



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday 11 May 2022

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 11 May 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

ATHENS DEMOCRACY FORUM

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that in the theatre today the newDemocracy Foundation, in association with the Athens Democracy Forum, is holding a forum considering issues regarding public engagement in politics and improving our democracy. The event is commencing now. I encourage members to attend and recognise the efforts they are making. Mr Iain Walker is running the forum. I have had a lot to do with the organisation; it is a good organisation and some good discussion will occur today. I encourage members to attend sometime between now and 10.30 a.m. I will address the forum at 10.20 a.m. If members who have been involved with various entities at the forum wish to speak, there will be an opportunity to do so afterwards.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

FIREARMS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Toole, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (09:48): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Firearms Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 amends the Firearms Act 1996 and the Firearms Regulation 2017 to clarify which firearms can be authorised for possession and use under restricted category D firearm licences, to provide additional licensing periods for primary producers with category D licences and to make miscellaneous amendments. The bill will remove the barriers faced by pest controllers and farmers in New South Wales to access fit-for-purpose firearms that their businesses depend on and gives more flexibility in licensing periods to support pest eradication campaigns. It does this without watering down the stringent restrictions placed on those licences and firearms.

An important context for these reforms was a decision of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] in 2020 in the matter of *Bankowski v Commissioner of Police* [2020] NSWCATAD 175. In that matter, the tribunal found that Six Corp MOD KS-30 category D firearms were prohibited firearms by virtue of item [5] of schedule 1 to the Firearms Act 1996—that is, a self-loading centre-fire rifle of a kind that is adapted or designed for military purposes. In making this decision, it was determined that "of a kind" in item [5] should be construed broadly. Following this decision, the NSW Police Force identified that a range of firearms which were previously legally purchased in good faith under category D licences were prohibited. This resulted in around 175 category D licence holders being placed in a position where they were potentially in breach of the firearms legislation for inadvertently being in possession of these prohibited firearms.

The Government acted quickly to ensure that affected licence holders who had purchased their firearms were not adversely affected by these circumstances. Temporary exemptions were made by amending the Firearms Regulation 2017 for affected licence holders to enable them to continue to possess these firearms. This bill will deliver a permanent solution. While the temporary regulation allowed affected category D licence holders to retain the firearms that they had already purchased in good faith, it did not allow licence holders to replace these firearms or acquire similar modern, fit-for-purpose firearms for pest control activities such as aerial culling. This had a detrimental impact on the ability of pest controllers and farmers to manage and eradicate pests throughout New South Wales and their regional communities. The primary purpose of the bill is to deliver a permanent solution to this issue affecting category D licence holders to ensure that they can access the firearms they need for their important jobs.

On top of this, the bill will also reduce unnecessary administrative burden associated with category D licence applications. This will ensure that the firearms regime better serves our community as a whole, particularly our rural and regional communities, by ensuring our pest controllers and farmers with category D licences can access fit-for-purpose firearms. At this point, it is important to point out that category D licence holders face stringent requirements under the Firearms Act 1996 to ensure public safety and these requirements will continue under these amendments. Category D licences will remain the most restricted firearms licences and will only be issued to fit and proper persons after extensive probity checking by the NSW Police Force.

Category D licences are only available where a person establishes a genuine reason of vertebrate pest animal control and evidence of a special need for the person to possess a category D firearm which cannot be met by any other means. A category D licence can only be issued to a professional contract shooter engaged in controlling vertebrate pest animals; a person in or employed by a government agency with functions relating to the control of pest animals; or a primary producer participating in an authorised eradication campaign for large feral animals or animals affected by brucellosis or tuberculosis. In short, these reforms will not make it any easier to acquire or retain category D licences and firearms. However, it will ensure that fit and proper people who access these firearms for their work in pest control or primary production can do so effectively.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Firstly, the bill will clarify that certain self-loading centre-fire rifles and self-loading shotguns which are not designed or adapted for military purposes can be authorised under a category D firearms licence. It does this firstly by amending items [5] and [6] of schedule 1 to remove the words "of a kind". These were the critical words considered by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal in *Bankowski v Commissioner of Police*. Removing these words will clarify that items [5] and [6] in schedule 1 to the Firearms Act 1996 only prohibit self-loading centre-fire rifles and self-loading shotguns that are designed or adapted for military purposes. This will avoid firearms that are not designed or adapted for military purposes from being captured by the definition because they are considered "of a kind" of another type of firearm that is designed or adapted for military purposes.

I note self-loading centre-fire rifles and self-loading or pump-action shotguns are also prohibited under items [3] and [4] of schedule 1 to the Firearms Act 1996. However, unlike items prohibited under items [5] and [6], category D licences can be issued for these firearms. The bill also amends the entry for category D licences in section 8 to omit the reference to item [11] of schedule 1, thereby allowing firearms that are prohibited by item [11] of schedule 1 to be issued under category D licences. Item [11] of schedule 1 captures firearms other than pistols fitted with a stock that is specially designed so as to be readily detachable or to operate on a swivel, folding or telescopic basis. Many contemporary self-loading centre-fire rifles are designed with detachable buttstocks and are arguably captured under item [11]. This amendment will ensure that firearms that fit this description and have not been designed or adapted for military purposes can be accessed by category D licence holders.

The bill will also ensure that category D licence holders will be able to retain possession of their category D firearms that have been previously acquired in accordance with the Firearms Act, even if that type of firearm is subsequently adapted for military purposes, which could be anywhere in the world. This is delivered by amendments to the wording of items [5] and [6] of schedule 1. The bill proposes item [5] will prohibit a self-loading centre-fire rifle that is designed or adapted for military purposes other than a self-loading centre-fire rifle mentioned in a new clause—schedule 3, clause 35. Item [6] will similarly prohibit a self-loading shotgun that is designed or adapted for military purposes other than a self-loading centre-fire rifle mentioned in schedule 3, clause 35.

New clause 35 of schedule 3 sets out that, if a person legally acquires a self-loading centre-fire rifle or self-loading shotgun and firearm of a type that is subsequently adapted for military purposes, that person's firearm will not be considered prohibited under items [5] or [6] of schedule 1 while those firearms remain in that person's possession. This new clause 35 of schedule 3 will ensure that, when a category D licence holder is issued a permit to acquire a self-loading centre-fire rifle or self-loading shotgun, that licence holder will be able to retain that firearm, even if that type of firearm becomes subsequently adapted for military purposes and thus prohibited by virtue of items [5] or [6] of schedule 1. To be clear, where a self-loading centre-fire rifle or self-loading shotgun does become adapted for military purposes, they will still become prohibited. However, these amendments will ensure that those category D licence holders who are in legal possession of those firearms will be able to retain possession, although they will not be able to supply or transfer ownership of that firearm to another person.

The bill also gives more flexibility to licence periods for certain category D licence holders. Specifically, the bill amends section 21 (2) to remove the 12-month maximum licence period that applies to category D licences issued to a person referred to in paragraph (c) of the genuine reason of vertebrate pest animal control in section 12. Paragraph (c) refers to a person whose occupation is the business of a primary producer, or who is the owner, lessee or manager of land used for primary production, and who is participating in an authorised campaign

conducted by or on behalf of a government agency or public authority to eradicate large feral animals or animals that are affected by brucellosis or tuberculosis.

Consequential amendments to clause 8 (1), clause 8 (3A) and clause 8 (4) of the Firearms Regulation 2017 will also be made to give effect to the amended section 21 (2). These amendments will address the unnecessary regulatory burden faced by primary producers participating in authorised eradication campaigns with category D licences when they have to renew their licence every year. This is an unnecessary regulatory burden on both the licence holder and the regulator, and does not provide any public safety benefits. The amendment will address this to align with other firearms licence classes, including other category D licences, that can be issued for periods of two or five years.

Lastly, this bill will make miscellaneous amendments to update the list of government agencies prescribed for the genuine reason of vertebrate pest control. The bill makes appropriate amendments to ensure that pest controllers and farmers with category D licences have and retain access to fit-for-purpose firearms and to remove unnecessary regulatory burden. I am pleased that the measures included in the bill will achieve this without watering down the stringent restrictions placed on these licences and firearms. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

GOVERNMENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2022

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government)
(10:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr David Mehan: This is the bit you like.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I am not going to table the speech this time. The irony is not lost on me either. I am pleased to introduce the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022, which amends the Government Telecommunications Act 2018. The key driver for the amendments is to support the rollout of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program [CCEP] by overcoming delays to site access. The Public Safety Network provides vital communications infrastructure that ensures the ongoing safety of people and places across New South Wales. Expansion of the network through the CCEP is crucial to ensuring that New South Wales emergency services organisations have the critical infrastructure required to protect communities. Public Safety Network sites are essential for protecting communities during emergencies and natural disasters such as bushfires and floods. An additional \$660 million in capital funding was announced as part of the 2021-22 New South Wales budget to complete the statewide rollout of the CCEP, which will deliver final Public Safety Network land coverage of 85 per cent, reaching 99.7 per cent of the population. The network's expansion represents the biggest investment in critical communications infrastructure by the New South Wales Government in a generation.

In rolling out the CCEP there have been a number of instances where the NSW Telco Authority has encountered significant delays in accessing land to assess for suitability of potential sites, in accessing other government infrastructure for collocation or integration to the Public Safety Network and in accessing land where there is infrastructure owned by the NSW Telco Authority. Delays at impacted sites present risks to lives and property, as emergency services organisations have reduced capacity to respond effectively in areas where the network is not fully operational. For example, in some areas this could mean a reduced capacity to coordinate responses to bushfires, floods and other emergency or public safety events. Some examples of delay include process delays due to councils or departments requiring ministerial consent to lease or license land; regulatory delays when a council or department is required to publicly advertise for stipulated time frames before leasing land; an initial lease for unrelated tenure, including a concurrence clause restricting additional tenure collocation on the same land or structure until completion of the initial lease; and landowners seeking unreasonable commercial outcomes.

The New South Wales Government is proud of the CCEP and the extensive work to date, providing New South Wales with one of the largest and most reliable public safety networks in the world. However, to continue to expand the network in a reasonable time frame, the amendments proposed in this bill are necessary to overcome current site access issues and to support the timely delivery of the CCEP. Specifically, the bill introduces a number of new and important provisions. These are the additional prescribed roles under the Act. The bill establishes a definition of "emergency telecommunications network operator" to extend relevant powers to emergency services organisations. This amendment is needed as barriers to access also apply to emergency

services organisations that operate alternative telecommunications networks for operational communications authorised under sections 17 or 42 of the Government Telecommunications Act 2018.

The bill will also establish, under new section 43A, a definition of "authorised officer", which is to include those persons authorised by the NSW Telco Authority as well as emergency telecommunications network operators appointed by emergency services organisations. These authorised officers will be permitted to exercise a range of specific powers prescribed in this Act, including new powers to respond to interference issues and new powers of entry, both of which I will now discuss. Clauses 34C to 34G of the bill include provisions to manage interference by trees and vegetation, structures and excavation work to Public Safety Network infrastructure or transmissions.

These powers are derivative of similar provisions in the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and are necessary to apply to the infrastructure of the Public Safety Network to ensure that it continues to function at optimal capacity without interference. Interference to site infrastructure could cause loss of signal in areas where the network is needed to manage emergency situations. The provisions of section 34C, regarding interference by trees, do not apply to protected areas under the Heritage Act 1977, the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, or to public reserves under the Local Government Act 1993.

Sections 34H to 34Q of the bill establish powers of entry to permit authorised officers to access public and private land and property for operational purposes, including inspection, installation, maintenance, repair and decommissioning of communications infrastructure. The powers of entry closely mirror equivalent provisions established in the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and will be selectively applied by authorised officers to overcome a range of barriers that currently inhibit progress accessing some potential sites to determine suitability for delivery of the CCEP and to access existing sites via private land. Importantly, the new provisions include a number of safeguards and obligations to support the responsible use of these powers. These include the need to provide notice to the owner or occupier of the land, except in cases of emergency, and an obligation to take care with entry and limit any damage.

The powers are an alternative to the use of compulsory acquisition processes under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 and section 27 (1) of the Government Telecommunications Act 2018, which cannot commence until after six months of failed negotiations or ministerial approval has been granted. I will now speak to deemed access to government-owned infrastructure. Alongside the amendments outlined, the proposed new section 34A provides authorised officers with deemed access approval to install communications equipment on any government agency or government-owned infrastructure, in compliance with site assessment processes. This new power is designed to increase the efficiency of the CCEP rollout by overcoming administrative delays with other agencies and to encourage prioritising CCEP equipment on infrastructure that is technically capable of supporting its presence.

Deemed access approval supports infrastructure rationalisation, a core objective of the CCEP program. These new powers are expected to contribute to delivering improved economic efficiencies by reducing the need to duplicate government infrastructure, which can occur if alternative locations must be sought. The powers of entry are also likely to be used in conjunction with deemed access approval in cases where government infrastructure is located on or accessed via private land. Finally, I will speak to the new penalty provisions. The bill also puts in place penalties for hindering or obstructing authorised officers from exercising any function conferred or imposed by the Act. Under section 34 of the Government Telecommunications Act 2018, the NSW Telco Authority is currently empowered to access infrastructure that it owns but for which there is no access agreement. However, there are no provisions for enforcement or related offences.

The introduction of penalties for obstructing an authorised officer in carrying out their functions will ensure that the access powers established with this bill are effective in overcoming barriers to the rollout of our critical public safety communications network. Overall, the new powers contained in today's bill have been developed to overcome existing and future delays in accessing potential CCEP sites, and other future networks, as the Public Safety Network expands to cover more of New South Wales and its population. Time saved in delivering the CCEP becomes time during which the Public Safety Network may be operating for emergency services organisations to provide critical operations in areas without current coverage. A typical time reduction could be two to six months per CCEP site where the use of the powers is appropriate. However, one to two years could be saved for sites where access negotiations have hit an impasse.

The powers established in the bill will be used as needed only for sites where there are significant delays. The powers will not be used to bypass existing site access protocols but will be used in conjunction with standard consultation and site assessment processes. The bill will achieve improved efficiency in government expenditure whilst delivering greater public safety outcomes in a timely manner. For all of those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

STATE REVENUE AND FINES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2022

Returned

The DEPUTY 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 10 May 2022

No. 1 GOVT No. 1 [c2022-066C]

Page 18, Schedule 5[4]. Insert after line 24—

(6AA) Surcharge land tax may not be refunded under this section if—

- (a) completion of the transfer of the residential land to the Australian corporation occurred before 21 June 2016, and
- (b) an application for the refund was not made on or before 21 June 2021.

No. 2 GOVT No. 2 [c2022-066C]

Page 18, Schedule 5[5], line 26. Omit "section 5C(6)".

Insert instead "section 5C(6AA), as inserted by item [4]".

No. 3 OPP No. 1 [c2022-078F]

Page 19, Schedule 6. Insert before line 2—

[1A] Section 163 Reporting on licensing and planning alignment

Omit section 163(4). Insert instead—

- (4) The Minister must, by 1 November each year, give a report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament about the Minister's progress in addressing each of the priorities set out in subsection (1) during the previous financial year.
- (4A) This section is repealed at the end of 31 December 2025.

[1B] Section 163A

Insert after section 163—

163A Reporting on implementation of Liquor Amendment (Night-time Economy) Act 2020

- (1) The Minister must, for financial years 2021–2022 to 2023–2024, give a report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament about the effectiveness of the reduction of fees and the extension of trading hours for dedicated live music and performance venues consequent on the enactment of the *Liquor Amendment (Night-time Economy) Act 2020* and its related legislation.
- (2) The report must be given to the Presiding Officers by 1 November following the end of each financial year concerned.
- (3) The report must include information about the following matters or things—
 - (a) live music and live performance events conducted under Part 12,
 - (b) extended hours for dedicated live music and performance venues under section 12A,
 - (c) any licensing incentives developed or implemented to encourage licensed premises to program live entertainment, being licensing incentives of the kind or similar to those referred to in section 163(1)(b),
 - (d) special entertainment precincts,
 - (e) small live music and performance venues,
 - (f) exempt development for low impact entertainment,
 - (g) the use of loading zones by musicians,
 - (h) the operation of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, Schedule 8, Part 1 (Playing and performing music),
 - (i) the temporary use of outdoor spaces under section 166,

- (j) interim small bar authorisations under the *Liquor Regulation 2018*, Part 3, Division 4, Subdivision 1.
- (4) The report must, where possible, include information about the numbers and locations, including the local government areas, of the matters and things referred to in subsection (3) and details of the planning and licensing processes related to those matters and things.
- (5) A copy of a report given to the Presiding Officer of a House of Parliament under this section must be laid before the House within 5 sitting days of the House after it is received by the Presiding Officer.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

STATE INSURANCE AND CARE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 30 March 2022.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (10:19): I advise that the lead speaker for the Opposition in debate on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, the member for Canterbury, has been delayed. I will speak first on behalf of the Opposition, to be followed shortly by the member for Canterbury. The objects of the bill are to amend the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 to make further provision for governance arrangements for insurance and compensation schemes; to extend the enforcement powers of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] in relation to the workers compensation Nominal Insurer, Insurance and Care NSW, the NSW Self Insurance Corporation and persons exercising claims administration functions on behalf of insurers; and to make further provision in relation to claims for workers compensation death benefits and the commutation of workers compensation liabilities.

The bill repeals the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Act 2012 consequent on those amendments in relation to death benefits and commutations. The bill is the result of significant consultation with SIRA and the Insurance Council of Australia, but I note that the Workers Compensation Independent Review Office [WIRO] was informed of the bill but not consulted. Likewise, the union movement was not included as part of the consultation process in the formulation of the bill. The unions were advised of the legislation after the bill was compiled. There have been significant problems with SIRA and workers compensation legislation in the past. In particular, a lot of workers have had significant trouble accessing their benefits and finding out who is responsible for paying them.

Those issues have been the subject of debate for over a decade—workers have had their payments cut off, have not received medical reports and regulation by SIRA has been lacking. The intention of the bill is to streamline and put more regulatory muscle back into the SIRA process. The reality I have seen as the member for Auburn—as someone who has had a large number of injured workers and their families pass through my office over a long period—is that many workers have not been able to access either the payments or the kinds of medical treatments they need under the current workers compensation system. The changes proposed by the bill may go some way to resolving those issues. I will now stand aside for my colleague, the member for Canterbury, to lead in debate for the Opposition.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:23): I lead for the Opposition and represent the Hon. Daniel Mookhey in this place in debate on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I acknowledge his work to hold the Government accountable with respect to icare. I thank all the stakeholders—the unions, businesses, Unions NSW, the business chambers, the Law Society of New South Wales, the New South Wales Bar Association and the individuals—who have contributed to discussions on the bill and the workers compensation scheme in New South Wales. Most importantly, I acknowledge the injured workers of New South Wales and the Injured Workers Support Network. I acknowledge their strength and courage, and thank them for their advocacy for injured workers in New South Wales—many of whom have not been able to work for many years and have had to battle bureaucratic rigmarole to claim their workers compensation entitlements.

All members in this place represent injured workers in their electorates, regardless of politics. But over the past 10 years the New South Wales Coalition Government has not put injured workers at the forefront. Our workers compensation system is broken. I thank the Minister's office for providing the Opposition with briefings on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill. Many people have done a lot of work on this bill. The shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, will move amendments to the bill in the other place, which I will speak to during the consideration in detail stage. I will also move an amendment in relation to commutations

that I have spoken to the Government about. I put on record that I have had good, sensible discussions with the Minister's office, with crossbench members and, of course, with my colleagues about the bill. As members have heard, the member for Auburn is a passionate and important advocate for injured workers. We served together in the upper House when the Government introduced the 2012 bill. We fought very hard into the wee hours of the morning—all night—to defend, advocate for and support injured workers.

Members in this place and in the other place have made some really bad mistakes that have caused a lot of grief for injured workers and their families. Injured workers have been left on the scrap heap in this State. But I acknowledge that the Government has brought forward this bill to make changes to the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 to implement some of the recommendations of the McDougall review, which were handed down in April 2021. The bill attempts to clarify the objectives and functions of both the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] and icare. It gives SIRA investigative and regulatory powers over the Nominal Insurer, increases the term for which an appointed director of icare's board may hold office, and provides for SIRA and icare to advise the Minister on whether issuing a particular direction to icare's board would be in the public interest. Finally, the bill makes allowance for the settlement of lump sum death benefits and the restoration of some commutation rights. The Opposition does not believe that should be provided for through regulation. I have been discussing that issue with many stakeholders and also with the Government.

The shadow Treasurer has identified a litany of issues in relation to icare, which I put on record. Labor has exposed a long list of wrongdoings at icare, but that list is not exhaustive. Icare underpaid 52,000 workers by up to \$80 million in total. It awarded its new CEO a \$120,000 pay rise earlier this year, making him New South Wales' highest paid public servant. Icare is increasing employer premiums by 6 per cent over the next two years. Icare tried to introduce a gap fee for injured workers needing to see a doctor last year. Icare racked up underwriting losses totalling \$4.5 billion in the last three years, resulting in the loss of icare's \$3.9 billion surplus. The Treasurer at the time, now the Premier, had to rush approval of a \$4 billion emergency bailout for the icare-managed workers compensation fund, which was protecting New South Wales police officers, paramedics, nurses and teachers, after it came within 23 minutes of plunging into a crisis in June last year. Senior Treasury officials said in internal emails that icare had a direct line to the then Treasurer and they could not rein in the scandal-plagued agency.

Last year icare was caught secretly paying a labour hire firm \$700,000 to hire a former United States Republican operative to work in the then Treasurer's office. Icare was found to have awarded a \$140 million IT contract in a seven-day tender, despite bidders warned the rush process would lead to ruin. The project's cost has since risen to \$360 million and remains incomplete. Icare was busted for handing \$18 million without tender to the IVE group. That is the Liberal Party's printer and a major donor, led by the former president of the NSW Liberals. Icare broke its own procurement rules to award at least \$6 million of contracts to Korn Ferry, a recruitment firm closely linked to a former New South Wales Liberal Party Minister and party treasurer.

A leaked report from last year shows that the scandal-plagued agency icare overpaid dodgy doctors hundreds of millions of dollars in duplicate, fraudulent payments. Icare handed \$4 million in salary and bonuses to its eight top executives in the 2019 financial year, despite the agency losing \$873 million that year, and 200 of its 1,200 staff were also paid bonuses. Icare's former CEO had to resign due to a conflict of interest after it emerged that icare handed his wife a \$770,000 contract without tender. The same CEO and another top executive took an undisclosed sponsored trip to Las Vegas paid for by a multimillion-dollar contractor to use the agency. Icare's top executives took a total of 36 foreign trips in four years, 10 times more than taken by the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA], its regulator. Icare faced an ICAC referral for handing an \$11 million marketing contract to a company secretly owned by a top executive of the agency.

In September 2019 Treasury secretly cancelled an external investigation into probity and governance at icare after the former CEO complained. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority made referrals about icare to the Independent Commission Against Corruption for further investigation. Last December in a report the Auditor-General slammed icare for illegally using employers' money to bankroll its lavish spending. In an April 2021 review, former Supreme Court Justice Robert McDougall slammed icare for failure of governance, sloppy execution and difficulties in getting injured workers access to their entitled benefits. In a unanimous report agreed to by all parties, an upper House inquiry slammed icare's board for comprehensively failing to properly govern the insurer. In 2019 a damning independent review found that in 46 per cent of claims handled, icare failed to follow the relevant law.

The bill will fail to fix icare because it will still write too many of its own rules. We should not be here supporting icare special privileges. The Parliament should make icare follow the same rules as every other public sector agency. I urge both Houses to support these amendments that provide that members of staff of Insurance and Care NSW and the chief executive are not entitled to the payment of a performance-related bonus or incentive payment; amend the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 to eliminate the Workers Compensation Nominal

Insurer's exemption from procurement laws and instead define it as a government agency so as to ensure proper procurement and transparent tender processes; require icare to report, using its accounting ratio, every six months and change its actuaries every five years; appoint one nominee of Unions NSW and one nominee of employers, either Business NSW or AIG, to icare's board; and make returning injured workers to health and employment an objective of icare.

This is a long list and it has been a very long and exhaustive process. We should have accountability and transparency. I urge the crossbench to support these amendments when they are moved. I now turn to commutations and the lump sum death benefits. I make some general comments about commutations before turning to the specifics. The benefits section of the bill before us responds to recommendation 40 of the McDougall review, which stated:

That the legislature give consideration to expanding the powers of commutation and settlement of lump sum death benefits, subject to the approval of the Personal Injury Commission.

A commutation is an agreement between an injured worker, their employer and the scheme agent to pay the injured worker's entitlement as a lump sum. A worker who has accepted a commutation is no longer entitled to future weekly payments or to claim medical, hospital and rehabilitation expenses for their injury. I put on the record very clearly that the Opposition supports in principle the expansion of commutations. We on this side support a viable and sustainable system but we need to make sure that the injured worker is at the very heart and has all the protection and particularly the support.

Every injured worker has a different story, but the devil is in the detail. This is what we have been talking about to the Government and stakeholders. Again I put on the record that I acknowledge the very considered discussions that we have had with the Government in relation to commutations. On all of the issues, we want to work together. On this issue, as I have said to the Government, we want to work together with stakeholders, Unions NSW, business, the Law Society, the Bar Association, self-insurers and all the experts. We need to get the experts around the table and come up with a system that is there for the injured worker to have independent financial, legal and medical benefits advice.

