performance and wish her well. I know Andrew Stark, the CEO of World Surf League, extraordinarily well. We have the headquarters of Surfing Australia in Tweed shire. Many in the Chamber may not know that surfing is now a demonstration sport in the Olympics. It began last year. They get gold medals as well. It has been a great thing.

Surfing has evolved. There are approximately three million surfers in Australia today. Many young people find a career on the circuit, and even in the Tweed we have a large company that employs a lot of surfers in the shaping of surfboards. It is very technical, a bit like building a Ferrari. The computer cuts out the original blank and then it is hand sanded, very finely. Believe it or not, our local TAFE runs Certificate III courses in surfboard shaping. It gives young people a real career. The glass lab produces approximately 10,000 surfboards per annum and employs 40 or 50 people. It is a significant sport. There is a lot of sponsorship. I enjoyed being there on Sunday because we have all suffered with the flood and this enabled the locals, both young and old, to relax.

As Madam Deputy Speaker will know, local surfers are very parochial about their break—locals only, other people go home. Surfing Australia and the WSL provide three wildcard entries from the local boardriders club. It gives people in the regions or the country an opportunity to compete against some of their heroes and perhaps go on to become one of those heroes in the surfing world. I think that is very important. Cabarita, where the event was held, has been the set of many films, including *Pirates of the Caribbean* with Johnny Depp. It is a beautiful spot. The Tweed Coast Pro showcased our local area and gave locals an opportunity not only to witness champions in the sport but also to compete against those champions. I think there were a few shakeups along the way. I thank the World Surf League and commend it to the Tweed.

RURAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:36): I start my private member's statement with an incredible quote:

I believe whether it is metropolitan Sydney or regional New South Wales, the State has the best health system of the country.

One might think this is a quote from *The Chaser*, *The Shovel* or *The Betoota Advocate*, but that would be wrong. That is what the Premier of New South Wales said in this Chamber last year. The Liberal Party Premier of the State actually believes rural health care is the same standard as that of Sydney. I wonder whether the Premier has ever travelled west of the Blue Mountains, because if he did he would know that the rural healthcare system is in crisis.

Last week the maternity ward at Griffith Base Hospital was on the verge of closing. Can you believe that? Griffith hospital services an area of 80,000 people, but soon there may be nowhere within a 200 kilometre radius for mothers to give birth. On Tuesday last week seven mothers and babies were inches away from being transferred to Wagga Wagga, two hours away. There were only two midwives able to work that night due to a chronic shortage of staff at the hospital. They did an incredible job working their butts off to keep the maternity ward open but they are getting no support at all from the New South Wales Government. Several midwives have resigned or have given notice at the hospital. That has left 109 vacant shifts in the upcoming rosters that cannot be filled. There are no full-time midwives left at Griffith Base Hospital. Nurses and midwives are being paid less than they are in Victoria and have to work longer hours. Part-timers are forced to work up to 90 hours a fortnight to plug the gaps.

Bullying is rampant in the Murrumbidgee Local Health District but where can a nurse go to report it? They can only go to the senior managers, often the bullies themselves, who then sweep it under the carpet. It is no wonder that our hospitals now have a faster staff turnover than McDonald's. A pregnant Griffith woman contacted me this week to let me know she tried to enrol in a pre-birth class at Griffith Base Hospital. There are none available due to the chronic staff shortage. She asked if she could therefore go to Wagga Wagga. She was told no because they only take expectant mothers from the local area. Her only choice was to pay \$450-plus for private lessons.

As it is, people in Hay, Hillston, Leeton, Deniliquin and Griffith have to travel two or three hours to Wagga Wagga to get a bone set, seek mental health support or for cancer treatment. Now they face the prospect of having to travel to give birth. The Government always comes up with the same excuse. It says it is too hard to get nurses and doctors in rural locations. The Minister says they do not want to come. That is a rubbish excuse. When the New South Wales Government wanted the Broken Hill pipeline made, it had no problem getting engineers and builders out to the Far West. The Government built the pipeline in record time, just over a year. The pipeline was a gift for the wealthy northern Basin irrigators. Nobody in Broken Hill wanted it. How did the Government get skilled labour out west so fast? It paid them lots of money. It gave them good conditions. Pay and conditions for hospital staff in New South Wales are amongst the worst in the country. That is a good indication of where the Government's priorities lie. I call on the Government to treat a pregnant woman in Griffith with the same level of urgency it gives to wealthy water traders in Sydney. I am happy to work with any member of Parliament, regardless of their party, to devise a rescue plan for regional health care. Let us get our priorities right and make the health and safety of regional families our number one concern.

MERCY PARTNERS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (16:40): It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the great work that the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta and Our Lady of Mercy College [OLMC] Parramatta does in the community and report on a historic milestone in the OLMC road map. On Sunday 13 March I was delighted to be invited to attend this historic occasion at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta. A special ritual was held to mark the transfer of the canonical sponsorship of OLMC Parramatta from the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta to Mercy Partners. Mercy Partners is a Public Juridic Person in the Catholic Church, sponsoring ministries entrusted to its care by its founding religious congregations. Mercy Partners sponsors and governs ministries in education, health, aged care, community, family and disability services, and commercial services.

The ceremony followed six months after the official signing of documents on 18 October 2021. After welcoming all to country to commence the ritual, Aunty Julie Webb blessed the ground painting entitled *The Journey* by Ngemba artist Danny Eastwood. This spectacular painting depicts the ongoing connection of the Darug people to the land and the contribution of the women religious who have lived and worked at OLMC. The ritual continued with a procession through the convent and college site, carrying water from the Parramatta River and candles. Reflections were held at the *Come, Sit Awhile* sculpture of the venerable Catherine McAuley in the beautiful Mother Mary Clare Dunphy Chapel and the Kavanagh Place courtyard. To end the ritual, water from the Brisbane River was blended with water from the Parramatta River and "The Rill" at Mercy International in Dublin, and was poured on the roots of the Mercy Tree. This was a truly historic moment in the college's long and rich history.

In reflecting on the ritual Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, Sister Mary-Louise Petro said there were many emotions experienced. She felt a sense of anticipation for a vibrant new life for the future of Our Lady of Mercy College and pride that after 133 years of Mercy education, the college was ready to fly in new and unknown ways. There were tinges of sadness as the mothering congregation was taking a step back from such a precious and longstanding ministry. One of the oldest Catholic girls' schools in New South Wales, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta was founded in 1889 by nine Sisters of Mercy from Callan, Ireland under the leadership of Sister Mary Clare Dunphy. Sister Mary Alacoque Kavanagh was the founding principal and for 115 years the leadership of OLMC was in the hands of seven successive Sisters of Mercy. This enabled the

development of the strong Mercy heritage, traditions and values that remain such a vibrant part of the school mission and community today. In 2002 OLMC was incorporated and its governance entrusted to a board of directors.

The hard work and dedication of the founding sisters, and every other Sister of Mercy in the Parramatta congregation who came after them, paved the way for OLMC Parramatta to become the thriving Catholic school it is today, providing excellence in education in the Mercy tradition. Their legacy will always be interwoven in the fabric of OLMC. Through this work they will continue to positively impact the lives of girls and their families into the future. OLMC Parramatta was the first of many ministries of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta. The sisters have truly done a remarkable job of living their vocation and walking in the footsteps of their founder, Venerable Catherine McAuley.

Early records show that the sisters, upon arriving at Parramatta, wasted no time in embracing their mission of mercy wholeheartedly. After establishing a primary school and a secondary school in their first year of arrival, they went on to establish a further 11 schools from Woolloomooloo to North Parramatta, two orphanages over the next 20 years and schools even into the twentieth century. The sisters' ministry efforts extended to visitation of the sick, which continues today, incorporating residential aged care, nursing, physiotherapy, counselling, pastoral care roles in various health and aged-care facilities, and partnerships with numerous not-for-profit social service organisations, bringing relief and service to the most vulnerable. Our western Sydney community is forever grateful to the hard work and commitment of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta. I congratulate the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta and the OLMC community on reaching this milestone in their history and wish them all the best as they enter a new era.

STRATHFIELD ELECTORATE ROAD SAFETY

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:45): On 13 March 2022 an 87-year-old man was fatally injured on a pedestrian crossing near the corner of John Street and Frederick Street, Ashfield. His family attached a bunch of flowers to the pole near where he was killed with the message "Rest in peace, Dad. We love you." They signed their names in Chinese characters. This was no unforeseen black swan event. The accident occurred on a notorious stretch of road that has been the site of numerous serious accidents and near misses over many years. Requests for safety improvements at this intersection have been made for many years to the transport Minister, the various iterations of Transport for NSW and local authorities. In response to this latest tragic pedestrian fatality, I have also asked the metropolitan roads Minister for an urgent road safety review.

After this recent fatality, many local residents wrote to me expressing their anger and concern about the long history of unresolved road safety issues in the area. Residents said that they have raised this issue repeatedly over years and are completely frustrated by the Government's failure to act. They believe that road safety issues are exacerbated by the increased traffic and heavy vehicle flow on what is now a major State transit road that flows through a predominantly residential area. In other words, Frederick Street, which was once a local suburban road, now carries the traffic load of a major road. They are requesting that Frederick Street be re-engineered in its entirety to respond to exponential increases in traffic and pedestrian movements.

Together with Jo Haylen, shadow Minister for Transport and member for Summer Hill, and Darcy Byrne, Mayor of Inner West Council, my office organised a community meeting of residents on 26 March to hear their concerns. The meeting was attended by dozens of concerned locals. Many attendees expressed their frustration and fear for the safety of their family and community members. Residents shared how they avoid the area completely if they can, either using other local roads or walking around the block instead of risking crossing at this dangerous intersection. Residents spoke of frequent near misses at the crossing. They say it is a problem for everyone, but especially for older residents and young children. The sounds of sirens attending accidents in the area are unfortunately heard all too often.

Some of the residents even shared personal experiences of being run over at the site. Anna Brown, who has lived in the area for over 30 years, still bears the scars from being run over at the intersection years ago. Another attendee was John Street resident Bruno Ferro, whose son David is still in rehabilitation after being struck by a car in the area five years ago. Alt Street resident Max Phillips was so concerned for the safety of his family, he started an online petition to install traffic lights at the intersection. This petition has now attracted over 1,500 signatures. Incredibly, just as we were holding the community meeting, yet another near miss occurred. I urge the metropolitan roads Minister to come to the site to meet with the local community and to see for herself the very dangerous condition of this intersection.

I thank all those who have raised their concerns with me as the new member for Strathfield. I also thank the many residents who attended the community meeting. These residents care about the safety of their community and are genuinely concerned that another serious accident will occur unless action is taken to improve road safety. They want expert analysis of traffic conditions and urgent remediation action to address the road safety risks.

I thank Jo Haylen, Darcy Byrne and councillors Mark Drury and Max Phillips for addressing the community meeting and for their ongoing community advocacy. I also acknowledge Inspector Mark George from the Burwood Police Area Command for attending the meeting and listening to the community's road safety concerns. Another child or family or community member must not be killed or injured at this site before appropriate action is taken. I urge the Government to urgently respond to road safety issues on Frederick Street and, in particular, at the site of this tragic fatality on 13 March.

REGIONAL ROAD SAFETY

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:49): Too many people are dying on rural roads. From 2011 to 2021 there were more than 3,700 fatalities on New South Wales roads. Of these, nearly 70 per cent were classified as country, not metropolitan. It was the same percentage in 2021. What is to be done? I want to share two stories. It is now 10 years since Sarah Frazer was killed on the Hume Freeway. Her car broke down on a section of the highway where the emergency lane was narrow. As the tow truck driver was hooking up her car, a passing truck hit both, killing them instantly. Sarah was only 23 and was travelling to Wagga Wagga to study at Charles Sturt University.

Tragically, Sarah had called her father from the side of the road after the car broke down, leaving a voice message in which she expressed fears about her situation. Her father, Peter Frazer, listened to that message at 12.30 p.m. His repeated, frantic calls to his daughter's mobile went unanswered. Sadly, Mr Frazer and his family were not officially notified by police until 5.00 p.m. that evening. They will grieve for the rest of their lives. Just weeks after Sarah died, Mr Frazer established Safer Australian Roads and Highways, or SARA, and the Yellow Ribbon National Road Safety Week in May 2013. The SARA group campaigns for changes to policy and legislation to ensure that lives are not lost in preventable situations. It does so by lobbying for a commitment to renewing poor infrastructure and asking drivers to take responsibility for their actions on our roads. The second story was raised with me by Jessica Barron, who lost two uncles in two separate crashes on Tumbarumba Road about 15 years apart. She said:

When I was four years old, it was on this road that my uncle, Jodie Bramich, was tragically killed in 2005.

...

At the end of May last year I received a call to say that another of my uncles, Shaun Bramich, had been killed in yet another car accident on the Tumbarumba Road. Another cross was put up. The similarities between the two incidents were eerie. Both were killed when their cars veered off the exact same road and both incidents, I believe, could have been mitigated had proper safety infrastructure been present on the road.

...

Both my uncles were experienced country drivers, with a sound familiarity with this road.

An article in the Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser last year reported 36 separate crashes on Tumbarumba Road in the five years ending in 2019. Ms Barron suggests multiple areas for improvement, but in particular she requests that flexible crash barriers be installed on the road such as have been adopted by governments elsewhere. Another constituent of mine described the road as "treacherous in the best of conditions". Sadly, there have been three fatal crashes in just six months on another significant local road, Holbrook Road. I have written to the Minister requesting a review of both roads by the NSW Centre for Road Safety. No-one should lose a loved one in preventable circumstances. Preventing road deaths requires education and laws to change driver behaviour. We all need to drive so others survive. That is the slogan of SARA. But we also need to make sure our roads are physically the safest possible. The Saving Lives on Country Roads website lists key safety measures, including audio tactile line marking, wide centre lines, flexible safety barriers, sealed shoulder widening, and curve, advisory and vehicle-activated signs.

I share those stories tonight to emphasise the importance of the physical condition of our roads in improving safety and to highlight an issue that may be hindering our ability to act in that area. That issue is that responsibility for roads is split between State and local governments, which can leave significant roads with rural councils that have a sparse ratepayer base, caps on rate increases and long distances to manage. For those councils, maintaining road safety is extremely challenging. I acknowledge there are special funding rounds, but that is a competitive process. They require specific applications from councils and separate approvals. At the last election, the Government promised to take back some local council roads. There was a hope that that would help alleviate and maintain those roads, but progress has been slow. The time has surely come for a better system to make major council roads in rural areas as safe as possible. After all, this is a matter of life and death.

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOODS

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:55): The North Coast of New South Wales is one of the best places on the planet to live. We have beaches that are the envy of the world, a pristine environment, lush rainforests, relative prosperity and, most importantly, weather that is near perfect all year round. But occasionally the weather can violently vent its fury at us. At the end of February a low pressure system settled over the north-east of the State and resulted in days of heavy rain, culminating in the worst floods we have ever experienced. Communities from the Upper Orara in the Clarence River catchment, west of Coffs Harbour, all the way north to Gympie in Queensland saw water levels rise rapidly, first cutting off properties and then whole towns, cities and regions.

In the immediate aftermath, I took an aerial tour of the region with the Premier and the Minister. I was shocked to see villages that I have known my whole life, like Woodburn and Coraki, almost completely submerged. The following day the road to Lismore opened, and I joined some volunteers in a Pantech truck to take some food to a volunteer organisation that was cooking and distributing it in central Lismore. On the approach to Lismore we passed the airport, and the first real sign of flood damage was a plane lying upside down on its roof on the side of the road. The plane had presumably been carried there from the airport by the floodwaters. From that point on during the drive into town the piles of debris on the sides of the road got bigger and taller. Although I had seen pictures of the devastation on TV, nothing could prepare me for the sheer scale of what the flooding did to that city.

I had arranged to meet a friend who was helping clean out a house near where Leycester Creek meets the Wilsons River. The houses along that strip had been flooded to about two metres into the second storey, so all the possessions were damaged and had to be removed. Driving through Lismore was reminiscent of the footage one sees of a war-torn European city after World War II. Piles of flood debris taller than the truck cabin lined the streets on both sides. Further downstream, towns like Coraki and Woodburn were cut off by road for nearly a week after the floods began. Since the floods began a month ago, we have only rarely glimpsed blue sky and sunshine. The weather has been overcast, gloomy and wet. Earlier this week another low pressure system settled over the North Coast, dumping yet more rain on our communities. The Northern Rivers have flooded again, not to the same severity as a month ago but enough to add more chaos to the already-disrupted lives of Northern Rivers residents.

The event this week has so far not been as severe as the one a month ago, but it is much more widespread. This time the Coffs Coast and mid North Coast also unfortunately copped widespread, significant heavy rain, leading to swollen rivers, extensive property damage and now, with high winds, the potential for further damage over the next few days. The clean-up is ongoing and the recovery will be long and slow. Those communities will no doubt never be the same. The enormity of the recovery phase means that it will take years. Government grants have started to flow, with several tranches of funding already announced and more to come. But it will take more than money to rebuild the Northern Rivers; it will take hope, it will take courage and it will rely on us all pulling together to support our neighbours as best we can.

Tragedy often brings out the best in people, and the best has been on display over the past few weeks. Support has come from far and wide, and the generosity of Australians has been overwhelming. Standing together in times of trouble is what this nation is renowned for. We do not know what the next few days will bring, but early signs of clearing weather are encouraging. I encourage all residents of the Northern Rivers to keep an eye on Weatherwatch and to heed the advice of the SES and emergency services. I conclude by reiterating something I said earlier this week. In the aftermath of the 2019-20 bushfire season, the RFS saw a significant uplift in new members and volunteers. The RFS outnumbers the SES by nearly 10 to one, and I know several members in this House who are members of the RFS but only one who is in the SES. I encourage everyone who has the skills or would like to learn the skills to put up their hand and volunteer for the SES. Those volunteers help us all in our time of greatest need. They need able bodies, and they need people out there driving those flood boats and rescuing people when they need it.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:00): I echo the sentiments of the member for Coffs Harbour in calling for volunteers for the SES. I make the point more generally that the people who have been out there in those orange overalls who are rescuing, helping and putting themselves at risk are, in fact, volunteers. Sometimes members of the community can make the mistake of thinking the Government should do everything or the Government can do everything. In those circumstances, it is often other community members pitching in. Those community members have volunteered their time to train, prepare themselves and give themselves the skills so that they can help at those times. I commend those who have done so and encourage others who may be able to do so to join them.

LAKEMBA ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:01): I echo those calls. If anybody is able to join the SES that would be much appreciated. I talk about the HSC of 2022 and, in particular, HSC achievement awards in and around our community. My great parliamentary friend and colleague the member for Canterbury and I started this awards season with the Australian Jieh Community Club, where we met some high-achieving students. There was also the Human Appeal and Bayt Al-Zakat, and the World Lebanese Cultural Union is later this week. It is about recognising students from the Arabic community, in particular, and other communities we represent who receive an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR] of above 90 in their HSC.

It is no secret to anybody that I am very passionate about education. I have spoken about the importance of education throughout my whole career, and especially in my inaugural speech. I am not the first member in this place to say that they were the first in their family to do the HSC and go to university. My mum and dad never had the chance to finish their education; unfortunately, they both had to leave school at a very young age. Two of their great sources of sadness are that they did not get to finish their schooling and I did not turn out to be a doctor. Education is critical in any society; it is a chance to uplift communities. I say that I was "first in the family", like the member for Canterbury, but there are lots of stories about being the first in the family. The family pride is absolutely exceptional.

Last year's HSC student cohort was the toughest of any to have done the HSC. They endured lockdowns, remote learning and distance from their peers and teachers, but they still found a way to succeed. Teachers—of whom I can never speak highly enough—found a way to engage with students. I heard stories of teachers dropping off study material to students and collecting their assessments. When people in our community did not have access to computers, schools organised computers for them. They organised for tutoring to be done over Zoom. That is not how students plan to study for the HSC, and it is a testament to everybody who achieved their HSC last year. I give a special shout-out to the teachers, families, friends and supporters of students and a big congrats to the students—hopefully they will never have to do something like that again. The family's pride in seeing their 18-year-old achieve outstanding HSC results was obvious at all the events. The awards enable the community as a whole to celebrate the students' achievement. It is a way for the community to say, "We are proud of you. Well done; we want to acknowledge you." An announcement is made about what those students who achieved an ATAR above 90 plan to do. One might be a pharmacist and another, a lawyer, engineer or doctor—all noble occupations. A couple went into nursing.

One student in particular stood out to me. Her name is Hurrain Zia. She scored 99.4 and could have done anything she wanted, but she chose to be a teacher. I went up to her afterwards and said, "Hurrain, you could have chosen to be anything. Thank you for choosing to be a teacher. We need the best people to go into teaching." A lot of people think, "I got a better mark," but the great teachers will be those who are the most capable. It is important to acknowledge that. Achieving an ATAR of 90 is fantastic, but it is not the be all and end all of obtaining an HSC. Many kids do not get 90 or above, including my own daughter. That does not mean that the HSC is any less valuable or important for them. Many kids are the first in their families to attain an HSC and have to overcome enormous adversity, incredible odds and difficulty to do it. They managed to get the best result they could and will find a pathway to where they need to be.

While we celebrate and congratulate the students who achieve scores of 90 and above, I do not want any kid who scored under 90 to think they did not do well. They have all achieved exceptionally well in such a difficult year. I say to all the students that they have a responsibility, as custodians of the future, to make sure they live their best life, do the best they can and give back to their communities. I encourage them to support one another and to give someone an opportunity if they ever get the chance. I imagine those students who achieved over 90 will go on to have incredibly successful careers. But the value and measure of a person is not in their badge or title; it is in the things they do and the commitment they have to others and to their community.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (17:06): Rural Fire Service volunteers are the consummate volunteers. Their range of skills is impressive, because they need to know how to combat not only serious bush and grass fires but also motor vehicle accidents and structural fires. The diversity of the role is often overlooked, but if I was in an emergency I would certainly want an RFS volunteer by my side. We have heard that said a few times today. Recently I attended a medal presentation at the Orana Fire Control Centre to celebrate some of our region's highly skilled volunteer firefighters. I congratulate those who received the National Emergency Medal for significant and sustained service during the 2019-20 fire season. They are Lyndon Wieland, Lisa Morgan, Joshua Morgan, Colby Boland, Michael Augee, Rhonda Buckler, Nicholas Lyons, Michael Herbert and Lianne Davids. We all remember that devastating season, the effects of which are still being felt today. They readily put up their hands to assist colleagues and protect communities across the State, and for that we thank them sincerely.

In 1978 Trevor Munro was recognised as a foundation member of the RFS. He has been an active member of both the Gollan and Eulomogo brigades, having served as secretary, deputy captain and brigade captain. Trevor was presented with the National Medal first clasp for 36 years of distinguished service and the Commissioner's Commendation for Service for his support during the 2019-20 bushfire season. Well done and thank you to Trevor. In 1969, at only 16, Greg Court officially joined the Ballimore brigade, although he had attended fires unofficially with his father well before that. Greg has held numerous leadership positions. During his 15 years as captain he worked hard to recruit new members and ensured they had the appropriate training. Thanks largely to Greg, the Ballimore brigade has a reputation for being able to respond effectively to a range of incidents and maintain crews in the field for a prolonged period. For his diligent service, he has been presented with the National Medal and first, second and third clasps, as well as the Commissioner's Commendation for Service. In nominating him, members of his brigade said they were inspired by his quiet yet confident leadership. I congratulate Greg.

It was also a privilege to pay tribute to David Lyons, who was posthumously awarded the Long Service Medal for 76 years of service. David attended his first fire at the age of just 14 in 1943, when wet bags and hoes were the standard equipment. He was a longstanding member of the Bodangora brigade but attended fires right across the region. He was a keen supporter of the modernisation of the Bodangora brigade and was instrumental in the acquisition of the first brigade truck—an international petrol truck—in the late sixties and early seventies. David was a well-respected member of his brigade and local community. Sadly, he passed away during the COVID restrictions and before his award could be presented to him. We thank David and his family for their dedication and commitment to the RFS. His Long Service Medal and clasps for his amazing 76 years of service were presented to his grandson Nicholas.

Many members were on hand to receive their long service medals and clasps, including John Bullock, who joined the Bodangora and Wuuluman brigades in 1960 and remains a well-respected and valued member of the community. Rex England, who officially joined the Bodangora brigade in 1963 but attended earlier fires at a much younger age, is always willing to help neighbouring brigades. He was awarded the Long Service Medal and clasps for 58 years of service. Frank Hodges, who joined Bodangora brigade in 1967, was awarded the Long Service Medal and clasps for 54 years of service. Neville Roberts joined the Euromedah brigade in 1970 and is currently the Group Officer of Narromine Group 17, which looks after Euromedah, Narromine HQ, Spring Creek, Tomingley and Webbs Siding. Over the years he has also held positions of permit officer, brigade secretary, and captain. He has been an invaluable member of the Orana senior leadership team, the Bushfire Management Committee and local Emergency Management Committee. In 2010 he received the Australian Fire Service Medal. It was great to recognise him again with his Long Service Medal clasp for 51 years of service.

Allan Giddings, who joined the Ballimore brigade in 1976, was awarded the Long Service Medal and clasp for 46 years of service. Pauline "Susie" Knowles and Tony Poole, both from Bodangora, were recognised for 45 and 43 years of service respectively. Peter Conn, AFSM, from the Comobella brigade was awarded for 42 years of service. Colin Buckler from the Eschol and Ballimore brigades was awarded for 31 years of service. Other award recipients include Corinne Ilievski, for 23 years' service; Carole Bayley, 22 years; Jason Conn, 20 years; Matthew Buckle, 15 years; Patricia Swain, 15 years; Paul Woodhead, 13 years; and David Howard, 12 years. Volunteers are a special breed of people—selfless, brave and above all generous. All award recipients have been extremely generous with their time, skills and professional approach. As I said at the award presentation, they and their families should be very proud. It takes the backing of family and loved ones for our Rural Fire Service members to do their job well. I thank them all for their dedication and service to their communities.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:11): March is Small Business Month in New South Wales. My electorate of Davidson contains many small businesses of all kinds, which are an active and vibrant part of our local community. I recognise the importance of the small business sector to our New South Wales economy. Small business is, in fact, big business in Davidson and across the State because small businesses contribute \$400 billion to the State economy each year. They also contribute socially by providing employment in local communities and supporting local schools, sporting clubs and charitable causes. Only yesterday former member the Hon. Pru Goward visited the Parliament as an ambassador for Go Local First, a well-supported national initiative of the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia. Go Local First was established during the pandemic. It promotes the value of small business and encourages people to support their local small business operators.