The Opposition has consulted widely on the proposed amendments covering commutations. As I have said on many occasions, I thank the many people who gave us detailed and frank advice, including Unions NSW, the injured workers group, the Law Society, the Bar Association, the Self Insurer's Association, specialised insurers, Business NSW, actuaries, lawyers and barristers who work in this space and are committed to ensuring that injured workers are protected and supported in a workers compensation system that is not working for them and is taxing on so many. It is a complex and contested space.

I note that the 2012 Joint Select Committee on the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme report, the 2017 Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice's *First review of the workers compensation scheme*, the Standing Committee on Law and Justice *2020 review of the Workers Compensation Scheme*, and the McDougall report highlighted the need to reform commutations. The Joint Select Committee on the New South Wales Workers Compensation June 2012 report stated at recommendation 13:

That the NSW Government liberalise the availability of commutations, generally subject to the proviso that the injured worker has obtained independent legal and financial planning advice before agreeing to a commutation.

The 2017 Standing Committee on Law and Justice report noted "concerns that the current provisions for commutations are overly onerous". Recommendation 9 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice's 2020 review stated:

That the State Insurance Regulatory Authority investigate:

...

- other options for injured workers and insurers to reach settlements and exit the scheme ...

The McDougall inquiry noted:

I agree that any measures that may increase the early resolution of claims, and decrease disputes, are desirable ... there are also significant psychosocial benefits in allowing workers and their families to settle claims, avoid the ongoing stress and difficulty that pursuit of a claim can create, and get on with their lives.

Lump sum payments were available under section 40 of the 1987 Act prior to 2012. The 2012 reforms introduced limited lump sum payments for permanent impairment via a commutation. Section 87EA of the 1987 Act lists the current preconditions for commutation whereby the injured worker has a permanent impairment of at least 15 per cent as a result of their injury, has been paid compensation for their permanent impairment, first received weekly payments for their injury more than two years ago, has fully exhausted all opportunities for injury management and return to work, has received weekly payments regularly and periodically throughout the previous six months, is entitled to ongoing weekly payments and has not had their weekly payments stopped or reduced as

a result of not complying with their return to work obligations. These preconditions mean that, while commutations are still available, access is limited.

Minister Dominello stated in his second reading speech that there are less than 50 commutations each year. We debated these restrictive conditions. We understand the psychosocial issues around people being in the system, and they want to be able to get out. In order for them to get out of the system, we need to ensure that there is a legislative framework that has been rigorously considered, and we must consider the unintended consequences. As I noted previously, the availability of commutations is contested. There are different opinions about how they should be used in a workers compensation system. It is disputed as to whether they should be a permanent or temporary feature of the system, whether they assist or undermine a return to work, what impact they have on the finances of the system and whether they should be used for large or small claims. The points outlined in the standing committee's 2012 report covered the issue well, and I will briefly summarise the areas of contention.

Stakeholders may not agree on how commutations should be used in a workers compensation system, but they agree that the process being introduced by the Government is not right. For such a disputed area there has been limited consultation. There have been submissions and discussions, but the Opposition has concerns about the design of the system through a regulatory process, which is the Government's intention. Stakeholders expressed anger at the limited consultation by SIRA, with key stakeholders missing out on any consultation. They expressed concerns about previous consultations by SIRA and did not believe SIRA should decide what is and is not included. They were also opposed to it being undertaken by regulation, which is the issue the Opposition has raised. There is concern across the board from all stakeholders. It is about legislating through regulation. Even the many people in favour of expanding commutations were opposed to doing it by regulation.

Even though there are serious concerns with the current system, there was a united opinion that the system should be left as is and that we should revisit it and do it properly. We all want to see an improved and expanded system, but we have to do it properly. There should be an undertaking that consultation will be conducted as a matter of urgency and these issues fixed through legislation. With this caveat, many stakeholders supported the Government's points that the current system is not working. Everyone is on the same page. I am putting these points on the record and reflecting on what stakeholders are saying. The Opposition wants to work with the Government on this important issue.

Unions NSW noted that the current system works against negotiated settlements and exiting the scheme. It also noted that, if done well, workers are able to control their finances and leave a draining and adversarial system behind. Everyone supports the expansion of the commutations, but we must make sure that there are appropriate safeguards, such as independent legal, financial and medical advice. The Australian Lawyers Alliance and the Law Society of New South Wales told the Standing Committee on Law and Justice in 2017 that section 87EA failed to allow injured workers the flexibility to take financial control of their lives and exit the system. I quote:

A worker who is able to settle on a final basis an entitlement to statutory compensation in exchange for a lump sum is then far more likely to be able to return to work in suitable employment with an alternate employer. A worker with a finalized claim is no longer "in the system" and as a result is more employable. Our experience has demonstrated the positive impact a lump sum settlement can have upon an injured worker's sense of autonomy and psychological state, which is often an impediment to a sustainable return to work.

The icare submission to the McDougall inquiry stated that commutations can provide greater choice and flexibility. I understand why icare is very supportive of this but, as I keep reiterating, we have to get this right. The NSW Self Insurers Association supported expanding commutations, saying that these agreements allow an injured worker to finalise their claims and entitlements and "put it all behind him or her and move on with their life and on to different employment". I also note the argument about commutations creating a "lump sum culture", which Michael Playford from PricewaterhouseCoopers flagged in the standing committee's 2012 report.

It was also raised by the Australian Industry Group and the NSW Business Chamber at the time. Mr Playford argued that commutations created financial pressures on the system and a perverse incentive for workers to stay off work to hold out for a lump sum payment and led to a deteriorating claims experience. I am interested in the research behind these statements. It is important, and we need to see it. I note the Law Society of New South Wales rejected this explanation. I quote its evidence from the 2012 inquiry:

What I found is far from workers expressing excitement at the prospect of a lump sum dangling at the end of the rainbow. The experience is quite to the contrary. When I explain their entitlements to them ... they express an abhorrence as to the fact, "How do I pay off my mortgage? How do I survive on a day-to-day basis with those entitlements?" This alleged existence of a lump sum culture assumes there is some voluntary intent on the part of the worker to remain on the drip feed until this lump sum at the end of the rainbow becomes available. The lump sums that are now available are so paltry that they would not attract anyone to remain in this system for an extended period of time.

Dr Kevin Purse stated that a "lump sum culture" was a result of misadministration of the scheme. Other stakeholders supported using commutations in a targeted way for limited cases and periods to clean up the system.

I foreshadowed an amendment to remove this section. Stakeholders may not agree on how commutations should be used in a workers compensation system, but they agree that it should not be undertaken by regulation. There are concerns about the process by which the Government is trying to achieve changes. It is problematic.

Apart from minor changes, the proposed amendments in the bill largely reflect the amendments relating to commutation of compensation contained in schedule 8 to the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Act 2012, which was introduced on 19 June 2012. They include uncommenced provisions enabling regulations under the 1987 Act to permit insurers to commute workers compensation liabilities in cases prescribed by regulations that do not meet the current criteria for commutation. As I have said to the Government, we are being asked to sign up to something with no specific details.

The New South Wales Bar Association sent a no-holds-barred letter to all members in this place putting forward its concerns and issues with that aspect of the bill. We should not be legislating through regulation in this particular area of law. I have heard the other argument, that we should not be putting operational matters in regulations. We must ensure that we know the classes of workers, the industry and the sectors, and that we have research, statistics, facts and information. I do not say this very often but we have had good discussions with the Government, and I am very hopeful that the work will be done and consultation will be undertaken with the key stakeholders to articulate how best we can deal with this important area. I mentioned the New South Wales Bar Association's powerful letter, which all New South Wales MPs received. The letter states:

... commutation arrangements should be closely considered by Parliament to ensure that they do not fail to provide for those entitled to be provided for.

4. The Association has consistently and strenuously opposed the over-use of Henry VIII clauses in NSW, which circumvent the ordinary process of parliamentary scrutiny and debate. The ability of Parliament to oversee and control delegated legislation is of fundamental importance in a liberal democracy.

...

7. The form of the legislation introduced into Parliament provides the member of Parliament with no indication of the circumstances in which commutations are now to be permitted.

As I said, with regard to the availability of commutations, we need to know what it is based on: the industry, location, injury type, age, degree of impairment, amount of entitlement, income, employment type or any other criteria. In his second reading speech, the Minister said the Government is committed to undertaking a program of work, including consultation with stakeholders. But that consultation will take place outside the public forum and without parliamentary scrutiny. The Opposition supports the Government undertaking consultation with experts. We are happy to be part of that. But Parliament exists for a purpose, which is to scrutinise these important matters. As I said, the Opposition supports the principle of expanding commutations, but we will put forward an amendment to remove the ability to do so by regulation. I turn to the issue of lump sum benefits. The bill responds to recommendation 40 of the McDougall review, which states:

That the legislature give consideration to expanding the powers of commutation and settlement of lump sum death benefits, subject to the approval of the Personal Injury Commission.

It also responds to part of recommendation 9 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice report *2020 review of the Workers Compensation Scheme*, which states:

That the State Insurance Regulatory Authority investigate:

...

- other options for injured workers and insurers to reach settlements and exit the scheme

There is widespread support amongst stakeholders for the changes relating to lump sum death benefits. The amendments provide for the settlement of lump sum death benefits disputes in the Personal Injury Commission on a compromised basis. However, as indicated in the bill, there must be a death benefit liability dispute before the Personal Injury Commission. All parties must be legally represented unless the commission otherwise directs. The prescribed lump sum death benefit amount only may be compromised. The commission cannot entertain proceedings to give effect to the settlement unless all parties agree to it; there is a reasonable basis for the insurer to dispute liability for the death benefit compensation; and the amount of compensation proposed to be paid in settlement of the claim is reasonable in the circumstances. Where the commission makes a determination to give effect to the agreement, the insurer is taken to have accepted liability for death benefit compensation. The amendment enables the workers compensation guidelines and the rules of the commission to provide for certain matters relating to agreements.

Currently the legislation provides an all-or-nothing proposition for both families and the insurer. The full lump sum amount is payable or nothing is payable, subject to the determination of the dispute. People will miss out where liability for the cause of death related to employment is declined. That refers to death claims in the

Personal Injury Commission where decisions are made against the deceased—that is, cases where the deceased worker has lost. Former Supreme Court judge McDougall pointed out that that can cause significant distress to the families of workers killed in workplace accidents. His review states:

There is no principled reason why they should not be able to compromise claims, so long as there is appropriate oversight of the compromise.

These disputes have the potential to be lengthy and complex. The amendments provide an option to families of the deceased, and to the insurer, to avoid prolonged litigation by voluntarily entering into an agreement with oversight by the commission.

The Opposition is concerned about the potential for death benefits legislation to be remedied in a piecemeal fashion. Justice McDougall and multiple experts have pointed out that that is an issue with the workers compensation system. I am glad the Government has acknowledged that. I note that last year the Government introduced the Motor Accidents and Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Schedule 2 to that bill amended section 25 of the Workers Compensation Act 1987 to create an additional compensation entitlement to cover the fees charged by the NSW Trustee & Guardian to manage a dependent child's lump sum death benefit to ensure that the child's lump sum is not at risk of being eroded by fees over time. The Opposition supported that important amendment. It had widespread support. That bill is still with the upper House. We need to get a move on. That important amendment came about through some excellent work by the Law Society of New South Wales and the ALA. Again, I acknowledge that the Government undertook to do it, but it must be resolved.

I will have more to say during the consideration in detail stage. This long and arduous process has taken 10 years. Last week I spoke to a number of injured workers from the Injured Workers Support Network. I put on record that they are distressed. Every day they encounter difficulties trying to get through the system. They told me about difficulties with case managers. The Hon. Daniel Mookhey and I, together with the Secretary of Unions NSW and the Injured Workers Support Network, were explaining the objects of the bill. A number of injured workers asked us a series of questions. They do not want to sit at home doing nothing. They want to get back to work. But there must be a considered system that has the injured worker at the centre of what we do. One of the gentlemen said to me, "Sophie, I've had over 45 operations, and I have to get more surgery on my back. I have to get all this treatment." He said, "I took that commutation and that was it, and I am in this situation". There were many stories. The Government needs to listen to those stories and make the system work for injured workers, putting them at the heart of what it is doing.

I urge the crossbench to support the Opposition amendments, but I put this on the record before I finish. In the other area that I have responsibility for, dust diseases, I have been urging the Government to act for months now. The Government commissioned the Driscoll report, which talks about five dust diseases that need to be put on the schedule. I have written to the Government Ministers responsible: Tudehope, Petinos and Kean. It is not difficult. Two stonemasons gave evidence on 18 March. They are 45- to 50-year-old men, with families, who have silicosis. Those young men cannot breathe and are finding life very difficult. One of the gentlemen has a child with disability, and the bills are piling on. The charges, the fines and all those fees—everything they have to pay for is piling on. They gave evidence from their experience, not from written notes or anything. We are seeing an increase in the high numbers of people in the workplace contracting dust diseases, and something has to happen. I am urging the Government to please get those five diseases on the schedule. They have the information, and we need to protect workers.

I can talk about this all day, but I will leave it at that. I am urging the Government to take that action. The dust diseases review report from the upper House will come out very shortly. The Government needs to take the recommendations very seriously, because this is the third report that we have had now and New South Wales is lagging behind every other State. None of us, not even members opposite, want to see Hardie mark 2.0, but that is where we are heading. I went to a memorial at the brickworks at Holroyd on Saturday with Mayor Lisa Lake, councillors, Barry Robson from the Asbestos Foundation Australia and Parramatta candidate Andrew Charlton. We spoke to a number of families, and it is devastating. My uncles worked in the railways; my dad worked at Metters. They died in their late 70s and 80s, but a lot of that generation did not have work health and safety. They did not have what we purport to have now, although we need to strengthen SafeWork NSW. Those people died because of dust diseases.

We had a recent death, and one of the family members was just devastated. They have lost everything, and these are young people. Many migrants that came to Australia in the fifties and sixties worked in those environments and contracted dust diseases. Now we have a new generation, and we are seeing the numbers increasing. Something needs to be done. The Opposition will work with the Government, whoever it is, because this is a matter of urgency. I ask the Government to please have a look at those recommendations and, more

importantly, to put those dust diseases in that schedule. I will have more to say during the amendment process, but I thank the House for listening to my contribution to this very important debate.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:04): I welcome the opportunity to speak in support of the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The objects of the bill are:

... to amend the *State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015*, the *Workers Compensation Act 1987* and the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998* as follows—

- (a) to make further provision for governance arrangements for insurance and compensation schemes,
- (b) to extend the enforcement powers of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority in relation to the Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer, Insurance and Care NSW, the NSW Self Insurance Corporation and persons exercising claims administration functions on behalf of insurers,
- (c) to make further provision in relation to claims for workers compensation death benefits and the commutation of workers compensation liabilities.

I particularly speak to clauses 22 and 24 in schedule 2 to the bill. Those provisions extend the power of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, or SIRA, to regulate insurers through enforceable undertakings and directions. The independent review of icare and the State Insurance Care and Governance Act 2015 undertaken by the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, found that SIRA should have sufficient enforcement powers to properly regulate the Nominal Insurer and Government self-insurers' compliance with the workers compensation legislation.

The bill proposes a new section 195, which establishes the power for SIRA to give a direction to all relevant parties undertaking workers compensation claims management activities. Importantly, the bill allows SIRA to issue a direction to any licensed insurer or self-insurer, regardless of how they are established as an insurer, with respect to a contravention of a condition imposed in the insurer's licence or the workers compensation legislation. In addition, a licensed insurer or a self-insurer will be able to give an undertaking to SIRA in relation to a contravention or alleged contravention of the relevant Acts.

Under proposed new division 4A of part 7 of the Workers Compensation Act 1987, SIRA will be able to accept an undertaking from an insurer in relation to a contravention or alleged contravention of the workers compensation legislation. The undertaking must be in writing, and the insurer must carry out the specific activities set out in the undertaking. For example, an insurer may offer an undertaking to SIRA where the insurer has uncovered a breach and has already commenced remedial action to address the contravention. An undertaking is insurer led, and supports and promotes a collaborative approach to regulation. The bill also proposes to introduce a new power for SIRA to issue a direction to an insurer if SIRA is satisfied that the insurer has contravened its licence, the workers compensation Acts or a requirement made by the authority under the workers compensation Acts.

A direction can require an insurer to take action, or refrain from taking action, to rectify the breach. Those proposed amendments enhance SIRA's oversight powers to ensure that all parties, including the Nominal Insurer, comply with the workers compensation legislation. SIRA must publish a notice of decision to accept or reject an undertaking as soon as practicable after it has decided to accept or reject the undertaking. In regard to a direction, SIRA must publish a statement of the effect of the direction and reasons for issuing the direction. I touch on the role that SIRA has within our community and the impact at the local level that my office is seeing in working with SIRA on behalf of a constituent. It emphasises the importance of having the regulatory authority to oversee insurance agencies. Our constituent has a fight with an insurance company that has been unresponsive to her issue.

This particular case involved overcharging a premium because an incorrect address was applied by the insurer. It is pertinent because the constituent is elderly and has recently undergone surgery. The insurance agency has a shopfront in our community and when the constituent went there, she was told they could not help her. She made many phone calls to the company and got nowhere, so she came to my office. I sat down with her a few weeks ago and discussed her situation. My office staff rang the insurance company, but no-one senior would come to the phone. An email address was provided for their government relations section. We sent three emails in search of a contact person to call the constituent. There was no response, so we lodged a complaint with SIRA. Within days my office was contacted by the insurance company, which apologised to staff and said that it would amend its procedures.

That is the importance of having that regulatory authority to oversight insurance agencies and their activities. In this case, ongoing correspondence is now underway between the insurer and the insured; communication has been restored. On this occasion, I give high marks to SIRA for quickly understanding the need to look after this older and unwell but recovering person. It acted and the service it provided was personal. It did not avoid confronting the insurance company and, importantly, it got the lines of communication back up and running. As we look at expanding SIRA's work, I am encouraged by that action. The State Insurance and Care

Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 provides amendments that will give SIRA additional tools to better regulate insurers and ensure that there is compliance across the workers compensation scheme. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:11): I thank the House for the opportunity to contribute to the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. Without duplicating what many members have spoken about previously, I am aware of the objective of the bill. I will move straight to schedule 1, which amends the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. It goes through a series of provisions. A whole series of motherhood statements have the obvious and bureaucratic mumbo jumbo, which go hand in hand with the alarming provisions in schedule 2. I will turn now to schedule 2, which amends the Workers Compensation Act 1987. This schedule has some positives, such as sensible provisions enabling death benefit disputes to be settled on a compromise basis rather than with an "all or nothing" approach. I support those provisions. I quote:

A party to a death benefit dispute may lodge with the Commission a proposed agreement for an amount to be paid in settlement of the part of the claim that relates to the lump sum death benefit under Division 1.

The schedule also includes a proposal to enable regulations to be made to ease restrictions on commuting a worker's rights to compensation on a "once and for all" basis by payment of a lump sum. The principle of the idea is a good one. It will enable more injured workers to exit the compensation system, where appropriate. But not a single clue is given as to what the new criteria will be to enable a commutation of a worker's rights. It is all left to regulation. Why are we in the dark over such an important aspect of the workers compensation system? This lazy drafting technique lacks transparency, will not be supported and should not be supported. The balance of schedule 2 is alarming. It gives the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] more bullying powers over hapless claims officers. For example, section 195 states:

- (1) If the Authority is satisfied an insurer has contravened its licence, the Workers Compensation Acts or a requirement made by the Authority under the Workers Compensation Acts, the Authority may issue a written direction requiring the insurer to—
 - (a) refrain from conduct contravening the licence or the Workers Compensation Acts or other requirement, or
 - (b) take action to comply with, or to prevent or remedy a contravention of, the licence or the Workers Compensation Acts or other requirement, or
 - (c) take other action prescribed by the regulations.
- (2) An insurer must comply with a direction issued to the insurer under this section.
Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units.
- (3) It is a condition of an insurer's licence under this Act that the insurer must comply with a direction issued to the insurer under this section.
- (4) The Authority must, as soon as practicable after issuing a direction under this section, publish on its website a statement of the effect of the direction and the reasons for issuing the direction.
- (5) In this section—

Workers Compensation Acts includes instruments made under the Workers Compensation Acts.

The scheme deficit has blown out like never before since the creation of SIRA and icare. Why are these massively expensive bureaucracies being given more and more functions and powers? There is already a litany of offence provisions in the legislation directed at insurers. For example, offence provisions exist for failing to determine claims within certain time frames. There is also an existing penalty provision for disputing a claim based on grounds which are not genuine. How will this extra layer put a single extra dollar in the hands of injured workers? SIRA already has enormous powers over insurers. One example is section 183A of the Workers Compensation Act, which states:

- (1) If the Authority is satisfied that a person who is or was a licensed insurer or self-insurer has contravened its licence or this Act or the regulations, the Authority may—
 - (a) impose a civil penalty on the person not exceeding \$50,000, or
 - (b) issue a letter of censure to the person.
- (2) Before imposing a civil penalty, the Authority is required to give the person concerned an opportunity to make written submissions with respect to the alleged contravention, but is not required to conduct a hearing into the matter.
- (3) A civil penalty that has been imposed under this section may be recovered by the Authority in a court of competent jurisdiction as a debt due to the Crown.
- ...
- (5) The Authority may cause a letter of censure issued by it under this section to be published.
- (6) A civil penalty that is paid or recovered is payable into the Workers Compensation Operational Fund.

Why would any person take a low-paying job as a claims officer at Employers Mutual Limited, GIO, Allianz or QBE only to be bullied by higher-paid bureaucrats? The legislation in this field is notorious for its complexity. How about we do something about that? As long ago as 2000, the judges of our Court of Appeal complained that:

The Act is a complex piece of legislation which has been much amended. The consequence is that the interpretation of its provisions and amendments is often attended with great difficulty.

If an eminent judge finds the legislation difficult to interpret, what chance does a hapless claims officer have? Picking fault and finding noncompliance with the plethora of legislation and instruments made under the workers compensation legislation would have to be the easiest gig in town. I guess it is like ripping wings off butterflies. It produces nothing but allows high-paid bureaucrats to justify claims for more power and more funding. Meanwhile, the system continues to be hopelessly fractured, with more reliance on high-paid consultants and ever-expanding regulators.

We spent a fortune on consultants during the review into the scheme by retired Supreme Court judge the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC. His report was handed down in April 2021. The New South Wales Treasurer at the time, Dominic Perrottet, and then Minister for Digital and Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello, announced on 4 August 2020 that the scheduled five-year review into workers compensation would be brought forward. It is an understatement to say that icare and SIRA were not covered in glory in the McDougall report. Why increase SIRA's powers to belt claims handlers? Instead, why not make the legislation easier for the claims handler to understand and administer? Justice McDougall suggested exactly that when he said:

... as those within the workers compensation system already know, the current legislative system is cumbersome, confusing and unwieldy... The current legislative provisions have resulted in a level of confusion, inconsistency and complexity that does nothing to assist the schemes to achieve their policy objectives. That must change... There is no reason for the retention of the existing and confused morass of multiple statutory instruments. Everyone involved with the scheme should be able to have recourse to one clear and consistent source of rights and responsibilities.

It is lazy and poor governance for this Parliament to keep dreaming up ways of empowering high-powered, high-paid people to smash the little people trying to administer the legislation, which his Honour described as failing to provide a clear and consistent set of rights and responsibilities for the claims handler to administer. I suggest that we abandon those provisions and instead show that we have the intellectual capacity and the decency to work hard to put legislation in good order before jumping to bully those who are trying to navigate this impossible system every day.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:20): The objects of the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill are to amend the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998. The aim of the amendments, as it is expressed, is to make further provisions for governance arrangements for insurance and compensation schemes, and to extend the enforcement powers of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority in relation to various bodies. The amendments also extend to provisions concerning claims for workers compensation death benefits and the commutation of workers compensation liabilities.

These last two categories—commutations and compromises on workers compensation death benefits—probably attract the most interest, and certainly attract my interest. Prior to entering this place, I was a lawyer in practice for almost a decade and a half—in the last century. A significant amount of my professional time, although certainly not all of it, was spent appearing for worker applicants seeking compensation benefits under the 1926 legislation, which was introduced originally by the Lang Government, or under the 1987 legislation. The regime is very different now, although I am certainly not convinced that the current one is better. I dealt with both these issues—that is, lump sum settlements and compromises on death claims—whilst in practice. In my time, the procedure analogous to a commutation was known as a redemption. It was a different process, yes, but the broad philosophy was the same.

The payment of a lump sum in replacement of other ongoing payments has a number of benefits. The lump sum is a specified particular amount without the ongoing liability. This benefits the party making the payment; it is a definite amount and it is over. To the injured worker, a lump sum can have benefits. It means an earlier resolution, finalising matters and allowing people to get on with their lives and not be subject to the drip-feed of weekly payments. Very few commutations currently occur and the changes in this bill certainly do not allow unrestricted commutations. The proposed legislation, however, relaxes the regime and will allow more commutations. That is a good and sensible thing.

There was always an undercurrent against redemptions and you hear it now in the rhetoric about lump sum cultures. Some people were critical of allowing injured workers to get a lump sum. Those critics were often also people who thought injured workers got too much compensation. They also had the elitist view that injured working-class workers did not have the skills to deal properly with a lump sum. Those critics, of course, were

largely spivs in expensive suits that would not know the working class if they fell over them. They were wrong; increasing the number of appropriate commutations is entirely appropriate.

The second of the changes is to settle lump sum death benefits on a compromise basis—that is, rather than getting all or nothing, claims can be settled for something more than nothing but less than a maximum payment. There is an old saying among personal injury litigators: A good settlement is always the best result. This allows all parties to make a realistic assessment of their prospects of success and agree to a resolution commensurate with that. That can obviously avoid the extra cost of litigation. It means the insurer does not run the risk of paying a maximum amount of compensation when it thinks it has a possible basis to deny liability. It means the families obtain some compensation where there is a chance of getting none.

I recall a case I was involved in when in practice of a macadamia farm worker who died of a heart attack travelling home from work in a car. The law is very different now but at that time in the 1980s, because he was on a journey from work to home, we might have been able to establish he died of a compensable injury and thus obtain compensation. It was obviously going to be highly contested, granted the cause of death was a heart attack. The insurer was represented at the compensation court with a silk in tow. Having senior counsel in compensation court was a very unusual occurrence in those days. I was there with junior counsel. We could have run the case and, relying on a compassionate view from the court and judge, maybe we would have won and got the maximum payment. Then again, we might have lost and the family would have ended up with nothing.

The insurer could have fought and maybe won a complete victory; then again, they may not have and then been up for quite a substantial compensation payment. Settling the case on a compromised basis was the blindingly obvious thing to do. That suited both parties. Frankly, it was in the interests of justice. Whilst the law and regulatory structure are very different now, that sort of case shows the merit of compromise settlements. I also note in passing that there is a sense of going back to the future with these two changes of increasing commutations and compromises on death claims. They almost go back to some of the things that used to happen, which raises the question of why they were changed to begin with. Having said that, the two changes are read with some enthusiasm.

But there are some discordant notes. The New South Wales Bar Association has expressed its concern about aspects of the proposed legislation. In particular, it has expressed its concerns "with the proposed restructure of the commutation arrangements in the bill, which appears to be intended to be undertaken by the use of regulations in the form of Henry VIII clauses." Certainly anyone who cares about the primacy of Parliament can only be concerned by the use of Henry VIII clauses. In some cases I have been persuaded they are appropriate—for example, most recently in the legislation to deal with the COVID pandemic. That situation, however, is very different from the situation here. As the association points out, there was no reference in the Minister's second reading speech to the use of Henry VIII clauses. The association makes a number of specific comments. One of them is:

Clause 4 amending S.87EA (2) and inserting subsection (2) (c) of the bill appears to envisage giving power to pass a regulation which will permit the lump sum proposed for the commutation to be excessive or inadequate. In a sense the power to make a regulation having this characteristic embodies the problem with Henry VIII clauses more generally, but it also begs two questions:

- i. What legitimate policy goal requires the power to make a regulation permitting overpayment and/or one allowing under compensation?
- ii. What properly designed scheme can afford overpayment?

It also points to clause 8. This excuses a worker from obtaining advice on certain cases. There is no clarity at all as to what the criteria for inclusion in a class of worker not requiring advice might be. The clause also allows regulations that require a worker to obtain advice but, once again, without even a hint of the criteria to be used in working out who is covered by the regulation. These problems seem to be exacerbated by the provision of clause 9, which requires that a worker who wishes to withdraw from a commutation agreement do so by writing to the President of the Personal Injury Commission. Is this potentially for a class of worker not required to obtain advice on the wisdom of a commutation? If so, this seems at best confused. As the letter from association president Michael McHugh, SC, notes, substantive changes in the scheme should not be left merely to regulation. The general provisions about commutations and compromises in death claims are going in the right direction. It is just a pity that the technical detail does not seem to have matched it.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:27): I speak on behalf of The Greens in debate on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I acknowledge my Greens colleague MLC-elect Sue Higginson, who is watching the debate and will take carriage of these issues and this area of work when she is sworn into the New South Wales upper House. She will take on the mammoth task of filling the shoes of David Shoebridge, who I acknowledge has done significant work in exposing the scandals and issues around workers compensation and particularly the failings of the now Premier and then Treasurer Dominic Perrottet when it came to the oversight of icare. I also acknowledge Labor member in the upper House the Hon. Daniel Mookhey,

who I understand worked very closely with David. I recognise the work they have done in addition to the Opposition spokesperson in this place, who has been leading the charge in making sure we have a workers compensation scheme in this State that respects and reflects the dignity of people in their workplace and does not prioritise large pay packets for those overseeing the scheme over and above the treatment of the workers they are intended to serve.

The bill implements part of the Government's response to the recommendations made by the independent review of icare and the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. It also responds in part, if not directly, to the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Law and Justice and the review of the workers compensation scheme that my colleagues David Shoebridge and Daniel Mookhey and others were instrumental in using to expose the outrageous icare scandals we have seen over many years. It is very easy to come here and start talking about the machinations of the scheme, the regulations and the legislative changes we are making while forgetting the real people who are impacted by the scheme's past failures.

All members in this Chamber have heard directly from people in their communities about how the failures of this system have increased the distress, trauma and frustrations experienced by individuals who need to deal with this system. We even heard Government members talking about the challenges in this space. It is important that we recognise that we need a scheme that not only respects the rights and dignity of injured workers but also recognises they have been through significant trauma. Many of those individuals want to get back to work. Instead, they are caught up in a horrific system that adds to the trauma.

This is not new. Sadly, the underfunding of certain aspects of our public service, the outsourcing of certain jobs and the privatisation or the attempt to put things at arm's length has meant that, instead of serving the community and public interests, only certain types of people are protected and the bottom line is prioritised. One clear change that must be made to this legislation is that the decisions or directions of the Minister should consider the public interest. We would have thought that that would go without saying, but the exposed scandals that we have seen in this space over the past decade demonstrate that that change is necessary.

The bill amends the State Insurance and Care Governance Act to clarify the objects and functions of icare and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] in the delivery and regulation of State insurance and compensation schemes. It establishes a four-year maximum term of office for an appointed director of icare, which was previously three years, and requires the icare and SIRA boards to advise the Minister whether they consider a ministerial direction to be in the public interest. The bill also amends the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 to extend SIRA's investigative and regulatory powers to the Nominal Insurer, icare, NSW Self Insurance Corporation and claims managers; empowers SIRA to impose licence conditions on both the Nominal Insurer and Government self-insurers with ministerial approval; provides for the settlement of some lump sum death benefit disputes in the Personal Injury Commission; and provides a framework that allows the president of the Personal Injury Commission to approve commutations and to allow the regulations to expand access to commutations for certain classes of claims.

It is important that we see this legislative change in the context in which it is being brought to the Chamber. In 2020 the Law and Justice committee conducted a review of the workers compensation scheme. The inquiry exposed extraordinary levels of financial mismanagement and that thousands of injured workers were being underpaid by icare. It also found that icare's failures resulted in a poor claims management scheme, causing return-to-work rates to plummet, and injured workers were facing considerable difficulties when trying to access the benefits to which they were entitled. The recommendations of this inquiry largely focused on internal processes at icare but called on the New South Wales Government to expand the regulatory powers of SIRA and NSW Treasury and to make operational and administrative improvements to icare.

The Greens do not oppose the legislation. While the legislation is improved, it is important to note that other elements create a significant risk, such as the proposed changes to the scheme's valuations. The additional directional powers SIRA will be given have also been raised with us and were mentioned by a number of members this morning. We also recognise the concerns that were raised directly with us and other members in this Chamber about the briefing note from the Government. In that note the Government was talking up its extensive consultation, as it is often known to do. The Government stated, "We've consulted broadly with all of the stakeholders." But, when we speak to certain stakeholders, they say, "We haven't heard about this. We haven't been consulted about this." So I question whether we need to make sure that when giving SIRA more power under this legislation that its staff are not the primary people who are being consulted. We have to ask to what granular level has consultation taken place with the unions that are most impacted by the workers compensation issues that regularly come up.

If the Government wants to take the politics out of this matter and if it is trying to serve the interests of workers, I urge it to recognise that the primary goal is to make sure that people are safe in their workplaces and that they do not need to access the services of this scheme services. But the Liberal-Nationals Government has a

history of not serving the interests of people. Occasionally, in jest, its members claim to be the party of the workers, but we all know full well that it is the party of the bosses and the people who are trying to profit from the exploitation of workers. That is what it will consistently do, so we need to make sure that we hold them to account.

I need to stress two things, and other members in this Chamber have also stressed them. The first is the concern that we are once again kicking the can down the road because the details of legislation we are considering will be in the regulations. Obviously we have the power in the upper House to disallow regulations in the future. But that is not a good way to consider detailed legislation in this Chamber, especially when we have had multiple reviews that recommend certain changes and when the Government responds to those reviews it states that it has consulted widely. We are kicking the can down the road because we have no detail whatsoever about the legislation that we are considering today. I urge the Government to consult in detail when it develops the regulations.

The Greens welcome this action from the Government to implement some of the recommendations. But we also express concern about the lack of consultation. We note that some of the recommendations from the McDougall review with relevance to the New South Wales Government are not addressed in the bill. Those include implementing an appropriate legislative response to the changing nature of work and the growth of the gig economy, which would provide those workers with the benefits provided by the workers compensation scheme, and amending the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act to provide for a further assessment of the whole person impairment where there is a significant deterioration in a compensable injury. *[Extension of time]*

I thank all of the people who have been actively working behind the scenes to improve our workers compensation scheme to ensure that there is oversight. I particularly acknowledge the contributions that Unions NSW and the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union have made. I acknowledge that experts in this space have worked closely with my colleague David Shoebridge over many years to feed in their expertise to expose the scandals that were shamefully overseen by the then Treasurer and current Premier, Dominic Perrottet.

To all of the workers who are facing the challenges around dealing with the dysfunctional scheme and who desire to have a scheme that works better for them and their community, I say that The Greens are committed to ensuring that no worker is injured or dies as a result of a workplace incident. We support the strong role of the unions and strengthening protections for workers to enable them to engage in collective industrial action and strikes to protect workplace conditions. First and foremost, we should be doing all we can to protect people when they are at work so that they are not injured or harmed so they do not need to access the scheme. That is the ideal option.

But the secondary option, if we have to have it, is to ensure that there is a scheme that treats the people that are engaging with this scheme with dignity and respect, and I think most people who have had the experience of engaging to date have not had that. We have an absolute commitment to making sure that we do that. We very much look forward to looking in detail at the Labor amendments. From what The Greens have heard, The Greens will be supporting the Labor amendments. Anything that we can do to try to strengthen the detail in legislation as opposed to put it into regulations is very welcome.

The New South Wales Bar Association has sent a damning critique of the ongoing habit of the New South Wales Government when it comes to these issues. It is something that has to be addressed. We will then be looking at whether or not we will seek to move further amendments in the other place, in line with the issues raised by the stakeholders that unfortunately were not consulted by this Liberal-Nationals Government, because it seems to be able to pick and choose the people who will tell it what it wants to hear when it comes to consulting with the community.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:40): I thank the member for North Shore for her patience and for letting me jump in. I support the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill, which will implement some of the recommendations of the independent McDougall review and the standing committee inquiry into icare. The aim is to strengthen oversight of insurers under the workers compensation scheme and to clarify the roles and obligations of icare and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority. I thank the Opposition, The Greens and other crossbenchers for their work over many years to strengthen oversight and accountability of icare.

I will support the Opposition's amendment to remove the regulation-making power on commutations and welcome the Government's commitment to do further work and bring a detailed plan to expand access to claims back to the Parliament. The amendment will achieve a better outcome for workers and I congratulate the member for Canterbury and the Hon. Daniel Mookhey in the other place. I foreshadow that I intend to move amendments to introduce a mandatory rigorous procurement oversight process that the Nominal Insurer must follow. The Opposition raised the need for reform in this space, and I am currently working with the Government to achieve

what we hope to be a transparent and workable process. Everyone in this place agrees that legislation is required to strengthen public confidence in icare and that is what the bill seeks to achieve. This House must protect and support injured workers and that is what we are working to achieve with the bill.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:41): I support the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. We are having a very interesting debate. There is a lot of consensus on sentiment around the Chamber in the goal of ensuring that we have a workers compensation scheme that meets the needs of workers, is rigorous and reflects the findings and outcomes of the McDougall review. Obviously, there is a lot of discussion to go about the final shape of the legislation, with amendments being put forward. I look forward to having further discussion on those as we progress. But speaking to the heart of the original legislation and the work that has been undertaken in the review by the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC—the McDougall review, as it has been referred to in this place—we acknowledge that it highlighted the need for greater legislative clarity in the objectives, the roles, the functions and the powers of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority—SIRA, as it has been referred to in this place—icare and SafeWork NSW.

We know that the bill put forward implements parts of the Government's responses to the recommendations made through the McDougall review. The amendments work to strengthen oversight of insurers under the workers compensation scheme to improve outcomes for stakeholders. They work to clarify respective roles and obligations of icare and SIRA under the different compensation schemes and to expand the powers of commutation and settlement of lump sum death benefits, subject to the approval of the Personal Injury Commission. The bill omits references that have prompted concerns about duplication and complexity, and provides clearer expectations about the respective roles in relation to the functional overlap between agencies since the dissolution of WorkCover in 2015. It is also important that the legislation governing these agencies reflects the contemporary roles of the agencies. As their roles evolve, the legislation needs to be amended to reflect those changes.

The establishment of SIRA and icare, and the structural separation of regulatory and operational functions, was a major reform for the State's insurance care schemes when it took effect. SIRA plays a fundamental role in preserving the integrity of several insurance and care schemes across New South Wales. Under the bill, the authority's role in the strategic development and oversight of schemes is accounted for, as is its ability to publicise data on scheme performance and advise the Minister. The proposed amendments to section 22 (2) (b) and (c) of the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 clarify SIRA's role in establishing procedures for dealing with complaints made by employers. Proposed new section 24 (2) (a) of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 clarifies SIRA's role as regulator and its role in the strategic development oversight of the schemes. Functions that it no longer performs have been omitted from the legislation, like not managing day-to-day operational matters such as the management of claims.

The bill includes objectives for icare in proposed new section 9A of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. Icare's pivotal role in managing the balance of access to compensation for individuals with the wider affordability of insurance at a system level is accounted for in the bill. The bill recognises that the State Insurance Regulatory Authority and icare both have a role to play in achieving this objective. The bill makes it clear that icare, when acting on behalf of or providing services to the Nominal Insurer and the Self Insurance Corporation, is responsible for all day-to-day operational matters including the management of claims. Icare's objectives also acknowledge its role in promoting efficiency, transparency and accountability when operating the relevant schemes under proposed new section 9A (b).

This bill's amendments to bring about role clarity will strength the governance of New South Wales' insurance and care schemes. They articulate the priorities of each of these agencies, spelling out how they differ, the objectives they share and their key areas of focus as they go about their business. Enhancing understanding of icare and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority's roles and objectives amongst stakeholders will generate positive outcomes for customers across New South Wales. The amendments create a yardstick by which we can evaluate both icare and SIRA in future and which I believe will set them up for success. There are also a range of reforms incorporated in the bill, looking to amend the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. These are to specify the objects; to clarify the objects and functions of icare and SIRA in the delivery and regulation of State insurance compensation schemes; to establish a four-year minimum term of office for an appointed director of icare, replacing the current three-year period; and to require the boards of both icare and SIRA to advise the Minister of whether it considers a ministerial direction in the public interest.

Amendments within the bill to the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 will further clarify SIRA's functions; extend SIRA's investigative and regulatory powers to the Nominal Insurer, icare, NSW Self Insurance Corporation and claims managers where appropriate; and allow SIRA to impose licence conditions on both the Nominal Insurer and government self-insurers, provided the relevant Minister approves licence conditions about prudential matters. Under the proposed amendments ministerial approval is not required for licence conditions about claims management

activities. The amendments also provide for the settlement of lump sum death benefits disputes in the Personal Injury Commission on a compromise basis, as I referred to earlier, and provide a framework allowing the President of the Personal Injury Commission to approve commutations and allowing the regulations to expand access to commutations for certain classes of claims.

As has been discussed throughout the debate on the bill, the work done by the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, which was completed last year, was a comprehensive review of icare and the State Insurance and Care Governance Act. The work that was undertaken has comprehensively informed the Government's proposal in this legislation. The Government, as members probably know, has already accepted 35 of the recommendations, which could already be operationally enacted by icare and SIRA. There has been a lot of work done to this point to make sure that we are getting the right outcomes for the State, the workers compensation scheme and the governance of that scheme, including extensive stakeholder management.

Stakeholders include legal profession bodies—and the Government has received feedback from some of those—Unions NSW, the Insurance Council, icare and SIRA themselves, the Independent Review Office and the Personal Injury Commission. To date the Government has had positive feedback on the proposed changes and, obviously, some suggestions on elements where it could make further amendments or support amendments that are brought to the House. All of the New South Wales government agencies were also consulted throughout the Cabinet process. I support the introduction of this legislation and the aims behind it. I am positive that we will see an outcome here which will improve the workers compensation scheme for workers, strengthen oversight of the insurers over time and manage the impact of premiums into the future for people participating in the scheme.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (11:49): I speak on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill. I note from the outset that the bill comes in response to a recommendation of the independent review undertaken by Robert McDougall, QC, into Insurance and Care NSW, or icare, and the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, which called for this Parliament to give consideration to expanding the powers of commutation and settlement of lump sum death benefits, subject to the approval of the Personal Injury Commission. The bill also comes in response to recommendation 9 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice 2020 review, which called on the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] to investigate other options for injured workers and insurers to reach settlements and exit the scheme.

Though these recommendations address different issues, they both take into consideration stakeholder concerns about the limited ways that claimants and insurers can reach settlements. The bill addresses two main areas of concern. The first is a provision for compromise between claimants and insurers during the settlement of lump sum death benefits. I note there is broad agreement amongst stakeholders that the changes proposed in the bill are beneficial, but I further note that there are some reasonable reservations regarding the way the Government has gone about implementing those changes in legislation. The second area of concern addressed by the bill is the matter of commutations. A commutation is an agreement between a worker and insurer to forgo future compensation or medical expenses and instead issue a lump sum to the claimant. This is a much more hotly contested provision, with a range of stakeholders warning that any change to this complex area of the law may have severe unintended consequences.

True to form for this Government, it is proposing sweeping policy changes—which may have an extraordinary impact on businesses, insurers, the workers compensation system as a whole and, most importantly, injured workers and their families—without adequate explanation of its plans and goals. Before I discuss my concerns about the way the bill proposes to tackle commutations, I will highlight some issues surrounding lump sum death benefit payouts which the bill seeks to correct. Every workplace death is an unimaginable tragedy. Every single worker, no matter what they do for work, should be able to expect that they will come home safe and sound at the end of the day. On 28 April we observed the International Day of Mourning for those lost to work-related incidents or illnesses. We should never stop our efforts to protect workers and improve workplace safety. But when the unimaginable does happen—which, unfortunately, is far too often—we should do everything we can to ease the burden on those who are left behind. The bill goes some way towards doing that.

As it stands, the legislation provides an all-or-nothing proposition for families and the insurer over the payment of death benefits where liability is disputed: Either the full amount is paid out or nothing at all is paid, with no room for compromise. I cannot begin to imagine the stress that this high-stakes proposition places on families and beneficiaries who are already struggling with the loss of a loved one. These sorts of disputes are incredibly complex, always gruelling, and absolutely horrible for people already experiencing grief. As Robert McDougall said in his review:

There is no principled reason why they should not be able to compromise claims, so long as there is appropriate oversight of the compromise.

For the sake of those left behind when a worker is killed, I welcome what I, my colleagues and many stakeholders view as long-overdue reform. But the question has to be asked: With so much support and such obvious benefits, why is the Government approaching this reform in such a piecemeal way? I note that in 2021 the Government introduced the Motor Accidents and Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill, which would amend the Workers Compensation Act to create an additional compensation entitlement to ensure that the lump sum paid out to a deceased's dependent child would not be eroded over time by fees charged by the NSW Trustee and Guardian. It is a good idea—it is a way to ensure that a grieving child does not lose their payout to administration fees—but that bill has still not been moved. Why not? Why has it not been packaged with the bill we are debating now? What are the Government's future plans in this regard and why is it being so cagey about them?

That brings me back to my concerns about the elements of the bill relating to commutations. There are benefits to allowing commutations in certain cases. As McDougall wrote:

There are ... significant psychosocial benefits in allowing workers and their families to settle claims, avoid the ongoing stress and difficulty that pursuit of a claim can create, and get on with their lives.

But as always with this Government, the devil is in the detail. As the New South Wales Bar Association has pointed out, "The form of the legislation introduced into Parliament provides no indication of the circumstances in which commutations are now to be permitted." Will those commutations be offered on the basis of industry, injury type, the degree of entitlement, the amount of entitlement, gender, age or income? The New South Wales Bar Association surmises that the legislation has been inadequately considered—that it "contains regulatory pathways which could permit the almost complete subversion of the underlying purpose of the scheme".

Unfortunately, coming from the Government of Dominic Perrottet, I would not be surprised if a complete subversion of the workers compensation scheme was the ultimate goal. If we ignore history, we are doomed to learn nothing from it, so let's look at the Premier's history. This is the Premier who wanted icare to be the jewel in his political crown—icare, where serious financial mismanagement at the highest levels led to serious and continual losses even before COVID hit; icare, where executives received bonuses despite those losses and were praised by the Premier for them; icare, which lost its chair and co-chair to resignation; icare, where there have been dodgy dealings galore, with massive contracts handed out to businesses linked to senior managers, including an \$11 million marketing contract given to a company owned by a manager, and questionable tender practices that saw a \$140 million contract handed out after a one-week tender process.

Liberal Party donors enjoyed extra-cosy relationships with icare as \$6 million in contracts were awarded to Korn Ferry, and an \$18 million contract went to IVE Group without tender. Staffing arrangements at icare were questionable: The CEO's wife was given a job there, and political staffers on the icare payroll were seconded to the Treasurer's office. But the most egregious of icare's many sins is the underpayment of tens of thousands of injured workers to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

Ms Kate Washington: Shame!

Ms JODIE HARRISON: It is a shame. This is the largest case of wage theft by an Australian government in the history of our country. It is a black mark for this Premier, this Government and our State. Make no mistake, the responsibility for all of this lies with the man who has overseen icare since its inception—Dominic Perrottet. This is the Premier who, as finance Minister, brought icare into the world. This is the Premier who, as Treasurer, oversaw high levels of basic incompetence and dodgy dealings at the highest levels and at the very heart of his brainchild, and whose department abandoned an investigation into icare in September 2019, before the problems that I have spoken about were brought to the public's attention. And now this Coalition Government is putting forward legislation that has not been properly considered and leaves far too much open to interpretation. Given the Premier's history of ignoring mismanagement in the State's workers compensation system, is it really so outrageous to think that he might be willing to overlook the problems caused by this legislation? I do not think so.

After all, the Premier leads a Government that has proven, over and over again, how little it cares for workers. It is a Government that takes every opportunity to sledge the frontline workers who have kept us going through the pandemic. It is a Government that has offered these workers little more than thanks for their hard work and that is overseeing a staffing crisis in our schools, our hospitals and our ambulance service. There is a case to be made for commutations, but I do not trust this Government and this Premier to handle it without the appropriate care. Over and over again the Government has proven that it cannot be trusted with workers compensation. Having said that, this legislation goes some way to fixing what is often a horrendous system for those who are injured but it needs amending to overcome the issues that I and others in this place have raised. I support the amendments proposed by the shadow Minister and member for Canterbury, who has worked hard on this bill.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:00): I speak in support of the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I particularly speak to the key commutation benefits introduced by the bill.

These amendments have two broad objectives: to allow the administrative function of approving a commutation to be done in the Personal Injury Commission under the delegation of the president; and to create a regulation-making power to expand access to commutations for certain classes of claims with appropriate controls to ensure the long-term viability of the workers compensation scheme.

Currently, under limited circumstances, compensation for workplace injuries may be commuted to a lump sum under the Workers Compensation Act 1987. It is essentially a "pay out" of any future liabilities to pay weekly compensation and medical expenses by making a lump sum payment to the worker. Once a worker commutes their entitlement to compensation in respect of an injury, they are no longer entitled to any further compensation for that injury. In his report former Supreme Court Justice Robert McDougall, QC, found that allowing workers and their families to commute claims can have significant psychosocial benefits. It can help workers and their families to get on with their lives.

These amendments protect workers who accept a commutation in several ways. Firstly, the bill provides that a commutation must be approved by the Personal Injury Commission. Secondly, before approving a commutation, the president of the commission retains the discretion to refer the commutation to a member of the commission for review, to ensure that any commutation agreement is accurate and adequate. Thirdly, the worker protections around independent legal advice and the desirability of obtaining financial advice are maintained. Currently, before an agreement is entered into, a legal practitioner must certify in writing that the worker has been advised of the full legal implications of the agreement and the desirability for the worker to obtain independent financial advice. Independent legal advice is an important protection for workers as it ensures that they understand the implications of accepting a commutation agreement.

The regulations may prescribe certain classes of claims where a worker is not required to obtain legal advice, but that is expected to be the exception and not the rule. It is anticipated that only very low-value claims will be exempted from the requirement to obtain legal advice, and that no worker will be prevented from obtaining legal advice where they consider that to be appropriate or necessary. The provisions create a rule-making power for the commission to deal with procedures for the applications and any documentation to accompany the application. As identified earlier, the second objective of the commutation amendments is to expand access to commutations. Currently there are very few commutations in New South Wales—in part because of this very strict precondition which has been in place for over 20 years. The proposed regulation-making power will allow the Government to identify additional circumstances in which commutation will be permitted.

A commutation can provide workers with an option to exit the scheme with a lump sum and allow them to regain a sense of autonomy and control over their lives. Commutations can benefit insurers by reducing their ongoing claims, management costs and reducing long-tail liabilities. It will be important for these classes of claims to be carefully selected and for this expanded access to commutations to be done in a careful, measured and controlled manner. This is essential to avoid the risk of unintended behaviours, such as a poor return to work or driving a "lump sum culture". Protecting the long-term viability of the workers compensation scheme is critical.