The various challenges of COVID-19 have inspired great agility and smart thinking from small businesses. My local cafes jumped into making take-home meals and supplying ingredients to home cooks. There are many other examples from across my electorate and the State. The Government has also stepped up in a range of ways. Its Dine and Discover vouchers, learn-to-swim First Lap vouchers and Stay NSW accommodation vouchers have been welcomed by hard-hit small businesses and an enthusiastic public. The free TAFE courses to develop

in-demand skills and the numerous New South Wales Government assistance grants have also been welcomed. Happily, the New South Wales Government's \$1 billion Small Business Support Program has been extended by four weeks to provide a longer lifeline to small businesses hardest hit by the Omicron wave. It provides eligible businesses lump sum payments of between \$500 and \$5,000 per week to help keep their doors open and workers employed.

Additionally, the small business fees, charges and RAT rebate has now increased by 50 per cent from \$2,000 to \$3,000. This rebate has tripled in value since it was introduced in 2021, with more than 88,000 businesses collectively saving approximately \$119 million. The rebate funds can be put towards the cost of rapid antigen tests for workers and also can be used to pay New South Wales Government fees and charges such as food authority licences, liquor licences, tradesperson licences, event fees, outdoor seating fees, council rates and road user tolls for business use. The extension of the Small Business Support package, along with the increase in the Government charges and RAT rebate, acknowledges the crucial role played by the 800,000 small businesses across New South Wales in providing essential goods, services and jobs.

The New South Wales Government's Faster Payment Terms policy has further assisted, with payment times improving from 20 days in 2018 to just five days in 2021, improving cash flow for small operators. Even before COVID, the New South Wales Government was acting to support business, especially small business, through Service NSW. Service NSW has excellent support for small business—for those starting out as well as established businesses. It has become a one-stop-shop for business. It has a free personalised business concierge service and helpful advice on licensing and regulation, as well as on marketing and growing your business. There are online options and a phone app, making it faster and easier to transact with the New South Wales Government and manage obligations, such as licences and permits, all in one secure place. I note that the Federal budget from Treasurer Frydenberg this week delivered a suite of welcome initiatives for small business across the country. I commend all concerned for their efforts to support and grow small business in New South Wales, as well as my local businesses for their resilience in what have been difficult times.

BINGO INDUSTRIES WASTE MANAGEMENT ODOUR

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:16): For the past two years residents in Minchinbury and surrounds have suffered from the emission of hydrogen sulphide gas [H₂S], commonly known as rotten egg gas, from the Bingo Industries waste management site located at Honeycomb Drive, Eastern Creek. This gas, which hovers relatively near to ground level, wafts over the motorway and enters into the homes of my constituents. The residents' lives have been in turmoil over the past two years. They are prisoners in their own homes. They need to keep their doors and windows closed at all times. They are unable to invite guests over or even enjoy their own backyard. Hydrogen sulphide is not subtle; it makes its presence known. It enters the respiratory tract and leaves the mark of a foul and unbearable stench, and is ever-present and inescapable from within the boundaries of the sanctuary of one's home.

This issue arose last year, at this time, when we were impacted by the rains. The residents were promised that the installation of flares to burn the gas will fix this problem. It is now evident that the investment by Bingo Industries in installing the gas flares has done very little to stop the odour during wet weather. Last year the Environmental Protection Authority [EPA] installed gas monitors around the Bingo Industries site to detect any H₂S emissions. The monitors were installed because Bingo Industries had denied that the emissions were coming from its site. Following an investigation by Blacktown City Council, the Bingo Industries site was identified as the source of the odour. The EPA has a responsibility to take firm action against companies that emit odour pollution. Yet on every occasion, the EPA has become an apologetic agency for Bingo Industries, making excuses as to why no prosecution action is taken against the company.

Despite the monitors surrounding the Bingo Industries site continually detecting high levels of H₂S emissions, the EPA's excuse is that the odour was caused by unprecedented rainfall this year. This is an unacceptable excuse by the EPA, as heavy rainfalls can be expected each year. The residents have had a gutful of the EPA making excuse after excuse, with no action being taken against Bingo Industries for its continual breach of its licence. Why is the EPA not doing its job and prosecuting this emitter or shutting down the site until Bingo Industries can demonstrate that it has resolved the odour issue? I spoke about this same issue, in this very Chamber, in May last year. I speak out again because it appears that Bingo Industries does not have a permanent solution for the problem, and the regulator, the Environmental Protection Authority, appears to be making excuses for the offender.

I call upon the environment Minister to get involved and remind the EPA of its responsibility to protect the residents from this unwanted pollution. The vast majority of us here in this House, at least as far as I am able to tell, do not have to live with a rotten egg gas smell in our home. Why should my constituents not experience the same basic sense of sanctuary in their homes? The situation that exists today is unacceptable. I will continue

to advocate on behalf of my constituents for the eradication of hydrogen sulphide gas from their homes. I trust that this House will duly note their concerns.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (17:20): I would like to respond to the member for Mount Druitt. I acknowledge the issue and thank him for raising it in the House. I apologise that he has had to raise it. I share the frustrations he has on behalf of his community. I can assure the member that it is my expectation of the Environmental Protection Authority and the site operators that this issue will be dealt with. I understand that it has been a frustration to the member's community for a long time now. I commit to continuing to work with the EPA and Bingo Industries to make sure that the issue is resolved. I thank the member again for raising the issue, and I will have more to say to him about it. I am happy to meet with the member for Mount Druitt at any time to discuss a resolution.

CABBAGE TREE BAY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (17:21): It gives me great pleasure to wish one of New South Wales' most popular swimming, snorkelling and surfing spots, Cabbage Tree Bay, a very happy twentieth birthday, because it was 20 years ago this year that the New South Wales Government declared it to be a "no take" aquatic reserve. Over that 20 years, what has occurred in Cabbage Tree Bay, also known as Shelly Beach, has been a wonderful demonstration of the importance of our natural marine environment and the value that it provides not only to the ocean more broadly but also to ecotourism, certainly for the businesses and residents of Manly. Cabbage Tree Bay covers an area of approximately 20 hectares from the southern end of Manly Beach. It includes wonderful rocky shores, goes around to Fairy Bower and beyond, and connects up to North Head.

Recreational activities are allowed in Cabbage Tree Bay such as swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving and underwater photography. More than 150 species of fish dwell in the reserve, including iconic species such as blue groper, giant cuttlefish, wobbegongs and a resident green turtle. Protected and threatened species inhabiting Cabbage Tree Bay include weedy sea dragons, seagrasses and grey nurse sharks. The declaration of Cabbage Tree Bay as an aquatic reserve means that the reserve's plants, animals and habitats can flourish—and they have. Fishing is prohibited, including the collection of marine organisms. There has been a wonderful collaboration between the fishing community and the Friends of Cabbage Tree Bay, a volunteer group with a deep passion for all things relating to Cabbage Tree Bay. They have proudly advocated for the importance of Cabbage Tree Bay and its aquatic reserve status for more than 12 years.

I thank the entire team at the former Manly Environment Centre, who worked incredibly hard to advocate for the aquatic reserve listing. That includes Judy Lambert, who was formerly on Manly Council. Judy was a driving force and chaired the committee to get the aquatic reserve status for Cabbage Tree Bay up and running. I also pay tribute to Mr Richard Nicholls of Manly Dive. He has supported Cabbage Tree Bay by educating thousands of people over the years to learn how to scuba-dive in the bay. Through that, they have come to see the wonders of the marine life there and gone on to explain to many other divers around the world how beautiful Cabbage Tree Bay is. I acknowledge also the wonderful fisheries staff of the Department of Primary Industries. They have done an enormous amount of work over 20 years in enforcement and compliance at Cabbage Tree Bay. Over summer it is not unusual to see a large amount of boats coming into the area, as well as people who are unaware of the regulations of Cabbage Tree Bay who go there to try to fish. The DPI fisheries team has been wonderful in working with the local community to educate people and be fantastic partners.

I also acknowledge the countless people in the community who are proud advocates of Cabbage Tree Bay. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the good work of my mother, who has been a longstanding member of Friends of Cabbage Tree Bay. She does a wonderful job there, and I congratulate her. Ultimately, what is demonstrated is the ability of an aquatic reserve to replenish marine life and to create a flourishing ecosystem that not only drives important conservation outcomes in Sydney Harbour and on the beach but also demonstrates the benefits of nature-based tourism and the ability for our nature to drive great economic outcomes, no matter where it is across the State. That is something that I, as the Minister for Environment and Heritage, am committed to doing, but equally as the member for Manly I am incredibly proud of the 20-year history of Cabbage Tree Bay as an aquatic reserve.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:26): I recently met with a delegation of local teachers in my electorate to talk about the current state of schools in Port Stephens and across New South Wales. Undeniably, our teachers have gone to extraordinary lengths over the past two years to help get our children through the pandemic. They have delivered online learning, juggled their own family commitments and then returned to teaching at school where COVID keeps taking off. But the workload on our teachers was growing exponentially long before COVID-19. I do not have to rely just on reports from local teachers. Multiple reports

have shown that teachers are working longer hours and dealing with many more complexities in the classroom, combined with increased reporting requirements. A study undertaken by the University of Sydney and Curtin University showed that classroom teachers are working between 50 hours and 56 hours a week, but there is so much red tape and administration that only half of that time is spent doing what they trained to do and what they love to do—namely, to teach.

Our teachers deserve better, and so do our kids. Young teachers are leaving the profession in droves, with 13 per cent of new teachers leaving within six years. Experienced teachers are leaving because they have been worn down. That means teacher shortages. That means there are more than 1,000 full-time teaching positions unfilled in New South Wales. That means classes without teachers and classes are combined. That means students of varying complexities and capacities, across different year groups, are under the care of one teacher. That means students squeezing into one classroom if they fit or, if they do not, learning in the playground. Imagine how tough it is, in that environment, for teachers to engage students meaningfully, to address individual needs and to teach a curriculum. It is little wonder that the educational outcomes of students in New South Wales have been declining across all learning areas under this Liberal-Nationals Government. For years it has been under-resourcing public education and setting up students to fail.

It has even become part of standard operating procedure that non-teaching staff from the Department of Education are seconded and sent to schools to cover composite classes due to chronic teacher shortages. So teachers are even losing the head office expert supports they could once rely on. It sounds like a system in crisis, and it is. Instead of showing its gratitude to teachers, instead of genuinely valuing these professionals, the Government cut their pay and reversed a pay agreement in the middle of the pandemic. But when I met with local teachers, they made it perfectly clear that their concerns were much broader than pay alone. To retain and attract quality teachers, they need more time for planning and collaboration because they know that this will benefit students. They need more school counsellors to provide professional counselling services for students who need it. Without them, teachers are left trying to hold everyone and everything together.

Importantly, teachers now face a mountain of paperwork and administration daily without any extra time to do it. To make matters even more difficult, the Government has introduced a new suspension policy, which teachers would love to implement. But local teachers shared with me their genuine fears that they will not be able to keep students nor staff safe if they are forced to implement the new policy without additional resources to do it. Teachers in Port Stephens deserve better. Their job is so important. They are literally shaping the future every day. They know how much more they could do if they were better supported by this Government and how much of a difference that would make. Local teachers are at the end of their tether. They are frustrated and exhausted. As their local member of Parliament, and as the daughter of two retired teachers, I will be backing our local teachers and our local schools every day of the year, because every day they are backing our kids to achieve their potential. They deserve more than thanks; they deserve better pay and better conditions.

I cannot finish without mentioning those who have been rallying today out the front of this place, the oldest Parliament in Australia. Like our local teachers, our local nurses have done the heavy lifting over the past two years. But just like our teachers, I have spoken to nurses who are telling me that they cannot cope anymore. In Port Stephens, we only have one hospital—the Tomaree Community Hospital—and the nurses who run that hospital work hard to provide the best care they can with the little resources that they have. It is not fair on our nurses to expect them to turn up every day and care for people when they need it most, without any breaks, pulling double shifts and feeling compromised because they cannot deliver the care they know people need. Today, our local nurses in Port Stephens joined tens of thousands of nurses across New South Wales to rally for better wages and conditions. Local nurses held signs that said, "We are doing this for you. We need safe conditions. It is time the Government listens." I am backing my local nurses because, just like our teachers, our nurses deserve better.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE FLOODS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:31): I have been travelling around Hawkesbury visiting locals who were affected by the catastrophic flooding, and I saw firsthand the devastation caused by this latest natural disaster. Of particular note was the Pacific Park Waterski Gardens and Motorcycle Park at South Maroota, which was completely engulfed by the mighty river it lay beside. David and Glynis walked me through the park and, even though the floodwaters had subsided, the havoc they had wreaked was plain to see. During my visit, I saw caravans that had been torn from their bearings, cabins crushed by the force of the water and large chunks of riverbank that had washed away. Recognising the threat ahead of time, David and Glynis acted quickly and, with family members and park occupants, they were able to move 50 boats and 120 caravans to higher ground, sparing them of the full impact of the flood.

I also travelled to Wisemans Ferry, which is a much-loved destination in the Hawkesbury for locals and also for tourists visiting from Sydney and surrounding areas. Normally a serene location with a meandering river, the small township was transformed by this disaster, and not in a good way. Fire trucks lined the main street

between call outs for assistance and emergency services tents were set up in an empty car park. A popular local watering hole, the Wisemans Ferry Bowling Club, as well as the local men's shed were inundated by the river, while recreational facilities at the retreat centre, including tennis courts and the pool, are currently unusable and will bear the scars of the flooding for some time.

Moving along the river, the devastation continued. Rubbish, including white goods, lounges, mattresses, tables, chairs and almost any household item you can think of, lined River Road in mounds as evidence of what the flooding had taken from people. The same terrible scenes played out all along the river—caravans gutted and homes stripped bare of furniture, which now lay ruined on the street, and anything that was saved was piled up onto higher ground. A bright spark amongst all of this devastation, however, was visiting the Disaster Recovery Centre established at the Wisemans Ferry Retreat Centre, one of two centres set up across Hawksbury after the floods—the other one is at South Windsor. Open seven days a week, the centre is assisting the community to transition from a response into clean-up and recovery mode. It offers practical, face-to-face support to locals and provides access to critical services, including mental health support and financial assistance made available through the New South Wales Government.

Speaking with many residents along the way, it was evident that the community response to the flooding this year was very different in the Hawkesbury. Having been through a flood 12 months prior, locals appeared more prepared—at least that was my observation. I think they agreed with me. With three floods in three years, many living alongside the river have learnt the hard lessons of their location and moved valuables early, as flood warnings came through. As the clean-up continues, I send my sincere thanks to the volunteers who stepped up to help the community in its time of need. I also note the many acts of kindness carried out between neighbours, such as the one member of the Wisemans Ferry Men's Shed who was giving out books to people who had lost electricity so that they could fill their time with some entertainment and good reading. This is a time in history we will never forget.

TUGGERAH LAKES FLOODS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:35): Today I talk about the impacts of the floods and send my deepest sympathy to the people of the Northern Rivers, who have experienced such devastating times and are going through it again at the moment. I have spoken with my colleague the member for Lismore, and I truly cannot imagine what the community is going through. My office has been ringing accommodation providers in the Lismore area and talking to them. It is a truly devastating time for that community. I also pay my respects to the emergency services personnel. I was personally involved in helping to fill sandbags at the NSW SES Wyong Unit. I am a surf lifesaver. A call went out to local surf lifesavers to join in and help in any way they could. Some of the surf personnel were using drones, and we had a briefing yesterday from Surf Life Saving NSW about how it was assisting other emergency services. There were members of the RFS who joined in efforts in our area as well.

To a certain extent, we dodged a bullet. The rain that was expected went north and south of my electorate, so we did not get past a moderate flood level. However, whether a flood is at a minor level at Tuggerah Lakes, which is 0.9 metres, or a moderate level, which is 1.3 metres, it has a devastating effect on residents, particularly in the suburbs of Tacoma South, Chittaway Point, Chittaway Bay and Berkeley Vale. My colleague the member for The Entrance commented last week about the effects of flooding on his constituents. I particularly draw attention to Chittaway Point. The residents there are quite pragmatic. They know that there will be floods, and they are not complaining. They bought property there, and it is a beautiful place—overlooking Tuggerah Lakes on one side and Ourimbah Creek on the other side. They get flooded quite regularly.

In 2007 the water level at Chittaway Point reached 1.65 metre; in 2015 it reached 1.45 metres; in 2020 it reached 1.67 metres; in 2021 it reached 1.52 metres; and in 2022 it reached 1.35 metres, meaning many houses there were inundated. On Monday I sat with Mr de Montfort, who lives at Chittaway Point. He had been in contact with me since 23 February because local residents know if they see an east coast low and they see the height of the catchment rising—which is made up of Wyong River, Wallarah Creek, Ourimbah Creek and Tumbi Creek—that there is going to be a flood. It is not rocket science. I often go to the weir at Wyong and take videos. On the day before the minor flooding started, you could see that the height at the weir had gone up almost 3 metres, which I have got video of.

Mr de Montfort contacted me because we also know that the opening of the channel at The Entrance is critical in making sure that the height of the flood is restricted. It will not stop the flood, but it makes a difference of between 20 centimetres and 40 centimetres. That is the difference between people's houses being inundated or not. I will talk more about this later tonight. Residents are concerned because the council has a report about how that is managed, but it has not released it. It is not a transparent process. I will talk later this evening about what Mr de Montfort and I spoke about and the processes the community wants to see put in place so that residents are fully informed of what happens. These are smart people. They have been keeping records, like the spreadsheet I am holding. Red shows when they get flooded and green shows when they get close to flooding. They have been

doing this for a number of years. They are very scientific about it. They are not crazy people; they just want to be a part of the solution and included in the discussion.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE FLOODS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:40): I called it the "pothole-demic" after the pandemic but, in all seriousness, I was impressed by the community's resilience during the recent heavy rains and floods in my electorate of Wollondilly. It was clear that we had learnt from past experiences. While Stonequarry Creek came close to flooding on five occasions, it was because of the outstanding early preparation of local SES and RFS volunteers, and the high levels of communication by community members, that we were able to avoid injury or death and manage damage to property. On Wednesday 2 March, heavy rainfall began wreaking havoc in the Southern Highlands, causing road closures, school closures, overflowing dams and daily disruption, as a deepening low pressure system battered south-eastern New South Wales.

Nearly double the average rainfall for the entire month of March hammered down in just one day. Areas outside of my electorate, such as Robertson in the electorate of Goulburn, received a special mention from the Bureau of Meteorology after it copped one of the highest falls in the State, with 201 millimetres in the 24 hours to 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 3 March. The community was adequately warned. The NSW SES Wingecarribee Unit said the intense rainfall could lead to possible flash flooding and that there would be damaging winds reaching speeds of up to 90 kilometres per hour, with the potential for locally destructive gusts of up to 125 kilometres per hour. The NSW SES issued flood evacuation warnings for Picton CBD, and there were multiple updates on road closures, trees falling and landslides from Transport for NSW, Wingecarribee Shire Council, Wingecarribee RFS and Wollondilly RFS. The Wollondilly mayor, Matt Gould, provided running commentary on the rising flood levels on the Argyle Street bridge, as well as other bridge closures in Wallacia, Douglas Park and other areas in Wollondilly Shire.

Ordinarily, people in semi-rural areas worry about the impacts of extreme weather on their country roads and older properties. Due to devastating memories of the 2016 flood, which caused Stonequarry Creek to spill over the bridge and flood the town, residents and businesses chose to begin sandbagging early. The owner of Porter & Hudson florist, Rebecca, said the early warning made all the difference. Christine and Mark Campbell, owners of A1 Autoparts, moved all of their products to higher ground in case of flooding. Lucky for them, the Government declared the Wollondilly shire a natural disaster area, and businesses, council and individuals were able to claim immediate financial relief. Sandbagging stations were set up in Mittagong, Moss Vale and Picton for those who required sandbags to protect their property, and a temporary evacuation centre was set up at Mittagong RSL. I single out the NSW SES Wingecarribee Unit, including Chief Inspector Warren Turner, Inspector Heather Rowe, Inspector Dylan Whitelaw, Brent Coulthard and Ngaire McCarthy.

Warragamba Dam spilled earlier than predicted, and Mittagong Creek spilled over the popular Cherry Tree Walk, flooding Rose Street. It was shocking to see. Train lines were down between the Southern Highlands and Campbelltown, causing lengthy delays and changes of plans. The Bowral Co-Op and Saddleworld were busy clearing floodwaters from their shops. I commend the community for sharing vital information on social media, heeding messages from authorities and showing patience and kindness while Mother Nature demonstrated her unpredictable force. In total, the SES in Wingecarribee, Moss Vale and Wollondilly responded to 879 requests for assistance; eight flood rescues; three evacuation warnings, at Argyle Street, Picton and Wallacia; two evacuation orders, at Bents Basin and Wallacia; and eight landslides.

I thank the 100-plus volunteers who were involved, some operating for up to 72 hours straight. So far, there is a whopping \$20 million in damage in both Wollondilly Shire and Wingecarribee Shire councils. Abbotsford Road at Picton was the victim of land erosion from flooding at the back of Stone Quarry Creek. Parts of their backyards and fences have fallen into the creek. People in my community have shown great resilience. I now call on Resilience NSW to help those victims make their backyards safe and to make sure all urgent damage clearing and road patching work is done in a timely manner before a future downpour. The work has only just begun. All the crews continue to work tirelessly repairing roads and infrastructure, and the sheer scale of the damage reminds the community why we need resilience infrastructure such as a Picton bypass.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:45): "We won't go quietly. We won't be silent. We say no to domestic violence." That was the call from the crowd from across the Charlestown electorate, Newcastle and the Hunter, which gathered the night before last to protest for a safer place for women. Their cry was simple: "No more violence. No more hate." We need women and children to feel safe and, more importantly, to be safe in our streets, our public spaces, our workplaces and in their own homes. On Friday last, 21-year-old Mackenzie Anderson was killed in Mayfield, Newcastle, outside her home. The man who has been charged with her horrific stabbing murder was not a stranger to her. He was her ex-partner, against whom she had taken out an apprehended

domestic violence order. She leaves behind a young son and a community that is mourning and angry. The night before last, at a march organised by What Were You Wearing?, her community demanded change.

Today we heard news of yet another woman, a 38-year-old in Bondi, who has died what appears to be a horrific death. A man is being questioned in relation to her death. In the past five years, although reported rates of domestic-related assault have been stable, reports of sexual assault and other offences, such as those apparently involved in the murder of Mackenzie Anderson, have been rising in the Charlestown electorate. According to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research figures, in the Lake Macquarie local government area the rate of sexual assault is up 7.6 per cent per annum. Breaches of apprehended violence orders are up more than 7 per cent per annum. In the Newcastle local government area, the trends in domestic violence and sexual assault are stable, but there is also an increase in breaches of apprehended violence orders and of people breaking bail conditions.

Domestic violence service providers that I have spoken to have highlighted again and again that offenders are not complying with apprehended domestic violence orders. It is devastating that our community has lost a 21-year-old woman, a young mother, because our system is not up to the job of keeping her safe. It is not only the communities represented in this place that are questioning what more we can do to keep women safe. In Queensland, Hannah Clarke and her three children were killed in the most horrific circumstances in 2020, after repeatedly seeking assistance to keep them safe. She was scared and, as we now know, she had every reason to be. Jack and Jennifer Edwards, shot and killed by their father in Sydney in 2018, had suffered a decade of domestic abuse alongside their mother. People helping domestic abuse survivors day in and day out are telling us that the current systems are failing women and children at the most pivotal moment—that is, when women decide to leave. We need to better engage with and listen to these services.

In coming together and marching last night, the people of Charlestown, together with the community of Newcastle, called for action. We need a whole-of-community approach. This is an issue that affects every culture, every age group, every socio-economic status and every gender. We do not want to rely on inquest findings, made after yet another young woman or her children have been killed, to point us in the direction of action. We know that the starting point for change is equality. We need women to receive respect, and we need equal representation in this place and in every level of Parliament. We need respect shown to women in industry in the provision of equal pay and equal access to promotions right to the top. We need recognition of women-led industries and an examination of their rates of pay.

In the wake of COVID-19, we should never again underestimate the importance of industries with a higher percentage of women workers, such as our healthcare staff, our nurses, our childcare workers and our teachers. We need cultural change. We need a generation of young men engaged in thinking critically about their use of violence as a whole, as well as violence against women. The appetite for change is there; we see it in the numbers of people, both men and women, campaigning for change and marching for justice. Primary prevention is key to creating real change in keeping women and children safe, and every one of us in this Parliament needs to be leading that change for a better future.

BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE RAIL SERVICES

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:50): I take this opportunity to update the House on an important local issue for my electorate: our community's standard rail services. Earlier this month I launched a petition calling on the New South Wales Government to immediately reinstate direct train services for commuters west of Bankstown to ensure that commuters from Yagoona, Birrong, Sefton, Chester Hill, Villawood, Leightonfield and Carramar stations can connect directly to the City Circle, and to allocate funding to undertake accessibility upgrades at Chester Hill and Villawood stations. I had the pleasure of handing out the petitions from my mobile offices across Birrong, Yagoona, Bass Hill and Chester Hill. I am pleased to see the positive response from residents, with many petition responses being returned to my office.

The communities west of Bankstown have experienced transport disconnection since October 2013—that is, since the removal of the Liverpool-Bankstown to City Circle via Regents Park train line, commonly known as the Inner West line. I have mentioned many times in this House that the delays and distress that commuters in my electorate have experienced as a result of the changed service have been unacceptable. A service that our community relied on for more than 70 years was taken away in October 2013. That doubled travel times for commuters from Chester Hill, Sefton and Villawood, who are forced to change trains at Birrong and then again at Lidcombe for what was previously a single journey to the inner west and the city.

In 2020 Transport for NSW proposed three rail options for stations west of Bankstown, following the completion of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro in 2024; however, none of the proposed options resulted in a complete restoration of the Liverpool-Bankstown to City Circle via Regents Park line. Whilst the selected option will result in a partial restoration of the line and reinstate direct access to the City Circle from Sefton, Chester Hill, Leightonfield, Villawood and Carramar, commuters from Birrong and Yagoona will still be required to

change services at Regents Park or Lidcombe to access any stations on the heavy rail network, or they will have to change at the interchange at Bankstown to utilise the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro. That is unfair and unacceptable.

It is difficult to comprehend why an earlier start date for the partial restoration of the service is not being considered by the New South Wales Government, given the current inconvenience to commuters west of Bankstown. Our local community should not be required to wait until 2024—a decade after the original service was cut—for the partial restoration of direct train services using currently available infrastructure. In its report on planning for rail services west of Bankstown, Transport for NSW stated that the timetable development would take place from 2021 onwards, after consultation on the preferred route options west of Bankstown had concluded. That process has already happened, and we are still waiting for the service to restart.

In response to a question on notice I asked at the start of this year's parliamentary session, the Minister for Transport stated that Transport for NSW is now building the timetable in partnership with rail operators. However, to date, Transport for NSW has not reached out since 2020 to seek input regarding the future timetable from commuters who will be accessing the rail service, and it has not provided clear information about stopping patterns or the number of trains scheduled per hour. Earlier this month I was pleased to inspect the long-awaited accessibility upgrades at Yagoona station. I started the campaign for an easy access lift at Yagoona station in 2012 and have raised the issue more than 30 times in Parliament. The Government has finally caught up.