The careful development of regulations with further input from stakeholders prior to regulations being made will ensure that risks are mitigated. This will support the identification of appropriate classes of commutations with controls tailored to the requirements of each class and ultimately achieve intended outcomes. Importantly, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority proposes that before the Government prescribes any new classes of claims eligible for compensation, it will undertake an extensive consultation with stakeholders. Any liberalised commutations program will balance the need for greater access to commutations for workers and employers with the risks to the long-term sustainability of the overall scheme. These commutation benefit amendments support an effective, affordable and sustainable workers compensation scheme. The bill is the first step in establishing the framework to give workers and insurers greater choice and flexibility consistent with the McDougall review recommendations. I thank members for their support of the bill and commend it to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:06): I make a contribution to the debate on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. New South Wales Bar Association President Michael McHugh, SC, has raised serious concerns in an official letter published on behalf of the association addressing the proposed restructure of the commutation arrangements in the bill. As a former practising barrister and still a member of the bar, I take concerns regarding legislative changes raised by the Bar Association with the utmost seriousness. As lawmakers we should also heed concerns raised by this body. The concerns raised by the New South Wales Bar Association in its letter specifically address the use of regulations in the bill in the form of Henry VIII clauses. It stated that the commutation arrangements should be closely considered by the Parliament of New South Wales to ensure that they do not fail to provide for the intended insurance beneficiaries of this legislation.

The New South Wales Bar Association has a consistent record of opposing the excessive use of Henry VIII clauses in legislation formulated by the Parliament of New South Wales. It stated that the benefit of the overuse of these clauses circumvents the ordinary process of parliamentary scrutiny and debate. The Bar Association

pointed out that the High Court had noted there is "good reason" for the frequent criticism of using such clauses. The reasoning of the High Court's position on this issue is the court's view that Parliament should have the ability to oversee and delegate legislation—a core feature of our liberal democracy.

The New South Wales Bar Association highlighted that in 2020 the Legislative Council Regulation Committee made recommendations on how to "foster greater transparency in the use of delegated legislative power". The committee recommended two clauses: to highlight the presence in the bill of any Henry VIII clauses, shell legislation or quasi-legislation; and to include an explanation as to why such a broad delegation of legislative power is considered necessary. The bill fails to reference or highlight the need for the Henry VIII clauses, which the committee recommended members of this House must adopt. The Bar Association also pointed out that the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government failed to mention these clauses in his second reading speech. The Minister has also failed to mention any limitations to such a broad delegation by appropriate safeguards through the use of sunset dates.

The New South Wales Bar Association stated that the form in which the legislation has been introduced to this Parliament fails to inform members of both Houses of the circumstances under which commutations will be permitted. That creates a lack of transparency in the commutation process. Further, the Bar Association raised concerns about how the classes of insurance claims deemed appropriate for commutation would be determined by regulators such as the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA]. That will diminish parliamentary scrutiny and give greater powers to unelected bureaucratic government bodies such as SIRA, which would harm the transparency of the commutation process. The Bar Association raised concerns that that process will be conducted outside of a public forum, out of the hands of legislators and under the control of bureaucrats.

The New South Wales Bar Association notes that the following issues appear to raise matters of concern about the central function of a workers compensation scheme. Schedule 2 [4] to the bill, which amends section 87EA (2) by inserting subsection (2) (c), appears to envisage giving power to pass a regulation that will permit the lump sum proposed for the commutation to be excessive or inadequate. The Bar Association believes the regulation containing this characteristic embodies the problem with Henry VIII clauses more generally but also believes that it begs two questions: What legitimate policy goal requires the power to make a regulation permitting overpayment and/or allows it under compensation? What properly designed scheme can afford overpayment?

The Bar Association also raised concerns about schedule 2 [8] to the bill, which excuses a worker from obtaining advice in certain cases. It is unclear what the criteria might be for a worker to be classed as not requiring advice. The association believes that if the regulatory authorities want to boost commutations in order to favour the operational goals of the scheme, they can merely alter the class definitions. The Bar Association also believes that if there is a principle that lies behind this provision, it should be the concept of the regulation-making power. Therefore, the Bar Association believes that schedule 2 [8] should identify the purpose required to be met in making any regulation.

The Bar Association takes issue with schedule 2 [9] to the bill, which requires that a worker wishing to withdraw from a commutation agreement can only do so in writing to the president of the Personal Injury Commission [PIC]. The association believes item [9] is not clear on why the restricted basis for withdrawal should be imposed upon a class of worker not required to obtain advice on the wisdom of the commutation who, seemingly, is expected to know that they have the ability to withdraw but must do so in writing to the president of the PIC. The association notes this in the context of there being no present information as to who will commute and under what circumstances. The Bar Association summarises its opinions on the bill by describing how the foregoing issues have indicated to the association that the legislation has been inadequately considered. The association believes the bill contains regulatory pathways that could permit almost complete subversion of the underlying purpose of the scheme and the McDougall recommendations.

The Bar Association has recommended that substantive changes in the scheme should not be left to regulation, even less so where the legislation envisages regulations. The association has stated that those substantive changes defeat the purpose of the scheme. It is clear from the Bar Association's analysis that there are many legislative and practical faults with the bill. The New South Wales Government's disregard, or perhaps ignorance, of the Bar Association's consistent position opposing the excessive use of Henry VIII clauses, as well as the view of the High Court on the use of those clauses, are representative of a government that appears to have no respect for the legal opinions of our State's peak legal authorities.

As the Bar Association stated, the overuse of those clauses circumvents the ordinary process of parliamentary scrutiny and debate. Parliament should have the ability to oversee and delegate legislation, which is a core feature of our liberal democracy, as the High Court stated. It is a shame that the New South Wales Government and the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, who was a practising lawyer, have displayed a disrespect for the sentiments expressed by the Bar Association and the High Court. The New South

Wales Government and the Minister should be ashamed of themselves for arrogantly thinking they can ignore legal opinions that any lawyer worth their salt would listen to.

The Legislative Council Regulation Committee's 2020 recommendations on how to foster greater transparency in the use of legislative power has clearly been ignored in the writing of the bill. The committee made only two recommendations, which clearly have not been followed. Those recommendations were to highlight the presence of Henry VIII clauses and include an explanation as to why such legislative power is necessary. It is clear from the Bar Association's analysis that the Government has failed to include those recommendations in the bill. Again, it demonstrates a lack of care for the recommendations and for executing legislation in a transparent way. When the Minister outlined the objects of the bill in his second reading speech, he did so in a non-transparent manner, which the association has raised.

I share the Bar Association's serious concerns about the circumstances under which commutations will be permitted in the bill. It is amusing that in government the Liberals, whose party ethos is supposed to be centred on smaller government and less bureaucratic red tape, have chosen this issue to strengthen bureaucratic powers in the public service. Why have they done this? It is not so they can genuinely invest in the public service but so they can once again target the working class, which is a feature of the Liberal ideology that is far more characteristic of this Government. The bill will have a negative effect on workers struggling with insurance claims, made harder by a more rigorous commutation process. [*Extension of time*]

The bill grants sweeping powers to regulatory bodies like SIRA and gives them the capacity to discriminate against whoever they feel because the class of worker defined by the regulators is not made transparent. The Bar Association is right to point out the need for regulation to permit overpayment or underpayment of compensation in the workers compensation scheme. That implies the capacity for reckless spending permitted by the Government through overpayment or an intention by the Government to once again sell our workers down the river by cheating them of sufficient compensation through underpayment. No properly designed compensation scheme should be able to afford overpayment, and I question whether the capacity for overpayment will be used in a fair or responsible way. It opens a can of worms for many errors to be made.

The process for withdrawing from commutations is also made unnecessarily difficult through the need to write to the president of the PIC requesting a withdrawal. That makes it harder for the ordinary worker, who may not be aware of the process for withdrawing from commutations, and it is confronting for them to have to write to the president of a regulator such as the PIC. To conclude, the reforms in the bill are intended to make the commutation process more efficient. The Opposition supports the bill but will move amendments, which I understand the Government will support. The bill has been executed in a non-transparent manner and is reflective of a lack of care for the legal opinions of the Bar Association, the High Court and the recommendations made by the Regulation Committee. The Government should take those legal opinions about Henry VIII clauses seriously. I commend the Opposition's foreshadowed amendments and the bill to the House.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (12:19): I speak in support of the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I am sure all members appreciate that the workplace death of a loved one can be extremely distressing for families. The expectation is that when a family member goes to work in the morning, they will come home at night. When they do not, it is a tragedy for that family. It is up to all governments, especially governments in advanced societies like ours, to look after the families of those who die in the workplace because prolonged litigation, when pursuing a claim for workers compensation benefits, can cause unnecessary complications and prolonged grief. Those families should be given the option to avoid incurring such anxieties. The amendments in the bill will go a long way towards ensuring that.

Amendments to the Workers Compensation Act 1987 in items [1] and [27] of schedule 2 to the bill are designed to ensure that families of deceased workers have the option to settle their lump sum death benefit dispute in the Personal Injury Commission on a compromised basis. Currently, the legislation provides for an all-or-nothing outcome for families and the insurer. Depending on the outcome of the dispute in the commission or higher courts, either the full lump sum amount is payable or nothing is payable. Under the current rules, dependants are not allowed to reach a compromise. The new provisions provide a framework for families to resolve disputes and to ensure that any settlement is reasonable, fair and proportionate in all the circumstances. The framework provides flexibility, giving families the option to access an alternative route that relieves the burden of litigation that would otherwise ensue while pursuing a genuinely disputed claim.

In many cases the issue of liability will be clear, but in some instances disputes can be very complex and potentially take years to resolve. A settlement lump sum presents a safe, guaranteed payout that minimises uncertainty where there is a genuine liability dispute. It can be a life-changing amount for families. The bill goes to the heart of protecting families of deceased workers in New South Wales, minimising the potential for added stress in an already difficult environment. At the same time, the amendments include the necessary controls to ensure that any settlement is reasonable, fair and proportionate in all the circumstances. The Personal Injury

Commission will entertain proceedings only if there is a reasonable basis for the insurer to dispute liability, based on the evidence before the commission, and a reasonably arguable view of the law. That will prevent arbitrary contestations from insurers. For that reason, death benefit disputes can only be settled in the commission.

Insurers and families cannot settle matters on a compromised basis outside the commission. Furthermore, unless each dependant agrees to the compromised settlement, including the amount, a settlement cannot proceed. That means no single dependant can be disadvantaged by a settlement. The bill requires separate legal representation for all parties, unless otherwise directed by the commission. That is important in ensuring that dependants understand the implications of a settlement, especially where the interests of young children are involved. The bill also grants the commission power to make rules about applications and procedures to be followed. That will provide the commission with the flexibility to shape proceedings on a case-by-case basis. The bill is essential to ensuring that the families of deceased workers in New South Wales are given the protections they deserve. It responds to the following observation made by the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, in his review:

There is no principled reason why ... [families] should not be able to compromise claims, so long as there is appropriate oversight of the compromise.

The amendments are crucial to guaranteeing that the workers compensation scheme remains effective, affordable and sustainable, now and into the future. This bill is the first critical step in establishing a legislative framework that gives workers and insurers greater choice and flexibility. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:24): I contribute to debate on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which implements part of the Government's response to recommendations made in the *icare and the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 Independent Review*, or the "McDougall review", and the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice *2020 review of the Workers Compensation Scheme*. The amendments strengthen the oversight of insurers under the workers compensation scheme to improve outcomes for stakeholders; clarify the respective roles and obligations of icare and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, or SIRA, under the different compensation schemes; and expand the powers of commutation and settlement of lump sum death benefits, subject to the approval of the Personal Injury Commission.

By way of background, an independent review of icare and the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, or the SICG Act, by retired Supreme Court judge the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, was completed in April 2021. The Government has already accepted 35 of the McDougall review's recommendations that could be enacted operationally by icare and SIRA. The bill's proposed reforms include amendments to the SICG Act to specify the objects of the Act; clarify the objects and functions of icare and SIRA in the delivery and regulation of State insurance and compensation schemes; establish a four-year maximum term of office for an appointed director of icare, replacing the current three-year period; and require the boards of icare and SIRA to advise the Minister as to whether they consider a ministerial direction to be in the public interest.

The bill also amends the Workers Compensation Act 1987, and the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 to further clarify SIRA's functions; extend SIRA's investigative and regulatory powers in relation to the Nominal Insurer, icare, NSW Self Insurance Corporation and claims managers, where appropriate; and allow SIRA to impose licence conditions on both the Nominal Insurer and Government self-insurers, provided the relevant Minister approves licence conditions about prudential matters. Under the proposed amendments, ministerial approval is not required for licence conditions about claims management activities.

The amendments to the Workers Compensation Act and the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act also provide for the settlement of lump sum death benefit disputes in the Personal Injury Commission on a compromised basis. I will say more about that later. They also provide a framework that allows the President of the Personal Injury Commission to approve commutations and to allow the regulations to expand access to commutations for certain classes of claims. All relevant stakeholders have been consulted, including legal profession peak bodies, Unions NSW, the Insurance Council of Australia, icare, SIRA, the Independent Review Office and the Personal Injury Commission. To date, the proposed changes have been well supported. All New South Wales government agencies have been consulted through the Cabinet process.

I turn to the death benefits and some of the questions that have been raised as part of the consultation process. First, I refer to the consultation that was undertaken on the benefit-related recommendations. The findings and recommendations of the McDougall review, which include benefit-related recommendations that are addressed in the bill, were made following extensive public consultation. In developing a legislative response to the recommendations, the Government considered the comprehensive and thorough review, which incorporated input from that consultation. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority published a comprehensive discussion

paper and undertook public consultation between October and November 2021 on the benefit-related recommendations.

The authority received many submissions from a broad group of stakeholders across the legal profession, insurers, business, industry, unions, the medical profession and government. Importantly, some input was also received from individual workers who had experiences in the workers compensation scheme. Submissions have been published on the State Insurance Regulatory Authority's website and are publicly available where permission has been obtained. Additionally, insurers, industry, the legal profession, unions and a number of other peak stakeholders were briefed on the proposed amendments.

Another question that has popped up is why the proposed amendments to the lump sum death benefit are necessary. Several submissions to the McDougall review proposed that, in circumstances where there is a genuine liability dispute around workplace death, the parties to the dispute should have the option to settle their dispute on a compromised basis. Currently, where there is a liability dispute about a workplace death, it is an all-or-nothing proposition. Either the employer is found to be liable, in which case the full \$849,300 lump sum death benefit is payable, or else the employer is found not to be liable and nothing is payable. That all-or-nothing proposition can drive prolonged litigation and uncertainty for families. Having the option to settle a genuine liability dispute on a compromised basis assists families by providing certainty regarding the outcome, allowing faster resolution of disputes and allowing families to get on with their lives. Settling on a compromised basis can represent a life-changing amount for a family. Nobody can be compelled to agree to a compromised settlement, but the lump sum death benefit amendments give families a choice.

That leads to the question of what protections will be put in place for the families of deceased workers if the insurer proposes a compromised settlement. How can we guarantee that families are not taken advantage of at their most vulnerable time? That is a really important question, and the protections for families and loved ones following a workplace death are of paramount importance. The proposed amendments contain a framework to enable compromised settlement of lump sum death benefit disputes in the Personal Injury Commission only. An insurer and family cannot enter into a compromised settlement agreement outside of the commission. As an independent expert tribunal, the commission ensures that settlements are reasonable and fair. The compromised settlement has to be approved by the commission, including that the agreed amount is reasonable in the circumstances. The commission is not to entertain proceedings to give effect to a proposed agreement unless there is a reasonable basis for the insurer to dispute liability based on the material available to the commission. Commission rules may make provision for applications and for the procedure for making a determination to give effect to the agreement.

That then leads to the financial implications of the death benefit amendments for employers and insurers in New South Wales. It is anticipated that the financial implications of the proposed death benefit amendments will be negligible. There are relatively few disputed death benefits claims in the New South Wales workers compensation system. The proposed amendments will allow the parties to settle matters on a compromised basis, thus avoiding lengthy litigation and the associated legal costs. But will the families of injured workers be worse off or better off? Several protections are in place for the families of injured workers to help ensure that they only enter into an agreement that is to their benefit. For example, each dependant must receive their own legal advice. The commission will approve the agreement only where it is satisfied that the compromised amount is reasonable, and the proposed amendments give families a choice. [*Extension of time*]

The proposed amendments give families of a deceased worker the option to settle their lump sum benefit dispute in the Personal Injury Commission on a compromised basis. They provide a framework for families to settle disputes and to ensure that any settlement is reasonable in the circumstances. The Personal Injury Commission cannot entertain proceedings to give effect to a compromised settlement of the lump sum death benefit unless there is a reasonable basis for the insurer to dispute liability, the amount of compensation is reasonable in the circumstances and each dependant agrees to the settlement. The proposed amendments deliver on the recommendation of the Hon. Mr McDougall, QC, with protections for families and loved ones and comprehensive oversight by the Personal Injury Commission.

Families cannot settle their other death benefit entitlements, such as weekly payments to children and funeral benefits, on a compromised basis. The option to settle does not extend to other benefits like funeral benefits, transportation of a body or weekly payments to children. Once a compromise is reached on the death benefit amount, those other benefits are payable in full, which is another important protection under the bill. One other question that arises is whether a dependant can agree to settle the lump sum benefit dispute while others maintain the dispute. I can imagine various scenarios where siblings or children may find themselves in that dreaded scenario but, no, the proposed amendments will not allow for one dependant to agree to settle the lump sum death benefit dispute while others maintain the dispute. A settlement can proceed only if each dependant agrees to the compromised settlement, including the settlement amount.

All parties to a death benefit dispute will be legally represented, which is a fundamental protection offered by the bill. The proposed amendments ensure separate legal representation for all parties unless otherwise directed by the commission. That is especially important to protect the interests of children. The amended death benefits are not applicable to coalminers; coalminer disputes are heard in the District Court rather than the commission. Given that those death benefit settlements occur outside the commission, those provisions do not apply to coalminers. The proposed lump sum death benefit amendments do not apply to volunteers for the same reason. The provisions for the death benefits will commence upon assent and will apply to deaths only on or after the date of assent. The death benefit amendments will not be backdated.

Claims cannot be settled outside the commission. The lump sum death benefits settlement is available only where there is a genuine death benefit dispute, which must be in the commission. The proposed amendments provide an option for families to settle matters on a compromised basis. Those families can be extremely vulnerable, and the option of a compromised settlement in the commission provides the opportunity to avoid the stresses of prolonged litigation. Moreover, the requirement for a claim to be settled at the commission offers protection to vulnerable dependants of deceased workers. As an independent expert tribunal, the commission can ensure that any settlement is reasonable in the circumstances. Following this review, I think it is a very important piece of legislation. Workers compensation, particularly when there has been a death, is a very important piece of public policy. I commend the Minister and his team for bringing the bill to the House. I thank everyone who was involved as a stakeholder in this extensive consultation process, and everyone who has given their advice and input into the development of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:39): I contribute to debate on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. As members have said previously, workers compensation is a vital protection for our community. It is a really valuable plank within the architecture of social protection for workers across the State and this country, and there is a long history of attempts to get the system right. I certainly do not imagine that anybody could say that any one attempt at legislation in this area has gone smoothly and easily from start to finish, and that is because there are clearly competing interests involved. In trying to protect workers who are injured or protect the families of those who are regrettably killed at work, one has to provide benefits. There has to be compensation available to those people to protect them from the harm that is done.

But in doing that for genuine cases, inevitably there is an incentive—a honey-pot effect—for those less scrupulous within our community who may sense an opportunity. We have seen that throughout the years in this field, as we have in other fields of insurance. There is also, it has to be admitted, the role played by the legal profession in earning an income out of this field. One might suggest that there is an incentive for them to make sure that income is as lucrative as it can be. I do not want to disparage anybody involved in the process, because it is essential at times. There are key elements where people need legal advice; I would not dispute that for a moment. But we have to admit that human nature plays a part in all of this and acknowledge that it is therefore a complex field.

Governments over the years have attempted to wrestle with the moving parts, to come to the best possible balance, to provide as much clarity and certainty as possible to the parties involved, to minimise the cost of the system and to maximise the benefit to those who really need benefits. Those are the goals, and we can all readily agree with those. They are just difficult to deliver. I heard the member for Liverpool, who obviously has a wealth of experience and goes back a fair way in this field, talk about reinventing the wheel and coming back to places we have been before. I can identify with that. My father, Clarrie Conolly, who is 91 now, entered the Government Insurance Office in about 1950, went straight into the workers compensation area and ended up heading that division within the Government Insurance Office.

In his day he could recite all of these factors, many cases, and many examples of why this law was good and that one was bad because of this known rort or that attempt or this learning experience from a previous piece of legislation. It has gone back and forwards over the years. I also remember the very big protest held on Macquarie Street when Bob Carr was Premier and he had a go at reforming workers compensation. The unions came out in force with an enormous protest. I seem to recall that Bob Carr had to find a back exit out of the building at the time; it was not terribly convenient to be seen. It just goes to show that it is a very challenging area. With all the best will in the world, it will take a fair amount of cooperation, a fair amount of consultation and a lot of dialogue to try to refine the system for the best possible outcome, and I believe that is what is going on here.

Debate interrupted.

*Committees***PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE****Reports**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the House take note of report No. 8/57 of the Public Accounts Committee, entitled *Examination of Selected Auditor-General's Financial Audit Reports 2020*.

Mr GREG PIPER: I move:

That this debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): I set down the resumption of the debate as an order of the day for tomorrow.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**Reports**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the House take note of report No. 9/57 of the Public Accounts Committee, entitled *Examination of Selected Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports August 2019 – June 2020*.

Mr GREG PIPER: I move:

That this debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): I set down the resumption of the debate as an order of the day for tomorrow.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Reports**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (12:46): As Chair: I address the House regarding the Legislation Review Committee's forty-second digest for this Parliament, entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 42/57*, tabled on 10 May 2022. In the forty-second digest, the committee examined five bills and eight statutory instruments introduced in the sitting week beginning 29 March 2022. One such bill included the Racing and Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill, which amends four statutes that regulate racing and online wagering in New South Wales. One of the changes under the bill is the introduction of sections 33JD and 33JE to the racing Act, which allow information about betting accounts, including personal information, to be accessed by certain persons as prescribed by the regulations. The committee acknowledged that information-sharing may impede the relevant persons' right to privacy; however, the committee also recognised that the sharing of the information in regards to online betting accounts is important in ensuring compliance with legislation and reducing harm to individuals. In the circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

The State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced to amend three statutes and to repeal the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Act 2012. The bill amends the Workers Compensation Act by creating a new strict liability offence for conduct by a licensed insurer who contravenes an undertaking. It also inserts section 195, which establishes a strict liability offence for a licensed insurer who does not comply with a written direction issued by the State Insurance Regulatory Authority. The committee reported that these offences depart from the common-law principle that the mental element of an offence is relevant to the imposition of liability. The committee further noted that the maximum penalty carried by these offences is monetary only, not custodial, and in the circumstances made no further comment.

Turning to a private member's bill introduced in the Legislative Council, the Water Management Amendment (No Compensation for Floodplain Harvesting Licences) Bill amends the Water Management Act to exclude floodplain harvesting access licences from certain compensation. It excludes these licence holders from compensation schemes for compulsory acquisitions of licences or reductions in water allocations permitted by those licences. The committee noted that the amendments are intended to address the potential public cost burden for administering such licences; however, they do not appear to offer alternative avenues for affected individuals

to seek compensation for lost access. For this reason, the committee referred this matter to the Parliament for its consideration.

That concludes my remarks on the forty-second digest before this Parliament. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest and the secretariat for its support. I give a special shout-out to one of the hardworking and dedicated professional members of our Legislation Review Committee team, Caroline Hopley, who I am told spent the weekend getting married. I can report to the House that it was a sunny day and the bride looked beautiful. I congratulate Caroline. We look forward to her return. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:49): It gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on the forty-second digest of the Legislation Review Committee in this Parliament, dated 10 May. The committee considered five bills and commented on all of them. We also considered 23 regulations and commented on eight of them. I, of course, extend the Opposition's congratulations to Caroline Hopley as well. I also note that the committee discharged the Hon. Wes Fang from the other place and appointed the Hon. Scott Barrett in his place. I welcome Scott on board. Farewell to Wes Fang—his star shone very briefly but oh so brightly in the service of the committee. I particularly thank the member for Port Macquarie, who has been discharged from the committee. She gave great service and was an important contributor to the work of the committee. I welcome on board the member for Camden, who will be replacing her.

One of the bills we considered was the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The object of the bill was to create an offence for certain behaviour that caused damage or disruption to major roads or major facilities. The committee noted that the bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 30 March 2022 and that standing orders were suspended on that day to urgently consider the bill. The Legislative Assembly then passed the bill without amendment on 30 March 2022 and the Legislative Council passed it with amendments on 1 April 2022. The Legislative Assembly subsequently agreed to those amendments later that day.