Last year accessibility upgrades to Birrong station were completed, following six years of campaigning with local residents to secure funding for this essential upgrade. However, in my community there are two stations that still remain without lifts: Chester Hill and Villawood. This is despite Transport for NSW's own 2014 report saying that Chester Hill ranked fourth among stations most in need of an easy access lift. Commuters residing in Carramar, Leightonfield, Villawood and Chester Hill are currently forced to go to Sefton station should they wish to access the rail service via a lift. These communities have a large number of people with disability, as well as a higher proportion of elderly residents than the State average, who rely on an easy access lifts.

My community has had enough. We are sick of waiting for essential accessibility upgrades. We deserve easy access lifts, and we deserve them now. As the member for Bankstown, I will continue to raise this matter in the House on behalf of my constituents. Our community should not be required to wait until 2024 because the Government has only now conceded that it must partly reinstate the Inner West line, due to the metro interchange being located in Bankstown. I again put this Parliament on notice. My community's transport needs should not be dismissed by this Government. We urgently need our train services to be reinstated.

CAMDEN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (17:55): The Local Business Awards acknowledge outstanding local businesses and people who go above and beyond in providing exceptional customer service experiences. Growing up in a family business that was established in 1917 and will celebrate its 105th anniversary this year, I have a good understanding of small business and have the greatest respect for small business owners. Because of my experience, I recognise that small businesses are the backbone of our community and contribute enormously to our local economy and employment. I am delighted to thank and congratulate the following winners of the 2022 Camden Local Business Awards.

The Finer Detail by Kim was the winner of the antiques, arts, crafts and gifts category. Kim is passionate about creating special keepsakes that are greatly appreciated by her customers—just read the reviews. European Autowerks, the winner of the automotive services category, specialises in servicing, maintenance and detailing of European vehicles. Dolce Vita, winner of the bakery or cake business category, is a family-owned business that provides fresh, homemade cakes, pastries, pies and gelato. Simply Divine Beauty, the winner of the beauty services category, provides beauty, skin and wellness needs. The Meat Man Wholesale Meats, the winner of the butcher category, is another family-owned business that provides top-quality, premium wholesale meats to both caterers and the public. Extract Espresso, the winner of the cafe category, is a boutique cafe and kitchen in Gregory Hills, and a favourite of mine.

JLM Conveyancing, the winner of the conveyancing service category, provides legal services, whether customers are buying or selling residential, commercial or rural property. The Early Learning Hub, the winner of the early childhood centre category, is a family-owned and operated long day care service for the families of Narellan Vale and Spring Farm. Hands-On First Aid, the winner of the education service category, is dedicated to providing relevant training services. Millie Rose Boutique, the winner of the fashion category, brings the latest women's fashion and accessories to Cobbitty. Bella's Pizzahouse, the winner of the fast food or takeaway category, is based in Narellan and offers pizza and pasta for dining in, takeaway and delivery through various delivery platforms. Core9 in Narellan, the winner of the fitness services category, provides health and fitness training.

Clementine Posy, the winner of the florist category, provides handmade floral arrangements. The Camden Fruit Barn, the winner of the fruit and vegetable shop category, provides premium quality fruit and vegetables.

Steven Michael Hair, the winner of the hairdresser category, offers a premium hairdressing experience. Macarthur Care, the winner of the health improvement services category, provides healthcare services to ex-servicemen and NDIS participants. Splendour Interiors, the winner of the home furniture store category, offers a unique design experience for its clients' total needs. Atlas Jewellers, the winner of the jewellery store category, is another family-owned and operated business and specialises in custom designs and repairs. Ray White Narellan, the winner of the most inclusive employer category, is focused on cohesive sales and property management. Real Recruitment Co, the winner of the new business category, specialises in sourcing and securing the best talent for businesses. Shane's Crew, the winner of the performing arts category, became one of the biggest online fitness and dance groups in Camden during the 2021 COVID-19 lockdown.

Macarthur Veterinary Group in Camden, the winner of the pet care category, is committed to high-quality health care, veterinary medicine and surgery for family pets. Choice Pharmacy, the winner of the pharmacy category, provides nothing less than the best advice, suggestions and service for retail, dispensary and toiletry items. All Suburbs Strata Management Macarthur, the winner of the professional services category, is another family business and understands the importance of partnerships. The Italian Food Project, the winner of the restaurant category, takes pride in having real Italians cooking authentic Italian food. Stairman, the winner of the service and trade category, proudly installs quality stairs. Proshades Australia, the winner of the sole operator category, is a family-owned and operated business and specialises in Australian-made shutters, blinds and awnings.

Maximum Skating, the winner of the specialised business category, provides the ultimate skating venue for all ages and a rink that my daughters love to visit. All Mower Spares, the winner of the specialised retail business category, provides online spare parts to Macarthur Mowers & Machinery. Gregory Hills Hotel, the winner of the tourism and accommodation category, is the largest iconic pub destination in Macarthur. Having congratulated all local business winners, I also thank those businesses that were finalists and thank all local businesses for the valuable contribution they make to the Camden community.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:00): Susan Walker, aged 74; Sharon Simmons, aged 60; an unknown woman, known as Miss Headland, aged 26; Mackenzie Anderson, aged 21; Kylie Griffiths, aged 36; and an unnamed 38-year-old woman this morning in Bondi—six women in less than a week were all murdered by men they knew, former intimate partners, carers, men they once trusted. Two of these six women were from the eastern suburbs. On average, one Australian woman will be murdered every week by a current or former partner. One in four Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former intimate partner. In New South Wales there are over 2,500 reports of domestic violence to the police every month, but this is likely to represent only 40 per cent of actual incidents. Since 2020 we have seen a 50 per cent increase in domestic violence related assaults in Sydney. The largest increase in cases has occurred in the eastern suburbs.

In the past 12 months one of my frontline service providers has had a 120 per cent increase in demand for services. It is estimated that, if no further action is taken against domestic violence, it will cost Australians over \$323.4 billion over the next 25 years. The emotional and psychological toll on our communities will be far greater. It is incredibly clear that our system is broken and failing us. While I admit that things are changing and have changed in the past decade, they are changing at a glacial pace. The system of attempting to support victims and survivors is not stopping the problem at the source—far from it. Yesterday I hosted an event in the theatre. The event was the viewing of a set of videos called *We're Better Than That*. The videos aim to target domestic violence at the source by changing perpetrators' behaviour, in particular the behaviour of men.

Well-known local celebrities and community leaders, including *Bondi Rescue's* Bruce "Hoppo" Hopkins, Mike Whitney and several other well-known Sydney men have lent their voices to the campaign. Vicki Johnston, the co-chair of the Eastern Suburbs Domestic Violence Network, believes men play a vital role in shifting the culture that leads to gender-based violence. She said:

Boys are conditioned to think that men are in charge, men have to be strong and not show emotion, men are the heads of the household and have the final say. Men have a significant role to play in providing a more balanced and healthy model of what it means to be a man and have healthy and respectful relationships.

That is what these videos do: They set a new benchmark for what it means to be a man. The short films also encourage men to be active bystanders when they witness behaviour that can contribute to domestic violence. This campaign is an invaluable resource to help prevent domestic violence and to promote respect, healthy relationships and strategies. I take this moment to thank the Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Networks and Randwick, Waverley, Woollahra and Bayside councils, which have all collaborated to make this video series.

Right now I call on the Government to properly address domestic violence in our communities and to fund projects and services that not only support victims and survivors but also address the cause and the route of this problem now. It is out of control. Six women in one week—enough is enough.

THE HAVEN AMPHITHEATRE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:05): I speak of a cultural, environmental, community and heritage treasure in my electorate of Willoughby: the Haven Amphitheatre in Castlecrag. It is a local icon I am thoroughly committed to supporting as the local member. With a history of almost a hundred years, the Haven, as it is affectionately known, was established in the early 1930s by Marion Mahony Griffin, the wife of Walter Burley Griffin, who designed the city of Canberra and the Willoughby suburb of Castlecrag, and a fine architect herself. As such, the Haven, and indeed Castlecrag, enjoy a special connection with our national capital. The Haven is hence a site of some national significance given its character, history and function.

Constructed in a unique Castlecrag gully with ideal acoustics, the Haven was designed as a community theatre site. With the help of a local sculptor and stonemason, Bim Hilder, the new residents of Castlecrag built the New Haven Scenic Theatre as their first community project. As an outdoor venue, the Haven would allow locals to enjoy concerts and other performances under moonlight and stars, surrounded by the charms of the eucalypt bushland. Regrettably, the amphitheatre soon fell into disrepair, but was salvaged through the efforts of the local community in the mid-1970s. Many of the heroes of those efforts are still working for the Haven today. In 1976 the Haven amphitheatre stage was rebuilt, giving the Haven a new lease of life. From 1976 to 2014 the Haven served as a hub for local talent in my electorate, attracting a rich array of jazz and classical musicians, soloists, dancers, cabaret performers, comedians and dramatists who brought entertainment to thousands of people in our local community and beyond.

Throughout each year, the Haven hosted a range of musicals, spectaculars and festive events, including Christmas carols and concerts. In its almost 40 years of modern operation, the Haven played host to hundreds of shows and thrilled tens of thousands of guests from all over the world. James Morrison, Alex Bonham, Rebecca Fulcher, Valda Wilson and Patricia O'Callaghan are just some of the local and international stars who have graced the stage of the Haven. Sadly, however, the Haven has lain dormant since early 2014, when council closed the venue due to its condition. The amphitheatre needs a new, fully functional stage to continue to provide the spectacular performances that have delighted audiences of thousands from near and far. Like their forebears in the 1970s, the people of Castlecrag and Willoughby are again rallying to the restoration of this unique and precious cultural icon. I am heartened that Willoughby City Council has committed some support for the restoration of the Haven, to which strong contributions from the local community can and will be added.

A not-for-profit charity, Haven Promotions Incorporated [HPI] launched a fundraising campaign to help rebuild the Haven stage. In 2017 HPI staged two major fundraising events at The Concourse theatre, Chatswood. These shows proved a roaring success, with about 1,600 people present, which helped raise awareness and much needed financial support. In 2018 Willoughby Council approved a deferred development application for the amphitheatre's restoration. More work and funding is needed for this to come to life. In the meantime, in April 2021 Willoughby Council announced that the lower terrace of the amphitheatre was being stabilised with sandstone edging and the connecting steps were being reset. The most essential work needed to bring the Haven to life once more is the stage. I will do all I can to ensure that the stage of the Haven once again roars to life, bringing joy to our residents and cultural vitality to our community. I know local Federal MP Trent Zimmerman shares this vision.

The Haven and its cultural history bear testament to the vision, enterprise and goodwill of ordinary citizens who desire to enrich their local community. This magnificent cultural institution is an indispensable part of our local heritage, and it deserves nothing less than a fully functional and safe stage to give a bright artistic future to our community. I recognise the efforts of many people across the community to keep the spirit and future prospects of the Haven alive in the interim. I recognise Richard Newton, Glen Gulliver, Chris Wren and Bruce Wilson particularly, who have all met or spoken with me in recent times about this local icon. Many of these people, and others, have worked for decades to keep the vision for the Haven alive. I share that vision and look forward to working with the community and council to ensure the Haven has a bright future.

ESSENTIAL WORKERS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:09): I address the House on a significant issue that impacts our essential emergency services and particularly the serving men and women of the NSW Police Force: the lack of access to affordable housing. Our law enforcement officers—and all essential workers, for that matter—deserve to have financial security and comfortable housing arrangements for themselves and their families. However, in New South Wales a growing number of police officers are being driven out of the housing market. Many areas of New South Wales have become too expensive for essential workers to live in. This forces our serving police

officers to choose between suffering from the financial stress of meeting rising housing costs or moving away from their work and facing extended daily commutes.

We have long known that the housing market in Sydney's eastern suburbs is unobtainable for the average full-time worker. However, we are now beginning to see this issue arise in western Sydney. I tell the story of Constable Melissa Bentley, who works at the Parramatta Police Area Command. Both she and her partner work full-time. Even with their combined incomes, the Sydney housing market is inaccessible. As a result, Constable Bentley is looking to buy on the Central Coast and faces the possibility of commuting to attend work each day. Constable Bentley states:

Even with both of our wages being decent wages we can't even get the pre-approval for Sydney. I worry about the travel to and from work to own a house. I guess that is what you have to do.

To put it into perspective, this means that Constable Bentley would have to commute for approximately four hours a day on top of the long hours she works when she is on duty. This poses the serious risk of fatigue in her workplace, which can already be extremely taxing physically, mentally and emotionally. Our police officers sacrifice so much, putting their lives in harm's way to protect our community. In the line of duty, police officers support members of our community during their most difficult and often dangerous times. Outside of this, they move their schedules around to accommodate shift work, often missing significant milestones with their family or time with their friends. Yet these same essential workers who put their own health and safety at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, the same workers who have offered immeasurable support during the recent floods and extreme weather events, cannot afford to own a home.

We are facing a large-scale and systemic housing issue in New South Wales. More needs to be done to provide secure and affordable homes for our New South Wales police officers. I acknowledge the work of the Police Association of New South Wales for bringing this significant issue to light. The issue of affordable housing is commonly spoken of, but it is rare that we discuss the impact that this systemic issue has on essential workers. The New South Wales Government must deliver options that help younger New South Wales police members acquire rental housing when they first graduate. All levels of government need to step up to address this issue and create holistic and far-reaching policies. To date, the State and Federal governments have done very little to address this issue, with no serious measures having been put in place. Tony King, President of the Police Association of NSW, states that it is unacceptable that essential workers can no longer afford to live in the communities in which they provide vital services daily.

It is to the benefit of the entire community that our NSW Police Force officers and their families have safe and stable housing. In fact, our community benefits greatly from local police officers living in, and building connections with, the local communities in which they serve. I thank all essential workers in New South Wales, especially Police Force officers. I thank them for the incredible work they do to ensure the safety of our community during fires, floods and the pandemic. Their dedication to the community is invaluable. They and their families deserve to live comfortably. They deserve to live near their own workplaces. I call on both the State and Commonwealth governments to take seriously the issue of housing affordability for our Police Force officers. I call on them to act on legitimate and holistic solutions to create more affordable housing. To ignore such an issue is a disservice to all essential workers who have sacrificed so much for our community.

KENDALL COMMUNITY OP SHOP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:15): The fourteenth annual Kendall Community Op Shop presentation evening was held on Thursday 24 March at the Kendall Services & Citizens Club. The organisation presented deserving recipients with funding that will allow them to mould and shape our communities into the beautiful region we call the Camden Haven. Few not-for-profit organisations in the State or indeed across Australia could boast of contributing a total of \$1,376,550 in grants and sponsorships over a 14-year period. Since its inception, the Kendall Community Op Shop has annually reserved and distributed a pool of funds to community organisations that result from the sale of donated clothes, kitchenwares, household items and general bric-a-brac, often with the small price tag of \$3 and under.

During the proceedings, vice-president Phil Higgins and Federal member for Lyne Dr David Gillespie presented the successful organisations with cheques totalling over \$88,000 for the purchase of equipment, the sponsorship of events and a range of resources. I congratulate the charitable organisations on their successful applications. The Camden Haven Dragon Boat Club secured \$1,500 to purchase life jackets. Camden Haven Pony Club received \$3,500 for a trailer. Laurieton Men's Shed installed a security system valued at \$2,567. Hastings Home Hospice obtained \$10,931 to purchase patient equipment. The Laurieton Hotel Stingrays were awarded \$5,530 to pay for a shipping container to store equipment. The Camden Haven Sea Scouts secured \$1,830 to purchase a lawnmower and other garden equipment. Kendall Blues Rugby League Football Club was allocated \$8,000 for a new lawnmower.

The Kendall Community Centre was the lucky recipient of \$5,690 to install solar panels. Kendall Riding for the Disabled was able to buy a ride-on lawnmower valued at almost \$7,000. The Kendall National Violin Competition received \$5,000 in sponsorship to hold three school concerts and workshops using an artist in residence program. Finally, the Riding for the Disabled Kendall Centre obtained a grant of \$2,500 for feed and veterinary assistance for a horse for its members. Over the past 12 months the Kendall Community Op Shop has also donated over \$6,500 in charity grants to Hastings Home Hospice, Liberty Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Services, Aussie Battlers, Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club and Burma education funds.

In light of the recent flood devastation that has rocked the Northern Rivers, the Kendall Community Op Shop has generously provided food and petrol vouchers for those sadly displaced from their homes. This welcomed support is ongoing and to date \$5,000 has been distributed to those in need. The original shop was established from small beginnings under the auspices of the Kendall pool committee to generate much-needed funds for the construction of the Kendall Community Pool. True to their form, the hardworking volunteers raised a total of \$640,727 in 2004 to commence the construction. A further \$187,530 contributed to a PA system, pool heating, lane ropes and shade shelters. In later years, an additional \$23,892 was invested to enable wheelchair access. I stress that all of these funds were generated entirely from the op shop sales. In 2009 the committee introduced a grants program after it recognised the need to provide financial assistance and support to local charities in the area, thereby investing back into the community.

President Sheila Ayshford concluded the proceedings by thanking her phenomenal army of volunteers who donate their valuable time and energy to the operations of the op shop. Without them this event would simply not have been possible. I applaud the wonderful committee that guide the Kendall op shop: president Sheila Ayshford, vice-president Phil Higgins, secretary Jaci Orr, treasurer Allan Phelps, shop coordinator Gerda Ashford, volunteer coordinator Elaine Browning and committee member Robert Rule. The Kendall Community Op Shop is such a valuable asset for the Camden Haven. It leaves an enduring legacy that continues to build and strengthen our local community. I give heartfelt thanks to the more than 90 volunteers who ensure this outstanding resource continues to provide a lifeline to so many not-for-profit organisations in the region, which are all focused on supporting others. I thank them all for their incredible efforts.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:19): My electorate of the Blue Mountains is World Heritage listed and renowned for its beautiful landscape, remarkable wilderness and misty mountains. Recently, my community has seen irreparable damage to our roads and rail line, destruction of houses, sinkholes and landslips that have caused ongoing transport disruptions, and a government that has continuously chosen to neglect our community in times of disaster. Blue Mountains residents have had enough. They deserve better than a government that, other than bandaids measures, will not conduct road maintenance or a safety audit on the entirety of the Great Western Highway. They deserve better than a Liberal Government that uses scare tactics to terrify Blackheath residents into thinking that they will have to give up their homes in order to make way for a tunnel that will destroy the integrity of the Blue Mountains villages.

Residents outside the Blue Mountains electorate have had enough as well. Some local residents from Hartley and Lithgow have come to me because they feel their concerns about the Great Western Highway duplication project are not being heard by their elected representative, Paul Toole. Isn't it his job to listen to the concerns of his communities and advocate on their behalf? I will reiterate: Residents in Minister Toole's electorate have gone elsewhere for help because their elected representative has failed them. The supposed highway duplication project has no regard for safety or the tourism industry and does not care for the residents in the areas affected. Let us not forget about the tolls that will be slapped on at some point in the future.

This is not the first time the Government has failed the Blue Mountains community. I am pleased and relieved that Sam Faraway, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, finally agreed to my requests for information about the rectification works on the Great Western Highway. Before Minister Faraway and I sat down face to face last week, I was stonewalled when I sought information to provide to my electorate on rail and road chaos—for example, on how long the single lane would remain through Mount Victoria, creating havoc, congestions, delays and utter fury. This is unacceptable. I have said before that the constant mismanagement and bungling of road and public transport issues must come to an end, but it looks like the Government is dedicated to letting the people of New South Wales down. Many of my constituents have written to me about their experiences with the recent mayhem of flooding on the Great Western "Goat Track" and the lack of available public transport. I put on record some of their experiences. Charlotte writes:

I went up the mountains last weekend to visit my family and it was a nightmare to navigate the buses. The Government has completely abandoned the mountains again.

Alison writes:

Today my eldest daughter is traveling 5 hours to go to a one hour compulsory class at university. It is ridiculous. Planning for these situations and conducting regular maintenance has not happened as it should.

Dean writes:

Those of us that work in the hospital are highly concerned. How do our colleagues get to/from work over the weekend to care for the patients and how do emergency services/ambulances get critical care patients to hospital?

Brianna writes:

I wish the government would stop putting a band aid on something that is clearly broken.

James writes:

I had to cancel a doctor's appointment yesterday, the only time I knew anything about it was when I got to the highway and saw the endless traffic jam. Totally unacceptable.

The roads and rail lines have been neglected for a decade under the Government. They are not new issues. Instead of fixing these problems once and for all, the Government has decided that it will cut corners and deliver a dodgy patchwork job and not a road fit for purpose and the future. The lack of interest for residents' safety concerning the Great Western Highway and surrounding rail lines is astonishing and tragic. We have had fatalities on the highway. You would think that, after a life is lost, the Government would plan necessary upgrades and improvements to prevent it from happening again. That has not been the case. How many lives must we lose before the Government listens and takes action? The resilience that I have seen in the Blue Mountains community has been inspiring. We have endured bushfires, floods, a pandemic and multiple lockdowns—not to mention this sham of a Government.

The Blue Mountains community is strong and, as their elected State representative, I will continue to hear their concerns and fight for them. It is time the Government addresses myriad issues on the Great Western Highway and assists our Blue Mountains City Council to deal with the pot-holed mess, landslips and local roads fallen down the cliff side, while urgently repairing the railway line damage and sinkholes in the Blue Mountains. It is time for the Government to conduct regular road maintenance and safety audits throughout the mountains, particularly now after flooding impacts. It is time for the Liberal Government to explain why it continually chooses to neglect residents in the Blue Mountains. It is time for change.

GALUNGARA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:24): On Wednesday 16 March I had the privilege, as Parliamentary Secretary for Education, of turning the first sod for the stage two project of Galungara Public School at Schofields, within the electorate of Riverstone. The small ceremony was attended by principal Tracy Anderson, a passionate and energetic school leader who is driving the development of a dynamic young school with the support of a parent community that values education and the opportunities it provides. Also present were student leaders who greeted the visitors, representatives of School Infrastructure NSW, contractors doing the construction and me. The stage two project will add another 20 learning spaces, two covered outdoor learning areas and two games courts to the facilities at the school, which will allow the enrolment to expand from 500 to 1,000.

The construction of Galungara school is a modular style that has recently been used in schools. It has the advantage of speeding up the construction phase because the school buildings are built indoors in a large warehouse-style workshop and then trucked and placed on site. There are no wet weather delays when you are doing that kind of construction. The site works in the early phases might seem to take a long while, then all of a sudden the school appears. I saw that with stage one and I am confident as a result that stage two will certainly meet the deadline to be open for the commencement of school in 2023. Galungara stage two follows a number of other school projects in the electorate. When I was first elected to represent Riverstone in 2011, it was a little larger than it is now. I have lost a few areas through redistribution.

I will mention those schools because I had a hand in pushing the agenda for them as well. Delivered in the area that I first represented in 2011 is obviously Galungara stage one, which opened in 2021, The Ponds Special School, Riverbank Public School, The Ponds High School and Northbourne Public School. They are all brand new schools that were opened in the area. Schofields Public School was an upgrade that essentially rebuilt the entire school and has been completed in recent years. Quakers Hill East Public School had an upgrade completed; Riverstone High School has had some facilities completed; John Palmer Public School and Glenwood High School are receiving upgrades as we speak; and the Rouse Farm Public School and a new high school at Melonba, more commonly known to people as Marsden Park, are in planning. There has been a suburb name change. It is in the pipeline now with funding in the budget and a site secured for each of those schools and ready to go.

Also across the region air-conditioning has been provided to each new school project and the upgrade projects as well as to Wyndham College, Marsden Park Public School, The Ponds High School, Riverbank Public School and Schofields Public School. Air conditioning is now being delivered to Riverstone Public School,

Riverstone High School, Vineyard Public School, Glenwood High School and Hambleton Public School. That is a vast array of work for a single electorate, as it was in 2011. A couple of those schools are now outside the boundaries of my electorate. It is an immense investment in education, unlike anything we have seen before—and I am not finished. I am pushing for more schools in the growing north-west of Sydney, particularly in the rapidly growing Nirimba Fields, where families currently have to find ways to get children to Hambleton Public School on the other side of the Richmond rail line. That new suburb is rapidly filling in, as is nearby Schofields.

The population there will boom in the immediate future, not in five years but within the next one or two years. I am pushing hard to get Nirimba Fields Public School underway. These developments are part of the largest ever investment of funds in education facilities in New South Wales—\$7.9 billion over the next four years. You can see from the story of one rapidly growing electorate just what a difference that is making. A similar number of new schools have gone into Sydney's south-west. More can be done. There is always demand and population growth is hard to keep up with, but that is a lot of investment. I am so excited to have been able to cut the opening ribbons on a number of schools already, and I am looking forward to being in this place a little longer to do a few more.

RAISE THE AGE CAMPAIGN

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:29): Childhood is a formative period during which experiences have lifelong impacts. It is a time when the brain is still developing, affecting judgement, decision-making and impulse control. That is why it is vital for children and the community at large that all children are nurtured, supported and educated. But children between the ages of 10 and 13 are considered to have criminal responsibility by the New South Wales justice system, which means they can be put before the courts and sent to detention. Prison—even in the form of youth detention—is no place for children and only sets them up for a lifetime of reoffending and disadvantage, with impacts on future generations. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has called on all signatories, which includes Australia, to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years and a coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, medical, legal and human rights organisations has established the Raise the Age campaign to urge all Australian governments to take this action.

Tonight I speak in support of this campaign. Criminalisation of children results in significant harm to them. The experience with police, courts and detention makes them more likely to reoffend and distrust authority, and the time in detention affects mental health and disrupts education. The burden of this damaging policy is disproportionately felt by First Nations children, who make up 65 per cent of children in detention. But it does not have to be like this. There are no safety benefits to criminalising offending behaviour in 10- to 13-year-olds. Evidence shows that raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14 would produce community benefits. Most comparable countries have a higher age of criminal responsibility without any increased crime rates. Many countries deal with child offending by working with families and support services.

A clear and easy pathway from criminalising children in this State was recently set out in a UNSW Centre for Crime, Law and Justice report entitled *Replacing the Youth Justice System for Children Aged 10 to 13 Years in NSW: A 'Best Interests' Response*. It shows how we could build on a range of existing local community wellbeing, education and family support programs in partnership with Aboriginal community organisations and families. Responses would differ depending on the seriousness of the behaviour and the young person's strengths and needs. In the very rare cases of children engaging in harmful violent behaviour, the system could incorporate an acute response model co-led by police and youth outreach workers; crisis accommodation if the child cannot return home and does not pose an immediate risk of harm, with wraparound support provided; restorative justice approaches to ensure the child understands the impacts of their behaviours, with victims given support through recognition payments, counselling and conferencing options; and secure residential placements in extreme cases where there is an immediate risk of harm—but only as a last resort and as a form of protection rather than punishment.

Offending behaviour would be treated as a sign of a child's needs, with the approach orientated towards the child's best interests. Increasing the age of criminal responsibility to 14 would immediately help us work towards Closing the Gap targets, while making a real difference to young First Nations people's lives. It would respect self-determination for communities. The Australian Capital Territory has committed to increasing the age of criminal responsibility and has begun consultation on the way forward. Our low age of criminal responsibility is a key driver of children's contact with police and the criminal justice system, which only leads to more offending and criminal activity in the community. There is no safety benefit. But, more importantly, it has disastrous long-term impacts on children and their families. I call on the Government and the House to show leadership and work together in a multi-partisan way to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 14.

TUGGERAH LAKES FLOODS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:33): Tonight I give part two of my talk on flooding in the Tuggerah Lakes area. I previously talked about the fact that last Monday I had sat down and had a discussion with Mr de Montford from Chittaway Point about his views on work on the channel operation and the maintenance of the berm. Mr de Montford, who is a businessman and very intelligent, has gone into this in great detail, looking at a whole range of publicly available documents, plans and reports right back to 1992. He was also able to show me the email trail of his discussions with staff over the last couple of weeks.

As I said, Mr de Montford contacted me just before the flooding started, when the east coast low was predicted by the Bureau of Meteorology [BOM] to hit the Central Coast fairly severely. We corresponded with council, and council came to the party and brought forward the widening of the channel in a proactive way. That certainly was welcome. However, there is a view that had council done it two or three days earlier, it could have made a 20-centimetre to 30-centimetre difference in the level of the lake. To some people that may not seem a lot, but for Mr de Montford it is the difference between water going through his house again or not. This time the flood was declared to be low to medium level. However, if the water goes through your house, it is severe, no matter what the prediction. A lot of the commentary—and I heard it on ABC Radio—was that because not as many places were affected this time that people had dodged a bullet. The people who got flooded did not dodge a bullet.

When I arrived at Mr de Montford's place, out the front were the furniture and possessions that he has had to throw away again. This is the third flood in three years and the fifth flood since 2007. Mr de Montford wants to sit down and talk with council staff. We are putting out an invitation for me, the member for The Entrance, the Parliamentary Secretary and council staff, including the general manager, to meet so that we can get a better understanding of the plan of management for maintenance of the berm. Some people may not know what a berm is. It is a sandbar that sits at the entrance to the mouth of Tuggerah Lakes. The theory is that if the berm is kept at a certain level, as the water builds up behind it, it will naturally break through during a flood.

What has happened is that the height of the berm has grown, so the water does not naturally break through. The council has been required to put machinery out there to dig a channel. This time council did the southern part of the channel. It is hard to explain, but there is a rock platform, and even though the width might be 110 metres at the entrance, over the rock platform the water depth travelling out is restricted. But if the cut is made further north, it actually scours out and a larger volume of water is able to move out. Council has reports that say it has to be cautious because if there is an east coast low, there is a risk of the water coming in from the ocean and impacting infrastructure and property inside the lakes.

What the community and people like Mr de Montford want to know in a transparent way is what the actual parameters are that council is using to make decisions. We understand that currently it widens the opening at 0.9, which is the low flood level, but when an east coast low is heading towards you, which can potentially drop 200 millimetres of rain in a very short period of time, even if it is 0.6, which it was when we started ringing, or 0.9 at the low level, the water in that catchment, all in one go, would rise very quickly. So what we are saying is if the council takes into account the weather patterns from the BoM and the current height of the lake, it should be able to judge whether to open the northern entry and not wait until it gets to a certain level. That is a trigger point. We want to have a discussion about those trigger points so it is transparent to the community and people are well aware of the information the council is making its decisions on.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE WASTEWATER OUTFALLS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (18:38): I was astonished when I first heard that in my electorate of Vaucluse we had the last wastewater outfalls in the State to still be pumping wastewater into our deep blue ocean. The three outfalls are at Vaucluse, Diamond Bay and Dover Heights, and they are a legacy of Sydney Water's early wastewater network. Local residents can tell of plans to close the outfalls from 10, 20 and perhaps even 30 years ago. I decided that it was time to fix this big problem once and for all, and I strongly advocated to the Government to ensure we had a plan and a budget to make it happen. I did not want this important issue to fall into the too-hard basket once again.

In November 2018 the New South Wales Premier joined me in Vaucluse to announce that \$85 million had been committed to closing the three deep ocean wastewater outfalls and to divert that wastewater to the Bondi Waste Water Treatment Plant. That was such good news. We then set to the task of requiring Sydney Water to work with the local community to find a way forward that would deliver the most benefits to the environment and to the community. A community reference group was set up, made up of representatives from local councils and residents groups. It was very gratifying to see my community come together regularly to share their local knowledge with Sydney Water and the engineers to find the best solution.

I take this opportunity to call out the 13 representatives and warmly thank them for their work: Allan Aaron, convener of the Vacluse/Diamond Bay Precinct Committee; Sally Betts, Bondi resident and Waverley councillor; Bruce Bland, vice-president of Rose Bay Residents Association; Tony Booth, secretary of the Vacluse Progress Association; Peter Cappe of the Dover Heights Precinct Committee; Dov Frazer, convener of the Dover Heights Precinct Committee; Leon Goltsman, Vacluse resident and Waverley councillor; Ron Nothman, member of the Dover Heights Precinct Committee; Terry Pullinger, long-time Vacluse resident; Peter Quartly, North Bondi resident and convenor of the North Bondi Precinct Committee; Bob Steele, Vacluse resident; Professor Bruce Thom, Vacluse resident and chair of NSW Coastal Council; and Susan Wynne, Vacluse resident and Woollahra mayor.

I believe that their collective goodwill and willingness to work towards a solution has allowed the plan to progress as speedily as it has. By December 2019 Sydney Water had completed its geotechnical work and had formed a view that any construction work would primarily be based at Parsley Bay, Vacluse, and the Eastern Avenue Reserve in Dover Heights. Through technological advancements, such as trenchless drilling over long distances, almost all of the new infrastructure will be located below the ground and anything above the ground will be designed to blend as much as possible with the existing environment. As part of the design, there will be two pumping stations installed at Parsley Bay Reserve, Vacluse, and Eastern Reserve, Dover Heights, which will require cutting into existing pipes to pump and divert the wastewater to the Bondi Waste Water Treatment Plant. It will also require works at Rose Bay to connect the new diversion pipes to the wastewater main at Rose Bay.

Woollahra and Waverley councils have worked with Sydney Water to identify how they could also improve those sites as part of the work. As a result, we will now have a new and improved toilet block within the ground floor of the existing Caretakers Cottage in Parsley Bay Reserve and an improved clifftop walk across Diamond Bay. In June 2020 Sydney Water put out a Review of Environmental Factors and, following feedback, a design report was released in December 2020 outlining the community feedback and how it would be addressed. Despite some delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the design stage is 50 per cent complete, with Sydney Water working closely with me, the local councils and the community to firm up the final design element. There is some further work to do, and that involves responding to and taking into account the community voices on those designs.

Let us not forget, this is a once-in-a-lifetime project. It is about strongly protecting our natural environment, our world-class harbour and our oceans. It is for our precious marine life and also for our deep-water ocean swimmers, fishers and kayakers who deserve to enjoy a clean, safe and natural environment. It is truly a remarkable project that will benefit not only my electorate of Vacluse, which sweeps all the way from Bondi Beach in the south to Rushcutters Bay in the north and the west, but also all of New South Wales. I will do whatever I can to ensure we deliver it in the way it is intended.

LIONS AUSTRALIA SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:43): I thank the members of Parliament and their staff as well as the parliamentary staff who joined us this week for the first parliamentary Lions barbecue for 2022, where we raised \$1,140 for women's health centres across New South Wales. I also give a shout-out to Louise from recruitment for winning the parliamentary wine in the raffle. This evening I talk about the very important role that Lions clubs play in our community. This September the local Sydney N5 and the Central Coast and Hunter 201N3 branch volunteers, along with 28,000-plus Lions members across the country, are celebrating the seventy-fifth year of Lions. As part of that celebration, they are organising all sorts of events across our community. I encourage parliamentarians to be involved, just as I have encouraged Lions to contact their local member of Parliament to ask them to have the Lions logo displayed on the Opera House as part of that celebration.

Members of Parliament will be hearing from their local Lions clubs in a bid to get the recognition that they deserve as they celebrate their seventy-fifth birthday. Australia Post has agreed to produce a prepaid envelope featuring the Lions logo and images of Lions at work. A gala dinner has been planned on 26 September, and international Lions dignitaries from around the world will be coming to Cairns to attend that dinner if all goes to plan. Lions throughout Australia will also do intensive PR to raise the profile of Lions in the lead-up to their seventy-fifth anniversary this year. Since the first club was formed in Lismore, Lions have grown into Australia's largest service organisation. Lions are really proud of what we have achieved in our communities over the past 75 years. We have made an incredible difference. There has never been a more important time to volunteer for people who want to get involved in serving their community, and we have seen that during the pandemic.

Lions' key focus areas at the moment include diabetes, the environment, vision, childhood cancer, hunger, youth, disaster relief and other humanitarian services. Our philosophy is, "Where there is a need, there is a Lion." The recent Australian Lions Foundation National Bushfire Appeal, which many local Hills businesses contributed to, raised over \$4.6 million that was quickly distributed to those in need. I have no doubt that Lions are garnering money to support the people who are suffering in Lismore at the moment, and I thank everyone involved in that.

Many of the volunteers serve their communities proudly yet quietly, behind the scenes, without any thought of recognition. It will be wonderful to see them acknowledged this year as part of our seventy-fifth anniversary. I am in ongoing communication with the Minister for the Arts, who is responsible for the fabulous Opera House, and the Lions are really keen to see that happen.

I will speak about some of the fabulous Lions events in my community. The Woy Woy Peninsula Lions Club members were devastated when COVID hit because they could not have their car boot sale. That is up and running again on the last Sunday of every month at the Dunban Road car park at Everglades, which is great. They also hold the Tea Cosy Expo and Devonshire tea in June every year at Umina Beach Surf Club, which may be worth having a look at. The East Gosford Lions Club is a fabulously friendly group of people who have a great clubhouse that they let out to the community. Over the years, using Community Building Partnership grants, they have built a new kitchen and are putting in an accessible bathroom. They have great meetings there and also generously let it out to the community, which really exemplifies the Lions. They look at what community needs actually are and work to meet them. Our service clubs are so much faster than the Government at identifying need in the community. They have used a Community Building Partnership grant to fix up Lions Park in Gosford, which is a huge success.

I am sure some of the young women who came into the Parliament today will be part of Lions Youth of the Year, and lots of parliamentarians are part of that successful program. As older people, we are in here governing for the future, so the voice of young people is so important. Here's to everyone involved in Lions Youth of the Year. I conclude by reading out the Lions' focus:

We believe in the power of people working together and making a difference. As a Lion you will gain leadership skills, a sense of self-worth and purpose, business skills, networking opportunities, and lifelong friendships. At Lions we make things happen.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:49): I praise the many wonderful volunteers who go out of their way to support so many different organisations across the Port Macquarie electorate. It does not matter what the event or gathering is about, if one needs any assistance there is always a community organisation or an individual only too willing to help. I have spoken previously in this place about our Ironman 70.3 event. This year's event will be held on Sunday 1 May, after it was disrupted for the past two years due to COVID. I know that people are itching to support that iconic, high-profile event, which attracts more than 1,000 local volunteers. Those volunteers will hand out more than 1,400 cups of water, 100 kilograms of fruit, 150 litres of ice cream and 500 litres of sweet drinks to over 1,200 competing athletes. The ironman volunteers are just one example that reflects the generosity of people across the Port Macquarie electorate.

Still on a sporting theme, Run Fest Port Macquarie continues to evolve and transition into one of the leading competitive sporting attractions on the mid North Coast. Setting the bar for major running festivals in New South Wales, the rising popularity of Run Fest continues to draw local and outside support, with over 2,500 people competing earlier this month. I congratulate event directors Kevin Chilvers and Amanda Cooper from Chilvers Events & Consulting on coordinating another successful Run Fest, attracting more than 1,000 runners from the local community and beyond. Run Fest was supported in 2022 by volunteers from Flamin' Dragons, Sailability, Can Too, Tour de Cure, Friends of Mrs York's Garden, Rotary, Run Port Mac and St John Ambulance, who are justly rewarded for their efforts with donations to their respective organisations.

I also recognise the volunteer efforts of Community at 3 member Marjorie Cameron for her invaluable work with the homeless, the lonely and those facing financial hardship. Marjorie has been a volunteer with Community at 3 for the past five years after deciding to play her part to support our most vulnerable. She regularly helps out at the weekly barbecue and donates homemade cooking to the meetings in the hope that she will at least brighten someone's day. On 12 February Marjorie turned 97 years young; yet the stalwart volunteer, hardworking community warrior and local for over 22 years has no intentions of slowing down, as she clearly believes age is no barrier if one believes passionately in a cause. I thank Marjorie for her longstanding contribution of service to our community.

I also acknowledge a new fundraiser for the Port Macquarie Base Hospital maternity unit to purchase co-sleeper cots for new mums to safely reach their babies while recovering from a complicated birth. The target to raise more than \$50,000 for the maternity unit is well in reach, thanks to organisers Grayce Gerke from Physio Collective, clinical midwife Zita Burt from Port Macquarie Base Hospital and Kirsty Minturn from Bare Birth Story. Funds raised will go towards purchasing 15 co-sleeper cots, eight recliner chairs, six paediatric transition cots, two antenatal examination beds and a hospital-grade breast pump for the maternity unit. I applaud the efforts of Grayce, Zita and Kirsty in raising funds for those purchases for the maternity unit, which will directly benefit our new mums.

I also commend a stalwart of Marine Rescue Camden Haven, Marie Roberts. At the spritely age of 80, Marie continues to donate her spare time to perform active duty as a radio operator for the unit. Described as an integral member of Marine Rescue, Marie is a true example of the adage that age is no barrier as she routinely dedicates a weekly six-hour shift to the unit in an effort to protect those using our waterway. Joining the Marine Rescue team in 2015, Marie has been instrumental in a number of roles within the unit while also encouraging more women within the ranks. Marie is also the fundraising officer, overseeing regular raffles that raise vital funds each year to support the unit's operations. I thank Marie for her impressive and valued contribution to Marine Rescue Camden Haven.

I know there are hundreds—in fact, probably thousands—of volunteers in the Port Macquarie electorate and far too many to name this evening, but this snapshot reflects the dedication and the incredible community spirit of those who call my electorate home. To those I have named this evening and to the many more I have not, I extend my sincerest thanks for their valued contribution to our community.

TUGGERAH LAKES FLOODS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:53): This is part three of my private member's statement on the flooding in the Tuggerah Lakes area. I was talking earlier about the impact of a low-level flood on some areas of my electorate, and Geoffrey Road is a case in point. Even though it was a low-level flood the other day, the residents of that street were without power for seven days because one of the houses has underground power, which arced. They had to shut down the power because it was not safe, which led to residents having to employ generators. With the current price of diesel, it costs about \$120 a day to run those generators. It was a costly exercise, but over the years they have learnt that when a house floods it is important to get fans on as quickly as possible to start drying everything out. Otherwise, black mould sets in.

Their other issue, which they have on a regular basis because of floodwaters, is sewage in the streets. The sewer system there runs on a vacuum system. When the power goes off, the sewer overflows. There is nothing worse. During the last flood one of the residents had to shovel the proverbial underneath his house because the smell was so atrocious. They had no electricity, sewage was flowing down the street, and they could not get their vehicles in and out. So even though the floods in that area are described as low level, for the people affected they are high level. It is not only about the loss of possessions. They can save a lot by moving things to higher areas. But they watch the Bureau of Meteorology rain radar and cross their fingers that it does not move from low to medium to high, which would wipe them out again.

Flooding occurs across my electorate. The Wyong Valleys experience what is called "lily pad flooding", where roads are cut in several places, leaving sections of dry ground. The SES workers told me that to do a medical evacuation, they would use their boats to get to the next dry section and then rely on local vehicles to transport the boats to the next one. Then they would put the boats back in the water to traverse the next body of water. It is quite complex. Those areas can be cut off for quite a while. This time Yarramalong village was underwater and Dooralong Road was cut off. People could not get to work and to school. So I was pleased when the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, Steph Cooke, agreed to declare our flood-impacted area a disaster zone.

The weather is taking a turn for the worse again. As of Tuesday 29 March the sewer has overflowed in multiple places: the Wamberal Lagoon in the electorate of my colleague the member for Terrigal; Cabbage Tree Bay and Wallarah Point Peace Park, Gorokan, in my electorate; and the north shore of Lake Munmorah to the north, in the electorate of my colleague the member for Swansea. Those polluted waters create a health risk, particularly near the ocean outfalls. Swimming is not possible for quite some time. It is a significant problem. People love to surf, but they can pick up infections if they go back into the water too soon.

Our merged council is struggling with that issue. It has had to repair about 8,000 potholes along 2,000 kilometres of road, from Wisemans Ferry in the West to the Hawkesbury River in the South and up to areas in the electorate of Swansea to the north—a huge area. About 80 roads were cut off because of the floods. Our community wants to work with council to get the best outcomes. But even people with low-level flooding have significant issues. As I said, this is the fifth flood since 2007 and the third flood in three years for Chittaway Bay, Tacoma South, Tuggerawang and Berkeley Vale in my electorate. We want to work together to make sure that we can limit flood impacts as much as possible. I ask that council consider sitting down with us as it goes through its processes to get a good outcome for the community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the member for Wyong and look forward to part four of his series.

MONARO ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (18:58): In my first private member's statement in this House I focus on schools, which are the hearts of our communities. They are places devoted to our young, our families

and our futures. Having had much to do with educational bodies over a long period of time in my region, I would personally like to recognise the incredible efforts of our teachers generally and, of course, during the incredible challenges that we have all faced over the past two years, and as we continue on our road to recovery. As the new member for Monaro, I am determined to see the long-advocated-for new schools in our region come to fruition. Since 2019 the former member and Deputy Premier John Barilaro has championed them. The progress in that critical work under the stewardship of this Coalition Government, which has invested \$20 billion in projects and reform in this financial year alone, continues apace. Monaro is most certainly experiencing the benefits.

Shortly, the extensive upgrade of Monaro High School in Cooma will be completed. Work on a new education campus for Jindabyne is well underway, and work on Googong Primary School, and Jerrabomberra and Bungendore high schools, is also advancing. In this public forum I am delighted to officially acknowledge and warmly welcome the three new principals who have been appointed in my electorate. At Bungendore High School we are so pleased to be joined by Melissa Giddins, formerly the deputy principal at Banora Point High School in the far north of New South Wales. At this time our thoughts are with everyone in that part of our State, which continues to deal with the flood devastation. Previously deputy principal at Hunter Sports High School, Scott O'Hara was officially appointed as the inaugural principal of Jerrabomberra High School on 28 February 2022.

Rebekah Lindsay, the former principal of Cooma Public School, has been announced as the Googong Public School principal. She is sorely missed at Cooma Public School, but she is a huge gain for the Googong area. Already each of those principals has been out meeting with members of the school community and outlining their various visions, including the cultivation of innovative and inclusive school environments. Those appointments are yet more evidence of this Government's commitment to public education and another positive step in providing for the best possible outcomes for our students, families and regional communities. I look forward to being with these outstanding education professionals and leaders in 2023 as they welcome our students through gates that literally open on their futures.

MOREE SPECIAL ACTIVATION PRECINCT

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:02): A new era has dawned for north-west New South Wales, which promises prosperity that has not been seen in a generation. Earlier this month I was pleased to be joined by the Deputy Premier to announce \$194 million in State Government funding to start civil works on stage one of the Moree Special Activation Precinct [SAP]. This 4,716-hectare economic zone, which is adjacent to the Moree airport and takes in the Newell Highway, the existing intermodal site and, most importantly, the Inland Rail corridor, is the change of fortune that the community has been desperate for. It is one of the largest State Government projects in the Northern Tablelands since the construction of the Copeton Dam in the 1970s, which paved the way for irrigated agriculture in the Moree Plains and transformed the economic fabric of that community forever.

For the Moree community, this announcement makes the SAP real. It takes the concept off the page and into reality. The first stage of delivery will open around 950 hectares of land in the central part of the precinct. The land will be developed with new and upgraded roads, gas, telecommunications, electricity and water, and stormwater and wastewater infrastructure. The Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation will lead the precinct's delivery, managing construction of enabling infrastructure, preparing a delivery plan to support streamlined local and State Government approvals, and providing a business concierge service to help investors establish themselves in the Moree Plains. Residents will see work begin, and the economic benefits flow, almost immediately.

Over the next eight to 12 months civil works will start, along with the east-west interconnector—including a new bridge over the Newell Highway and the Inland Rail route—which will syphon heavy vehicle traffic into the precinct and away from the Moree CBD. Initially, 2,500 new jobs will be generated, with the potential for 4,000 to result from the SAP at full development. It is anticipated that stage one will fully open in around 2025-26, in conjunction with the completion of the Inland Rail project. The SAP is absolutely key to diversifying Moree's economic base and leveraging its almost \$1 billion a year agricultural sector—the richest and largest agricultural production shire anywhere in Australia—through value adding.

Instead of loading raw product onto a truck or train and sending it to Newcastle, Sydney or Brisbane for manufacture, processing or export, those businesses will be in Moree. Containerisation operators, waste recyclers and backend businesses will support the agricultural sector—the interest from industry is certainly there. Discussions are already underway with a number of Queensland-based food processors that are interested in relocating to Moree and expanding their operations. It is going to provide farmers with quicker and more direct access to international markets, saving them millions of dollars each year on freight, so that the best product in the world, grown in the Moree Plains shire, can be served in supermarkets and kitchens around the world. The economic flow-on effects to farmers from lower freight costs and new markets will be enormous. This is certainly no flash in the pan.

The SAP will provide for 40 years of demand and will be staged over time with initial development leveraging off existing road, rail and utility infrastructure in the north-east and central areas. This development will singlehandedly change the economic and social fabric of Moree and the entire north-west of New South Wales forever, and it will change it tangibly for the better. Council will have the confidence to open up more land for residential development, helping alleviate some of the current housing shortage and accommodating new residents who will relocate there for work. New residents to town means new students in Moree's schools and new members at clubs and sporting organisations. Moree will experience the growing pains, there is no doubt. But in my experience in local government that is far better than the alternative, which is bleeding talented professionals to other regional centres or to the big city.

Moree Plains Shire Council is absolutely on board. In fact, the new mayor of the Moree Plains, Mark Johnson, said last week that the role of council now is to "get out of the way and to allow the State Government and developers to do what they need to do." I recognise the huge amount of work done by former Moree Plains Shire Mayor Katrina Humphries; Mark Connolly, the Executive Manager of Regional Activation, who has done a brilliant job; and Rebecca English, the Regional Activation Coordinator. Their contributions since Moree was announced as an investigation area in 2019 have paved the way for this outcome. We would not have reached this point without them. It was their can-do attitude that has allowed this outcome to happen for Moree and will fundamentally make the Moree SAP the economic success story of a lifetime for our region and for north-west New South Wales.

STAGGERED SCHOOL START TIMES

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:07): I speak about the proposal the Government has floated to have various start times for different schools in New South Wales and working with communities to achieve that. In my electorate, Merrylands East Public School is the only school in the State that has changed its starting and finishing times to work in with the local community. The school has a fantastic principal, John Goh, who has been there for about 20 years and who is always at the forefront of innovations for the school. He has partnered with Atlassian to teach the kids coding. The school was one of the first to put solar panels on its roof. There is a fantastic school kitchen garden there. They made sure that their new school hall was a custom size to fit with the playground, rather than take out a large section of the playground to fit the standard size hall. When Principal Goh changed the school timetable, it was on the basis that a lot of kids were being dropped off as early as 6.30 and 7.00 in the morning, before their parents travelled to work in Parramatta or the city. The school needed to have staff there that early just to supervise the kids.

The school consulted with its community and found out what worked. The change was implemented over a period of time. It did not suit all families, so the school assisted with the transfer of those students to other schools. The Government looks at this example and thinks it is a great idea to introduce across the State. In some ways, it is. But the Government wants to do this only two years after it stopped kids being able to go to a school outside their local area. Across the State, any school that has a demountable, any school that is seen to be over the level of enrolment that can be accommodated in the permanent classrooms, cannot take out-of-area enrolments. A lot of kids in my area apply to go to Parramatta High School. This year Parramatta High School did not accept a single out-of-area enrolment, even though there were hundreds of applications. Greystanes High School is another popular school in my area and it only accepted one in five out-of-area enrolments this year.

At primary school level, it is really difficult to go out of area. Even in cases where the boundaries have changed and elder siblings were in the area, the younger ones cannot go to those schools. In some ways, it has been about forcing parents to send their kids to a local school which has been under capacity because it has had an undeservedly bad reputation or some other issue that has meant parents have not wanted to enrol their children there. But if the Government then superimposes this rigid policy about out-of-area enrolments, the option for a school community to decide for itself what its school start and finish times will be will disenfranchise thousands and thousands of families across the State. Parents will be forced to find a different school for their child or find a different job which suits the school hours. They will have difficulty finding a different school because, certainly in my electorate, every single school is full, according to this Government's criteria. Every single school has its permanent classrooms at capacity. The policy will not work unless there is flexibility in other ways.

I am also concerned that, if parents are going to be forced into this system, it is going to make it harder rather than easier for women to return to the workforce, because employers have an expectation now about what school hours are. If school hours are completely random, it will be too complicated for employers to hire the mothers of children who are too young to be able to get to and from school, or to before and after school care, on their own. Employers will just look beyond them. This is an idea, a thought bubble, based on a very good idea that worked well in my electorate but that does not fit with the way that this Government runs our education system. I am not surprised. This is a Government that for years did not build schools in new areas, and it did not build schools in my area after it allowed a whole lot of units to be developed there, because it decided that children

do not live in units. A few years ago, Westmead Public School had 1,600 kids enrolled who lived in units. The Government's policies are not working.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:12): The report entitled *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW* sets out the New South Wales Government's vision for social housing. Objectives include using wraparound services to "support tenants build their capabilities", setting government on a course to create pathways to independence for those where this is appropriate. A particular feature of this policy is that those most disadvantaged in our community must be "assisted to live in a safe and stable home environment". As well as recognising the key role of "feeling safe at home", the policy looks to make better use of social housing properties and to improve the educational outcomes of students living in social housing. These are themes that we are working through within Albury and its accommodation services for youth, the homeless, and those seeking refuge from domestic and family violence.

To truly attack homelessness we have to operate strategically and at many levels. One of those levels is to open up access to unused rooms in people's homes. Holdsworth HomeShare is a not-for-profit organisation in Sydney that helps connect older homeowners with younger people looking for housing. The benefits to the homesharer are lower housing costs, access to lived experience of the owner, and a path to developing resilience and life skills. Homesharing has the additional benefit of prolonging the period an elderly person can continue to live at home. It provides older people with more options.