The committee noted that the bill does trespass on personal rights and liberties, particularly in relation to freedom of association. The committee wanted to bring these matters to the attention of the House and note that it has reported on them even though the bill was passed before members of the House had the opportunity to consider the committee's comments. The committee made similar comments that the Roads Amendment (Major Bridges and Tunnels) Regulation 2022 trespasses unduly on personal rights and liberties. The committee noted that, under the Crimes Act, industrial action undertaken by working people is not covered by those prescriptions under the regulation. We nevertheless referred the regulation to the House for its consideration, and I do so accordingly. Again, I thank my fellow committee members for their work and the secretariat that supports us so well. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge those attending the Introduction to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly public sector seminar, who are watching question time from the Cooper gallery. I had the privilege of addressing the group this morning, as did a number of members. I welcome them to question time. I extend also a very warm welcome to the guests of the member for East Hills, school captains and vice-captains from De La Salle College, Revesby Heights, and Mount St Joseph Catholic College, Milperra: Daniel Garzaniti, Jarrod Field, Marcus Sahyoun, Jayden Fama, Sarah Gill, Angelica Jardim, Alexia Pengue and Emily Shun Wah. I also welcome to the Cooper gallery the guests of the member for Wollondilly: Mr Matt Gould, the mayor of Wollondilly Shire Council, and Mr Ben Taylor, the chief executive officer of Wollondilly Shire Council, whom I know from his Northern Beaches days. It is good to see him.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that a media representative has been authorised to take still photographs on a pool basis from the side door of the Chamber this afternoon.

*Members***REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House that the Attorney General will answer questions today in the absence of the Deputy Premier.

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House that on 12 April 2022 Stephen Bruce Bromhead was appointed as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport and Roads. An updated list of Parliamentary Secretaries has been electronically tabled with the Clerks.

*Question Time***SYDNEY CONGESTION CHARGE**

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:19): My question is directed to the Premier. This Government is already the highest taxing State Government in the country. Why is the Premier now working out plans for putting new taxes and tolls onto motorists in what is already the most tolled city on earth?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:19): Mr Speaker, the best city in the best State in the country. The accusations by the Leader of the Opposition are false. Let us go back a step. Since 2011 this Government has cut \$9 billion in taxes because Liberals and Nationals believe in lower taxes. The payroll tax threshold in 2017-18 was \$750,000, and we increased that threshold to \$1.2 million before the pandemic arrived. What did Labor do at the last election campaign? Labor ran on increasing 10 taxes, leading into this term of government.

Dr Hugh McDermott: That is complete rubbish.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You did. Okay, I will tell you. You had a boat tax. As the member for Monaro quite eloquently pointed out yesterday, you wanted to put a tax on farmers in the middle of a drought. You opposed the indexation of stamp duty rates, which would have increased taxes on every homebuyer across New South Wales. You opposed the increase in the payroll tax threshold, which we introduced. What does that do? That provides the cash flow for businesses to employ people across our State, giving them cash going into the pandemic, which allowed them to stay open. When those opposite talk about tax—

Dr Hugh McDermott: Where are the others? You said 10. Name the 10.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That shows how basic they are. When you grow the economy and people and businesses are doing well, you collect more tax because they are making more money. That is the Liberals' and Nationals' way. That means that you can invest in the things that matter.

On the charges from the Leader of the Opposition, I will say that, as the infrastructure Minister pointed out, we immediately ruled those recommendations out. The Executive, not the public service, makes the decision. But I was shocked to read recommendation 6, which said that the New South Wales Government should consider the introduction of a CBD congestion tax; and recommendation 7, which said that the New South Wales Government should pursue the greater use of user charges on major road projects, and that the Government should also embrace toll roads as the new norm. I was also shocked to learn that this was not the Government document; this was the Labor-backed McKell Institute, from 2014. I was shocked to also learn who the research fellow at the McKell Institute in 2014 was. It was none other than Christopher John Minns, the congestion-tax-charging man himself.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:22): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is working to ensure that our kids are given the best start in life?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23): That is a great question from the member for North Shore. As a young mother herself, she knows the importance of giving our kids the best start in life. That is what they have under the Liberals and Nationals in our State. On a whole raft of measures kids are so much better off in New South Wales today than they were under Labor, and they know it. The school students in the gallery know it. They know that they are better educated because of the Liberals and Nationals. In fact, they probably would not be here under Labor—it closed 90 schools during its time in office. It wanted to close 100 schools. I am happy to see that the students are at school today because of the Liberals and Nationals.

Talking about giving kids a great start in life, this morning I was with the Minister for Mental Health at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, where we opened a mother and baby unit to support mothers who are suffering from mental health issues and ensure that, in those difficult times following birth, mothers are connected with their new babies. This morning we met a young mother, Gwen, and her two-year-old son Arlo. She faced significant challenges when she gave birth, and today she spoke incredibly well about the importance of setting up this mums and bubs unit at RPA. We will be opening one at Westmead as well later in the year. This is building services around those who need them, and I know—as Gwen knows—that it will make a real difference to people's lives. I was out with the Minister for Health—wherever we were—on Sunday.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Westmead.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Westmead. There are hospitals everywhere. I am in a hospital every day. We just keep opening them—I get lost. They are all over the State. I do not know how many hospitals the Minister for Health and I have been at. We were at Nepean the other day with Minister Ayres—that \$900 million investment.

Mr Stuart Ayres: It is \$1 billion.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Sorry, \$1 billion. There are 100 millions and billions everywhere.

Mr Brad Hazzard: We have been to Nepean, Blacktown and Westmead in the last three weeks.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is just non-stop. We have to stop building. It is just happening everywhere. That hospital was opposed by the member for Londonderry, by the way. What were we doing there? We were delivering.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Yes, 300,000 baby bundles. New baby Noah—very happy.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: New baby Noah, and was it Lisa? And John? [*Extension of time*]

Mr Brad Hazzard: Lisa and John.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Lisa and John.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am just getting some assistance. We were also opening the new paediatric facility there, which we know will make a real difference. For the students, we announced today our trial of eight schools in terms of flexible school hours. We want to move away from the nine to three school structure—archaic, from the past. Labor members oppose it, oppose reform. They are just backward conservatives. The Democratic Labor Party is alive and well in the Labor Party. We believe in building services around parents and children. By having more flexible work hours—earlier in the morning, if parents would like it, or later in the afternoon—we create greater opportunity and learning experiences for children, while also making sure that as many mums and dads as possible across our State balance work and family life, and that we build our school structure around them. I know the students in the gallery want to spend more time in school every single day. We will deliver that for all of them.

We know that Active Kids vouchers, Creative Kids vouchers and our intensive tutoring program for students that we launched during the pandemic have made a real impact. Right across the board, every child in this State gets a great start with the Liberals and Nationals—whether it is preschoolers in swimming lessons for the first time, kids getting involved in sport for the first time who may not otherwise have had the means to do it, looking at school hours or building record numbers of schools across our State. It is the Liberals and Nationals that will always put families first across our State.

SYDNEY CONGESTION CHARGE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:28): My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's answer ruling out his Government's secret plan for a new road tax. When he considers that his Government promised no more privatisations before the last election and then sold off the rest of WestConnex, promised to spend 30 per cent of Restart NSW funds in the regions but barely cracked 20 per cent and promised the Parramatta Light Rail stage two at two elections before dumping it, why would anyone believe there is not a great big new tax on the way for the families of western Sydney?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:29): Why did the Leader of the Opposition write the report that proposed it in the first place? We have ruled out a congestion tax. I know those opposite have not been in government for a long, long time—and long may that reign rule—but it is the members of the Cabinet that make the decisions on public policy. I encourage the members of the public service to come up with new ideas. That is what good government is all about. But it is up to the elected officials to make the decision. Minister

Stokes had not even seen this report and, as he quite eloquently said this morning—as he always does—even if it had got to him, he would have ruled it out and not even brought it to the Cabinet, because if he had brought it to the Cabinet he would have got laughed out of Cabinet.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There was never a commitment in relation to the WestConnex. We sold the first tranche of WestConnex, a project—

Ms Jo Haylen: How about returning local roads to local communities? Now you are going to toll them too.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: She loves WestConnex. Every time we mention it, she gets excited.

Ms Jo Haylen: It does not do any of the things you said it would.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We made \$9.26 billion from that first transaction, unlocking capital to build infrastructure. The second tranche of that transaction has ensured that we can invest \$5 billion in WestInvest, which really triggers those opposite. They hate WestInvest. We do not make any apologies for this. We are building \$110 billion of infrastructure over the next four years. In fact, today is one of my favourite days—it is Infrastructure Committee day this afternoon. It is my favourite committee after Cabinet, Expenditure Review Committee and Strat Co.

Mr Brad Hazzard: What about DaPCo?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There is no DaPCo any more, and Victor is happy about that. Let's move on. That is awkward. I have often thought about what the Infrastructure Committee was like under Labor for 16 years.

Mr Brad Hazzard: They didn't have one.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I know they had one, but it was a light agenda—welcome, apologies, general business, close. They say a short meeting is a good meeting but Labor took it to a whole new level, and that is why nothing got built. Our Infrastructure Committees go through the evening, as we build motorways, public transport, schools, hospitals and roads. And, once again, the Leader of the Opposition raises Restart—a fund that would never have existed under Labor because it opposed the poles and wires transaction. Those opposite raise concerns with WestConnex but they opposed WestConnex in the first place. On this side of the House we will just keep building; they can keep complaining.

COST OF LIVING

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:32): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Government's policies are helping New South Wales families tackle cost of living and whether there are any threats?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:32): What an excellent question from the member for Hawkesbury.

The SPEAKER: I have not started the Treasurer's time. I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time. The Clerk will restart the clock. The Treasurer will be heard in silence.

Mr MATT KEAN: I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her question. I acknowledge the work she has done in fighting for western Sydney, and particularly fighting for her community during the floods. She has done outstanding work and I commend her leadership of the Hawkesbury region. I also acknowledge the work that she does continuing to fight for families of western Sydney in ensuring that they can lower their cost-of-living pressures. That is what this Government is about. We know how the Leader of the Opposition lowers his cost-of-living pressures: He gets the Chinese Communist Party to pay for his travel.

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

Mr MATT KEAN: That is how he does it. Business class is pretty cheap when you do not have to pay for it.

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

Mr MATT KEAN: This is a government that is focused on lowering cost of living for families and businesses across New South Wales. In fact, due to our programs, families have seen \$5.8 billion worth of savings since 2017 when we introduced these regimes.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Wollongong to order for the third time. If he persists, he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr MATT KEAN: Our cost-of-living measures are driving down cost for families in this State. In fact, the average person who has visited Service NSW has saved around \$700. That is as a result of the Coalition Government's strong policies to drive down cost of living. We have a number of programs. We have programs to help first home owners. Concessions of nearly \$78 million in First Home Owner Grants have been handed out. There have been \$750 million worth of savings in stamp duty concessions because of the Liberal-Nationals Government's policies. This Government has given out around \$330 million every year as energy rebates to help families with their energy costs. We want to make sure that we look after not only the families of western Sydney but also the families of—

[Opposition members interjected.]

I know members of the Opposition do not think these are big savings—and they are probably not to someone who gives themselves a \$142,000 pay rise by knifing their boss.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is not being directly relevant to the question he was asked.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Treasurer was responding to an interjection. The Treasurer may continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: I was talking about the great cost-of-living schemes that this Government has to support families—like the Creative Kids vouchers, the Active Kids vouchers, and the before and after school care vouchers. These are important things. I know the Labor Party does not take it seriously. The member for Londonderry may not take it seriously, given her \$56,000 pay rise—that is half an ALDI bag in Labor currency. *[Extension of time]*

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is not being directly relevant. He is debating the answer under Standing Order 130. He should not be granted an extension of time unless he confines himself to directly answering the question.

The SPEAKER: I have granted the Minister two minutes. I ask that he not refer to ALDI bags in relation to individual members of the Parliament.

Mr MATT KEAN: I want to talk about what the Government is doing to help pensioners across New South Wales. Pensioners can access council rates rebates of up to \$425. There are a number of other cost-saving programs available, including the NSW Gas Rebate, through which eligible households can save up to \$121 per year. There is the Seniors Energy Rebate of up to \$200 per year and the Family Energy Rebate of up to \$198 dollars per year. The member for Lakemba will be interested to hear about our Rentstart Bond Loan, the tenancy assistance scheme, the tenancy guarantee scheme. We have a range of programs to ease cost-of-living pressures and help families across New South Wales to save on their bills. I wish the Leader of the Opposition would focus on helping his constituents benefit from these schemes rather than cooking up fantasy congestion taxes like he has done today. He cannot think up policies for his own party, but he makes up policies for the Government—policies which are pure fantasy, a work of fiction.

I will identify for the House the biggest threat to cost-of-living pressures here in New South Wales: It is the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party, because Labor's only economic plan is to shut down this State. The Leader of the Opposition closed down the State, working with Labor's friends in the union movement to bring about the Year of the Strike. The Opposition wants to drive up the cost of living for families by making them pay more for child care because they are shutting our schools. Labor wants to drive up fuel costs. They want to shut down our trains, forcing people onto the road and making them purchase more petrol. The Leader of the Opposition has no plans to help families. He only has a plan to help the union bosses who installed him in the job and helped him knife the former Leader of the Opposition, Jodi McKay. The public know it. It is a disgrace. *[Time expired.]*

ROAD TOLLS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:38): My question is directed to the Premier. On 3 May the Premier said that "distance-based tolling makes a lot of sense". Some families are paying over \$6,000 a year in tolls already under the Government's privatised toll road monopoly. How much more will they have to pay when the Government starts charging commuters a toll for every kilometre that they drive?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:38): You would love being on e-scooter travelling down the WestConnex, Mr Speaker. What we have said on this side of the House—actually, let us go back a step. Which government introduced distanced-based tolling in New South Wales?

Mr David Elliott: Labor—M7, distance-based tolls.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It was Labor, on the M7. What we have said—

Ms Jo Haylen: And whose government document says you want to put it on every single road?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Stop scaring the public—such negativity. This Government is taking this State from good to great—to the next level—building motorways, public transport, right across the State. We believe in putting downward pressure on tolls across this State. We do not believe—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Government does not believe that having to pay a flag fall every time you go on to a separate motorway is the right approach. Having a more streamlined system will ensure that families, particularly in western Sydney, pay less on tolls under the Liberal-Nationals Government.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In addition to that, we make no apology for building road infrastructure across our State. If we did not, untolled roads like Epping Road and Parramatta Road would be complete car parks under Labor. Albanese opposed WestConnex. NSW Labor opposed WestConnex. Now, with WestConnex, Parramatta Road flows faster and those who want to use the motorway can use the motorway. It is a win-win for everybody across western Sydney. Members on the Government side of the Chamber know that. Those opposite know that. The member for Keira came in yesterday with a unique strategy of asking the member for Monaro about the new committee she is chairing—which, in fairness, she had been on for all of five minutes. A little birdie close to home has given me the attendance records of the Public Accounts Committee, which the member for Keira is on—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. The Premier is nowhere near being even generally relevant to the specific question asked about distance-based tolling. Referring to someone who is a Chair of a committee being asked a question yesterday is certainly not directly relevant.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Speaker, this is about the Public Accounts Committee, which has a very important role, particularly—

The SPEAKER: Is the Premier speaking to the point of order?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yes, to the point of order.

The SPEAKER: Then speak to me, please, Premier.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Of course. Mr Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee plays a vital role as a committee—

The SPEAKER: Are you saying you will link the committee to the question?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Absolutely. Why would I do anything else, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Please continue on that basis.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In 2017 the member for Keira was appointed to the Public Accounts Committee and this is his attendance record: apology, present, apology, apology, present, apology, present, present, apology, apology, apology, apology, apology, apology, apology, apology, present, apology, apology, apology, apology—\$5,000 clearly not well spent.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier's time has expired. I like to think the Premier was going to link the committee to the question, except he ran out of time.

WESTINVEST

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (14:43): My question is addressed to the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on how WestInvest will secure a brighter future for communities across western Sydney?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:43): I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question, and for her passion and advocacy for the people and communities of western Sydney, particularly those in her electorate. It is fantastic to be able to talk about how the Government is investing in communities across western Sydney and there is no better example than its new WestInvest program. The Government is going to be able to invest \$5 billion across communities in western Sydney. How is it funded?

The WestInvest program is funded through recycling assets. The creation of WestConnex has sped up travel times across western Sydney. It built the M4 East, the project that Labor promised, cancelled, promised, cancelled. We on this side of this Chamber have delivered it. People in western Sydney are using it every single day. They are getting to jobs faster; they are getting home to their parents faster. We have expanded that out. We have widened the M4 and created a new tunnel. We are linking those, we are improving traffic flows and, because we have been able to recycle that back into the community, we have got our \$5 billion WestInvest Fund.

The first \$400 million of that is going across the 15 councils. Everyone is a winner here: Blacktown City Council, \$34½ million; Blue Mountains City Council, \$23 million; Burwood Council, \$21½ million; Camden Council, \$24 million; Campbelltown City Council, \$26 million; Canterbury-Bankstown Council, \$34 million; Cumberland City Council, \$29 million; Fairfield City Council, \$28 million; Hawkesbury City Council, \$22 million; Liverpool City Council, \$28 million; City of Parramatta Council, \$29 million; Penrith City Council, \$28 million; Strathfield Council, \$21 million; The Hills Shire Council, \$26 million; and—for that guy, where was he from, Cumberland? If you live in Kellyville you are further west than Parramatta—Wollondilly Shire Council, \$22 million. This is making sure that we take the value that we create on behalf of the taxpayer and reinvest it back into their communities.

The next round is \$1.6 billion. We have gone out and had the registration of interest and we have got over 1,000 registrations of interest from community organisations right across those 15 local government areas in western Sydney. It is fantastic to see that the people across western Sydney, as their communities are growing, are saying to us, "We want more open green space, better quality places to play sport and have recreation. We want to make sure that our schools can do more than just educate—they are places where people across our community can gather."

Going out to the citizens of western Sydney and seeking their ideas is shaping what we are going to do with the WestInvest Fund. Those registrations of interest have closed and now all of those people who are eligible are invited to make their application by 27 June. This will mean \$1.6 billion of improvements right across western Sydney. This is making life better for families. This is what happens when a government invests in infrastructure and manages the economy well. We keep delivering for those people who live in western Sydney. This is the benefit of strong economic management. [*Extension of time*]

It is also the benefit of investing in infrastructure. I was fascinated, listening to the Premier earlier. I noted that the Premier talked about how the Leader of the Opposition was a research fellow at the McKell Institute when they were writing reports about increasing congestion charges. I wondered whether the report that was leaked—that no Minister was seeing—was actually written by those opposite, but we will leave that alone. One of the other things I have also seen released by the McKell Institute, which the Minister for Active Transport, and Minister for Cities, along with the Leader of the Opposition, also released earlier, is another document that showed how important infrastructure delivery is across the city. The thing I noticed in that report, and I have raised this here before but I think it is important to keep contrasting what this Government has done compared with what Labor has done in the past, is that the McKell Institute said Victoria and New South Wales were at the back of the pack 10 years ago when Labor was leading the Government benches. Now, we are the national leaders in investing in infrastructure.

It is strong economic management and investment in projects like WestConnex that allow us to make our cities function more effectively, get families back home around their local communities faster and get workers closer to jobs. When you manage those assets properly, you can reinvest them back in community embellishments, which is exactly what we are doing in WestInvest. Here is the thing: Every single one of those proposals has been opposed by those opposite—every single one of them. When we are out there investing in local communities,

strengthening our communities, developing better community amenity and we have funded it through the way we have managed WestConnex, I remind every one of our community members and every person across western Sydney that not one of those projects would have been funded if Labor was in government.

WATER OWNERSHIP

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (14:48): My question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Water. The New South Wales Government allows Chinese Government company COFCO to own 7,000 megalitres of New South Wales water entitlements in the Gwydir Valley. Has the Minister reviewed this decision since becoming the water Minister and can he tell me which foreign governments own New South Wales water and how much water they own?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: The Brits have most of it, Helen. And they put it in a suitcase and take it home.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (14:49): All right, you two—enough! We had it all last year—enough! I thank the member for Murray for her question. We are managing our water resources in New South Wales and it is a continuous improvement exercise. We have record-breaking rainfall. It is hard to believe that only two years ago this State was in drought. We now have record rainfalls, which helps us manage our river systems, which we know are an important lifeblood to our communities and our farms.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: We know that it has rained.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mrs Helen Dalton: Standing Order 129. I want to know—

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Again I want to talk about how we are managing water in New South Wales. Healthy rivers, healthy farms, healthy communities—that is what we are doing in terms of making sure that water resources across New South Wales are used in the most efficient way. The most horrendous drought was not only felt in New South Wales but also in Sydney as well. When it comes to managing water across New South Wales, no-one does it better than the New South Wales Government, particularly when it comes to enforcing—

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied the Minister is being relevant. Is that the member's point of order?

Mrs Helen Dalton: Standing Order 129. He is not being directly relevant. I am talking about foreign ownership, not the drought.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is, I think, heading in that direction. He is being relevant.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Yes, thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Again, that is why the New South Wales Government is embarking on major programs to ensure that we have enough water in our river systems to make our communities, farms, rivers and environment sustainable. Just last week I was at the Menindee Lakes and I met with a number of river groups. I met with the Paakantji and a number of people who talked to us about how to make water more efficient and how to make sure we have healthy rivers, farms and communities. In partnership with the Commonwealth and local governments we are delivering on that Murray-Darling Healthy Rivers Program, the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanisms and Western Weirs Program, all to ensure healthy rivers, healthy farms and healthy communities, and that we have enough to go around. We will continue to look after our rivers.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will hear the member for Murray on a point of order, but I point out that the member's question had a number of components. The Minister has completed his answer. I do not have a copy of the question and I say again to non-Government members that it would be useful if I had copies of questions, which I have asked for. Given the question, the Minister was being directly relevant to it. If the member has a specific question, she should make it one specific question, and I will enforce the standing orders more specifically.

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:52): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's investment in state-of-the-art health facilities is building a better future for children and families right across New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (14:53): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. I know he has a great interest in the provision of services for children and young people. He was at Blacktown hospital early in April with the Premier and the member for Riverstone. We very much enjoyed seeing the new paediatric ward opened as part of the \$700 million expansion of Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. First of all, in view of the new limited time we now have, it does not matter what part of the State we are in there are new paediatric, neonate and maternity services being built. That is because the Government is building new hospitals across the State.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The services being built across the State are part of over \$11 billion being invested in the current four-year period. As I have often highlighted in this place, the former Labor Government was completely incapable of managing the economy and, therefore, incapable of managing new builds of hospitals, as any future Labor government will be. Fortuitously, the Coalition Government has been able to build billions of dollars worth of new hospitals across the State. There are new facilities at Blacktown, Westmead, Randwick, Bega and Eurobodalla, which the new member for Bega thought would never be built, probably because Labor closed all the maternity units down that way in the past. The bottom line is the Government is building hospitals across the State and every one of them has new facilities. The member for Campbelltown is excited because he knows he is going to get another 4,000 children looked after in the south-western part of Sydney in Campbelltown. Heaven only knows what he has been up to, but I saw that he was excited about the 4,000 children. The new \$632 million children's hospital in Campbelltown—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

It was not all his doing, I can assure you. We are all very excited about what the member for Campbelltown might have been up to. *[Extension of time]*

The \$632 million stage two upgrade to Campbelltown Hospital has the capacity for new paediatric services, enabling another 4,000 children to be treated locally. When I speak to senior physicians, including NSW Chief Paediatrician Dr Matt O'Meara, they stress that the new infrastructure built across regional and city areas over the past 11 years has enabled families to get treatment for their children closer to home. It has also enabled more complex patient treatment to be closer to home. The State has the biggest and best children's hospital network, in Westmead and Randwick. The Government has invested \$608 million for a comprehensive cancer centre and new development in Randwick.

We also have the capacity to treat patients at home. For example, there has been a magnificent redevelopment of Wagga Wagga hospital over the past few years. I am sure the member for Wagga Wagga would confirm that it is magnificent. He knows it well; his wife works there. I was delighted to meet Dr John Preddy, who is a paediatrician at that hospital, and I am told they now have eight full-time paediatricians at that hospital. That makes the difference. When you build new hospitals, paediatric facilities, neonatal facilities and maternity facilities, like the Liberal-Nationals Government has been able to do, you attract physicians. Finally, I thank the doctors, nurses and allied health staff who work in these magnificent new facilities. Wherever the Premier and I go, they tell us that they enjoy working in these new facilities. We value what they are doing, looking after our children and babies. The member for Campbelltown is so enthusiastic— *[Time expired.]*

ROAD TOLLS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:58): My question is directed to the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade. On 3 May the Premier said that distance-based tolling makes a lot of sense. Does the Minister think it is fair to force people who live in Penrith to pay 10 times more on tolls than people who live in Surry Hills?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:58): The only person who needs to worry about a distance-based toll is the member for Mount Druitt, who is desperately hoping that the member for Londonderry does not move into his seat. He is getting awfully worried about the margin. He is absolutely desperate.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The Minister is not being relevant to the question being asked. Where the member for Mount Druitt or the member for Londonderry might go is not directly relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to come to the question.

Mr STUART AYRES: We are on the side of the member for Mount Druitt. I know the Leader of the Opposition has to run the protection racket, but we are on team Ed. We want him to stay in Mount Druitt. The most fascinating thing about what the member for Londonderry has raised is that there is no toll on the M4 between Penrith and Church Street. Given that the Government has no policy to put tolls there, the only way there will be

a toll for the people of Penrith, Mount Druitt or Londonderry is if those opposite follow the recommendation of the Leader of the Opposition from when he was a research fellow at the McKell Institute and charge distance-based tolling. That is the only way this could ever happen.

If the Opposition is saying it wants to charge a toll all the way down the M4, it should just tell people. The Government is not doing that. The Government built the WestConnex M4 East Tunnel, which the Opposition would never build. How often does the Opposition say it will build things but then does not. Labor cancelled it, like every other project it cancelled that would have helped people across western Sydney. There is now a tunnel underneath Parramatta Road, there is a duplicated M5 and there will be the Rozelle Interchange, which will free up traffic everywhere. What do we get out of that? We are able to invest back into things like WestInvest.

The concept of distance-based tolling was introduced by Labor on the M7. If the Opposition wants to introduce distance-based tolling on other roads across Sydney, it should go out and tell people. I will doorknock in those suburbs with them. The Government wants to make sure that people get fairer pricing across the network. As you increase the number of roads that have improved the traffic flow, you should price them across the network. The Government is not saying it wants to charge distance-based tolling. If you do distance-based tolling, you have to keep it within the network that already exists.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:02): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is supporting communities through its investment in transport projects?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans) (15:02): I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question. He has certainly taken an interest in transport, particularly across his region. He has highlighted to me on a number of occasions that every time he goes out he sees the increased spending that this Government is investing into public transport infrastructure, which is transforming this city and the State. It is making life easier for families, businesses and communities, particularly in his electorate of Wollondilly. Speaking of communities, what a big difference we have seen in East Hills recently, with a \$13.5 million station upgrade at East Hills. The good people of East Hills deserve it. It is a wonderful part of Sydney and produces some of the most intelligent and handsome politicians that the State has ever seen. I commend the people of East Hills for the quality of people that come from that area.

Recently the Premier and I visited Chatswood. We went deep underground looking for Labor policies, but we found a \$60 billion Sydney Metro coming to life. This city-shaping project includes a 15.5 kilometre twin tunnel, 66 kilometres of rail and 4,000 tonnes of Australian steel. It will connect all 31 stations of the Sydney Metro, which was a project promised by Labor 36 years ago but delivered by this Government. Ninety-eight thousand tonnes of concrete has been poured, which is enough to fill more than 16 Olympic swimming pools. Recently I celebrated the milestone of 95 per cent track laid, which is the result of the work of 500 trades men and women over the past 15 months. Some 50,000 people have been working on that wonderful project.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It is not only built infrastructure that is coming back into this city thanks to 10 years of Coalition Government. Only last month I was on the harbour welcoming home the first cruise ship since the pandemic began. Members of this House would be aware that the \$5 billion cruise industry was put on hold. Now that it has returned, 18,000 jobs have returned to our economy.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister is giving a serious answer. Quite reasonably, he expects silence in the Chamber. The member for Port Stephens and the member for Wakehurst will contain themselves.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It was great to join representatives of the cruise industry. Indeed, it was fantastic to hear the first call made through the Vessel Traffic Services Centre when that wonderful, majestic cruise ship came in. Right across this State—not the least being across western Sydney—record amounts of money are being spent.

FUEL EXCISE POLICY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:06): My question is directed to the Minister for Infrastructure. At a time of record taxes, tolls, fines, fees and charges, which are putting incredible pressure on the cost of living for families, does the Minister still believe that the Federal Government's decision to cut the fuel excise is, to quote the Minister, "absolutely nuts"?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (15:06): Mr Speaker—

Mr Dominic Perrottet: What a king hit.

Mr ROB STOKES: Yes, ouch! Please make it stop. I thank the member opposite for the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will remain silent.

Mr ROB STOKES: I believe it is incumbent on all of us to question unfair taxation, wherever we see it. That relates specifically to things like fuel exercises, which, by their very nature, are regressive. I am not alone in my beliefs on that issue. Certainly Adrian Dwyer from Infrastructure Partnerships Australia has not been effusive in his praise of the policy. He condemned it, as did Mr Khouri from the NRMA, who made the point that it would make no difference and would be swallowed up quickly, and that over the long term it would not have any impact on or make any difference to rising costs for western Sydney motorists.

But it is not only the stakeholders and I who are raising questions about the efficacy of the fuel excise. The Leader of the Opposition raised similar questions about what it meant for how road infrastructure in particular is paid for. That is why this Parliament came together in response to the Government's electric vehicle strategy to transition us, in a fair way, towards new electric vehicle technologies—supported by those opposite—with a much fairer basis for paying for the unavoidable costs of road maintenance charges: not by using a regressive form of taxation such as the fuel excise, but by moving to fairer forms of funding the infrastructure that we all depend upon and by making sure that we do so in a way that does not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable.

CROWN ASSETS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:08): My question is addressed to the Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is investing in Crown assets and how it is important to the people of New South Wales?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (15:09): Mr Speaker—

Mr Jihad Dib: It is a big day today, Ando.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: A big day today. Lucky I got a new suit.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: Dressed for the occasion.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: One hundred per cent!

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Not quite. I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question about what we are doing to upgrade, look after and invest in Crown assets. We do that in a number of ways. One of them is through the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund. That fund is the one that keeps our communities alive, with recreation spaces like surf lifesaving clubs—I know the member for Coogee has a number of them in her electorate—showgrounds, scouts and girl guides, police citizens youth clubs, pony clubs, recreational reserves and racecourses. Recently we opened another round of that funding. It is a \$17 million program that funds opportunities for investment in Crown land right across this great State. I know the member for Coffs Harbour has a keen interest, purely because the grandstand at his showground is being upgraded. Some \$4 million is going into the grandstand upgrade at that showground.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: That grandstand upgrade, including toilets and a kiosk, will provide greater comfort for 1,200 spectators. The member for Rockdale is happy that the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund is available to his community because \$300,000 will be used to construct a bridge north of Barton Park. His community is really appreciative of that update to the poor old bridge. Every weekday 300 cyclists use that bridge. The member for Murray, who is our biggest cheerleader at the moment, is very happy with the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund, which will provide \$350,000 for the Campbell's Swamp reserve in Griffith to ensure the boardwalk is available so that schools and other organisations can use it to look at birdlife, and so the Griffith visitors centre can promote, once again, that important wetland.

The Crown Reserves Improvement Fund is important. While those opposite keep crying about how poor they are, I can tell members that many have applied for grants under that fund and are benefiting from it. I give a huge shout-out to the volunteers who, right across New South Wales, clean the halls, mow the lawns and pick up

the rubbish at our local showgrounds and recreational grounds under this fund. Members on this side of the House will keep investing in our communities so that they can enjoy a better quality of life.

ROAD TAX

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:12): My question is directed to the Minister for—what have you got, Rob?

Mr Rob Stokes: To assist the Leader of the Opposition, my portfolios are Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport.

Mr Brad Hazzard: That's the question.

The SPEAKER: Do you have a supplementary question? I will not count that as a question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We find out for the first time, so it is worthwhile. My question is directed to—I cannot remember what his portfolios are—Rob Stokes. Given that he will not support his Federal party's signature cost-of-living tax cut, why should the people of western Sydney believe that he will not pursue a great big road tax for the people of western Sydney?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (15:12): Getting around the double negative in the question, the first thing is does the Leader of the Opposition know that his own Federal colleagues are endorsing the very thing that he is saying I am opposing and, therefore, that is a problem? The Leader of the Opposition has asked the same sorts of questions that I have been asking about the efficacy and fairness of the cut and what will be done to ensure that infrastructure is still paid for. We must remember that fuel excise goes toward paying for the maintenance and construction of the roads that we all drive on. If that is cut, that money has to come from somewhere. That is why members on this side of the House have a plan to replace that revenue with a much fairer form of revenue based on the same sort of road-user charging that was announced recently in Western Australia.

That is exactly why the Labor Party supported our position when we announced it in the last budget. So I am not quite sure what point he is trying to make. But it allows me the opportunity to say quite unequivocally again that we have absolutely no plans whatsoever to introduce a congestion tax. The member knows that we have no plans to introduce a congestion tax. Frankly, what the Labor Opposition is doing here is devious. It is misleading the people of western Sydney to suggest they will be exposed to a tax that is simply not being proposed by the Government. Frankly, that conduct is beneath those opposite, and they should be developing policies of their own rather than hunting around dumpsters looking for draft policy positions.

The SPEAKER: The member for Londonderry will remain silent.

Mr ROB STOKES: All of the people of New South Wales believe, as the Leader of the Opposition was keen to point out yesterday, that we are all being paid to do important work for the people of New South Wales. We are getting on with the business of developing policies that will help people live their best possible lives. Those opposite, frankly, are not developing policies on those issues at all.

Ms Jo Haylen: So you are developing a congestion tax. You are developing that policy.

Mr ROB STOKES: The shadow Minister is interjecting, suggesting again that we have some sort of secret policy for a congestion tax. That is absolutely untrue.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Summer Hill will remain silent.

Mr ROB STOKES: I will say it again and again: There is no policy. Labor's continuing statements on this issue are frankly moving beyond misleading into outright lies, because those opposite know that is not the Government's position.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Small Business. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's support for small and family business is securing a brighter future for the people of New South Wales?

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:16): What a sensible question from an incredible member in western Sydney. I acknowledge his background in small and family business as well as his advocacy in his local community for small business. The Government understands the crucial importance of small business throughout New South Wales, as of course it should. The 800,000 small businesses in this State employ 1.6 million people and contribute \$400 billion to the State economy each and every year. For that reason, small business is the beating heart of all of our local communities.

They are an essential provider of goods, services and jobs. That is why this Government has made sure that it has provided extensive support through difficult years to the small business community. Despite the challenges over the past two years, I am pleased to inform the House that the number of small businesses in New South Wales has grown by 4.1 per cent in the past 18 months. That means not only that more direct jobs have been created through those new businesses but also that there has been a positive flow-on effect through all of our communities.

It is because of the targeted and continued support for small businesses that New South Wales has an unemployment rate of just 3.9 per cent, which is well and truly below the national average. When Labor was in office, though, the unemployment rate was above the national average for 59 of Labor's 66 months in power. Over the last 10 years that Labor was in power, New South Wales had the lowest jobs growth of any State or Territory in the country. Confidence is returning to small business because of the Government's extensive support measures. I am pleased to tell the House that the April 2022 survey from the Small Business Commissioner indicated that small business confidence about future prospects has increased by 42 per cent compared with August last year.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time.

Ms ELENI PETINOS: When business sentiment is high among small business owners, they are more likely to do things such as employ more people, expand operations and invest in business. In the past two years alone, the State has led the nation in support programs for small and family businesses. The Government has many initiatives to support small and family businesses: the Dine & Discover vouchers, the \$3,000 Small Business Fees and Charges Rebate and rapid antigen test rebate and, of course, the 2022 Small Business Support Program. In addition, the Government has increased the payroll tax threshold from \$1 million to \$1.2 million. At the last election, Labor opposed payroll tax cuts for thousands of small businesses. One message is well and truly clear: When we build up small business, we build up families, communities and the State. Only the Coalition can ever do that for small and family businesses.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Tweed that I will put him on a call to order if he continues talking.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONCESSION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:19): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given the significant contribution that international students make to the economy, the education sector, the labour force, and Sydney's culture and community, will the Minister conduct a trial of public transport concession travel for international students?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans) (15:19): I thank the member for Sydney for his question, and he has certainly taken a keen interest in making sure that we revitalise the CBD economy. I also acknowledge and endorse his recognition of the contribution to the economy made by international students. Like a lot of things, the COVID pandemic and border closures have impacted our international student numbers. We are now beginning to see a return to that thanks to the good work of the Coalition Government here in New South Wales.

In response to the pandemic, the Government increased funding for Study NSW to \$19.1 million over four years, which will improve the international student experience and deliver international campaigns and services to attract students back. We are also expanding our offshore network with dedicated education-focused roles to attract international students to New South Wales. The program the Government has endorsed will support 6,360 international students and their dependants with temporary accommodation. We have also helped 436 students by providing free legal advice via increased support for the International Student Legal Service NSW and have provided 55,000 free food hampers through the wonderful work of Foodbank.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Here in New South Wales, international students are full fee paying students and cannot currently access concession travel. But in response to the question, the most international students will pay each week under the current Opal fares is \$50. Those international students who receive Commonwealth scholarships are entitled to receive additional support such as concession travel. The policies, eligibility criteria and administrative processes that govern the concessions system in New South Wales ensure that concessions are available to those in need. The Government is providing a number of services and tools through Study NSW to make the experience of international students even better, safer and more enjoyable.

I am working with my colleagues to investigate options to support international students further. However, it is important to recognise that not all international students are based in Sydney or travel on the Opal network. We must ensure that these decisions are for the broader benefit. The Government strongly supports international

education and is committed to ensuring that international students who choose New South Wales have the best possible experience they can have and go home and tell their families and friends, who will hopefully mirror their experience. We are lucky to have so much on offer here.

Unfortunately, people are doing it tough in many parts of the world. We have seen the horrible situation in Ukraine, and our hearts go out to those who are not enjoying the wonderful opportunities that students have in New South Wales. As a small gesture, the Government has announced that Ukrainians seeking refuge here in New South Wales will also get free Opal cards while they establish their lives and rebuild their families here. The State has a proud history of supporting migrants, refugees and students. *[Extension of time]*

The Government is providing Opal cards to help new arrivals, which will allow the people who are in need of our support to attend medical appointments, community support groups, religious services and the like. That is thanks to the generosity of the Treasurer, who has seen it fit to allow us to spend up to \$50,000 on those cards. That is not the only way Government members are supporting families. The fare-free travel plan has proven to be highly successful, and more than 13.2 million trips were taken across the Greater Sydney area in those 12 days. It is fair to say that Sydney well and truly fell in love with public transport again over that fare-free period, and they are using it at a rate of knots. International students are an important part of our community and the initiative is an important part of the support network that the Government offers, even if it is only for a short time. I will continue to work with the member for Sydney to explore ways in which we can support them further.

MULTICULTURAL NSW

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:24): My question is addressed to the Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Government is securing a brighter future for New South Wales by investing in our multicultural communities?

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (15:24): I thank the member for East Hills for her question and her outstanding advocacy on behalf of local multicultural community groups and leaders. Well done to the member for East Hills. As I have said time and again in this place, we must all continue working hard to not just maintain our great multicultural society but also to build on it.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Did you write this?

Mr MARK COURE: I did. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has an incredibly strong track record when it comes to this through its help and support for, and investment into, multicultural communities. For example, last month the Government invested a quarter of a million dollars into the Ramadan Nights festival in Lakemba.

Mr Jihad Dib: The best investment.

Mr MARK COURE: The best investment, I hear. It is Australia's biggest cultural event, with more than one million visitors attending over the 30 days of Ramadan this year. It was the biggest crowd in the festival's history—four times larger than when it was last held in 2019. I can say firsthand that Haldon Street was an extraordinary sight. The shops and stalls were jam-packed with locals and visitors alike, who came from far and wide to enjoy what the Middle Eastern culture has to offer. As the members for East Hills and Lakemba will tell you—and, of course, the member for Rockdale, who was there as well—the festival is about more than just camel burgers, falafel and knafeh. It is also about promoting a greater understanding of our faiths and cultures here in New South Wales. Shoosh, shoosh, shoosh!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MARK COURE: I am doing your job, Mr Speaker. The many values of Ramadan, which include charity, family and a deepening sense of community, are shared by people right across New South Wales. It is those same values that drive the Government to continue investing in multicultural communities. But it is not just celebrations and events; the Government has also invested into those who come to our State to secure a better life and a new beginning for themselves and their families. As we have seen clearly just in the past few months, New South Wales is a safe haven for those fleeing conflict. I am proud that the Government has invested in targeted programs, which are assisting new and emerging communities with employment, health, education and legal services. Since 2016 it has invested \$190 million into initiatives to ensure that new arrivals are set on the best possible path to a brighter future. Among those initiatives there is a real focus on strengthening employment opportunities for people, who in turn are able to support themselves and their families. *[Time expired.]*

*Community Recognition Statements***STATE DEBATING SQUAD PARTICIPANT NIKKI HAN**

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:28): I recognise Nikki Han, a year 11 student from Queenwood who has recently been selected for the 2022 New South Wales State debating squad. I congratulate Nikki on an amazing achievement and opportunity. She should be very proud of representing herself, her school and our local area with great pride and talent. Queenwood has long been a successful school when it comes to debating at all different competitive levels. Just recently the senior A team won the Independent Schools' Debating Association competition. I thank the school principal, Elizabeth Stone; the debating coaches, who have undoubtedly supported Nikki; and all of the Queenwood debaters for their success. I have no doubt that Nikki will go on to represent New South Wales with great talent, along with the rest of the debating team selected. I wish the team the best of luck as they represent our State at the national level. Being a debater and high-school debating coach in my university years, I know that no matter the outcome, all of those students have come so far to be selected as representatives from a vast pool of talent. I again congratulate Nikki.

WORLD TAEKWONDO POOMSABE CHAMPIONSHIP PARTICIPANT HARRISON BENN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:29): Congratulations to 15-year-old Harrison Benn of Tempe for placing tenth at the recent World Taekwondo Poomsabe Championships—the world cup of taekwondo martial arts—in Goyang, Korea, on 25 April 2022. Harrison is a year 9 student at Tempe High School. He currently holds a 3rd Poom black belt in Taekwondo. Harrison's selection to the Australian team is the culmination of 10 years of hard work, which includes thousands of hours of training and travelling great distances to compete in the sport. Along the way, Harrison has had to overcome a number of injuries. Harrison's success would not have been possible without the guidance, encouragement and support of the whole Benn family, who I am told are very proud of his success, as is the whole of the Heffron community.

AUSTRALIAN TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITOR RHIANNON BELLETTE

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:30): I congratulate Rhiannon Bellette, a Mount St Joseph Catholic College student who has won a number of awards competing at the 2022 Australian Track and Field Championships. Rhiannon achieved gold in the under-15 ambulant shotput, silver in the under-15 ambulant long jump, bronze in the under-15 ambulant discus, fourth in the 800 metres, fifth in the 400 metres and 200 metres, and sixth in the 100 metres. Rhiannon has also been commended for her sportsmanship by fellow competitors and by the organisers of these events. I congratulate Rhiannon on being an outstanding athlete.

NSW POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR SERGEANT VANESSA ROLFE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:31): I offer my congratulations to Sergeant Vanessa Rolfe from the Crime Scene Services Branch, who has been awarded the 2021 Rotary International NSW Police Officer of the Year. The Crime Scene Services Branch is located at Pemulwuy, in the electorate of Prospect. Sergeant Rolfe works in disaster victim identification [DVI], an internationally recognised process of identifying victims in mass-casualty events. Vanessa has performed the role of ante-mortem coordinator in numerous DVI events over her career, including the 2004 Thailand tsunami and the Victorian and New South Wales bushfires in 2019-2020, as well as multiple fatal air and motor vehicle collisions across the State. She has also played a pivotal role during international disasters involving New South Wales residents, such as the MH17 plane crash in 2014 and the White Island volcano eruption in New Zealand. I commend Sergeant Rolfe for her tireless efforts in DVI. Her ongoing work to locate and identify the deceased who have fallen victim to disasters or accidents is so important. I thank Sergeant Rolfe and the NSW Police Force. I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

SENIOR CONSTABLE ROBERT BILES RETIREMENT

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:32): I pay tribute to Senior Constable Robert Biles on his retirement from the NSW Police Force. Last Friday Senior Constable Biles received a guard of honour as he marched out of Singleton station, completing a distinguished 33-year career as a general duties police officer. Robert John Biles has actually served New South Wales for 38 years, serving an initial five years as a State Rail Authority transport police officer before transferring to the New South Wales police. In December 1993 he was assigned to Singleton in the Upper Hunter patrol and remained a frontline officer for the next 28 years, working at either Singleton or Branxton. He also relieved extensively as a sergeant at Singleton and Muswellbrook. Bob has received numerous awards and citations, including the Commissioner's Commendation for Courage and the Royal Humane Society of NSW bronze medal for when he and Senior Constable Craig Duncan made attempts to rescue a two-year-old child trapped in a burning Singleton house in August 1996. I wish Bob a happy retirement.

TRIBUTE TO DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE PATRICK JONES

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:33): I pay my respects to Detective Senior Constable Patrick Jones, who spent his entire career at the Auburn Police Area Command in the service of the people of Auburn. Pat started work in general duties at Auburn in 2008. In 2013 he went across to the detective unit, eventually receiving his designation as a detective in 2015. Pat was known within the command and across the south-western metropolitan region for his extraordinary IT skills and capabilities. If Pat found a problem, he worked the problem. If there was a way to do something better, Pat would get it done. The impact that he had across COPS, e@gle-i, BluePORTAL and other programs will never be able to be fully appreciated. Tragically, in January 2019 Pat was diagnosed with bowel cancer at the age of 30, just as he was due to start a six-month secondment to the rank of sergeant at the State Intelligence Command. Sadly, Pat lost his battle on Friday 23 October 2020. His loss was not only devastating for his family but for his command and the NSW Police Force, and for my local community, the people whom he chose to serve.

ST ALBANS VILLAGE MARKET

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:34): I recently attended the monthly St Albans Village Market, which drew visitors from around the region. The market runs one weekend a month and displays the best local produce, including honey, vegetables, plants, woodwork and many more wares. It is an opportunity for locals to come together too in the remote but vibrant St Albans community and I commend organiser Diana Fernable for her effort in pulling the market together. While the Saturday session of last month's market was called off due to heavy rain, Sunday went ahead under blue skies, highlighting the pluck of the community, which braved the early foggy conditions and the possibility of wild weather to make the markets happen. Organisers generously gave away six \$50 vouchers to spend at any of the stalls at the pop-up market, encouraging those attending to support the local vendors.

BLUES ON THE MOUNTAIN

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:35): I sincerely thank Ryan Howard and everyone involved in Blues on the Mountain as they celebrate its 10-year anniversary at Mangrove Mountain Hall. Blues on the Mountain was born when Ryan, who was involved in the music industry, realised he could get great artists to come and play in his local community. The community has jumped on board from day one. Now, very regularly, the historic Mangrove Mountain Hall features talented national artists performing to packed houses of appreciative locals. Last weekend Australian blues boogie piano queen Ali Penney and the Money Makers performed following a great gig at Byron Bay's Bluesfest. How lucky we are to celebrate talent in the Mangrove Mountain districts on the western side of the Gosford electorate on a very regular basis. Ali was a taste of 10 years of quality performances thanks to the commitment of Ryan Howard, who does all the bookings, provides ticketing, and does the set-ups and close-downs. I thank Ryan and the community, which often provides light menus and dinners and show packages to all of our privileged locals. Happy tenth anniversary to Blues on the Mountain!

SIKH GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOUNDING DIRECTOR SHAM SINGH DHANJU

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:36): I acknowledge Sham Singh Dhanju, who is the chairperson and founding director of the Sikh Grammar School Australia. Over recent years I have worked with Sham as he has pulled together a team of people within the Punjabi Sikh community—across Sydney but particularly in the north-west—to found this important school project. It will be the first Sikh school in Australia. They are well underway. They have raised millions of dollars over a number of years. I think Sham said he has been working on this project for close to 15 years, but recently it has started to come together. They have achieved the purchase of the site. They have an approval and they are working now towards construction and raising sufficient funds to complete the project. Sham Singh is a positive role model in the community and always leads by example. He maintains high professional standards in all the tasks that he performs and ensures that all community members within his sphere of influence maintain that same standard. I congratulate and commend Sham Singh Dhanju.

WYONG WATER POLO CLUB COMPETITOR MIA AKHURST

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (15:37): I congratulate Mia Akhurst from Wyong Water Polo Club, who recently competed and placed fifth in the State in the under-14s girls competition at the Water Polo New South Wales Junior State Championships at Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre. Mia was named in the Tournament 7 after being the leading goal scorer in the tournament with 19 goals—more than double any other player. Mia recently also broke three historical records at the Wyong swimming club and was awarded its club captaincy. Mia's new records are in the 13-14 years 100-metre freestyle, the 400-metre freestyle, and the women's open 200-metre freestyle event in a record time of 2 minutes, 34 seconds and 16 milliseconds, which has not been broken since 1985. I congratulate Mia Akhurst.

SOUTH COAST SURF BRANCH TRAINING, ADMINISTRATION AND STORAGE CENTRE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (15:38): It was an absolute pleasure to recently attend the official opening ceremony for the South Coast Branch Training, Administration and Storage Centre located in West Nowra on the South Coast. After 44 years the South Coast Surf Life Saving Association finally has a home. Steve Jones, president of the association, was extremely pleased with the outcome of the facility to say the least, considering he has been working for 15 years on the project. The new complex, which is part of the Shoalhaven emergency services precinct, includes two training rooms, multiple administration areas—which will also be home to the branch administration officer, Sean Hendry—and storage areas for the branch's \$180,000 worth of assets and equipment. The \$1.54 million complex is officially opened. I look forward to seeing more surf lifesaving volunteers and members use the facility training rooms and gain the experience they need to be great South Coast surf lifesavers. I congratulate Steve Jones and all members on the new complex. I know it will do our community a great deal of good, training members to be able to keep local families and friends safer on our beaches.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:39): I acknowledge the family and friends of Central Coast workers, who gather every year on 28 April to commemorate International Workers' Memorial Day. The service at the Ourimbah Memorial Wall of Remembrance is attended by those who have lost loved ones because of a workplace death or an occupational illness at work. The site was officially opened in 2006 to give Central Coast residents a special place to remember their loved ones and to remind us that as a community we must continue to work towards a world where workplaces are safe environments. This important commemoration is supported by Unions NSW, Central Coast unions and SafeWork NSW. I appreciate the support provided by Lisarow High School, which delivers the welcome to country. My electoral staff and their families voluntarily put in tremendous effort in the lead-up to the day, with a working bee to make sure the site is clean and well presented for the community. Families can also place plaques recording the names of workers who have died at work at the memorial wall. My office will continue to coordinate this on behalf of my community as a way to remember those who have died and to fight for the living.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CLUB BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR PHYLLIS JONES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:40): I acknowledge the achievements of Phyllis Jones, a local Hay girl and one of Australia's most celebrated truckies. Joining the transport industry in 1964, Phyllis has been a key contributor and advocate for truckies across the country, culminating in her inclusion in the National Road Transport Hall of Fame. Phyllis has been recognised as the Rotary International Club Businesswoman of the Year and Hay Citizen of the Year. She is a powerhouse of the trucking industry and deserves to be singled out and honoured for her work both within the trucking industry and her local community. There is no doubt that Phyllis is a trucking legend, and I thank her for all she does to improve her town and the trucking industry.