Looking to expansion of the program into regional areas, I can see how homesharing can be life changing for young people at risk of homelessness, who might just need a lucky break to get on their way. It is clear to me that there is a need to get the program up to scale and to involve regional areas if we are to see more benefits. It was good to be able to bring Holdsworth into a conversation with some great people in the Albury area and organisations in my community, and already there are flow-on discussions underway to see how a local pilot program potentially can be developed.

At a grassroots level, it is important to come to grips with the scale of things. New South Wales provides and manages over 154,000 dwellings. In perspective, that is double the number of social housing dwellings of our neighbour Victoria, and New South Wales invests 60 per cent more per capita in social housing. The social housing waitlist dropped from 83,052 applicants in 2010 to 52,752 in 2020 through a combination of new builds and assistance programs. But we want to do even more. The 2020-21 budget included \$812 million for new and upgraded housing across the State. This takes the total New South Wales Government investment in social and affordable housing to \$4.4 billion over four years.

Last year I sought assistance from the Land and Housing Corporation, inviting senior staff and the Minister to visit Albury and advise council and housing-related NGOs about options for developing new social housing. Meetings took place in February, and it was pleasing to see particular areas singled out as suitable for more social housing, including possible apartments and dual occupancy homes that make more productive use of existing large blocks. A thorough audit of social housing properties has been underway in Albury and has revealed the direction forward. We have around 1,000 Land and Housing Corporation properties in Albury alone. This is a substantial portfolio. However, many are three- and four-bedroom homes and the current demand and trend is to need more one- and two-bedroom homes, including apartments. In October last year we opened brand new dual occupancies in Kestrel Street, Albury. Two more sets of dual occupancies are under contract for construction and are scheduled for completion mid-year. As a result of combined efforts to connect, Land and Housing Corporation is working closely and productively with Albury City Council to bring other plans to life.

We need to tackle, we are tackling, this combination of social issues by treating them not individually but more as a complex set of interacting influences and possible solutions—housing, security, wellbeing, safety and education. This is in tune with insights from *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW*. Pleasingly, the Minister for Planning has expressed a desire to emphasise housing for regional New South Wales, and I welcome Albury being part of the State's consideration. I thank those involved in the conversation so far, who are working together with genuine enthusiasm to pursue accommodation opportunities to fulfil a vision of wellbeing for Albury's most vulnerable. Driving engagement and collaboration between council and government will help. This is a space where, as the local member, my focus has been on driving engagement and collaboration between government, agencies, councils and NGOs to enable pathways to emerge for our Albury journey.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODES OF CONDUCT

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:17): I raise a matter that I am gravely concerned about: codes of conduct and their application in local government. An industry of code of conduct examiners have enveloped local councils—I have four that cover my area—and that seems to distract and produce a very costly exercise.

Codes of conduct complaints as councillors squabble with staff have developed into a very unhealthy industry. I will use one example as a case study. In respect of this matter, I ask that the Minister for Local Government organise the Office of Local Government to investigate the conduct of this council—that is, the Georges River Council.

You would not believe this, because I did not believe it when I found out. A councillor arguing over a swimming pool within the council area questioned the accuracy of a report to the council and had a different view. Arising from that, the council staff member who was the author of that report complained about the councillor under a code of conduct. Apparently he did not like the idea that a councillor was discharging his democratically elected duty in questioning, as was his right, the accuracy of the report and its conclusions. The council engaged a code of conduct examiner at a cost of \$13,000, and would you believe the code of conduct examiner upheld the complaint? For all of those in local government who think that somehow or other the code of conduct overrides their rights, I remind those people that Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states:

Everyone shall have the right to hold opinion without interference.

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

I also remind councillors in the State's councils there is a well-established principle of statutory interpretation in Australian courts and that is that Parliament is presumed not to have intended to limit the fundamental rights of freedom of speech unless it indicates its intention in clear terms. That also includes freedom of expression.

I also remind councillors that, by virtue of the High Court decision in *Nationwide News Pty Ltd v Wills*, which has been confirmed in the case of *Unions NSW v New South Wales*, the Australian Constitution has an implied freedom of political communication as an indispensable part of the system of representative and responsible government created by the Constitution. It operates as a freedom from government restraint. Neither the Commonwealth Parliament nor the Parliament of New South Wales is entitled to legislate away that fundamental right of freedom of expression.

A democratically elected councillor is free to criticise a council officer's report, free to criticise another councillor's view, free to criticise a member of public and free to criticise a general manager. In fact, not only is it their right but it is their duty. Councillors should not fear these codes of conduct where the law does not override freedom of expression. The codes of conduct, as the previous head of the Independent Commission Against Corruption indicated once to the statutory oversight committee, seem to have gone beyond the aspirational documents. Councillors feel constrained. They are the vital third tier of government in Australia, and they need to understand that no bureaucracy or code of conduct overcomes their rights.

GOSFORD WATERFRONT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:22): I talk about the potential of the fantastic Gosford waterfront. I invite the Government and the council to include the local member of Parliament in the discussion. Often the Government forgets to include me in some of the invitations to great openings in my electorate. This is something that is absolutely dear to my heart. We lived in a poor family, but I lived in rented houses on waterfront for a lot of my life. As a sailor, I have seen lots of amazing waterfront developments around the world. I am absolutely thrilled to be the member for Gosford at a time that I believe is right to activate our fantastic waterfront and the opportunities that are there. The Government's park, which won lots of awards even though there are a few problems with it, is a really great start. We have the leagues club and discussions with its members right now about the potential for development. Hopefully, because it is a leagues club and not a private land-banking opportunity, we will see the club go ahead. There is the new leagues club park. They built a wall on the side where the waterfront is, so you cannot see the waterfront from the leagues club. It is an interesting design concept, but I am sure that they have something in mind.

It is a beautiful waterfront and has so much potential. At the moment, there are quite a few people living on boats there because we do not have enough social or affordable housing in our community. There is the fantastic bar at Drifters Wharf, the Gosford Sailing Club just down the way and the Central Coast Aqua Park, but there is a dead area where the water quality is not always good because there is not much throughflow. There are also a lot of toxins because it has been the outfall of the city. It is a shallow waterfront, which is not much good for keelboats or anything. There is the potential for development over this waterfront area à la Darling Harbour but in a modern way. I have visions of wharves with lights along them and promenades for the community. There is also the potential for accommodation there and fantastic retail opportunities, which would brighten up Gosford. The beautiful Brian McGowan Bridge is the gateway to the city, and you can park there, but there is nothing to entertain the people. It is a bit of a dead end.

I have been advocating for a bike path linking the area under the Brian McGowan Bridge to Point Clare, which is where Marine Rescue NSW is. I am glad the council is looking at it. From that bike path, it basically connects to Woy Woy and the peninsula along the waterfront. There is the potential to add a fantastic riding facility to this magnificent waterfront. There is a Minister for Planning and a Minister for Cities, and before too long there will be a locally living commissioner for the Central Coast. There is so much opportunity for this beautiful city. Unfortunately, there were a bunch of land-banked buildings that we were hoping would go ahead but did not. Poor old Gosford might get a new commissioner and more brochures showing what is going to happen, but it is time to oversee the reality of development. It is going to take some government investment, and there is also the possibility for private investment. There needs to be some leadership to activate what needs to go ahead so that it does not just sit there waiting like lots of other things in the city.

As the local member of Parliament, I have made a huge effort with the Government and the council to ensure that all of the wharves in my electorate have been upgraded. It is really important to activate and link the community to the water. Brisbane Water is magnificent, bound by the Terrigal electorate on one side and the Gosford electorate on the other side. There are community members talking about a ferry from Woy Woy to the Gosford town centre. I am not sure we are ready for that yet, transport-wise. I am waiting on numbers on train trips, and Gosford parking will be a challenge. Let us get active transport linking to this beautiful place, where we can be on the wharves and at the restaurants on the waterfront. We could have accommodation there. We have got St Hilliers coming over the way.

There is potential in our community to do so much more with this space, which is currently a dead-end space. We sit there, we look at it and we have some protests there, but you can shut your eyes and imagine what it could be. I look forward to working with all of the stakeholders, with lots of community consultation along the way. Labor's investigation into Gosford in 2008 ended with the Our City, Our Destiny plan. There was also the Go Gosford campaign. Let us actually see the activation we need to make the Gosford waterfront the great start to our beautiful city.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): In accordance with the earlier resolution, I shall now leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell. [*The Temporary Speaker (Mr David Layzell) left the chair, pursuant to resolution, at 19:29 on Thursday 31 March 2022.*]

[Friday 1 April 2022]

[*Continuation of sitting of Thursday 31 March 2022.*]

[*The bells having been rung, the House resumed at 15:30 with the Speaker in the chair.*]

Members

CALLS TO ORDER

The SPEAKER: I remind the House that because this is a continuation of the sitting of Thursday 31 March 2022, members remain on calls to order. The member for Rockdale is on three calls to order. The member for Blacktown is on three calls to order. The member for Canterbury is on three calls to order. The member for Bankstown is on two calls to order. The member for Wollongong is on three calls to order. The member for Swansea is on one call to order. The member for Summer Hill is on three calls to order. The member for Maroubra is on one call to order. The member for Wyong is on two calls to order. The member for Cessnock is on two calls to order. The member for Blue Mountains is on one call to order. The member for Hawkesbury is on two calls to order. The member for Oxley is on one call to order.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: By leave: I move:

That:

- (1) Mr Kevin Francis Conolly be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in place of Ms Gabrielle Cecelia Upton, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***HOME BUILDING AMENDMENT (MEDICAL GAS LICENSING) BILL 2022****Returned**

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

ROADS AND CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**Returned**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration in Detail**Consideration of Legislative Council amendments.***Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 1 April 2022***No. 1 OPP No. 1 [c2022-053C]**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 13—

[6A] Section 144G(4A)

Insert after section 144G(4)—

- (4A) A person does not commit an offence under this section if the conduct occurs—
- (a) at the workplace at which the person works, or
 - (b) at a workplace owned, occupied, operated or used by an employer of the person.

No. 2 OPP No. 3 [c2022-053C]

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 13—

[6C] Section 144G(4C)

Insert after section 144G(4)—

- (4C) This section does not apply to the extent that it prohibits conduct in relation to—
- (a) Parliament House, or
 - (b) an office of a member of parliament.

No. 3 OPP No. 1 [c2022-058]

Page 3, Schedule 1[7], line 17. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead—

part of the following—

- (a) industrial action,
- (b) an industrial dispute,
- (c) an industrial campaign.

No. 4 OPP No. 6 [c2022-053C]

Page 4, Schedule 2, proposed section 214A. Insert after line 17—

- (3A) A person does not commit an offence under this section if the conduct occurs—
- (a) at the workplace at which the person works, or
 - (b) at a workplace owned, occupied, operated or used by an employer of the person.

No. 5 OPP No. 8 [c2022-053C]

Page 4, Schedule 2, proposed section 214A. Insert after line 17—

- (3C) This section does not apply to the extent that it prohibits conduct in relation to—
- (a) Parliament House, or
 - (b) an office of a member of parliament.

No. 6 OPP No. 2 [c2022-058]

Page 4, Schedule 2, line 17. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead—

part of the following—

- (a) industrial action,
- (b) an industrial dispute,
- (c) an industrial campaign.

No. 7 **PHON No. 1 [c2022-059]**

Page 4, Schedule 2, proposed section 214A(5), definition of *major facility*, line 31. Insert ", manufacturing, distribution" after "energy".

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (15:38): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

The Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 has returned to this House largely in the form in which it left, with a number of amendments to which the Government agrees. One set of amendments concern clarifying the extent of the carve-out for industrial action. To some extent, those amendments were similar to amendments that we debated a couple of days ago. As I said at the time, it did not seem that those amendments were particularly necessary, but if it gives some people comfort we have agreed to those amendments. Another set of amendments concerned a carve-out or protests concerning members' offices and this precinct. As I said a couple of days ago, it is not the Government's intention to close down legitimate protest; it is not the Government's intention to close down the sorts of protests that we saw yesterday with nurses and midwives. It would only be in extreme circumstances that we would contemplate using that, but because that appears to be a red herring and set the hares running, we are happy to agree to that amendment as well.

The bill is not about climate change. The vast majority of members in this Chamber, and certainly the Government, believe in active steps being taken on climate change and this Government leads the country in our transition to renewable energy. The bill is not about closing down democracy or legitimate protests. There are plenty of non-physical ways to vent our voices and there are plenty of physical ways to vent our voices. We are not closing down the general right to public assembly, whether it be in the streets, outside Town Hall, in The Domain or wherever. The bill is about protecting ordinary citizens from the random attacks of anarchists who seek to disrupt—

Mr Jamie Parker: Anarchists?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Anarchists, that is right. The Greens have shown their true colour in this debate. They are not Greens; they are black. They are anarchists. They are not on the side of legitimate protesters who want to assemble at the Town Hall or in George Street. These are people who want to close our ports—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Balmain to order for the first time. I call the member for Balmain to order for the second time. I call the member for Balmain to order for the third time. I will direct the member for Balmain to leave the Chamber if he continues to interject.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: They are the ones who want to close our ports. They are the ones who want to close our bridges. They are the ones who want to inconvenience ordinary workers going about their ordinary lives. The vast majority of citizens will not put up with that. This is an urgent bill, because we have seen that the types who are blockading the Princes Highway in Sylvania will not let up. We need fast action. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:41): The Opposition supports the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. We think it is important to the safety and security of the State of New South Wales. We are glad the Attorney General has brought the bill to Parliament. We supported it here and we will support it in the upper House. It is important to the safety and security of the State. I ask all members to think about the implications of the Blockade Australia protests, if they can loosely be called that—the guerrilla activity that is taking place in New South Wales at the moment. Think about those who might have been stuck in a car accident in the airport tunnel at any point over the past three or four days when these protests took place. Think about ambulance officers who might have been desperately trying to get to that accident but could not because of gridlock affecting two to three million people as a result of protests in that part of Sydney. It is shameful to think it is appropriate for anyone in pursuit of their own particular aims to disrupt the lives of ordinary people as they go about their business.

I looked up the aims of Blockade Australia, and there are none. It appears it is just anarchy for anarchy's sake—putting it up on a website, disrupting people's lives. It is not like coal barons are the people who are being affected by these protests. It is ordinary people going about their lives and trying to earn a living. If a casual worker in New South Wales does not turn up for work, they do not get paid. No-one will reimburse them. What about a pregnant mother who is desperate to get to a public hospital but cannot because for three days in a row there is traffic chaos in the southern part of Sydney? What is our response as a Parliament to that person, to that

family as they seek desperate and important medical intervention for the birth of their child? An owner-driver stuck at Port Botany for five or six hours will never be compensated as a result of that lost income.

I say to The Greens and to all those who do not support this legislation: This is not building consensus in relation to climate change; it is alienating the very people we are trying to get onside to take decisive action in relation to climate change. The New South Wales Opposition moved amendments, some in concert with the Government, that protect industrial action. Those amendments are important. It is the guaranteed right of a democracy to take industrial action as it pertains to the workplace. The Opposition moved an amendment to schedule 1, "Campaigns by industrial organisations", to:

Omit all words on that line. Insert instead—

...

- (a) industrial action,
- (b) an industrial dispute,
- (c) an industrial campaign.

So they are not subject to the scope of the bill. We understand that in his second reading speech the Attorney General asserted that that was the case, and this amendment makes it guaranteed. The amendment also goes on to say that all those words be omitted in a subsequent or concurrent bill before the House. That is important. That gives the unions and all those representing workers in this State the guarantees they need to make sure that they can protest on behalf of their members to the Government Executive. It is also important to shoot down assertions by the member for Newtown, who said in her contribution to the second reading debate that the provisions of the bill will stop action on the climate emergency, stop action in relation to calls to the street for increased nurse-to-patient ratios—

The SPEAKER: The member for Baulkham Hills will remain silent.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —and stop action pertaining to ending sexual violence. That is simply not true. The fact of the matter is that the students who took action on climate change, which was out the front of the Prime Minister's residence last Monday, sought and were granted police permission to protest. The organisers of an auxiliary protest from Sydney University, that again ended at Kirribilli House, sought and were granted permission from the New South Wales police, as did the organisers of protests relating to a terrible murder in Newcastle when people in Newcastle took to the streets to call for action to end violence against women.

So we have protections for peaceful protests in this State. But causing anarchy on a large scale in pursuit of action on climate change, when we know it does the exact opposite, is concurrent with a pervasive approach to protests by The Greens and like-minded groups. We saw this in relation to the Adani convoy in the lead-up to the Federal election in 2019, poking their finger in the eye of Queensland voters right when we needed them to support us in taking action against climate change and action against the Morrison Government. We saw that with The Greens' decision to sink the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme legislation of the Rudd Government. We know that if that legislation had passed 200 million tonnes of emissions would have been struck from the Australian environment.

The simple fact of the matter is that, rather than recruiting people to the cause of climate action, they stick their finger in the eye of the people who do not agree. But we need to recruit people on these important matters. That is the distinction between Labor and The Greens. This legislation is important and I am happy to support it. It is important to the safety and security of New South Wales. It is important to protect lawful protests and it is important to carve out industrial protest against the Executive Government. That is why Labor supports it. There can be no ambiguity in that.

[*Members interjected.*]

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:48): I will not acknowledge those heckles from the back of the Chamber. Things have gone very smoothly for the Government and the Opposition over the past 62 hours. As the member for Sydney said when we were first considering the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, what we are seeing here is embarrassing. I acknowledge the efforts of those in the community, in the union movement, in the legal and human rights organisations, in the climate and environmental organisations and all of the activists, campaigners and believers in peaceful protests and non-violent direct action for what they have done in the past 62 hours to assist The Greens in disrupting the ramming through and passage of this draconian bill.

It is absolutely crucial that we are clear that this has been an absolute overreach by the Liberal-Nationals Government. It is a bill that was drafted sometime last week by the Attorney General—we are unclear whether it has been to Cabinet—and then it comes in after some late discussion between the Attorney General and the shadow Attorney General, who may have forgotten that it is not his right any more to make the captain's call for the Labor

Party. Then all of a sudden the unions find out about it, and they are saying, "What is this? What are we doing?" All of a sudden the civil society groups and the legal organisations find out about it, and they are saying, "What is this? What are we doing?"

This is a bad process, and it is embarrassing. It is not about a position on climate change, and it is not about a position on an organisation; it is about a complete disregard for the processes of this Chamber. I am often accused of being a radical in this place, but the Liberal-Nationals Government has been radical in undermining the processes of this Chamber. We would not be here right now if the Attorney General had given notice of the bill and given members the time to consider it and consult, or if he had consulted with anyone—but here we are. I note that New South Wales Labor Opposition members have all left the Chamber. The Leader of the Opposition gives his big, fiery speech attacking me and then leaves. The Leader of the Opposition is feeling very uncomfortable, because large parts of the union movement in New South Wales are very concerned about this piece of legislation.

The bill certainly is improved as a result of the Opposition amendments, and I talk particularly to two of those amendments. Interestingly for those who have been watching along at home, the Opposition in the Legislative Council actually moved two amendments that The Greens had moved in this place in slightly different forms. All credit goes to the Labor folks in the upper House, who had concerns that the bill causes issues around blockades of Parliament that would see an end to protests outside Parliament House. The Legislative Council has thankfully amended the bill to carve out protests outside the New South Wales Parliament, which will not be included in this draconian bill.

The Legislative Council also carved out the offices of members of Parliament. Those who were watching late on Wednesday night would know that was also a Greens amendment, so I am very pleased to see that the principled position of Labor in the upper House saw that that amendment was passed. When it was moved down here, sadly, the Labor Opposition in the Legislative Assembly lined up behind the Liberals and we saw them filing through to vote against that Greens amendment. I acknowledge the amendments that saw the exclusion of conduct at the place at which a person works or a workplace owned by their employer. That is another Greens amendment that the Labor Party in the other place saw merit in moving to improve this appalling bill. They are improvements. I highlight the fact that The Greens have a number of amendments. I move:

That the question be amended by omitting all words after "That" and inserting instead:

- (1) Amendment Nos 2,3 5 and 6 be agreed to.
- (2) Amendment No. 1 be amended by omitting "person." and inserting instead:
"person, or
(c) as part of a peaceful protest."
- (3) Amendment No. 4 be amended by omitting "person." and inserting instead:
"person, or
(c) as part of a peaceful protest."
- (4) Amendment No. 7 be disagreed to.

Members might be curious about amendment No. 7. It is a Pauline Hanson's One Nation amendment. The former Federal Labor Party member and now Pauline Hanson's One Nation member in the upper House moved an amendment that The Greens have serious concerns about. We believe the Legislative Assembly should reject that amendment outright. The Opposition in the other place did not support that One Nation amendment, and I hope that the Opposition here will join The Greens in opposing it.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:53): In recent weeks Sydney has been abused, tormented, tortured, terrified and infuriated by protestors at Port Botany. The small band of activists have obstructed traffic, shut down operations at a major industrial port and generally occupied the time of ordinary people who were trying to get on with their busy lives. That is the sort of protest that has inspired the changes brought forward in the bill. There are groups that are trying to obstruct or weaken the bill to the point of uselessness, claiming it infringes on the right to protest or that that it is anti-protest.

While the bill does not affect the right of people to demonstrate, it does seek to deter people from engaging in antisocial behaviour and in some of the more onerous and traumatising ways that protestors try to make their voices heard. It stops such people infringing on the rights of others to go about their business. The groups trying to obstruct the amendments are the same people who are concerned about an octopus being abused, tormented, tortured, terrified or infuriated, according to some strange, subjective test. Those groups want to see animal rights in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, extending human-like rights to any animal. Allowing protestors to continue to traumatise an entire city and make it grind to a halt is not the right path. The point could be better made in a dozen other ways that do not involve harm or trauma to their fellow citizens. What if someone needed

urgent medical attention and was stuck in traffic as a result of such behaviour? Intentional disruptive protest can bring more risk than benefit. Why are these groups willing to fight for the rights of carp while at the same time treading on the rights of people just going about their business?

I have participated in many well-organised, well-planned and civilised protests. I have marched on this Parliament, and I will probably do it again. Those protesters make their point and bring far more of the public onside by making their presence known, but they do that while being careful not to cause too much disruption to people just trying to go about their daily lives. That becomes an issue of social licence. Protesters might turn people against their cause, no matter how legitimate it is, if they infuriate an entire city, particularly one that has been traumatised in recent years by bushfires, a pandemic and floods. I did a quick straw poll of people who are not engaged with politics or the news cycle. All they could tell me about the Port Botany protest was that there was disruption. They did not know what the issue or the cause was.

Do those activists not think highlighting recent and current natural disasters and documented weather variability leading to bushfires and floods might have been a better way of alerting people to the issue? Why do they want to add to people's distress? People are busy enough facing myriad stressors, like family, work and finance. The list is endless. Why do those groups want to force their views down people's throats when they could win more friends and influence more people with a more organised form of protest—one that will not abuse, torment or torture the public? Life is tough enough for most people. Those unnecessarily disruptive protests need to be curbed. There are better ways to get the point across.

Protests are welcome, do not get me wrong. Every time a group assembles outside Parliament House, as health workers did this week, I am reminded of the good fortune we have to live in a democracy. It always sends a sharp message to me as an MP. Governments, corporations and other entities do not always do the right thing. Sometimes we need to make a show of numbers and strength to bring them into line, make them change their course and correct injustices. But there must be limits to how disruptive those protests are and how much psychological, physical or financial distress they inflict on those around them.

There are groups that do that incredibly well—the Knitting Nannas are a force to be reckoned with. Their approach of polite but persistent engagement has influenced people of all political persuasions and certainly the broader public. They are credible, respected and, to an extent, feared because of how they go about influencing public or political opinion. Protesting and demonstrations are vital to a good democracy, but so is law and order and mutual respect between the citizens of the democracy. While I speak in support of the bill, I also include a caveat and a polite warning. If those powers are used selectively to stifle the right to peaceful protest, every right-minded person in this place—and I hope that includes members of the Liberals and The Nationals—and I will weaponise such an abuse of power in this place and in the media.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:57): On behalf of the Greens, I contribute to debate on the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 to raise critical matters of principle within the bill. Government members have spoken about specific examples and have said that the bill seeks merely to increase penalties. They think that will stop the protests, but it does more. It narrows the options of the public. For example, someone need only be at a protest with people being redirected from a facility that the Minister has decided is a major facility through regulation and they can be fined. All they need to do is be redirected. It is unlike the existing situation. At the moment, under the Summary Offences Act, people can fill out the schedule 1 form, lodge it with the police seven days before and then go ahead with the protest. They do not need police approval. It is their right to protest, but they must notify the police.

The bill is different. The bill changes a significant right that currently exists. People will need police approval to protest. That does not exist at the moment. If someone lodges a schedule 1 form—the notice of intention to hold a public assembly—and the police say no, they can go to the Supreme Court. They do not have that right under this bill. The court is gone. Either the police support it or they are subject to the bill. A protest will go from lodging a notice of assembly that can be appealed in the Supreme Court to getting approval from the police. They will say yes or no. That is a narrowing of our rights. That is why we are here. The Greens are also concerned that there is a constitutional issue with the bill.

We are standing up for the constitution and for proper process, which is what conservatives are supposed to do. But today it is our job because processes are being abused. It is clear in the Constitution that individual aspects of the expression of people's political views cannot be attacked. In this bill the Government is saying that industrial action is okay but not climate action. Clearly the Government is carving out an area of political dissent that it does not like. The Government said as much in the media; it made absolutely clear what political issues it is targeting and what type of action is acceptable to the State and what is not. Industrial action is acceptable but climate action is not acceptable. The Greens have asked the Government to agree to amendments that rule out a range of approaches. Sadly, the Government has not done that.

A particular problem that I have is the implications of the bill on solidarity. Say an industrial action takes place at Port Botany and people are redirected—redirection is one of the tests in the list, not "blocking the street"? A family member might participate in a barbecue at that event. I might attend, as an MP. A Labor MP, or even a Liberal MP, might join that. All of them will be subject to this law because it is not their place of work; it is an industrial action that they are supporting but not participating in. A range of important legal questions must be addressed and answered. The Greens are disappointed that that has not happened. In debating this bill, we were in a ridiculous situation when the Attorney General said, "Maybe Parliament House can be included as a major facility." In the Legislative Council The Greens said, "What is a major facility? Let's define it." The Government said no. Will The Domain be a major facility? Will it be a hotel where a conference is held? What is a major facility?

The Greens understand that the Leader of the Opposition has to speak to a constituency in western Sydney. We understand that the Government is speaking to a constituency. But we are raising legitimate points of legal principle. The police now have to authorise a protest when that was not previously the case. People run new risks when they support industrial action by acting in solidarity. Constitutional questions also arise. During debate we have expressed important questions. It is our right to say in this place that we should have the opportunity to rigorously examine a bill that was still marked "draft Cabinet in confidence" when it was presented to us only an hour before the sitting. We are proud of addressing these questions in this place. The bill did not go to Cabinet. How many Ministers knew it was coming? They did not know, nor did the shadow Cabinet. The only reason that people have been involved in discussion of the bill is they had a chance to reflect on it. That is what this House is for and that is what elected representatives need to do. I am proud of every step we have taken.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:02): Once again, I state my opposition to the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I do that as the member whose electorate has the most protests, as a member who has been part of many protests and as a member who has experienced many protests against them.

Mr David Elliott: What? No!

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: I know! Who would protest against me, right? It has happened. I have a lot of respect for the member for Barwon. I found his example of the Knitting Nannas quite a remarkable one to use. The Knitting Nannas have blocked streets and tied themselves to buildings. They have sat outside my office. Under this bill, the Knitting Nannas face two years in prison and a penalty of \$22,000 each. I reiterate the point that I made in my contribution to the second reading debate. The bill will not stop people from engaging in climate action; it will simply embolden them further. Today the Parliament has sent a message that what they are doing is working. The remarkable contribution of the Leader of the Opposition will be seen as a success by groups such as Blockade Australia and others. They know they are having an impact and making people in this building feel uncomfortable. To suggest that people who live in and around the Spit Bridge or work in and around Port Botany do not understand the dire nature of climate change is completely incorrect. They understand it and they take it seriously. I know that my very diverse range of constituents appreciate people sounding the alarm.

The bill will not stop the situations and examples that were provided by members in their contributions. It will embolden people to take further action. The only thing that will stop those examples that have been provided is meaningful engagement, particularly by our Federal Government, to take real action on climate change. I acknowledge the Attorney General's remarks about the way in which this Government is taking action on climate change seriously—I support it and I endorse that. But we have a Federal Government that, in its budget, cut expenditure for action on climate change appallingly. We know that voters will probably make their voices heard at the next Federal election about that.

The other point that has been made in this place—and I know it has been aired on 2GB—is the credit I have given that radio station for this legislation. I congratulate 2GB. The Government and the Opposition have met the deadline that was set by 2GB to rush through this poorly drafted legislation, which will have no meaningful impact other than to see fines increased and more people spending more time in jail. We hear a lot about harm-minimisation approaches and the importance of redirecting people out of the criminal justice system. Yet here we are, wanting to send people who care about our planet to jail or fine them more in some kind of failed attempt to limit the disruption to people who live in and around the Spit Bridge from going about their ordinary lives.

The SPEAKER: I clarify that each member can speak up to three times for five minutes each.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:06): I will address The Greens amendments to outline what we are seeking to do in relation to the amended Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which was returned from the Legislative Council, and the schedule of amendments before us. Before I do that, I ask the Attorney General to clarify his understanding of the concerns that were raised around constitutional issues by my

colleague in the upper House Ms Abigail Boyd and the member for Balmain. I think it is really important that we do that.

The member for Balmain outlined here—and Ms Abigail Boyd, who I note is in the advisers area now, raised on behalf of The Greens in the other place—that we cannot pick and choose what is permitted by the Constitution. It would be great to get clarification from the Attorney General as to whether any external or independent legal advice was taken around the insertion of industrial action. The first draft of the bill that was presented, which I think the Labor Party was going to support, did not have industrial action in it and then the next version did. That was quite a quick turnaround, so I just want to ensure that independent legal advice, or some kind of advice, was sought about that change and ask whether the Attorney General can provide, on record, more details about the constitutional issues raised.

I now speak specifically to The Greens amendments proposed here, particularly for the consideration of Opposition members. I acknowledge some of the contributions made in the upper House by Labor members. I recognise that this is not easy for everybody—to have to deal with a bill that some people probably did not even know was coming and may not personally support. I have my differences with the Labor Party, but I also recognise that everyone has a different theory of change, so I acknowledge the fact that those Labor members did what they could to try to make this bill slightly less bad. They were willing to take up some of The Greens amendments that were moved in this House because they could see there was merit in them. The two amendments that The Greens are moving are amendments that the Labor Party moved or supported in the other place in the past few hours. It would be very surprising to me if Labor members chose to reject those amendments. It would mean that there is, all of a sudden, a division between Labor's position in the other place and Labor's position in this House.

I will now outline what those two amendments do. The first is taking an Opposition amendment from the Legislative Council around peaceful protest and inserting that into the amended bill to send it back to the upper House. It would basically add in a provision to say that people would be excluded from committing an offence if their conduct was being undertaken as part of a peaceful protest. That was a Labor amendment moved in the other place, which The Greens supported. We recognised the value of that change, and we trust that the New South Wales Labor Opposition will show some principle and consistency across both Houses by supporting that amendment.

The second one is rejecting Pauline Hanson's One Nation amendment that was successful in the other place, which the Liberal-Nationals Government backed along with conservative crossbenchers. The New South Wales Opposition in the other place just a couple of hours ago voted against that amendment and did not support it being in the bill. The New South Wales Labor Party has shown its support or opposition to both of those. As a result, I expect that the New South Wales Labor Opposition in this House will support The Greens amendments; otherwise, we have some bigger questions to ask about who decided on the position that Labor has taken today.

The final point I wish to make relates to the real sense that there is a level of what could be described as a form of tone policing around non-violent direct action and protest whereby basically there are certain types of protests that are agreeable and acceptable, and there are certain types of protests that are not agreeable and not acceptable. That all depends on the position we are coming from and how desperate we are in a circumstance. We heard the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Barwon talk about the risks to people's health and safety if someone is unable to get through in a disaster or a catastrophe. But then we just need to look at the disasters and the catastrophes happening around the world as a result of the climate emergency and see that there is a need to look at the various perspectives of how people are being impacted by the actions this Government is taking. I commend the amendments to the House. I hope the New South Wales Labor Opposition will join us in supporting them. I thank the member for Sydney for his support.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:11): The member for Newtown does an awful lot of talking about the Labor Party. Just so that people are clear: We want this bill. We want it to become law. We do not see any point in sending it back to the other place to be defeated again and sitting here all night so that the bill bounces between the two Houses. We can count. We know what we can get up and what we cannot. What we have done successfully in this House and in the other place is move amendments that we say significantly improve the bill. The Labor Party is capable of speaking for itself. We do not need to hear from the member for Newtown. Her modus operandi is to attack the Labor Party and that should be put on record again today.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:11): I wish to respond to the shadow Attorney General's comments. I assure him that my modus operandi is not to attack the Labor Party. In fact, like many in the community, I spend a lot of my time shaking my head in disbelief and feeling disappointed at the fact that the Labor Party cannot be like it used to be because I do not want the Liberal-Nationals Government to be sitting on the Government side of the Chamber in March 2023. I did not want those opposite sitting there in 2019, and the member for Maroubra knows that full well. It is disingenuous of the member for Maroubra to suggest that I would want anything other than to see the New South Wales Labor Party occupying the Government benches. The reality is, though, that we

need to make sure that we do not see a version of the New South Wales Labor Party sitting on the Government benches so that we cannot distinguish it from the Liberal-Nationals Coalition. It is the role of The Greens to make sure that 2GB is not the only one that is consulted when it comes to New South Wales Labor policy.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:13): I was wondering whether the Attorney General would seek the call. It did not look like he would so I jumped to my feet because there are some genuine questions The Greens wish to ask. Is it now a fact that, in order for people not to be exposed by this legislation, they will have to seek approval from the police? What we do now is lodge the Notice of Intention to Hold a Public Assembly, Form 1. The procedure is that Form 1 is lodged, you give seven days notice and it goes to the NSW Police Force. People have their protest and the Summary Offences Act is covered. The police do not have to say, "Yes, you have approval." In fact, sometimes the police have said, "No, we definitely won't give you approval," and the people who sought approval make an application to the Supreme Court for the outcome to be determined.

Is it the fact now that the bill will trump that process? Will people have to actively seek and obtain approval from the police instead of just lodging Form 1? If people have to seek and obtain approval, that is therefore a restriction on what currently applies, which is simply lodging a form rather than seeking active approval. They are the questions I pose to the Attorney General, through you, Mr Speaker.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:14): The implied freedom of political discussion that has been recognised by the High Court on a proper interpretation of the Constitution has been raised in the debate. The rights of communication and demonstration of speech are not unfettered; they are subject to the ability to impose limits that are proportionate and serve a legitimate purpose. As a matter of general principle, laws against vilification and inciting violence—like section 93Z of the Crimes Act—defamation laws and existing laws on the books such as the Summary Offences Act do not infringe upon those rights. The Government is making the broad proposition to increase penalties for a range of conduct that is already unlawful. The Government, the Cabinet—for those who doubted it—the Liberal-Nationals party room and I have resolved not to see ordinary citizens greatly inconvenienced and threatened in the way that they have been.

The amendment of the member for Newtown proposes to exclude any peaceful protest from the operation of the bill, which is very similar to what the Labor Opposition sought to do last night. I know The Greens vigorously oppose the bill, so it is no surprise that they are proposing an amendment that would negate almost everything the bill does. People lying in the middle of the Spit Bridge, near Tom Uglys Bridge or at Port Botany are being peaceful. However, the problem is that form of protest is causing economic chaos and threatening the ordinary livelihoods of ordinary citizens. It is shocking that the Labor Opposition countenanced that last night. It is proposing a similar amendment, which would have the effect of torpedoing the whole bill.

The Opposition leader can say all the right things today, but last night Labor tried to sneak through an amendment to carve out so-called peaceful protest—the member for Newtown is nodding in agreement—and torpedo the bill. We can talk about the Opposition leader making a captain's call, as reported in the paper, but it seems that he is Captain Bligh and there has been a mutiny in his party and subterfuge to attempt to torpedo the bill under the guise of an amendment for a carve-out for peaceful protest. Last night the Labor Opposition tried to negate the entirety of the bill so that the sorts of activities that we have seen at Port Botany, near Tom Uglys Bridge and at the Spit Bridge would not be prohibited under the legislation. Its mutinous left wing is more concerned with solidarity with people hanging from cranes at Port Botany than with ordinary workers who want to attend medical appointments, get to casual jobs so that they can be paid or take their kids to school.

Let us be under no misapprehension of the subterfuge and the trick that the Labor Party tried to play on the people of New South Wales last night. At least The Greens are open and up-front about how they vigorously oppose the bill and that they are proposing an amendment to torpedo it, which—let us be under no misapprehension—is what the Labor Opposition tried to do by subterfuge last night.

Mr Jamie Parker: That's the nicest thing you've said all week.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I like you, Jamie. The problem is that, under the guise of peaceful protest, these amendments would render the bill unitary. The debate on the merits of the bill has been had. We need a bill that is strong and that will protect ordinary people in New South Wales. The One Nation and Opposition amendments that were proposed last night regarding water, sewerage and power facilities must extend to other major infrastructure, like telco and distribution facilities—the sorts of facilities that would create economic mayhem if they were blockaded. The Government's needs the ability to act quickly to prescribe regulations where necessary, which is why it supported the One Nation amendment and opposed the Opposition amendment. I commend the bill to the House. The Government opposes this amendment.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:19): I speak to the point about peaceful protests. Labor does not agree with the lazy interpretation that the Attorney General is indulging in. It was incredibly sneaky of Labor

to put it in black and white and lodge it for discussion in Parliament, which is broadcast to the entire world! That is pretty sneaky. The Opposition's simple proposition in reply to the Attorney General is that these activities that are prohibited by the bill are a breach of the peace; therefore, they are not peaceful. Labor does not agree with the Attorney General.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:20): I like the Attorney General too, and I would like for him to answer the question about narrowing the definition. At the moment the bill says that you need police approval. Will the lodging of the notice of intention for a public assembly satisfy that or do you need to now go an extra step if you would like not to be subject to these laws? Must the police proactively say, "Yes, you can have that protest at that time in that place and, if we don't like it, you don't get to do it," as opposed to the current situation where you give seven days' notice and lodge a form and that is sufficient? Then, if the police say they do not like it, a person can go to the Supreme Court and have the court make the adjudication. Could the Attorney General clarify that? It is critical because, as the member for Maroubra said, any facility could be included in the schedule. The Greens want to be clear about that. In normal circumstances, people lodge a form, give seven days' notice and go to the protest. Hopefully, that is the Attorney General's answer.

In some instances, the police will contact a person and get them to sign a form for approval. Often the police just say, "Thanks. You have given us a form, and that is enough. Notify us that you are having a march, and it is all fine." Regular marches are fine. It is important to clarify because my understanding is that the bill says "requires police approval". Will the lodging of the schedule 1 form be sufficient to allow for approval, recognising there are additional rights that the person who makes the application has because they can challenge the police refusal in the Supreme Court? I hope that right will not be taken away. As the Attorney General knows, there have been some interesting cases in the Supreme Court where it has ruled that a protest can go ahead despite the police having foolish reasons why the protest should not proceed. It is an important question, and it goes to the amendments. I would be grateful if the Attorney General could clarify that so that, when this bill is implemented—as it looks like it will be—it can be done properly.

The SPEAKER: Are there any further speakers?

Ms Jenny Leong: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: I inform the member for Newtown that she has spoken three times and is not permitted to speak again. The question is that the amendment of the member for Newtown be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only three members for the question, I declare the determination of the House to be in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Ayes, 3

Mr A. Greenwich
Ms J. Leong
Mr J. Parker

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.

Community Recognition Notices

AUSTRALIAN JORDANIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION 5TH GRADUATION EVENT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I take this opportunity to recognise the Australian Jordanian Community Association on their 5th Graduation Event which was hosted on 19 March 2022 in Merrylands. The Graduation Event is an opportunity to recognise the graduation of high-achieving Australian Jordanian students from high school, tertiary institutions and universities. The event also celebrated the 60th Birthday of the King of Jordan, King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein. The event was attended by Dr Ali Kraishan, the Ambassador of Jordan to Australia and New Zealand. Dr Yasser Alnawashi received a special honorary award for his tremendous contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Alnawashi assisted many members of the Jordanian and Arab community to overcome the psychological effects of the lockdown, and hosted many lectures and meetings over Zoom to provide information and answer questions from the community. I congratulate Australian Jordanian Community Association President Mr Mohammed Alqadi and Secretary Mr Emad Asshor on a successful event, and I commend the Association's entire leadership team for their tireless efforts in promoting social harmony and multicultural relations within our community.

IRAQI AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES FORUM AWARDS NIGHT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I take this opportunity to recognise the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum [IAUGF] on hosting their annual HSC High Achievers, University and Medical Practitioners Awards evening at Club Mounties on 27 February 2022. The ceremony was organised in cooperation with the Iraqi Al-Karimian Association Australia and the Iraqi Australian Medical Association. The event celebrated high-achieving Australian Iraqi students who graduated from high school or university in 2021, and honoured Iraqi doctors who worked in the front lines to fight COVID-19. Dr. Ahmed Alrubaie, the secretary of the Iraqi Australian Medical Association of New Zealand, presented the keynote speech about the Association's role in spreading awareness about COVID-19 through the Southwest Sydney community. Last year, the Association developed a highly-effective campaign to spread awareness about COVID-19 throughout the Iraqi, Arab and immigrant communities, leading to a rise in vaccine percentage across these communities. I congratulate IAUGF President Dr Bushra Alobaidi on a successful event, and I commend the Association's entire leadership team for their tireless efforts in promoting social harmony and multicultural relations within our community.

2021 NAPLAN RESULTS

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—On behalf of my electorate of Bankstown, I would like to congratulate all the hard-working students and schools on a terrific 2021 NAPLAN result. These past two years for schools and students, particularly in Southwest Sydney, has been a challenging and stressful time, and combined with the move to remote learning, this makes the improvements we have seen since the 2019 NAPLAN results even more impressive. I congratulate the following schools on their improved 2021 NAPLAN results compared to 2019; Bankstown North Public School, Birrong Girls High School, Chester Hill North Public School, Christ the King Catholic School Yagoona, HopePoint Christian School Georges Hall, Salamah College, St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, St Euphemia College, Yagoona Public School, Villawood East Public School, and Villawood North Public School. I would like to thank all of the students who sat the NAPLAN last year for their incredible work, and the impressive level of adaptability they have all demonstrated during such challenging times. I am very proud of the students in my electorate, and their terrific achievements. I would also like to thank all the principals, teachers, administrative staff, parents and guardians, who have provided immeasurable assistance to our students.

STAR SCIENTIFIC

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—The Central Coast is home to a range of fantastic and innovative companies. Star Scientific who are based in Berkeley Vale were recently highlighted on the world stage for their innovative tech development. Star Scientific's 'HERO' technology uses hydrogen to create unlimited, affordable, safe, and reliable heat – with zero emissions. This technology saw the company win the 24th Annual South by Southwest [SXSW] Innovation Awards New Economy category. To be judged alongside innovators and creators from across the world is an incredible achievement and winning the award shows the ingenuity of the technology and recognises its importance in solving real energy challenges the world is facing. Congratulations to Chairman Andrew Horvath and the rest of the team at Star Scientific.

CENTRAL COAST SURF PRO

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Recently the Central Coast hosted one of 4 World Surf League Qualifying Series surfing competitions. The Vissla and Sissrevolution Central Coast Pro 2022 was held at Avoca Beach thanks to the NSW Government's partnership with Surfing NSW. Congratulations to Central Coast locals Macy Callaghan and Molly Picklum took out the top two spots in the women's final. Kalani Bell took out the top spot in the men's event. Molly Picklum and fellow coastie Joel Vaughan were winners in the Central Coast Pro Junior. I would also like to acknowledge that the competition is leading the way as the first surf pro with pay parity with a total prize pool of \$30,000 for men and women. Thank you to Surfing NSW CEO Luke Madden for his incredible work to show off what the Central Coast has to offer. This was an incredible opportunity to showcase Avoca to fans of surfing and beneficial to local businesses including accommodation providers and hospitality venues. Congratulations to all the participants and I wish them the best of luck in the upcoming competitions.

GRAFTON SPORTING CAR CLUB

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Grafton Sporting Car Club for the support and opportunities they afford their members, which is a springboard that allows them to achieve their goals. At the age of 24 Blake Evans, who has used the Car Club's tracks for many years for his karts, is now part of the F1 community at PWR on the Gold Coast as a mechanical engineer. He also recently was in Saudi Arabia working with HASS F1. This wonderful achievement highlights the importance of local sporting clubs and associations and the need for governments to continue to provide funding that allows these sporting organisations to upgrade their facilities. I wish Blake continued success into the future and I also offer Graham Merry, President

of the Grafton Sporting Car Club, and his Executive continued success in the running of this amazing local sporting club.

MICHELLE WELLARD

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Wallsend local Michelle Wellard has been awarded the Work Integrated Learning Student of the Year by the University of Newcastle in recognition of her efforts during a hospital placement as part of her Bachelor of Midwifery. Work integrated learning is the term given to educational activities that integrate academic learning of a discipline with its practical application in the workplace. During her time at the Belmont Midwifery Group Practice, Michelle focused on one-to-one woman-centred continuity of care experiences [CCE's]. CCE involves providing care for women throughout their pregnancy, birth and postnatal period, ultimately improving outcomes for both mother and baby. Michelle structured her learning around four CCE women with varied support needs, including vulnerable patients. Going above and beyond, she was able to transform what might have been an ordinary part of her degree by embracing extensive opportunities to engage in mentorship with experienced midwives. Her confident, patient-centred approach, understanding each woman's hopes and concerns, is why Michelle is a worthy recipient of this award—and more importantly why I am sure she will make a truly fantastic midwife.

GLENDORE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Glendore Public School on their appointment. Glendore Public School is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. The outstanding staff at Glendore Public School work alongside the parent and student body to uphold their motto "Where Everyone Can Succeed" by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind hearted students at Glendore 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 Glendore Public School's values. I congratulate the 2022 Student Leaders, Prime Ministers Fletcher and Amelia, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Liam, Minister for Communications, Harry, Minister for Education, Isabella, Minister for the Environment, Paige, Minister for Sport, Nate and Minister for Wellbeing, Vincent 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 Glendore Public School.

LAMBTON PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Earlier this year, Lambton Public School students in each class from Year 2 upwards elected a class Student Representative Council representative. The SRC has an important role to play in providing a student 'voice' to decision making at the school, and are responsible for choosing the charities that the school supports. Congratulations to these wonderful representatives, chosen by their peers: Ivy Brogan from Class 1/2S; Chiara Thoeni from Class 2J; Holly Lacey from Class 2O; Penny Ireland from Class 3W; Violet Borg from Class 3/4M; Kayla James from Class 4/5B; Acacia March-Dickinson from Class 5L; Liam Marcus from Class 5/6N; and finally Will Saxby from Class 6CS. The Lambton Public School leadership team, led by Principal David Holland, has always aimed to empower students and have their say in the running of the school. In 2022, the school aims to give the SRC a role to play in improving environmental practices—particularly fitting, as young people have a vested interest in the environment. Congratulations to Lambton Public School's 2022 Student Representative Council! I wish them all the best for the coming year.

AMITY COLLEGE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise Amity College at Prestons. This school commenced in 1996 and has developed significantly since then. I have been associated with it over this time. An event occurred on 18.3.22 to celebrate the 2021 HSC and ATAR results of the students. I acknowledge Executive Principal Mehmet Koca, previous Executive Principal Deniz Erdogan, Boys High School Principal Hasan Dagli, Girls High School Principal Omer Ayvaz and Adam Sayadi, representative of the Sule and Amity Graduates Association. The event was a celebration not just of the individual achievements of particular students, but the collective achievement of the school as an institution as well as the efforts of those supporting the students – their families and broader networks and of course the teachers and staff at Amity College. There were also speeches by Laila Safi (ATAR of 99.40) and by Girls School Dux Manal Khan (an ATAR of 99.9). There were also many other excellent results and state rankings in Maths Advanced, PDHPE, Biology and Turkish. These results were achieved in the face of a pandemic. This demonstrated admirable resilience on the part of the students.

THE WYONG ROOS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)—The Wyong Leagues Club history goes back to 1900 possibly even 1893. Recently the Wyong Roos have debuted their first senior women's Rugby League team. The women's team took two years to set up. Wyong Roos has successfully catered for three junior league teams which has 70 girls enrolled at the club. The program was a transition for girls who played touch football and wanted to move into contact sport. Congratulations to Sarah Dimech on her recent promotion as the Ladies Coach and Development Officer. This league is a great asset to our community and I congratulate the Wyong Leagues club and Wyong Roos on all of their achievements.

QUEEN'S SCOUT TOBY STONE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was honoured to attend 1st/2nd Merrylands Scouts on 28 February for the presentation of Toby Stone's Queen's Scout award. 1st/2nd Merrylands Scouts offers great training in lifeskills through fun activities. Starting with Joeys aged 5 and upwards to Cubs to Scouts to Venturers to Rovers. The Queen's Scout Award is the highest award that can be achieved in the Venturer section and is a significant achievement. To achieve the award a Venturer Scout must be able to set a goal; plan progress towards that goal; organise their self and others; and maintain the determination to overcome difficulties and complete the task. Despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic, Toby spent countless hours fulfilling his Queen's Scout Award challenges in categories such as personal development, leadership, outdoors, environment and citizenship. I congratulate Toby for his remarkable achievement and wish him well for his training to be a Joey Scout Leader. Thanks again to Group Leader Jeanie Wood for the invitation and for the opportunity to join Toby on this special occasion.

SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Students from Catholic schools across Sydney recently took part in the Sydney Catholic Schools Swimming Championships at the Sydney Olympic Aquatic Centre in Homebush. Mary Mackillop College students Gabrielle Parsons and Karoline Fasavalu both participated in the events along with almost a thousand other students. The swimming carnival was a celebration of the sport as well as a chance for Catholic School students across Sydney to come together and represent their school community. Sydney Catholic Schools believes that sport should be for everyone from non-competitive participants right up to elite level. I extend my congratulations to all medal winners and participants in the Sydney Catholic Schools Swimming Championships 2022.

ESSENCE OF ASIA FUNDRAISER – KHMER COMMUNITY NSW INC.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On Friday 25 March 2022 I attended the Essence of Asia fundraising event at the Khmer Temple in Bonnyrigg, organised by the Khmer Community NSW Inc in partnership with Good Neighbour Australia and Good Neighbour International. The event was well-attended and was a celebration of traditional dance, music and costume. Authentic Cambodian food was on sale at the event, with all proceeds going support of the children and families who have escaped to the Ukrainian and Polish borders as a result of the conflict in the Ukraine. Good Neighbour International have a team of volunteers assisting at the Ukrainian/Polish borders and are in need of support and the Khmer Community NSW Inc were generous enough to step in to assist. I congratulate Mr Srey Kang, President of the Khmer Community NSW Inc on a very successful event which will see much-needed funds make their way to the Ukraine.

HARMONY DAY 2022 – VERONA SCHOOL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On 25 March students and teachers of Verona School in Villawood came together to celebrate Harmony Day. The theme of the day was "Celebrating Our Cultural Diversity" and students were encouraged to wear the colour orange to get into the spirit of harmony Week 2022. It was a day for the school community to recognise the various different cultures which co-exist in the community and at school. Students and staff had an assembly and then were treated to a picnic lunch comprised of many orange foods, followed by outdoor games, all while surrounded by flags of all nationalities which were draped around the school. I commend Principal Carla Scott and staff as well as the students of Verona School for the acknowledgement of Harmony Day in such a festive manner and for their understanding of the importance of the Message of Harmony Day in Australian society.

HUNTER WORKERS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Hunter Workers Women's committee who hosted a fundraiser film screening for Got Your Back Sista recently at Maitland Hoyts Cinema. Women of Steel's director Robynne Murphy led a discussion after the screening of the documentary which tells the remarkable and inspiring story of an Australian landmark victory against BHP in Wollongong. A diverse but united group of

migrants, unionists and feminists won a 14 year fight for women to work at the Wollongong Steelworks in the 1980s/90s. The documentary follows the courageous battle of the women to gain the right to work, to equal pay and freedom from harassment and discrimination and shows the integral part migrant women played in the emancipation of all women in the Australian steel industry. Women of Steel is an inspiring call to action and a beacon of hope for a new generation of women who are on the frontline of inequality, discrimination and sexism at work. Thank you to Leigh Shears, Hunter Workers and the Women's Committee for hosting an inspiring event in Maitland, which raised much needed funds for our sisters experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence. An excellent International Women's Day event!

NATIVE FOOD GARDEN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Slow Food Hunter Valley on the new native food garden at the Maitland-Rutherford Guides Hall. The garden was funded under the Federal Communities Environment Grant Program, sourced through the Federal Member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson MP. According to Slow Food Leader Anne Kelly, Amorelle Dempster led the process with support from Ian Clarke, Pauline Chesworth and Jarrad Long as the contracted landscaper. Many of the plants were sourced from Noel Jupp at Riverdene and the Maitland Woodturners produced and donated the plants signs. Last Sunday I was at the handover, and observed the 30 species of Australian native plants, reflecting the biodiversity of local indigenous foods used by Aboriginal people along the east coast and hinterland of New South Wales. Jill Norburn and Senior Guides prepared a scrumptious afternoon tea of freshly baked velvet mint bush scones using leaves from their own bush garden as well as many other delights. The finished project is the living result of countless hours of hard work and collaboration by a number of community groups and volunteers. The Guides will now look after the garden, monitor the plants growth, flowering and fruiting, and collect seeds for propagation.