YOUNG PERFORMER AMARA KAVALIKU

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:41): I congratulate nine-year-old Amara Kavaliku of Werrington Downs, who has been cast in the role of Jane in the upcoming *Mary Poppins* stage show at the Sydney Lyric Theatre. Following an arduous audition process with more than 200 young performers competing for the role, Amara was selected. She is only nine years old, but in 2020 she was the face of dancewear promotions for the Capezio brand and has five years of experience appearing in commercials. I have absolutely no doubt that when she is performing on the main stage at the Sydney Lyric Theatre as part of *Mary Poppins*—a fantastic new stage show coming to Sydney—she will do her community, and particularly her family, incredibly proud. The role in *Mary Poppins* is Amara's first musical appearance and I wish her every success.

NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:42): This year Neuroscience Research Australia, or NeuRA, celebrated its thirtieth anniversary event. I was thrilled to be able to attend the event to celebrate the amazing research being undertaken by the organisation. NeuRA is celebrating 30 years of impact—and that is not an understatement. In the past 30 years NeuRA has generated over 5,300 pieces of new knowledge about brain and nervous system disorders and used that knowledge to inform and develop evidence-based tools and treatments. It has also informed legislation, clinical practice, manufacturing standards and consumer behaviour. There are countless highlights from NeuRA's history. One that stands out for me is the work that it has done on child car seats. NeuRA's aim was to reduce child fatalities in car accidents and, after tireless research that turned into nationally adopted guidelines, child fatality rates in car crashes have been reduced by 45 per cent. I thank everyone at NeuRA for the amazing work they do. Here's to another 30 years of impact.

GLENMORE PARK NETBALL CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:43): I recognise and congratulate Glenmore Park Netball Club on the special milestone it has recently celebrated. This year the club celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, having been established in 1988. After being unable to finish the competition last season, the club has now roared back to life with 23 teams taking to the court, including around 230 players representing the club in all grades from the under-7s to seniors. Local sporting clubs are a vital part of our community. They foster teamwork. Kids get to make new friends. Clubs encourage people to get out and be active. I congratulate the club on its significant milestone and look forward to a great performance from all the teams this season.

NELSON BAY RUGBY CLUB

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:44): The Nelson Bay Rugby Club has an impressive history. Now, thanks to the efforts of club members, its future looks even brighter. Over the years, I have been pleased to support various grant applications made by the club. The grants have now materialised into upgraded facilities at Bill Strong Oval, and they are looking great. The club now has a women's dressing room, electronic scoreboard, accessible toilet, a ramp to the clubhouse and an impressive new spectators' mound. The improvements to accessibility and inclusivity have paid off, with the club now boasting a significant rise in the participation of girls. But it could always do with more. I pay tribute to the club's committee and members, particularly president Gavin Rocher, patron Ray Milton and coordinator Tiani Bishop. I recognise the Nelson Bay Junior Rugby Union Club committee and members, particularly president Clint Brown and coordinator Leigh Byfield, because no sporting club is strong without a pipeline of young players. I thank both clubs for making our community stronger and wish all players a safe and successful season.

SYLVANVALE FOUNDATION

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:45): I acknowledge the incredible Sylvanvale Foundation, which recently opened its state-of-the-art specialist disability accommodation in Bangor. Founded in 1947, Sylvanvale is a wonderful local organisation committed to supporting people with disabilities to live the lives they choose. I was delighted to join Her Excellency Margaret Beazley, AC, QC, and other dignitaries on 26 April 2022 to mark this important milestone in disability support services in the Sutherland shire. These new homes will accommodate eight people living with disability and have been designed with assistive technologies, providing residents with accessible, adjustable and personalised areas enabling supported independent living.

Of course, none of this is possible without the hard work and dedication of those who assisted with this project. I acknowledge Sylvanvale and its executive committee members, Thomas Allouche, Joel Stewart and Troy Hodges from Vista Build, Lyndall Wynne and Laura Featherstone from Wynne Planning, and architects Vic Lake and Jeff Dooley as well as interior designers Holly Gooch and Madi McTigue from Studio Albus. I commend Sylvanvale for delivering this important project for our community and look forward to seeing more facilities like this in the future.

THE GYM SISTERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:46): When four Tumut residents—Mieka McMullen, Kylie Rushton, Kadie McDonald and Tracey Callaway—signed up for the 2022 Sydney Coastrek event, they initially wanted to raise \$2,000 for mental health charity Beyond Blue. Instead, this awesome foursome managed to raise an impressive \$10,764 after completing the 60-kilometre trek. The four women, known as the Gym Sisters, were one of 76 teams who set off from Sydney's La Perouse at 6.00 a.m. and walked for more than 13 hours before reaching their destination. They stuck together for the whole route. Impressively, their \$10,764 tally meant that the group was ranked at number 11 in the group fundraising category. With family members and friends in Sydney to cheer them along, the foursome also had plenty of support back in Tumut, with Tumut's The Gym regularly posting social media updates on the group's progress through the day. Ms McMullen told the *Tumut and Adelong Times* that the importance of women's health in the local region, affected by factors including the bushfires and COVID-19, inspired them to get involved. Their spectacular fundraising effort was well done.

COROWA SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL SWIMMERS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:47): I congratulate all the students of Corowa South Public School who qualified and moved through to competition in the New South Wales State swimming carnival held in Sydney in April. The students who reached this high standard are Macy Douch, Maddison Ryan, Harrison Webb and Cooper Patten. Congratulations must also go to the swimming instructors and to the school for producing athletes who can compete at the elite State level. The students are continuing to train hard and support each other through the tough regimes. Sport is the epitome of hard work, dedication, leadership and much more. I wish them all continued success in their sporting endeavours.

BULLI MINE DISASTER

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:48): At 2.30 p.m. on 23 March 1887 a gas explosion in Bulli Mine killed 81 men and boys. Herbert Cope, aged 17, was the sole survivor of the Bulli Mine disaster. When locals first heard the explosion, they had no idea of what a tragic loss of life was unfolding. The impact on the community at the time was immense. Funerals were held every few hours as soon as bodies were identified. How miners worked back in the 1880s is far different from what miners of today experience, but it is still a risky and challenging industry. I pay my sincere respects to the families and other descendants of those men and boys who lost their lives all those years ago. I continue to acknowledge those miners and community groups who preserve our heritage and ensure that mining is safe and will not lead to these sorts of disasters again and continue to advance safety precautions throughout the industry.

VOLUNTEER WORKER CHANTAL FLEMING

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (15:49): Today I recognise the inspiring and heartfelt charity and volunteer work undertaken by Ms Chantal Fleming of Yass. Ms Fleming was crowned Classic Queen at the World International Royalty Australia [WIRA] pageant in Melbourne on 6 March 2022. Focusing on charity and community service, it is judged on deportment and positive activity in the community. Ms Fleming was also crowned the WIRA charity queen for raising the most funds, proudly supporting the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Ms Fleming raised over \$3,500 in one month after entering the pageant and continues to actively raise funds. Ms Fleming has undertaken a number of community service roles, starting with the voluntary production of the Murrumbateman Trades & Services Directory, multiple fundraising trivia nights in the Yass Valley over 11 years and, more recently, volunteering with Yass High School, particularly in its performing arts programs. I congratulate Ms Fleming. She will be part of the inaugural Australian team at the World International Royalty finals to be held in Cork, Ireland, in October 2022.

BONALBO SHOW

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:50): The Bonalbo Showground was absolutely packed this year for another great Bonalbo Show. I thank Bonalbo Show Society president David Whitney and the entire show society for their persistence in putting on the show. They were unsure for a while of whether to put it on but I am so glad they did, to give us a chance to come together as a community and celebrate a truly great country show. It was free entry, which was wonderful after everything everybody has been through. Former Kyogle councillor Lindsay Passfield opened the show and gave a fantastic address. Many of the competitors, show goers and stallholders said to me that it was one of the biggest crowds they have ever seen. I agree. We all had a wonderful fresh lunch, which is a Bonalbo Show tradition, which was lovingly prepared by the wonderful local cooks who always provide us with a good feed. I caught up with Captain John Tart of the Bonalbo RFS and everything else in Bonalbo. He explained that the Bonalbo RFS had done 89 days' cleaning in Lismore. I look forward to next year.

PICTON ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:51): This year on Anzac Day I was able to attend several services in my electorate to remember our fallen troops and in support of our currently serving men and women. In Picton, at the RSL memorial park, they put on an impressive dawn service, which the whole town really got behind. I was very impressed to see over 5,000 locals sacrificing their sleep and braving the rain to honour the brave men and women who sacrificed more for us. As I looked out at the large sea of umbrellas, listening to the last post, I felt a wave of community spirit and solidarity, which was quite moving. It was great to see the SES, the RFS, Fire and Rescue and the police all participating in the service, as well as young students and community groups. I thank Ray Law and the Picton Anzac Committee for their considerable efforts in organising the service, which is one of the largest Wollondilly has seen. Lest we forget.

CONSTABLE DAVID CARTY MEMORIAL SERVICE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:52): On Tuesday 19 April 2022 at Fairfield RSL Club, Fairfield City Police Area Command commemorated the 25-year memorial service for the late Constable David Carty in the presence of the Carty family, past and present NSW Police Force officers and the wider Fairfield community. The memorial was organised by Senior Sergeant Brett Grenfell, Quynh Truong and Natalie Matty of the Fairfield City Police Area Command. David's passing is still felt to this very day in Fairfield. This was evident during the moving tributes and prayers offered throughout the service. Those assembled also watched a video presentation and observed a minute's silence for David, a young man whose life was cut short at the beginning of a promising career. It was an honour to lay a wreath on behalf of the Fairfield community, alongside the former Federal member for Fowler, Chris Hayes, MP. May David Carty rest in peace.

NORTH SYDNEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:53): I recognise the North Sydney Community Centre as it celebrates 50 years of operation. I congratulate the entire team at the centre, past and present, on reaching this significant milestone. North Sydney Community Centre is a not-for-profit organisation that has been an integral part of the North Shore community for decades. It currently offers essential support services as well as a wide range of courses, events and programs to connect the community, and hosts the play school program. However, the centre started from very humble beginnings. In 1972 a group of women occupied derelict terraces to start a leisure centre after extensive lobbying of North Sydney Council for a venue proved fruitless. They provided after-school care activities for children to support the high number of single parents and working mothers. The centre grew, eventually finding a formal location and council funding. The centre established events such as the North Sydney markets and Northside Produce Market, which still run successfully today. I thank the centre, led by director Michelle Worthley, for all the amazing work it has done and will continue to do for our community.

RIVERINA COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:54): As the Country Women's Association [CWA] of New South Wales celebrates the centenary of its formation, members of the Riverina group have been keen to join in the festivities. Members of the group, which is only a few years shy of its own centenary, have recognised and remembered the CWA's rich history with the unveiling of a specially made park bench and plaque, which are now in place outside Wagga Wagga's tourist information centre. The bench will provide a beautiful location for people to enjoy the peace and the gardens, while also reflecting on the work of the CWA. I was pleased to attend the official unveiling of the bench and to acknowledge the incredible work of CWA members. Like their counterparts across the State, the members of the branches in the CWA's Riverina group have devoted countless hours to improving the lives of regional families. I congratulate members of the Cartwrights Hill, Collingullie, Coolamon, Euberta, Galore, Ganmain, Henty, Henty Evening, Oura, Pleasant Hills, Tarcutta, The Rock, Uranquinty Evening, Wagga Wagga and Wagga Wagga Evening branches, as well as those of Yathella-Coursing Park, which is currently in recess, and all past and current members.

CAMDEN LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR RUTH LESMANA

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:55): It was an honour to announce Camden's Local Woman of the Year, Ruth Lesmana, at Camden Council's International Women's Day gala event held at Gledswood Homestead and Winery earlier this year. Ruth worked for eight years in Thailand teaching women and children how to reduce the risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. Ruth also helped countless victims of human trafficking escape and rebuild their lives, often risking her own safety to help. Ruth now works for a not-for-profit organisation assisting refugees to settle in Australia. The people she helps are highly vulnerable and it takes a great deal of compassion, expertise and strength. Ruth has worked in highly dangerous, stressful, sad and challenging environments, yet she remains so positive. Ruth is a strong woman and it is clear to everyone who meets her how dedicated she is to helping others less fortunate and empowering them to have happy, healthy lives. I sincerely thank Ruth for the work that she does.

EAST HILLS GIRLS TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:56): I congratulate the students and teachers of East Hills Girls Technology High School on their outstanding 2021 HSC results. I acknowledge the school's highest performing students: Elena Stojevski, who attained an ATAR of 99.50 and first in the State in business studies and was also on the all-rounder list; and Jayalakshmi Seshadri, who attained a 97.95 ATAR. I also congratulate Emily Apostolovski, who received a band 6 in HSC dance and three other HSC courses. Emily received an exam mark of 92 and an ATAR of 96.25. She is now dancing professionally for JLD Entertainment and has been accepted into the University of Sydney to study physiology. I congratulate Alisa Huseyin on her outstanding band 6 result in HSC dance, with an exam mark of 94. She is now completing full-time studies at Ettingshausens this year. The staff and students of East Hills Girls Technology High School should be congratulated on their outstanding results in what were the most challenging of circumstances to undertake the HSC.

SANDY HOLLOW CHARITY HORSE RIDE

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:57): I inform the House of a wonderful annual event that takes place in Sandy Hollow, the Sandy Hollow Charity Horse Ride, which was held this year on Saturday 23 April. The picturesque Upper Hunter Valley village and surrounding district hosted one of the great charity bush horse rides of Australia for 125 riders. It takes riders on a 25 to 30 kilometre trek through the valley and mountains surrounding Sandy Hollow. The event was established 32 years ago to raise funds for the Hunter Region Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. This year's event raised \$15,000. In fact, since the ride commenced it has raised a total of \$560,000, which is an impressive amount for a small community. I acknowledge and

congratulate the committee members of the Sandy Hollow Charity Horse Ride Committee—Mick and Megan Turner, Mark and Alison Judge, Lachlan and Kate Conway, John Hamsom, Brian Atfield, Mark Edwards, Linda Bennett, Roda Leask and Doug Hinder—on conducting an outstanding event.

Private Members' Statements

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE PETER ZAHRA, SC

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:59): On Sunday 8 May 2022 Australia's legal community lost a professional and personal titan. He was previously a giant in criminal defence law in New South Wales; the author of *Zahra and Arden's Drug Laws in New South Wales*; respected by the community, practitioners and judicial officers across New South Wales; and a friend, colleague and mentor of mine for more than 40 years. His Honour, Judge Peter Zahra, SC, died peacefully at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital surrounded by family, after suffering a medical episode the previous Thursday. A prolific workaholic, Peter's dedication to the law was eclipsed only by his sense of community and love of family. He was deeply proud of his Maltese roots and wanted to see more people from diverse backgrounds enter the law and the judiciary. Anecdotally, he was alleged to have at one time had the largest criminal case load of any member of the New South Wales bar. He certainly had the largest murder practice at the New South Wales bar, and he was proud of that work.

Peter was appointed a public defender in 1989. I met him more than 40 years ago, in what was then called the Public Solicitor's Office. I remember him appearing as a duty solicitor at Blacktown Local Court and, even then, he was said to carry a heavy—maybe the heaviest—case load of any solicitor in the Public Solicitor's Office. In 2001 he was appointed the Senior Public Defender and took silk. By that stage, Peter's workload dwarfed many of our colleagues in the Public Defenders Chambers. At that time, as I said, he was said to have the busiest murder practice at the bar. In 2008, in an article published in the *Bar News*, Keith Chapple, SC, credited Peter's legal contributions as having "established battered women's syndrome as a defence to murder and extended the defence of mental illness in New South Wales".

In 2007 Peter was very deservedly elevated to the District Court bench. On 30 January of that year he was appointed as a judge of the District Court of New South Wales. As I said, Peter was deeply proud of his Maltese roots and was even more proud that, once elevated to the bench, he found himself as one of only a few with a non-Anglo-Saxon surname. After more than 15 years, there remain only a few with non-Anglo-Saxon surnames on the District Court bench. Now, of course, there is one less. As a District Court judge, Peter continued to carry a huge workload motivated always by a deep sense of justice and care for both victims and offenders. In 40 years he never lost his values of integrity and what was right. At the time of his passing, Peter would have been a District Court judge for 15 years and 98 days, making him one of the most senior jurists on the New South Wales District Court.

Despite his seniority, Peter always had time for his colleagues, in particular, recent law graduates. He was always ready to guide and support, or just to offer a warm smile and kind greeting to the young public defenders who crossed his path, many of whom went to law school reading and analysing criminal cases that Peter had been involved in. Peter was also incredibly supportive of his associates and believed that his role in giving young people an opportunity to work with a judicial officer not only assisted those associates' personal careers but also contributed to the betterment of the entire legal profession.

On the academic front, Peter's textbook, co-written by Courtney Young, *Drug Laws in New South Wales*, is the foremost text on the subject in New South Wales. He was, sadly, working towards a new edition at the time of his death. Hopefully his co-author can finish that important work. Peter's commitment to his profession was not self-serving. The people whose lives were most impacted by the law drove Peter's dedication to his work. His commitment to justice was ingrained in his strong sense of humanity. A few years ago, following my election to this place, Peter came to see me for some support for an Indigenous baseball team. The titan of the legal profession was, to those kids, the bus driver who drove the team bus on the weekend. Without Peter, many of those young people would not have been able to participate in that sport. This week our community has lost a giant. Vale, His Honour Judge Peter Raymond Zahra, Senior Counsel.

TRIBUTE TO THE HON. JOHN JOBLING, AM

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (16:04): I acknowledge the contribution of one of the Upper Hunter's larger than life political figures, the Hon. John Jobling, AM, who sadly passed away on 7 April 2022. John Hughes Jobling's public life began as an alderman on the Muswellbrook Municipality Shire Council between 1968 and 1979. From 1971 to 1974 he was deputy mayor. He then held office as the president and mayor from 1974 until 1984. His civic duty was recognised by his being made an Honorary Freeman of the Shire of Muswellbrook. John—or "Jobbo", as he was known—had a long-held desire to serve in higher political office.

The opportunity finally arrived in 1984 when, as a member of the Liberal Party's Legislative Council ticket, he was elected to the "House of Review".

The Hon. John Jobling would be a member of his beloved Legislative Council until February 2003. It was a career that spanned 18 years, 11 months and five days, complete with the highs and lows of political life, including being a Government Whip and an Opposition Whip. Interestingly, John noted during a discussion for a Legislative Council oral history project in July 2016:

At one stage I was the most northern Liberal past the Hawkesbury. There were only Virginia Chadwick and myself as Liberals in the Hunter.

I am sure that John would have been proud as Punch that the late Hon. Virginia Chadwick was today immortalised with the unveiling of her marble bust in the Legislative Council Chamber. It was the first unveiling of a bust in the Legislative Council in 107 years. Virginia was the first female President of the Legislative Council and the first woman to have a marble bust in the Chamber.

I mentioned that John Jobling was larger than life. This is evident from his CV—I marvel at the energy that he put into the Upper Hunter and especially Muswellbrook. He graduated from the University of Sydney as a pharmacist in 1960 and went looking for a practice in the country, initially deciding on Scone but about 18 months later moving to Muswellbrook. In his valedictory speech in the other place, John recalled that he "became involved, as one does in a country area, in every conceivable activity, from joining societies and organisations to restoring old houses and trying to serve the public". John served as president of Muswellbrook Rotary in 1972. John was a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow and led a Rotary group study team to Tennessee, United States, in 1974.

Service to the Muswellbrook Shire State Emergency Service and Civil Defence was another part of John's contribution to his community. In 1988 he was awarded the National Medal and Bar for service to the State Emergency Service. John Jobling's Muswellbrook of the 1970s and 1980s was experiencing the dawn of the Upper Hunter becoming the electricity generation powerhouse of New South Wales, with the construction of the Liddell and Bayswater power stations. He took a keen interest in the electricity distribution network, becoming chairman of Shortland County Council, the Hunter's local power supplier, and president of the Local Government Energy Association. This evening I have only touched the surface of the John Jobling story—from local government to the New South Wales Parliament, and his service to the community. I express my condolences to the Jobling family on their loss. I also want to say a big "Thank you" to them for sharing Jobbo with Muswellbrook, the Upper Hunter and the State of New South Wales.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:08): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his contribution about John Jobling. What a lion of the Liberal Party John Jobling was. We in the Liberal Party were all very saddened to learn of his passing last month, particularly following the loss of his wife Carole "Linde" Jobling, OAM, a number years ago. She was also a significant contributor to our party. I mentioned her loss in this place at the time of her passing. John was a member of the other place for almost two decades, but that was not in any way the most important of his contributions in life. His love for the Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook and Scone permeated every element of his existence. Even once he was living in Balmain, he never left the Upper Hunter region behind. The artwork on the walls of his Sydney home reflected his Upper Hunter history and heritage—the place that he called home. I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his tribute to John. I give thanks and recognition to John Jobling for his contribution to the Liberal Party and to this Parliament. May he rest in peace.

WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE EDUCATION PROJECTS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:09): I speak to give focus to education policy and outcomes in Willoughby and across New South Wales. I commend this Government for its Regional and Metro Renewal Programs, which are delivering improvements to schools, with five projects in my electorate of Willoughby. The Government launched the Renewal Programs in 2020 with the aim of delivering improvements to local schools in response to what school communities desired. Constituting an investment of \$120 million from the Government, combined with contributions from local school communities, the programs will deliver much-needed upgrades to school playgrounds, sport courts, libraries, science laboratories, kitchens and other amenities. Benefiting our children, the renewal programs will provide students with engaging and modern learning spaces to enhance their educational experience.

As a generator of employment growth, the Metro Renewal Program is supporting more than 1,300 jobs across metropolitan Sydney. Wherever possible, local contractors and suppliers have been engaged, ensuring the positive impacts of this stimulus are felt as far and as wide as possible. I can point to five school projects in this broader investment that will make a very positive difference in Willoughby: (1) a science laboratory upgrade at Willoughby Girls High School, (2) a refurbished learning space at Northbridge Public School, (3) a learning space

upgrade at Willoughby Public School, (4) a canteen upgrade at Cammeray Public School and (5) a kitchen upgrade at Naremburn School. These follow prior projects, including the complete refurbishment of both Chatswood Public School and Chatswood High School, together with ongoing construction of more than 150 new and renewed teaching spaces, halls, libraries and sporting facilities.

For these earlier initiatives, I naturally recognise and appreciate very much the vision and drive of my immediate predecessor, Gladys Berejiklian. In her almost two decades as member for Willoughby, Gladys was a tireless advocate for improving educational facilities across the electorate, and I am determined to build upon her legacy. My electorate of Willoughby is home to 19 schools, 10 public schools and nine private schools. The high quality of these schools is one of the great drawcards for families who make Willoughby their new home. Our high schools nurture academic excellence and they consistently achieve Higher School Certificate results well above the State average. In the 2021 HSC, Willoughby Girls High School was the top-ranked, non-selective government school in the State. In addition, Chatswood High School, Mercy Catholic College Chatswood and St Pius X College Chatswood were all ranked in the top 150 schools in New South Wales.

Willoughby is a centre for education, and I take great pride in the young talent, hard work and high aspirations of our local community. As I said in my inaugural speech, I believe in the power of education. As a parent, I have a deep interest in education as the key to unlocking the potential of our children. A good education is what will set them up for life, to not only excel personally but to also be positive contributors to our community, State and country. As a Liberal member, I appreciate the importance of education to enriching the life of every individual, and few understood this better than the founder of the Liberal Party, Robert Menzies. As Prime Minister, he once told an audience of parents, "Our great function when we approach the problem of education is to equalise opportunity to see that every boy and girl has a chance to develop whatever faculties he or she may have, because this will be a tremendous contribution to the good life for the nation, and to their own good life."

I owe my own success to the education I was privileged to receive from primary school through to university. I am the product of both the public and private school systems, and I desire to see each flourish in my electorate and across New South Wales. To help realise this vision, I am heartened by the Perrottet Government's investment in schools and education across our State to secure a brighter future for New South Wales families. Over the next four years, the Government has budgeted \$7.9 billion to deliver an additional 215 new and upgraded schools. This Government has put its money where its mouth is by not only promising to deliver but also having already done so. Since coming to office in 2011, this Government has delivered 176 new and upgraded schools including 44 new or relocated schools, 132 major school upgrades and approximately 2,930 new classrooms.

This compares favourably to Labor's record in office when it closed more than 90 schools. When Labor was last in government, it tried to close down Chatswood High School in my electorate. By contrast, I seek to increase the number of schools in my electorate. I have committed recently to working to deliver two new public schools in Willoughby—one at the Sydney Metro Chatswood dive site and the other in St Leonards/Gore Hill. Both are very needed, given the growth in our community. I will work tirelessly to deliver these new schools. Again, I welcome the New South Wales Government's commitment to investing in school infrastructure in both my electorate and across New South Wales.