BOLWARRA LANDCARE 2.0

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Hunter Region Landcare Network and Maitland City Council who have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to help support Landcare, and to commit resources to establish two sites across the Local Government Area in the first year. One of these projects is to restart the Bolwarra Landcare group. This is a great opportunity to start making immediate improvements to the natural environment of the Bolwarra area. With a changing climate, drought, fires and floods and increasing development, we need Landcare groups more than ever to ensure that the precious public lands we have left are managed properly, to eradicate weeds and regenerate local native flora and fauna. I acknowledge the important role Landcare plays throughout New South Wales in bringing together farmers, landholders, conservationists and nature lovers, of all ages through vital projects and shared goals. Unfortunately Bolwarra Landcare's recent Working Bee had to be postponed due to the wet weather. The good news is that it has been rescheduled to 30th April from 9am to 11am at John Wilkinson Sporting Complex, and I'm hoping I can attend and share some of my love of gardening and nature with the group.

SHARE THE LOVE PROJECT

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—A newly formed group targeting homelessness and financial hardship is gaining momentum in my Electorate called the 'Share the LOVE Project' which offers essential items and access to support services. Community representatives Felicity Fough and Mum Vicki Crawley have developed a self-funded aid service that offers donations of groceries, clothing and toiletries for our homeless population on the Mid North Coast. Share the LOVE Project was inspired by mother and daughter combo in an effort to create a one-stop-shop which offers practically all the essentials for people facing hardships and struggles. Created over the Christmas period and launched in January, Felicity and Vicki hope to gain charity status in the near future to expand their footprint across the Port Macquarie-Hastings community and help other groups with much needed resources. Felicity and Vicki are always looking for volunteers to lend a hand. Donations are always welcome and contact with this passionate pair can be made through their Facebook page. They also accept fuel and phones so people experiencing isolation can connect with support services. I thank Felicity and Vicki for their generosity and kindness in helping those less fortunate living in our community.

SELECTION INTO LOWER NORTH COAST FOOTBALL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I recognise Camden Haven High School trio Charlie Forster, Will Naven and Sam Smythe for their recent selection for the Lower North Coast CHS Football side. Impressing the selectors recently to score a position in the Lower North Coast Football team each of these students impressed the selectors with their performance against rivals Hastings Secondary College in the Combined High Schools [CHS] Puma Cup Round Three. Convenor for Lower North Coast Rodney Rowe noted the particularly high standard on display this year by all the school teams on the Mid North Coast with quite a few standout players in the strikers. Sam Smythe is one of the standout performers for the season to date after utilising his classy skills to shoot a free-kick from outside the 18-yard box to score a goal to remember against Melville High School on

18th March. A trio already displaying so much promise and talent, I congratulate the boys for their selection and wish them every success for the upcoming season.

THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATORS OUTSTANDING GRADUATE AWARD 2021

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I congratulate Blake Jamison and Madison Barbara who are former students at Charles Sturt University recently presented with the prestigious Outstanding Graduate Award from the Australian College of Educators. Blake and Madison were both honoured on the 22 December 2021 at a presentation ceremony held at Charles Sturt University for their outstanding academic performance and teaching practices at Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus and Lake Cathie Public School. As part of the award, the pair will enjoy a complimentary five-year membership with the Australian College of Educators. Madison was acknowledged for her academic excellence after completing a Bachelor of Education (K-12) in 2021 along with her past 12 months with Lake Cathie Public School. Blake is another leader in education who completed his Bachelor of Education (K-12) in 2021, attaining a high distinction in all math related subjects. He has now moved on to Mackillop College to join the Mathematics Faculty after teaching at Hastings Secondary College in 2021. I congratulate Blake and Madison for their academic achievements and thank them for their passion and commitment to teaching.

KIM JONES - GRIFFITH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise and thank Kim Jones for her outstanding service to the Griffith community as the only Lymphedema Occupational Therapist in the area. Kim works tirelessly leaving no page unturned to assist her patients while being allocated only one day a week at the Griffith Base Hospital. Kim goes above and beyond to ensure her patients receive the best, most individualised treatment possible. Last year, she provided laser treatment to a cancer patient who had developed a condition on his neck that affected his daily life. This successful treatment by Kim enabled the patient to improve his speech, breathing, swallowing and range of movement in his neck, enabling him to return to a more normal life. Kim's service is critical to the health and wellbeing of our communities. She is well respected, dedicated, compassionate and approachable. Kim is a great asset to the health community and her hard work is greatly appreciated. Kim, it is a pleasure to honour you today.

RESILIENT TWEED COMMUNITY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—In a change to the usual practice of praising or congratulating one particular person or organisation, I wish to acknowledge the resilience and spirit of the entire Tweed community following the record flood event of February 2022. As the flood waters rose, evacuation centres at Kingscliff TAFE and Murwillumbah TAFE opened and were supported by community members mobilising with bedding, food and other necessities of life for evacuees and, in many cases, their pets. As the flood waters receded and residents returned to their devastated homes, the community again rallied with donations of food and water and an army of volunteers to help remove the mud and ruined possessions of strangers-now-neighbours. Volunteers too numerous to mention, the local "Mud Army", Tweed Shire Council officers, the SES, church groups, FACS, ServiceNSW, and the ADF continue to clear, clean and rebuild. The Recovery Centres in Chinderah and Murwillumbah have been invaluable in dealing with post-flood inquiries and providing support, direction and advice. I would simply like to acknowledge the work of the entire community that came together in response to this natural disaster.

SHARON CURRY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I note the passing of Sharon Curry, who gave more than three decades of devoted service to protection of the environment in Byron Shire. Sharon served as a key figure of the Byron Environment Centre, nurturing the health of the waterways and bushlands of the Shire for 31 years with grace and wisdom, teaching Earth restoration practices long before they became well-known. Sharon was a great friend of the Belongil wetlands, co-ordinating a chemical-free restoration project there and removing weeds and replanting with natives. She was also pro-active in the reforestation of land around the Steiner school in Ewingsdale. Other projects involved saving of wallum country at Belongil and the Binyabutts campaign to prevent cigarette butts being disposed of on Byron's beaches and streets. Sharon's was a loud voice in the No Mackin Way' campaign to keep McDonalds outlets out of Byron in the early 1990s, and the refusal of Club Med and Becton developments at Belongil, and to all inappropriate development in the region. She was a gentle but a committed and determined warrior, and will be much missed.

NEWROZ KURDISH NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Tuesday 22 March 2022, I attended the Newroz Kurdish New Year celebration co-hosted by Stephen Bali MP, Jamie Parker MP and the Federation of Democratic Kurdish Society Australia. Newroz is the Kurdish celebration of Nowruz, which is the arrival of spring and the new year

in Kurdish culture. Newroz is considered an important festival and is a time for entertainment such as games, dancing, family gathering, preparation of food and the reading of poetry. Newroz is especially important to the Australian Kurdish community as Kurds in Australia not only celebrate Newroz, as the beginning of the new year, but also as the Kurdish National Day. The Australian Kurdish community in Sydney are a valuable part of our society. I am very glad that they had this opportunity to celebrate their New Year and National Day at the Parliament of New South Wales. Congratulations to the Federation of Democratic Kurdish Society Australia, this was a great event to meet with members of our Kurdish community and learn more about their culture. I look forward to attending more Kurdish events in the future.

BLUE RIBBON BALL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Saturday 26 March 2022, it was wonderful to attend the NSW Police Legacy Blue Ribbon Ball at the International Convention Centre, Sydney. The Blue Ribbon Ball is a fantastic annual event and the largest NSW Police Legacy fundraiser. It is an opportunity for our community to recognise and acknowledge the proud traditions and history of the NSW Police Force. Whilst paying homage to the dedication of the NSW Police Force and remembering the officers we have lost in the line of service. This year the Ball held extra significance as it marked 20 years since the first Ball was held. The "Blue Ribbon Memorial Dinner", as it was known back then, was first held in 2002, to honour Constable Glenn McEnallay, who was tragically killed on duty at the age of 26. Thank you to Superintendent Garry Merryweather, Chairperson, NSW Police Legacy and all hard working members of the NSW Police Legacy for your continued efforts in supporting our NSW Police Force, Legatees and families. Thank you to NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb APM for your leadership and support. We celebrate the memory of Constable McEnallay, his family, and the memory of all our fallen Police.

BANGLADESH NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Monday 28 March 2022, I attended the Bangladesh Independence and National Day reception held at the Parliament of NSW. It was an honour to once again spend time with His Excellency, Khandler Masudul, Bangladesh Consul General for New South Wales and Queensland, who organised the event. The Independence and National Day of The People's Republic of Bangladesh is a national holiday to celebrate Bangladesh's declaration of independence from Pakistan on 26th March 1971. Independence was eventually achieved on 16th December 1971 after a nine-month guerrilla war which resulted in the death of 3 million Bangladeshi men, women and children. I pay my respects to the martyrs who died fighting for their independence during this conflict. The Australian Bangladeshi community in Sydney are a valuable part of our society and I am very glad that they had this opportunity to celebrate their National Day at the Parliament of New South Wales. Congratulations to His Excellency the Consul General and his staff for organising a successful event. It was wonderful to meet with members of the Bangladeshi community and learn more about their culture. I look forward to attending more events organised by the Bangladeshi Consulate.

2021 WESTFIELD LOCAL HEROES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—Today I congratulate the 2021 Westfield Local Heroes in my local area. Speaker, every year a number of local leaders are nominated and voted for by their local areas under the Westfield Local Heroes program. To win the award, nominees must be an excellent community role model who makes a positive impact on their community or environment. Speaker, Lucillia Chan from the Hurstville Community Garden Association, Annette Mayne from the Reconnect Project and Sonya Sarkis from the Sweet Dreams Foundation are all perfect examples of what a good community role model should be. All three are well-deserving of this award as each of them in their own unique way have demonstrated their enthusiasm to make our community a better place. Speaker, Lucillia, Annette and Sonya will each receive a \$10,000 grant to their affiliated organisations to help them improve and continue the work they do in our community. I want to congratulate all three of them and wish them the very best in their future endeavours.

FIKRY H. ATALLA

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I recognise a wonderful member of my community, Mr Fikry Atalla. Mr Atalla, a local Mortdale resident, is a role model for his fellow citizens as his work ethic and dedication to his passions are something to be admired. For around 30 years, Mr Atalla has taught our future generations, starting out at Alexandria Boys High in 1960. He later moved to Birrong Boys High in 1971 as a science teacher and then onto the North Sydney Marist College in 1973. He concluded his long teaching career at Kingsgrove North High School in 1990 as the Senior Science and Physics teacher. Mr Atalla has also been a Justice of the Peace since 1983 providing an essential service to his local community. He also worked for the Egyptian Olympics Team in the 2000 Paralympic Games. Speaker, Mr Atalla exemplifies what it means to be a role model citizen as he has devoted himself to helping others through his

teaching skills and commitment to his community. I would like to wish him all the very best and commend him on his actions.

LOUD SHIRT DAY – THE SHEPHERD CENTRE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—Today I acknowledge the great work that The Shepherd Centre is doing to support thousands of children who are hearing impaired. Speaker, for those who are hearing impaired the importance of developing solid methods of communication is crucial to ensuring the best possible quality of life. Speaker, Loud Shirt Day is a fantastic initiative by The Shepherd Centre which aims to raise awareness about the importance of early intervention and life development supports for children with a hearing impairment. On Loud Shirt Day people are encouraged to wear a bright, loud shirt to visually demonstrate their support for those with a hearing impairment. I would encourage everyone in this House to get involved and support such a worthwhile cause. I would like to thank David Brady, the Director of Advocacy and Engagement, as well as the entire team at The Shepherd Centre for their great work in communities right across our state and in my local area.

ELENA MULHAM DENILIQUN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to congratulate Elena Mulham of Deniliquin for her outstanding achievements in the 2022 Riverina Secondary Swimming Carnival [RSSC]. Held over one day in Leeton, Elena proved herself as one of the most skilled swimmers of her age, breaking both a 19 and 20 year old record. Her 100 metre freestyle broke not only a 21 year old record, but beat it by an outstanding 2.5 seconds. Elena's dedication to the sport is truly commendable, with teachers describing her as the first one in the pool, and the last one out. Despite losing numerous swimming partners and teachers, Elena still manages to stay motivated and excel in the sport. Few are more deserving of recognition than Elena, and I can't wait to see what she achieves in the future. Once again, congratulations, Elena.

DR NHI NGUYEN

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I recently attended the Penrith CBD Corporation's International Women's Day Breakfast at Penrith RSL. During the event I was privileged to announce Dr Nhi Nguyen as the Penrith Local Woman of the Year. This well-deserved honour acknowledges Nhi's hard work across our region. Nhi has and continues to lead the intensive care unit at Nepean Hospital as it responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nhi also played a significant role in designing the state-wide response that was deployed to hospitals across NSW. She is one of the most highly regarded and well respected Doctors not just in Nepean Blue Mountains LHD, but across NSW. Nhi's energy and commitment to serving our community is to be commended and it was my absolute privilege to acknowledge her with this award. While this award is recognition of Nhi's individual contribution, it's also recognition of the exceptional work done by our local LHD staff in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Events like this are possible thanks to the sponsorship they receive so I extend my thanks to Bespoke Realty, Nepean Regional Security, Penrith RSL and NAB. In addition, a shout out to Penrith Selective High Schools ensemble who performed the background music.

CAMPBELLTOWN JOGGERS CLUB

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Getting active is not only good for the body, it is good for the mind. Often having a friend or two to do exercise with you makes all the difference in terms of motivation. That is why clubs such as the Campbelltown Joggers Club are so important. For 46 years the Campbelltown Joggers Club has been providing locals and running enthusiasts with an opportunity to exercise in a more formal and social setting. A crucial aspect of the club is that it caters for runners and walkers of all abilities – making it a truly inclusive organisation. It was a meeting at the Campbelltown CIVIC Centre On December 6, 1975 that signalled the intentions of likeminded individuals to get together and form the club. Just over a month after that meeting the inaugural club run was held at Bradbury Oval. Over the years those at the club have also worked with Campbelltown Council to help host the annual Fisher's Ghost Fun Run. The club has certainly stood the test of time with about 250 people members today. Congratulations to everyone who has been and/or continues to be involved with the Campbelltown Jogger Club.

SEAHAM SCHOOL PARLIAMENT OPENING 2022

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens)—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 has 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 – a parliamentary team that would hold its own right here in this chamber. I would like to commend Seaham Prime Minister Julian Vella, Leader of the Opposition Addison Elbourne, and the two

Sergeants-At-Arms Lucy Taylor and Barney Meehan. I also acknowledge the governor general – or school principal - Mr Partridge, the school's teachers - or senators, and congratulate their respective Speakers, Ministers and Shadow Ministers; Dali Bobako, Hayden Edwards, Lachlan Pascoe, Shelby Griffis, Billie Drew, Charlotte Bacon, Sofia Vella, Mia Laver, Lila Foot, Sam Burey, Milly Bridge, Larni Kennedy, Kayla Kennedy, Andrew Stapleton, Flynn Imber, and Aidan Crowley. The future leaders of Port Stephens are shining in Seaham!

PATRICIA CUDMORE AND BETTY JACOBS – CRONULLA NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Patricia Cudmore of Caringbah on being a finalist in the 2022 Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. Patricia is a dedicated and active member of St Vincent de Paul Society in the Sutherland Shire and has also been regional president for one year after serving as Miranda conference president for three years. As well as leading the organisation's service to people in need in the Shire, Patricia's role sees her helping oversee the 1,000 St Vincent de Paul members across Sydney. Patricia is appreciated as an inspiration to many, a hard worker and a great community leader. I congratulate Betty Jacobs of Kurnell on being a finalist in the 2022 Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. Betty's family was involved with building the Kurnell guide hall in the early 1960s and she has been helping with the guides ever since. She's also been bringing locals together as president of the Kurnell Pensioners Club for more than 10 years, while making library bags for school kids and knitting blankets for people in need. Betty is a tireless worker for the Kurnell community.

MILTON SHOW

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the Milton Show Society and their efforts to think quick when it came to having to postpone the 152nd Milton Show, although they still went ahead with the exhibitions in the pavilion. Even though the 152nd Milton Show has been postponed for the safety of the community, the show judges and the animals, the Milton Shows exhibits inside the pavilion were a big hit for people of all ages. Over the duration of the two days thousands of people went through the pavilions, president of the Milton Show Society, Ken Leslie said it was a shame to have to postpone the outdoor events, due to the torrential rain the South Coast experienced. Everyone involved volunteers, committee members and those who entered the competitions worked tirelessly to make the pavilion a great success and I was pleased to hear it was a fantastic day. It is great to see so many locals come together and support our community even in tough times, I look forward to hearing how the rest of the show turns out with the new date being announced for April 29th – 30th, 2022.

CORALIE SMITH

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate young Coralie Smith who is now a student at Ulladulla High School, she is being awarded a finalist for Scout of the Year for all her outstanding efforts. Coralie is just 12 years old and has already made her mark by helping change lives, last year she organised the donation of coats and jackets to help homeless people around Ulladulla survive a bitter winter. After seeing a homeless man with a baby in a tent it inspired her to come up with this incredible idea so she made it her mission to raise the issue with her school peers asking for donations for warm winter jackets. Coralie determination and imagination also saw her organise her fellow students from Ulladulla high to write cards to Afghani Refugees, letting them know they're welcome in Australia, she wanted to do what she could to make them feel welcomed. These amazing efforts make Coralie a very worthy runner up for the Scout of the Year competition. She has been given the costs of attending the jamboree as part of the Australian contingent along with some spending money, what an outstanding achievement.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—The Ulladulla and District Community Resource Centre's recent international Women's Day event saw six local women who share a connection for working for their community, where awards were presented for their dedication and commitment to our community. Which saw winners Kim Gregory, Carlie Young, Catherine Craig, Lyn Steven, Tracy Griffin, and Marion Gallagher presented with awards, these women have been recognised for their outstanding duties to our local community. These women have serviced our community and contribute to our community in many ways which includes things such as volunteering at local homeless shelters, joining the local SES, ensuring food security, offering support to those in need, Volunteering in community care to even being a founding member of the Ulladulla Stroke Club. These ladies have done a considerable amount of services for our community which will always be commemorated in our community, I am pleased to have upstanding members apart of our community. I would like to congratulate these six local women for their hard work and dedication in our community you all have made an impact to many people significantly and as a community we are forever grateful.

BOB PATERSON

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)—I wish to congratulate and thank former President and Director of the Balgowlah RSL Memorial Club, Bob Paterson. Bob has served the club for 10 years, including 4 years as its President. The Balgowlah RSL is affectionately known in the community as "The Bally" and is a thriving hub for the local community. The Club has transformed itself numerous times during the last 10 years and I'm sure the Board and the clubs members will miss Bob's stewardship and guidance. I wish Bob the best of luck in his future endeavours and thank him for his tremendous service to the RSL and the Community.

ANNA BARWICK – 2022 NSW PREMIER'S WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise PhD student and practising pharmacist, Ms Anna Barwick for her achievements and commitment to uplifting the lives and health outcomes of regional women. Ms Barwick initiated PharmOnline, a telehealth advisor service that aims to provide Australians with 24/7 remote access to registered, experienced pharmacists. PharmOnline clients range from worried parents to patients with chronic diseases in isolated areas that need advice to manage their medication. Anna's innovation and resilience through drought, floods and COVID demonstrates her capacity to achieve progress for regional communities. These attributes have earned her the 2022 NSW Premier's Woman of the Year at the NSW Women of the Year Awards. This year she has also been named the winner of the NSW Minerals Council Regional Woman of the Year Award. Ms Barwick is a partner of NSW Street Smart, is involved in Country to Canberra leadership initiative and was named the PSA 2021 NSW Pharmacist of the Year. I congratulate Anna on being recognised officially for her many achievements. I commend Ms Barwick on her commitment to improving the health of rural people.

PHOEBE VIMPANY – THE MINISTER'S STUDENT COUNCIL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Ms Phoebe Vimpany for her participation on the Minister's Student Council, Department of Student Voices in Education and Schools [DOVES]. This is a prestigious appointment to the peak forum for interaction between New South Wales public schools students, the department of education and the Minister for Education. As a Year nine student at Glen Innes High School, Phoebe has been active on the Student Representative Council. She took the initiative to submit an online application to serve on the Minister's Student Council, took part in an online verbal interview, and then was selected by DOVES representative students currently serving on executive roles. Together with her school and community participation Phoebe will be an effective contributor to DOVES. The guidance she is given and her experience on the Council can assist Phoebe in future leadership roles. I congratulate Phoebe on her appointment to the Minister's Student Council and I wish her well. I commend Phoebe for her leadership qualities and her active participation in better communication among students, the department of education and the Minister for Education.

NICOLE ALEXANDER – THE LAST STATION

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise author Nicole Alexander for her latest novel, *The Last Station*, depicting the end days of the riverboat trade along the Darling River. Nicole writes from first-hand experience of the harshness of bush life having grown up in the Northern Tablelands and working the family property outside of Mungindi. Her deep love of the land and keen observations add to the inspiration of her novels as rural fiction. However, well into her eleventh book Nicole is recognised as writing Australian historical fiction in appreciation of our pastoral life. With so much attention today on the Darling River, it is a good reminder of the eccentricities of the river systems which *The Last Station* depicts within its colourful storyline. I congratulate Nicole on a stunning literary career. I commend Nicole for her accurate portrayal of the Australian rural life in both modern and historical periods for her global readers to get a glimpse of Australia and its people.

KATE HORROBIN

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the indefatigable Katrina Horrobin. For 10 years Kate has fought tooth and nail to protect residents on the Balmain Peninsula from pollution, noise, vibrations and disruptions from the White Bay Cruise Terminal. She is a self-taught expert in fuel standards, noise regulations, and global best practice in the cruising industry. She has been the main driving force behind our community's nine year campaign for shore to ship power at White Bay, a campaign that culminated in a remarkable win last week. Kate has fronted up to dozens of meetings with various Ministers armed with every possible answer or piece of data. She has lobbied the Port Authority directly. She has organised thousands of letterbox drops and hundreds of pole posters and pushed to keep air pollution at the top of my mind for nine years.

On behalf of the Balmain Electorate, I want to thank you Kate for your years of hard work on behalf of our community. You have made a real difference and I am happy to put that on record in NSW Parliament today.

STOP CRUISE SHIP POLLUTION

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House all the residents from my local area who have contributed to the campaign against cruise ship pollution which culminated last week in a fantastic announcement that shore power will be installed at White Bay Cruise Terminal. I want to thank those residents who started the community campaign back in 2013: Valerie Sundquist, Maree Thomas, John Stamolis, John Priest, Kate Priest, Caren Lockhart, Adrian Lockhart, Kerin Cox, Gill Hazel, Libby Horrobin and Kate Horrobin. I want to thank those who have joined the campaign since then and kept this issue top of mind: Lisa-Marie Murphy, Mark Collier, Valeria Volpini, Kevin Crawshaw, Chrissie Tucker and Helen Gilbert. I had the pleasure of catching up with many of these folks at a residents meeting on Saturday. It was such a delight to get together and swap stories from over the years and thank them personally for all their work. On behalf of the Balmain Electorate, I want to thank you for your years of hard work and of course congratulate you on a job well done.

MICHAEL DOUGLAS AND NEIL REYNOLDS – CRONULLA NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Caringbah's Michael Douglas on being a finalist in the 2022 Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. Michael has been a dedicated contributor to Sutherland Food Services since 2006 as a member of the management committee and board, including time as President. Michael was a guiding light as the organisation navigated the challenge of a boom in demand as a result of COVID-19, visiting the office each week to check on staff and volunteers. He keeps everyone enthused with his energy, wit, upbeat nature and expertise. I congratulate Yowie Bay's Neil Reynolds on being a finalist in the 2022 Cronulla NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. A former school principal, Neil is a much loved and long-time member of Caringbah Baptist Church and is appreciated for his care for families, bringing his sense of fun to kids and listening ear for parents at the church's playgroups and Friday afternoon Adventure program. Neil also has a special way as he helps at Skillz4Me with therapy groups for children with a disability or developmental delay. He is valued as a quiet and committed helper in the community.

GENE MILLS INDUCTED INTO SHEARERS HALL OF FAME

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to congratulate Mr Gene Mills of Young who was inducted into Australia's Shearers Hall of Fame. For Gene, shearing is not just a job but has been a passion. He still shears and is known amongst his peers for always being ready to lend a hand and teach a thing or two to the up and coming generation of young shearers. A fast and clean shearer, something that is always greatly respected in the profession, Gene has a top tally of 450 in lambs and has competed in more than 300 open class competitions with great success. His competitive achievements include having been named winner of Canberra Shearer of the Year five times, Australian Open winner once, and winner of Australian Strong Wool twice as well as taking out the Longreach Diamond Shears in 1992, and internationally winning at the National Stock Show in Denver, Colorado. Gene has also been a member of the Australian Team to New Zealand in 1983 and 1984. I would like to once again congratulate Gene on this deserved recognition.

EMMA MULLER NAWIC 2021 NSW REGIONAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to recognise Emma Muller who was named as the 2021 NSW Regional Woman of the Year' at the National Association of Women in Construction [NAWIC] Awards for Excellence in Sydney on February 23. Emma was given this prestigious award due to her work with Cootamundra's Horizon United Group as Managing Director. The award recognises the contribution and achievements of women in construction in a rural, regional, or remote area of New South Wales. It celebrates women who have made substantial contribution through leadership, sustainability, construction, design, safety and innovation in the industry while being regionally based. Emma is a very deserving recipient of this award and deserves to have her lengthy and very successful career in the construction industry put in the spotlight. She has played a major role in the development of regional NSW through various projects which have all better our small communities for the future. I congratulate Emma on this wonderful achievement and thank her for her work

FAREWELL TO TEMORA LIBRARIAN ROS LANGFORD

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to thank Ros Langford for dedication and hard work to the community of Temora as a librarian for the past Thirty-One years. Ros fell in love with the library after starting off her career

there in 1991. It was meant to be just another job to see her through until she could start work in another planned career, but the joy and wonder of being a librarian captured her heart and began a love affair that has spanned over three decades. This love of books has also led to inspiring children and fostering their appreciation of the written word and stories by providing an experience called 'Storytimes'. Hundreds of children ranging from nought to school age have joined her over the years to not only listen in awe at magical stories, but sing a welcome song, dance together and gather for games and a bounty of crafts. I would like to once again thank Ros for her service and congratulate her on being able to look forward to the next fulfilling chapter of her life.

PETA LAWRENCE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Peta Lawrence of Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie who was awarded the National Medal. Peta joined the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard in 2006. In 2009, Peta attained her Radio Operator Rating and transferred to Marine Rescue NSW, following the formation of Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie's Lake Macquarie Unit. In addition, Peta earned her Crew Rating in 2011, and working mainly within the Radio Stream. In 2014, Peta achieved her Watch Officer Rating. Peta is currently the Roster Administrator. This role involves constantly ensuring adequate manning levels, primarily in the area of radio operations. This is a challenging task. However, Peta possesses the skills to complete it. Peta's dedication to Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie shows that she is committed to helping others. Therefore, she is a deserving recipient of the National Medal. I congratulate Peta on receiving this award. I also thank her for continuously helping the local community.

KY WILLOTT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Ky Willott who has been named as a member of the Australian Men's Hockey squad. Ky is an outstanding young sportsman who consistently strives to do his best in his chosen sport of hockey. In addition to being selected in the Australian squad, Ky has also competed at state and national level. Ky was a member of the NSW Pride team, which won the inaugural Hockey One league comp in 2019. Ky was also awarded the 2019 Basil Sellers Scholarship at the Hockey NSW Awards. As a member of the Australian squad, Ky has moved to Perth to work towards selection in the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the 2024 Olympic Games. Ky's willingness to move across the country to pursue his sporting career demonstrates his drive and determination to succeed. I congratulate Ky on his achievement and wish him all the best with his career and future endeavours.

MARILYN COUSINS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Marylin Cousins of Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie who was awarded the National Medal. Lyn joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 2008. In 2009, Lyn attained her Radio Operator Rating and transferred to Marine Rescue NSW, following the formation of Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie's Lake Macquarie Unit. Lyn has held a number of positions including Admin Officer, Membership Officer, Statistics Officer, Rating Officer and Training Support Officer over the years. She also achieved her Watch Officer Rating in 2013. In addition to her involvement in Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie, Lyn was heavily involved with the Rural Fire Service up until 2018. She also volunteers for the Hunter Medical Research Institute, assisting with fundraising and maintenance of the Institute's databases. Lyn's volunteering efforts demonstrate her passion for helping others and giving back to the local community. Therefore, she is a deserving recipient of the National Medal. I congratulate Lyn on receiving this award. I also thank her for continuously helping the local community.

WINSTON MALL CHILDREN'S CENTRE ANZAC COMMUNITY GRANT

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Winston Mall Children's Centre at Winston Hills in the Seven Hills electorate has been successful for one of 52 grants via the ANZAC Community Grants fund. The Children's Centre was awarded \$500.00 for their project entitled 'Veterans' Stories'. The Children's Centre's project will collect stories, memorabilia and photographs of their family members who are veterans and share this with their peers, teachers and the community. The children will do a 'show and tell' exercise to their class as part of their current learning about veterans and service. Family members will be invited to talk about their experiences and share the rich history with the children at the centre. I thank the current and previous ministers for Veterans for their advocacy in promoting projects that assist in communicating our military histories to local communities across the State.

MARY'S HOUSE AND THE DAISY CENTRE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to acknowledge and commend Mary's House and the Daisy Centre for their important contribution to helping victim-survivors of domestic violence and family violence, including those from the Willoughby electorate. Mary's House is driven and funded by the community to proactively and pre-emptively help women and children escape domestic violence. Working on several fronts,

foremost they provide safety and belonging through immediate support of essentials and emergency accommodation. A highly qualified and dedicated team of caseworkers assist domestic violence victims in rebuilding shattered lives, ultimately acting as a crucial conduit to transitioning into a new and safe life free from violence with their comprehensive relocation service. The Daisy Centre continues this valuable work through providing a safe space with ongoing support services. I applaud Mary's House and the Daisy Centre for their essential efforts in aiding victims of domestic violence to be able to best go about their lives during and after domestic violence. We do not accept domestic violence in our community and these organisations play a vital role for which I thank them.

WILLOUGHBY WILDCATS AFL CLUB

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I am pleased to recognise and commend the Willoughby Wildcats AFL Club for its wonderful community-based effort in bringing local boys and girls aged 5 to 17 years to learn and play AFL. AFL happens to be my wife's favourite code and I love it too. The club fosters an inclusive and fun environment for young people to learn aussie rules football, develop their skills and fitness, make lasting friendships and play in one of Australia's greatest games. The Willoughby Wildcats Auskick program is facilitated by a team of dedicated volunteers and parents. It is exemplary in demonstrating the determined efforts of the community to support others in sport, health and community spirit. I wish the Wildcats well and support them in their ongoing and outstanding efforts in developing young people in their sporting endeavours. Thank you to the club staff, volunteers, parents and players for their hard work that makes this local club strong and successful.

CHATSWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I wish to recognise and commend the long history and continuing strong contribution of the Chatswood Chamber of Commerce which celebrated its centenary last year. Chatswood is the bustling, colourful and impressive commercial centre of my electorate. Organised and run by a diverse group of local business people and community representatives, the Chatswood Chamber of Commerce provides invaluable opportunities for businesses of all kinds. The Chamber facilitates the networking and collaboration of local enterprises, contributing to a more prosperous Willoughby and working towards commercial and employment opportunities for all. The Chamber also contributes to charity events, working with Westfield Chatswood to organise the annual 'Chatswood Sleeps Rough' event. The proceeds from this annual sleep out go towards the work of the Salvation Army Chatswood and Streetwork. I will be next week attending the Chatswood Chamber Federal Budget Breakfast – one of many successful events on its annual calendar. I recognise and thank the Chamber, its leadership including President Warwick Andison, board and all members that make it a successful organisation in Willoughby.

ROD HOLDSWORTH, MARK LLOYD AND ADAM BUCKLEY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I recognise the contribution of three long serving members of Wanda Surf Life Saving Club, Rod Holdsworth, Mark Lloyd and Adam Buckley. Last weekend a new surf boat was christened the Rod 'Stick' Holdsworth to highlight his 20 years of service as a rower, sweep, coach, mentor, gym manager and club vice captain. According to the club, Rod brought a steely determination to the club that has guided the rowers and he always steps up and leads by example. The club's newest IRB was named after Mark 'Lloyd' Lloyd and Adam 'Bucks' Buckley. Mark has been a member since 2011 and IRB captain for three of the seven years he's been with the section. He is known for his leadership in the impeccable maintenance of equipment. Adam Buckley has been part of Wanda since 2008. Adam has served as part of core IRB team for nippers for more than 10 years, as well as helping with emergency rescues and regional call outs for floods. The club says Mark and Adam are the driving force behind the stability, quality and professional response of the IRB team and are exceptional role models to members.

RESILIENT LISMORE HELPING HANDS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to place on the parliamentary record the thanks and gratitude of the Lismore community to Lismore Helping Hands. Born out of the 2017 floods Lismore Helping Hands are a community led recovery effort. In the 2022 floods the rescue and recovery efforts were led by community and Lismore Helping Hands have been at the centre of that. Led by coordinator Elly Bird the group have set up at the library car park recovery centre providing every need from tradies, to donations, food and support. Every day it is a hub of activity. Through their website <https://www.floodhelpnr.com.au/> they have done the challenging but vital task of linking donations to those in need and volunteers to jobs. The website enables volunteers to register to help and flood affected to request help. It matches skill sets with jobs and has been a life line for so many in our community. Right now they are in action helping with the clean up efforts after yet another round of major flooding in Lismore. I thank all the volunteers for their dedication, compassion and hard work. They embody the true power of community.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DAY – NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Each year secondary school leaders from all NSW high schools are invited to visit the Parliament of New South Wales to participate in the Secondary Student Leadership Program, conducted over six separate dates - this year in March and June. The program recognises the school leadership role of students and provides them with the opportunity to meet their elected representatives and to develop their knowledge of constitutional and parliamentary processes including the role of the Governor. During the program students hear from Members and Parliamentary Officers, ask questions of us, view parliamentary proceedings from the public galleries and visit Government House to meet with Her Excellency, the Governor. I wish to acknowledge Clare Mudge and Oliver Cormick from Kygole High School, Charlotte Smith and Haylee White from Bonalbo Central School, Connor McDougald and Emily Shephard from Richmond River High School, Jemma Gilliland and Haylee Jones from Murwillumbah High, Georgia Brown and Carloine Menger from Lismore High School, Julia Wilder-Donvito and Davide Irace from Wollumbin High School. Despite the challenging times facing communities in the Lismore Electorate with major flooding the students represented their school and local communities with distinction, demonstrating their leadership qualities.

TENTERFIELD BUMBLEBEES NEW ENGLAND RUGBY SEASON

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate the fabulous young women at the Tenterfield Bumblebees on starting training to gear up for another season of the New England Rugby Union. This year they are merging with the Glenn Innes Elks to combine their strength and they will still be a fighting force in this year's season. Their persistence and commitment to women's sport is admirable and I am so thrilled to see the season up and running. The Tenterfield Star included a great article about them in a recent publication. The collaboration between the two clubs will see the Bees play in the third grade competition, the Elks in the second grade while the women link up and play under the Elks banner. The Bees hosted their pre-season fundraiser which featured both clubs while the Elks participated in the Armidale Blues knockout carnival in the men's and women's divisions. They will host the Blues for pre-season trials at Elk Park on April 9. I wish the women's team well this year and I hope to catch a game and cheer on the Bees and Elks.

ENDEAVOUR SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Endeavour Sports High School ("Endeavour") on their appointment. Endeavour Sports High School is a beloved community in the Miranda Electorate. Led by outstanding Principal James Kozlowski, the wonderful students at Endeavour inspire each other to achieve their best and help each other along the way. Week to week, the Endeavour community celebrate the numerous achievements of their talented students from sport, to academics, fundraising, volunteering, and making the most of their education journey. Leading by example is the 2022 leadership team who truly embody the values of Endeavour Sports High School. I congratulate School Captains Tamara Girdwood-Reich and Hayden Matthews, Vice Captains Lara Wakeham and Brae Ovens along with Prefects Bronte Prentice, Robyn van Meeteren, Abby Aros, Brock La Macchia, Bailey Nikolovski and Damien Murphy 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 them embrace opportunities throughout the year. I commend the student leaders from Endeavour Sports High School on their success and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

SUPERINTENDENT BRETT STANDALOFT

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I acknowledge Superintendent Brett Standaloft of Oyster Bay who was named a 2022 Australia Day Honours recipient of the Ambulance Service Medal for his significant career as a paramedic. With a father in the police force, Superintendent Standaloft has a longstanding connection to the emergency services. Across more than 25 years with the NSW Ambulance Service, Superintendent Standaloft has held a number of incredible roles including Zone Manager at the Sydney Control Centre Clinical Operations where he manages the flow of ambulances. Superintendent Standaloft has also led large-scale system developments and was instrumental in the creation and implementation of the Inter CAD Electronic Messaging Systems ["ICEMS"] and the Control Resourcing Electronic Worksheet ["CREWS"]. ICEMS is an electronic communications system between emergency services and public safety organisations, which facilitates the rapid sharing of incident requests and messaging to relieve the pressure on telephone communications. Additionally, Superintendent Standaloft's work on CREWS now enables greater visibility of paramedic welfare and fatigue when on duty by increasing access to information, reporting and planning capabilities. I commend Superintendent Brett Standaloft on receiving his Ambulance Service Medal and thank him for his ongoing work serving and assisting our local community.

2022 MIRANDA LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the 2022 Miranda Local Woman of the Year, Cr Laura Cowell of Alford's Point. Laura's story is one of resilience and volunteering. At age 14, Laura found herself living in a refuge and gave birth to her wonderful daughter at 17. From these experiences, Laura developed her passion for supporting women and vulnerable youth in our community. Dedicated to these important causes, Laura has been involved in a number of projects such as Café Y which supports the training of young people in hospitality and cooking. Laura is also the first female Vice President of the Sutherland Shire Football Association, and has volunteered countless hours advocating for community sport. Continuing her campaign to support women, Laura was appointed as the local #GetOnSide 2023 community bid ambassador for the 2023 Australia and New Zealand Women's World Cup and led the bid for the Sutherland Shire to host an international women's team for training. Finally, Laura was recently elected to Sutherland Shire Council where she continues her advocacy for our community. I commend Laura on being named the 2022 Miranda Local Woman of the Year and look forward to following her journey.

PORTRAIT OF HARMONY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—To celebrate Harmony Day this year, libraries around Georges River showcased diverse experiences of local members of the community through their 'Living Libraries' Exhibition. Living Libraries aims to challenge stigmas and stereotypes, and encourage understanding and respect, by offering insights into other people's experiences. As part of the exhibition, the libraries showcased portraits of people in the local community, sharing their personal experiences and stories and highlighting the diversity within the community. One of the stories that has been shared through the exhibition is the story of Lisa McAdams, a domestic violence survivor who has open, honest, and at times confronting conversations about the effects domestic violence has on women's lives emotionally, psychologically, physically, financially and professionally. Another story that has been shared is the story of Zeinab Mahfoud, a first generation born Lebanese-Australian who works in the community sector with refugee, migrant, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, whilst also uplifting the unheard voices of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through her photography.

Congratulations to the libraries of Georges River for this fantastic initiative and allowing the community to experience the stories of so many people living in the community.

HERITAGE COLLEGE YEAR 10 GEOGRAPHY CLASS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—It is always wonderful to see young people taking an active interest in their environment and working to improve local habitats. I'd like to congratulate a group of Year 10 geography students from Heritage College Lake Macquarie who joined with Landcare NSW and OzFish volunteers to rehabilitate shoreline along Lake Macquarie. I should add that Ozfish Unlimited is a charity group which works to improve the health of rivers, lakes and estuaries and protect fish habitat. Led by teacher Amy Pascoe, the 18 students travelled to Salts Bay at Swansea where they helped to plant more than 900 native trees and plants in just 90 minutes. The seedlings replaced bitou bush which, if left unchecked, can smother sand dunes and destroy the habitat of native animals. I understand the students embraced the physical nature of the work and felt a great sense of accomplishment upon seeing the very real difference their mass planting had made to the area. The class had been searching for a project in the community and I think they found an admirable one. Well done to Heritage College Lake Macquarie's Year 10 geography class.

HARMONY DAY 2022

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—On Monday 21 March, we celebrated Harmony Day. In Australia we represent more than 300 ethnicities and 120 faiths. What makes Australians so successful as a nation is how we embrace all the diverse cultures and customs of people from all over the world who call Australia home. This is certainly true in Camden. As our community grows we are welcoming more and more residents from other nations who are choosing to become Australia citizens and calling Camden home. This year's theme "everyone belongs" is all about inclusiveness, respect and fostering a sense of community. On Harmony Day we proudly share and celebrate these diverse stories, beliefs and traditions. Happy belated Harmony Day!

MACARTHUR ANGLICAN SCHOOL AGRICULTURAL SHOW TEAM

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Congratulations to the Macarthur Anglican School Agricultural Show Team on their incredible results at Moss Vale Show. After nearly a year off, twenty students and seven steers went down to tackle the mud and weather conditions, despite this, the team was outstanding. In the Paraders Competition, Christine won her class u14 and placed 3rd overall in the final for her age group. Well done to Ethan, Mikayah and Megan who were selected to represent South Coast and Southern Highlands (Group 5) at the Royal

Easter Show. Congratulations once again on these fantastic results and I wish you all the best at the Royal Easter Show.

MOUNT ANNAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE HICES DEBATING TEAM

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Congratulations to the Mount Annan Christian College Stage 3 HICES Debating Team who recently had their first debate winning against Inaburra. The subject of the debate was that "we should learn to type not write". The HICES team were affirmative, agreeing with the topic. Debating is an invaluable skill for students, promoting confidence and effective public presentation. It encourages logical and critical thinking, social awareness and sparks interest in current affairs. What a fantastic opportunity to represent your school at such success. Congratulations to the students and teacher involved in the debating team and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

BONDI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I wish to congratulate the Bondi Chamber of Commerce and the Bondi Beach Babes for their fantastic fourth Annual International Women's Day Awards. The Bondi Chamber does an incredible job of supporting women in business and women in the community sector, right across the Eastern Suburbs, and their event was a fitting celebration of the amazing work of local women. I wish to congratulate the following, very deserving winners of their respective awards: Bondi Environmentalist of the Year: Sondra Beram from Bru Coffee Bondi; Bondi Humanitarian of the Year: Leah Simmons, Founder of KAAIAA Bondi Health, Beauty and Wellness; Woman of the Year: Dina Savitz from the Mum's Health Collective; Bondi Business Woman of the Year: Julie Stern from Best Life Fitness Bondi; And the Bondi Mother of the Year: Ann Marie Chester. Congratulations to President of the Bondi Chamber, Emmanuel Constantinou, and the wonderful owners of Bondi Beach Babes, Sarah Launt and Amy Lynch for another successful International Women's Day event. Special thanks also to the Bondi Beach Public Bar for their excellent work in hosting the event.

WE'RE BETTER THAN THAT CAMPAIGN

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I acknowledge the amazing work done by the Central & Eastern suburbs Public Health Network and Eastern Suburbs Domestic Violence Network to create the We're Better Than That Campaign. This campaign is an invaluable resource for prevention of domestic violence and to promote respect and healthy relationship strategies. The short films also look to encourage men to be active bystanders when they witness behaviour that contributed to domestic violence. This is because the organisations involved – including partner organisations such as Deli Women's & Children's Centre; Hope, Believe, Shine & Woollahra, Randwick, Waverly & Bayside Councils – ensured that direction from experts guided the campaign. Thank you to producers Afterglow Films and Micheal Power, development leaders Vicki Johnston and Melinda Leves, project manager Brenna Harding, Chair of the local Primary Health Network Dr Michael Wright and the influential men who star in the campaign, including local Bondi Lifeguard Bruce "Hopppo" Hopkins and local cricketing legend Mike Whitney.

CLOVELLY CROCS SEASON LAUNCH

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—It was fantastic to recently attend the Clovelly Crocodiles Junior Rugby League Club's annual season launch. The Crocs are a wonderful, family friendly local sporting club, who are entering their 105th season of rugby league. Not only have the Crocs brought fitness, fun and a sense of community to generations of young players, but they have also produced some of the game's greatest players, including Victor Radley, Shaun Kenny-Dowall, Taane Milne and Lachlan Lam. The Crocs have also done a fantastic job at growing the women's games and are always looking to have more girls and young women take up this grand old game. It was a privilege to award life membership of the Clovelly Crocodiles to club legend, Trudy Devereux! Volunteers are the backbone of community sporting club and Trudy has provided many years of brilliant service to the Crocs and their community. Congratulations Trudy and all the best to the Crocs for the season ahead.

KENNETH COLEMAN 2022 HEATHCOTE SENIOR'S LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Kenneth Coleman recognised in Heathcote 2022 Senior's Local Achievement Awards. Ken was an active member of Rotary for over a decade particularly as Sylvania Rotary President. In 2012, Ken joined Dandelion Support Network, a not-for-profit supporting children and families in need. He's driven trucks around Sydney, collecting donated goods from offsite donation days. Driven full trailers from local donation days at church halls to sort, receive and collate goods in local houses. Ken uses his incredible handyman skills to support Dandelion, assembling cots, bassinets and changing tables. He fixes large nursery items and takes items home to fix in his spare time. He volunteers once a week at the warehouse but in reality

volunteers many more hours. As Dandelion has expanded, he has helped install shelving units for donation storage and assisted corporate volunteer groups. His community spirit also stretches beyond Dandelion, sponsoring 2 students at St Judes, Tanzania, where he visited and spent a fortnight volunteering as a teacher. I commend Ken as a Heathcote 2022 Senior's Local Achievement Awards recipient. Ken's a devoted volunteer, tireless advocate and a true example of community dedication. I thank him for his service.

PAT KENNEDY HEATHCOTE SENIOR LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINEE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to congratulate Pat Kennedy who was nominated for a Heathcote Senior Local Achievement Award. Pat has tirelessly worked to preserve the environment in our community as Chair of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre and has worked to preserve the character of the area. Pat's written a number of books: Long Bay which received a prestigious Royal Australian Historical Society Grant, From Bottle Forest to Heathcote about the first suburb of the Sutherland Shire, From Long Bay to Malabar a history of Malabar and several children books. He is also an Ambassador for the Barbara May Foundation and assisted with the writing of a Doctor in Africa, an account of Dr Andrew Browning's work helping African women affected by obstetric fistulas. Pat cares about his community and has been an advocate for his local area. He volunteers at the Heathcote Anglican church as service leader and sometimes preacher and inspires others to value and protect the quality and amenity of the places where they live. His efforts build a wonderful sense of community. I commend Pat on his outstanding contribution to preserving both the natural beauty and history of our community.

SANDRA BOURNE HEATHCOTE SENIOR LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINEE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to congratulate Sandra Bourne who was nominated for a Heathcote Senior Local Achievement Award. Sandra owns The Everything Shop and helps the poor, homeless and anyone in need. She repurposes donations with a passion and gives whatever she can. Her shop has become a safe haven for many. Sandra also sponsors various animal rescue organisations and charities including Country Companion Animal Rescue in Helensburgh, Dandelion, Anglican Church Engadine, Tonga/Fiji appeal and Cambodian Children's Trust. I commend Sandra on her outstanding commitment and contribution to the community.

CHARLOTTE NASH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Congratulations to Charlotte Nash, a student in my electorate from Emmaus Catholic College who has just recently been announced as a winner of the Runner Up Prize in the Executive Director's Summer Reading Challenge for Catholic Schools. Every summer, students at Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta's 80 schools are encouraged to hit the books through the Executive Directors Summer Reading Challenge. Right across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, these children and young people have the chance to win prizes for every time they read something new. It is a great initiative to get our youth actively reading and giving more chances to learn or expand creativity over the summer. Congratulations to Charlotte Nash on a great effort.

DILPREET KAUR

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Congratulations to Dilpreet Kaur, a student in my electorate from Caroline Chisholm College Glenmore Park who has just recently been announced as a winner of the Runner Up Prize in the Executive Director's Summer Reading Challenge for Catholic Schools. Every summer, students at Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta's 80 schools are encouraged to hit the books through the Executive Directors Summer Reading Challenge. Right across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, these children and young people have the chance to win prizes for every time they read something new. It is a great initiative to get our youth actively reading and giving more chances to learn or expand creativity over the summer. Congratulations to Dilpreet Kaur on a great effort.

HUGH HARROLD

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Congratulations to Hugh Harrold from Penrith Anglican College in my electorate from the class of 2021, who was selected for the Shape 2021 exhibition for his Year 12 Design and Technology major work, The Heli-Plank. Hugh had built the Heli-Plank as a way to improve the working conditions of personnel in and around helicopters carrying out maintenance work or other tasks. Hugh was able to witness first-hand the methods and practices that both aircraft engineers and pilots took when completing maintenance and pre-flight checks on helicopters. Many of these practices included the use of a ladder which was often unsuitable for the uneven ground of many rural airfields that were not paved and as a result witnessed many injuries by engineers falling off ladders. When the Heli-Plank is assembled on the helicopter, it provides a stable walking platform that allows engineers to access the entire engine bay of the helicopter. SHAPE will open at the Powerhouse Museum, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences on 4 March 2022 and close on 14 August 2022. Once again, Congratulations Hugh and all the best in life after High School.

BALMORAL TOUCH FOOTBALL ACADEMY CHARITY DRIVE FOR TONGA

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise and thank the Balmoral Touch Football Academy [BTFA] for the charity drive benefit they ran in light of the devastating volcano and tsunami disaster in Tonga earlier this year. The BTFA has existed for over 40 years in the local community, serving as a welcoming environment for any rugby enthusiasts no matter their age or gender. They regularly meet for games at Balmoral Oval with all skill levels welcome, before enjoying a swim and a coffee at our beautiful Balmoral Beach. The BTFA organised a charity match and BBQ on Australia Day to help raise funds with many locals attending. They have raised over \$20,000 in total. Through the Academy's close relationship with Newington College they were connected with Topou College in Tonga, and were able to put this impressive amount of funds towards a water purifying machine to help deliver clean water to the community. The Academy have previously organised more than \$7000 for victims of the Christchurch earthquake back in 2011. Congratulations, and thank you again, to the BTFA for your generosity and hard work to support disadvantaged communities. You deserve to be commended.

MOSMAN ART WALK 2022

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise the Mosman Art Walk which returned for its second year in 2022 and ran from the 24th of February to the 14th of March. The Mosman Art Walk is organised by the Mosman High Art Committee and aims to support local artists, businesses, and the art students of Mosman High School. The local businesses of Mosman host a unique trail-like art exhibition showcasing art pieces in their windows for the public to enjoy. The 2022 program showcased pieces from more than 30 renowned Australian artists including Ken Done, Ann Cape, Sophie Cape, Rhett Brewer, Ian Grant and Mirra Whale, some of which are local to the area. All art pieces were available to purchase with 75 per cent of profits going directly to artists, and the remaining 25 per cent going towards the art department of Mosman High School to support our local up and coming artists. Thank you to the Mosman High Art Committee Chairperson, Ann King, her Board members, Jenni De Jager, Al Adamson, and Kelly Pasmilidis, and the Committee members for bringing this great program back to North Shore. Thank you to all contributing artists and participating businesses who made this event possible.

MOSMAN LOCAL ROWS THE ATLANTIC FOR CHARITY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise a Mosman local, Louis Hugh-Jones, for his monumental achievement earlier this year. Louis, along with three friends Sam, James, and Rob rowed across the Atlantic Ocean for charity. Congratulations, what an astonishing feat to accomplish physically, let alone for charity. Louis and his team raised a staggering amount of funds, almost \$200,000, as part of this expedition. These funds went towards local charity Gotcha4Life who provide critical support for men's mental health. Thank you for this amazing act of generosity Louis. Mental health is a huge issue for men, with suicide rates extremely high amongst the male population. The team trained for this journey by rowing from Mosman to Palm Back and back. Overall their journey took 37 days to cover 5000km. They rowed 24 hours per day taking turns to have 2 hour breaks to eat and nap. I can't even imagine how tolling this journey would have been both physically and mentally. Congratulations again to Louis, Sam, James, and Rob. What you have done is truly extraordinary, and the funds you have raised will no doubt provide essential help to those struggling in the community.

HIGH RISK MANAGEMENT CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)—Today I recognise the Correctional Officers involved with the refurbishment of Area One in Goulburn's High Risk Management Correctional Centre. Corrective Services NSW's Correctional Officers are, in my opinion, the best in the world. Not only do they protect our community, they are helping offenders find ways to improve their lives. A work day can be varied and the role is required 24/7, 365 days of the year. Parallel to this, and COVID-19, our Correctional Officers were also dealing with a multi-million dollar renovation. Adding even more to the complexity to the situation – it was all happening within Goulburn's Supermax Prison. I had the opportunity to visit the facility at its opening. To see the state-of-the-art security upgrades and meet many of our Correctional Officers. Not only was the project delivered in budget, it was also delivered in excellent time despite the multitude of challenges presented. I congratulate all involved in the refurbishment and I also publicly recognise the excellent work of Goulburn's Correctional Officers.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 16:28 on Friday 1 April 2022 until
Tuesday 10 May 2022 at 12:00.**