YOUTH KNIFE CRIME

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:14): I speak today as a concerned father to raise awareness of an issue of increasing distress for parents, families and young people in the electorate of Prospect and indeed throughout New South Wales. This issue is the rising threat of knife crime committed by minors in our State. What the State and the nation saw at this year's Royal Easter Show on Monday 11 April was shocking. The Royal Easter Show was a family-friendly event, a place where many children go to have fun with their friends and family during the Easter school break. It enrages me that this year the Royal Easter Show was overshadowed by a horrific act of knife crime. This resulted in children and parents traumatised, witnessing the arrest of a 15-year-old, the serious injury of a 16-year-old and, much to everyone's sorrow, the tragic death of a 17-year-old.

The 17-year-old boy, Uati Faletolu, known as Pele by his loved ones, was working at the Royal Easter Show when he met with two other teenagers aged 15 and 16 while on a break. The trio had an altercation with another group of young people. It pains me to say that Uati died in the ambulance on the way to hospital after being stabbed. The 16-year-old he was with at the time was taken to Westmead Hospital in a serious condition with a stab wound. The 15-year-old was arrested and charged with affray, being armed with intent to commit an indictable offence, and custody of a knife in a public place. I pay my respects to Uati, the two other victims and their families.

While this tragic event has brought the issue of knife crime to the public's attention, this is not the first murder as a result of youth knife crime this year. In January a 13-year-old boy was stabbed to death on the Central Coast as a result of a fight prearranged on social media. Another 13-year-old has since been charged with

murder. The prevalence of youth knife crime across the State is clear. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that minors have been suspected of carrying out one in five stabbings across New South Wales in 2021. Last year the NSW Police Force investigated 66 persons of interest who may be charged with knife crime offences. Sixty-one of these persons of interest were minors aged between 10 and 17 years of age.

In addition to these persons of interest, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data shows that the number of their victims is even greater. Ninety-eight children aged between the ages of 10 and 17 were victims of non-domestic assaults, using not just knives but also screwdrivers or scissors. Sadly, two of these children lost their lives as a result of these assaults. Enough is enough. How many more young people's lives need to be lost before the New South Wales Government takes action to curb this growing incidence of violence? As a father of three young daughters in an electorate that has so many young families, the safety of our children is of paramount importance to me and the people who live in Prospect. Our children should not have to grow up in a State where youth violence, let alone violence using weapons such as knives, is rapidly on the rise. Our children should not have to grow up in a State where they are traumatised by bearing witness to violence like this at family-friendly events like the Royal Easter Show.

The Premier is a father of seven young children and I appeal to him as one family man to another to act to end this violence. I also appeal to the Deputy Premier as our State's Minister for Police to work with the NSW Police Force to review the current strategy for tackling knife crime, especially amongst minors between the ages of 10 and 17. After the events of the Royal Easter Show it is time to say enough is enough, yet this should not have had to occur for the Government to be compelled to act. The statistics of last year are evidence that a serious crackdown on the rising incidence of knife crime in our community needs to be taken by the NSW Police Force. The safety of our children should always be a priority. We must act now to prevent any further minors falling victim to knife crime perpetrated by other youth in New South Wales. I thank the House.

ST FLORIAN'S DAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:19): I am pleased to speak in the House on St Florian's Day, also known as International Firefighters' Day. It is an annual day of remembrance and thanks held on 4 May. This St Florian's Day I was pleased to be invited to speak at a local RFS event organised by the Orchard Hills RFS community. Unfortunately I was unable to physically be present due to a sudden family emergency. However, one of my staff members was available and delivered my speech on my behalf, which I was very grateful for. The Orchard Hills RFS put on a very special event, with the chaplain and RFS staff members present. The photographs I saw afterwards show that they took very particular care and attention in hosting the remembrance day and thanksgiving day in honour of all their volunteers.

St Florian's Day is named after the patron saint of firefighters and is traditionally the day where members of the firefighting community come together to recognise their volunteers and the staff who have gone above and beyond, showing incredible acts of bravery in protecting the community or in delivering the highest level of commitment to the service that is worthy of special recognition. In all cases the recipients of these special awards are nominated by their peers. That indicates that these awards are truly deserved, because it is only through being on the front line, fighting side by side with your colleagues—the people that you train with, the people that you study and understand everything to do with firefighting and personal safety with—that they really know when you go above and beyond the basic training and expectation of firefighters.

These awards are truly deserved. Our Rural Fire Service volunteers have had to endure some of the most devastating natural disasters in recent years. It is during these times that communities urgently call on our bravest to defend our families or those of loved ones and communities in general across the country. Without hesitation, these volunteers step in to danger. They race to the danger when the majority of us are running away from it. They do that because they have a love and a desire to protect us and to defend our homes and our livelihoods from some of the most dangerous natural occurrences.

The bravery and fierce determination of the RFS was on full display when our nation was battling the Black Summer bushfires. Tragically 33 Australians died in that event. I specifically note the RFS volunteers who passed away: Andrew O'Dwyer and Geoffrey Keaton from the Horsley Park RFS Brigade, Samuel McPaul from Morven RFS Brigade and Colin Burns from Belowra RFS Brigade. I had the honour to work with Mel O'Dwyer, Andrew's wife, to see a small plaque, which the Liverpool City Council graciously funded, installed at a playground in Middleton Grange, where Mel and Charlotte live. As Charlotte grows up and visits that park, or even when she grows beyond the playground but goes to the sports field to play her sport, she will go past the plaque and see the image of her dad and read about the extraordinary sacrifice that he paid fighting against the Black Summer bushfires for people like her and others in the community.

It is these tragic events which take a deep toll on our volunteers, the community and families. It is on these occasions that we need to rally around our volunteers. We need to honour them as we are able to do on days like

St Florian's Day, International Firefighters' Day. As the local member for Mulgoa I am glad to see the investment being made in the Mulgoa RFS Brigade. It has been razed to the ground and is being rebuilt into a magnificent facility that will further enhance our volunteers to be able to do their job. I pay tribute to Jody Preston of the Wallacia RFS who led the team to respond to the recent flooding of the Nepean River at Blaxland's Crossing. I thank all our volunteers for the work they do.

WENTWORTH POINT FORESHORE PARK

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (16:24): During a debate in this Chamber yesterday, I raised the issue of the Peninsula Park, also known as the Foreshore Park, at Wentworth Point. This park was proposed for the Wentworth Point development, which now has about 25,000 people squashed into the Sydney Olympic Park peninsula. It was this Government's responsibility to build that parkland by 2016. It was to be the park for the families and children of that area—the people who members opposite profess to be building infrastructure for. Transport for NSW, or Roads and Maritime Services as it was then known, was responsible for building that park because it is government land.

The high-rise apartments in Wentworth Point have been built on publicly held land, and it is the State Government that has profited from the high-rise development being built on the land. The Government gave a commitment in the master plan that the park was to be 3.9 hectares. That was the basis upon which everybody bought in to the peninsula for. That was in 2016; we are now in 2022. In the run-up to the 2019 election, the Government put up a fence around the parkland site. That fence is still sitting there, with no park available and no answers from the Government on when the park will be delivered.

Because the Government has taken so long to build the park, it has now decided that part of the parkland will be used for the high school oval. The land that is going to the school for its oval is going to have a 1.2 metre fence all the way around it. Instead of getting the 3.9 hectares of land that was promised by the Government, which says it is building infrastructure for the people, the community is now possibly getting 3.1 hectares of parkland, if it ever gets built. The Government has made huge profits on this land. Every time there is a development application, more height is added to every building in that peninsula. The height of the buildings goes up and more people go in, but the size of the parkland goes down. I tried to get to the bottom of what was happening with the park. On 25 February I got my colleague in the other place the Hon. Anthony D'Adam to ask:

Given this project was originally due to be completed in 2016 what is the current date of completion? Is the construction of an oval on Peninsula Park required for the Wentworth Park High School being funded from within the Transport portfolio or Department of Education? Will the oval be completed as part of the contract for the construction of the park or will it be undertaken by the Department of Education?

Transport for NSW owns the land and has responsibility for it. The response I got on 17 March was:

This is a matter for the Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport.

On 31 March I asked the Minister for Infrastructure exactly the same question, given that I had been told by Transport for NSW that it was his responsibility. The response I got was:

This is a matter for the Minister for Planning and Homes.

Mr Edmond Atalla: Pass the buck.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: Pass the buck. On 29 April I asked the Minister for Planning the same question, but that answer is not due for another week. We have been trying to get an answer to this question since February. I am interested to see what the answer to that question is. I have another question that is due to be answered today, and I still have not got an answer. I asked, "What is the time line for Transport for NSW to deliver this park? Has it sold any of the other land? Have there been any leases or sales?" There are still no answers from Transport for NSW, which is remarkable because the environmental impact statement in the submissions specifically says:

TfNSW will undertake all works as they relate to the site works outside the school site and delivery of Ridge Road ...

That is the very land I am talking about. It then says:

TfNSW will prepare all documentation for the development approval and construction of the multipurpose sportsfield, associated carpark and the proposed road ...

These are all of the things that are part of those parklands. You can ask a question on notice in February, and keep asking it for two or three months, and this Government will not answer it. The people of Wentworth Point deserve their 3.9 hectares of parkland. This Government does not build infrastructure; it fails families and children in the densest parts of Sydney. It is a disgrace.

GOULBURN REGIONAL HOCKEY FACILITY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (16:29): As the member for Goulburn, I am delighted to have officially opened the Goulburn Regional Hockey Facility on Saturday 26 March with an open day for the community. The project was made possible through the Restart NSW funding program, with a staggering \$3,872,000 contributed. The project includes the construction and upgrade of hybrid synthetic fields, installation of field lighting, men's and women's player change rooms, more player and public amenities, multipurpose rooms and a 132 car capacity sealed car park. I first became aware of the challenges facing the Goulburn District Hockey Association and the need for major upgrades to the facility in mid-2019. In conjunction with the hockey association working party, the Goulburn Mulwaree Council, the New South Wales Government and the Office of Sport, the project was realised in October 2020 and subsequently funded.

As a result of the redevelopment, Goulburn will become home to national and State hockey championship matches and tournaments, with local facilities upgraded to elite competition standard. Water-based hockey fields are considered one of the best playing surfaces, as they not only reduce friction, allowing for quicker and smoother play, but also reduce the risk of injury. Goulburn has a proud history of professional and social hockey participation, and the facility will secure the future of the sport in the region, allowing players to keep on playing and encouraging newcomers to join the fun.

The Goulburn District Hockey Association was founded in 1907, but it was not until 1909 that W. Harman, a New Zealander attached to the historic Kenmore Hospital, organised the sport for the recreation of the staff. Hockey has played a huge part in Goulburn's sporting history, producing six of 11 Olympians, 33 Australian representatives and countless State representatives. The Goulburn District Hockey Association has also contributed largely to the Goulburn Sporting Hall of Fame, with 27 of the 68 inductees coming from the sport. Our most recent success story is Crookwell's Emily Chalker. She represented Australia from 2011 to 2021, attended three Olympic Games, made 255 match appearances, scored 88 goals and co-captained the Australian Hockeyroos. If we can produce players of this calibre from bygone days, I am excited to think about the talent that will be on display in the future now that we have these first-class playing fields and facilities.

The Goulburn District Hockey Association currently has 10 clubs comprising 50 teams, with approximately 650 players from Goulburn and surrounding districts. With the addition of training, meetings, carnivals and spectators, over 1,200 people visit the hockey complex each week. The upgrades will potentially generate up to \$1.6 million per annum for the region, with teams, supporters and spectators travelling to Goulburn. This is great news for the local economy and is thanks to "heads on local beds" and the money spent in local restaurants, cafes and shops.

On 5 and 6 May the Goulburn Regional Hockey Facility and the Goulburn District Hockey Association hosted its first major event since the official opening in March, hosting the 2022 field state championships for the over 55s men's masters. They competed over two days, with 18 registered teams and 240 registered players in attendance. I congratulate the Goulburn District Hockey Association for its advocacy, fundraising and vision; the Goulburn Mulwaree Council for the delivery of a first-class facility; and the many volunteers who put in tireless hours behind the scenes. Funding support like this from the New South Wales Government is significant, particularly as a boost for regional areas like Goulburn. It ensures that everyone across New South Wales has access to quality sporting facilities. I commend the Government for its commitment to providing regional areas with the opportunity to develop vital infrastructure such as the Goulburn Regional Hockey Facility.

COUNCILLOR ALAN PENDLETON, OAM

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:34): Recently Blacktown City Council honoured former mayor and councillor Alan Pendleton, OAM, with the key to the city. His remarkable record of service to the Blacktown local government area began more than 50 years ago. He was employed as a staff member on council from 1964 to 1994. Alan was then elected as a councillor representing ward 1 from 1995 to 2016 and served two terms as the city's mayor from 1994 to 2004 and from 2010 to 2012, and one term as deputy mayor from 2008 to 2009. In 2014 Alan made the Queen's Birthday Honours List and was bestowed with a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to local government and to the community of western Sydney.

Alan joined Blacktown City Council in 1964 as a health and building surveyor. In 1987 he was appointed Director for Health and Building and was the principal building surveyor for the approval of all building applications. In 1997 he was appointed the inaugural director of the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board and in 2009 was selected as the inaugural chairperson of Regional Development Australia Sydney. During his time as a councillor, Alan had a vision to design a combined library and leisure centre to service the fast-growing needs of north-western Sydney. Alan's vision was realised with the establishment of the Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope.

Alan was instrumental in the construction of the Max Webber Library at its new location in the Blacktown CBD. He was also key to the refurbishment of Grantham heritage building estate. In my electorate of Mount Druitt Alan secured funding for the community resource hub in the centre of Mount Druitt. Councillor Pendleton was influential in council partnering with the AFL to establish its first western Sydney team, the Greater Western Sydney Giants. Alan has been a patron of the Cumberland Nepean Softball Association, and Blacktown and District Soccer Club. He is also a patron of Mitchell High School and Seven Hills West Public School. Alan represented Blacktown city on committees, including Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils—or WSROC—Hawkesbury-Nepean advisory catchment committee, Floodplain Management Authority, Westpool and the Rural Fire Service Liaison Committee.

From 2004 to 2016, I served as a fellow councillor at Blacktown City Council alongside Alan. I am immensely grateful for his advice, mentoring and counsel. He conferred on me a deep understanding of local government. The awarding of the key to the city by Mayor Tony Bleasdale is a gesture that highlights the admiration that the Blacktown community holds for Alan's relentless efforts to make the city the best it can be. Congratulations, Alan.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:37): I take the opportunity to echo some of the sentiments expressed by the member for Mount Druitt. During his many years of service to Blacktown, Alan Pendleton was a knowledgeable, patient, thorough and effective representative of the people. Although he was a political opponent from my standpoint, I recognise that he was passionately committed to the wellbeing of the people of the community. Early in my role as member for Riverstone, when Alan was the Mayor of Blacktown, I was happy to be able to work alongside him in the interests of those people. Well done, Alan.

OURIMBAH CREEK ROAD PUPPY FARM

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:38): I raise an issue of concern for residents on Ourimbah Creek Road, Palm Grove. Recently I met with those residents. They are having difficulty with a neighbour who runs a puppy farm adjacent to their property. There are two issues. One is that some people have a fundamental disagreement with puppy farms because of the way they operate and the stress they cause to animals et cetera. The other issue is the way the planning system works. For both those reasons, this particular development is causing genuine concern for the residents and the wider community. I could go through a long list of noncompliance issues for which the owner is seeking retrospective approval. Basically, the owner has put in place infrastructure without permission, for which they have subsequently sought approval.

In 2019 the residents became aware that the puppy farm operators were carrying on their business. On 10 October 2019 the Central Coast Council served a notice of intent to cease operations. Some 4½ months after the matter was first brought to council's attention, council upgraded the notice of intent to an order that required the puppy farm to cease operations on 28 November 2019. A month later, notwithstanding that the operator of the puppy farm had received an order to cease operations, the puppy farm continued to operate.

Further action was taken in 2020. On 13 February 2020 a development application was lodged with the council seeking approval to regularise the animal boarding and training establishment that was operating on the site. On 31 March 2020, 8½ months after the matter was first brought to council's attention, a council officer confirmed that unauthorised building works were continuing on site, despite council visits and a council notice requiring cessation of business operations on or before 28 November 2019. Essentially, council had told the business to cease operating, but the business continued to operate and the operators put in place unapproved infrastructure and sought retrospective approval for those developments.

In 2021 residents sent council a list of 16 questions about how council was overseeing implementation of the development consent conditions for the site. Later council was notified of six major concerns and that adjacent residents had observed or experienced 148 breaches of consent conditions in the period 22 December 2020 to 21 August 2021. The problems continued. Residents are concerned for two reasons in particular. One is that, unfortunately, the Central Coast Local Planning Panel issued a 15-month conditional approval for continued operation even though it had received 48 well-founded objections and council had recommended that it not be approved. The residents' second concern is that, even though council has been proactive in issuing orders, it has not been proactive in following up those orders.

There is no use in having a planning panel and planning laws if people can deliberately flout them and then seek retrospective approval. An operation either complies or does not comply. If it is noncompliant, the operators should be compelled to discontinue, particularly when so many objections have been made. I met with the residents and heard the barking dogs, which was pretty amazing given the loud noise made by insects in the area. The residents need a resolution. The operation needs to be stopped and this issue followed up as quickly as possible.

FEDERAL ELECTION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:43): On Saturday 21 May residents of the Port Stephens electorate will head to the polls to cast their vote to determine the next Federal Government. It is an incredibly important decision for our community. The election represents an opportunity to change direction after nearly a decade of leadership of Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull, Barnaby Joyce and Scott Morrison. As I travel throughout our community I hear the same thing over and over again—that our country is heading in the wrong direction. Prices are going up everywhere but wages are not. The cost of living is increasing and families are struggling to get ahead. In fact, they are going backwards. After everything our community has gone through over the past two years, there is even more hardship on the horizon. That is why we need a change of government—to put our country back on track.

When it comes to wages, Scott Morrison's Government boasts that low wages are "a deliberate design feature of our economic architecture". That was a quote from the then finance Minister. This Liberal Government publicly admits that its goal is to keep wages low. Anthony Albanese and Labor, on the other hand, have committed to supporting fair wage rises that at least keep up with the rising cost of living so that families are not going backwards. At this election there is a choice between Scott Morrison, who wants to keep wages low, and Anthony Albanese, who supports fair wage rises for hardworking families in Port Stephens.

This Federal election is an opportunity to fix aged care in our country. The recent royal commission into aged care was shocking; the level of neglect within some facilities can only be described as shameful. They are our parents and grandparents, our aunts and uncles, our friends and our neighbours, and one day it will be us. Labor's plan to fix aged care is a game changer, particularly for communities like ours in Port Stephens—mandating a registered nurse on site 24/7, making sure there is more time to care for each resident every day, giving our hardworking aged-care workers a decent pay rise to reflect the important work that they do, improving food and nutrition by partnering with the Maggie Beer Foundation and putting in place stricter controls on taxpayer funding to make sure it is not being wasted.

Labor has a comprehensive plan to fix aged care in Australia, and the hysterical responses from members of Scott Morrison's Government have told us everything we need to know. They say it is impossible and unachievable, and we should all just accept that our loved ones will continue being neglected and receiving inadequate care. Labor's plan is not just achievable; it is critical, essential and urgent. My message to the people of Port Stephens is: If you want aged care fixed in our country, and if you want our elders treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve, vote Labor.

Anthony Albanese and Labor have a plan to fix child care and help working parents to earn and keep more of their own money. Under Scott Morrison and the Liberal Government, childcare fees have risen sharply. It has never been more difficult to find affordable childcare in Port Stephens, which makes it so much harder for women to return to work and for working parents to get ahead. That is why Labor will make child care cheaper. In fact, every young family in Port Stephens will be better off under Labor's childcare policy. That is a massive investment in our community, and it is a massive investment in local families who are trying to get ahead. If the families of Port Stephens want cheaper child care, they should vote Labor.

Under Scott Morrison and the Liberals, our healthcare system is broken. I hear from locals who are waiting weeks to see a GP, if they can get in at all. Labor has a plan to make it easier and cheaper to see a doctor by recruiting more GPs in Port Stephens, expanding bulk-billing services across the Hunter and reducing the cost of medications. It is such an important issue for our community, but Scott Morrison and his local candidates say it is all too hard to address—impossible to fix. That is not the kind of leadership we need for our country. This Federal election offers us a clear choice, and the only way to make it easier and cheaper to see a local GP is to vote Labor.

Scott Morrison is not capable of being the leader our country needs. He never takes responsibility, he always blames someone else and he goes missing when our nation desperately needs a leader. The reality is a vote for Brooke Vitnell in Paterson or David Gillespie in Lyne is a vote for Scott Morrison. That is the choice before us. A vote for the Coalition candidate is a vote to reward Scott Morrison and return his Government to power. Our community and our country deserve so much better than that. We need a change of government; we need Anthony Albanese as our next Prime Minister. Vote "1" Meryl Swanson for Paterson; vote "1" Alex Simpson for Lyne.

REGIONAL MOBILE AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:48): Very few items have come to better represent modern living in the twenty-first century than the ubiquitous mobile phone. But sadly, in a lot of regional parts of Australia and particularly in the Northern Tablelands, the ubiquitous mobile phone is quite redundant. Many of

my constituents are prevented from using their mobile devices to make telephone calls or to upload or download important data for the transaction of business, particularly precision agriculture, because of the dearth of mobile phone towers and mobile phone reception.

Even if someone is lucky enough to get a few bars of reception on their phone, in the most far-flung areas of the Northern Tablelands it will almost certainly be 3G. These days the bandwidth on those towers is typically clogged to the gunwales, and it is very difficult to open even a simple page on a search engine to do a Google search—let alone to upload business activity statements or download the latest data from the Bureau of Meteorology—if one is considering making some very important decisions about when to plant or not to plant, or whether to put a header in the paddock or to prepare for next week if there is rain coming.

Country people have dealt with that frustration for many years. But with the increasing integration of technology into every part of life nowadays, and with governments of all persuasions and at all levels driving people—no matter where they live—to online portals to apply for grants, to make complaints, to receive information and to undertake the routine business of renewing licences, it is more important than ever that governments make the equivalent investment in ensuring that the telecommunications infrastructure is there to allow people to do that. Unfortunately, many of the people that I represent in this Parliament simply do not have that access.

We know telecommunications is solely a matter for the Commonwealth Government under the Constitution, and it is to the Commonwealth Government that I continue to appeal to actually deliver on its commitment to regional Australians to offer equity of access with our city counterparts to good telecommunications. That access is not consistent. The irony is that those people in my electorate that are lucky enough to live in Armidale enjoy faster broadband speeds than people who live in Sydney, because we have NBN fibre to the premises rather than fibre to the node. But my focus is not so much the landline connection; it is access to a mobile telecommunications service. For a lot of the people that I represent in dispersed population areas, mobile devices are more key than fibre to the node or fibre to the premises. It is absolutely crucial not just for the liveability of regional areas or the conduct of business—whether it is in agriculture, any main street business or everything in between—but also for the safety of the people in regional Australia.

The ability to make an emergency phone call at the scene of an accident on a major highway, or even on a back road, should be absolutely fundamental. At the moment someone travelling on the New England Highway in the Northern Tablelands, one of the busiest Federal highways in our country, can drive between Armidale and Glen Innes—which is not far; it is 110 kilometres—and lose phone reception through Llangothlin. They do not have phone reception on the northern side of Llangothlin and will drop out before they get to Glen Innes, about 20 kays south. Most people that live in our area can tell you to the nearest guidepost exactly when reception starts and finishes—even those who invest in large aeriels and booster systems for their vehicles. But that is not just in New England; it is the same story on the Newell and the Gwydir highways, the main thoroughfares for the region, let alone some of the back roads. It is a major issue in regional areas, and it simply has to be addressed.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for bringing the plight of Llangothlin and telecommunications to the attention of the House.

RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:54): Last week the parliamentary inquiry into rural and regional health handed down a damning report revealing a crisis in health care and how the Government has failed residents over the past decade. The landmark inquiry was established by the Labor Opposition, and I am proud to have fought for it alongside my upper House colleagues the Hon. Greg Donnelly, who was the chair of the inquiry, and the Hon. Walt Secord, to make sure that we shine a light on rural and regional health for those living in remote parts of New South Wales. The committee received more than 700 submissions—a phenomenal amount—and travelled the length and breadth of New South Wales to hear stories from residents, health professionals, community groups and peak bodies.

The committee held 15 public hearings between March 2021 and February 2022. Five were held at Parliament House in Sydney. Three were held virtually, due to the pandemic. Seven were held in regional areas: Deniliquin, Cobar, Wellington, Dubbo, Gunnedah, Taree and Lismore. I was delighted to attend many of those hearings. The damning report put forward 22 findings and 44 recommendations, and made one thing very clear: Health care in rural and regional New South Wales is in crisis. The inquiry found that those living outside metropolitan areas have poorer health outcomes compared with those living in metropolitan areas. The Liberals and The Nationals have reduced rural and regional healthcare capacity, and this has left our hospitals dangerously exposed to future pandemics.

Residents living in the bush often tell stories about waiting over a year before they can access vital surgery, and they wait for hours in the emergency department for basic treatment that many people in our cities could receive at their local GP. At every hearing there was undeniable evidence from witnesses signifying that we have a crisis in health care right across rural and regional New South Wales. We have heard that many hospitals have no doctors. At times, rural hospitals do not have basic medical supplies such as antibiotics. Kitchen staff and cleaners have been left to look after patients and newborn babies. Operating theatres are closed more often than they are open. People living in remote areas of New South Wales often need to travel long distances or relocate to attend health services or receive specialised treatment.

Someone's postcode should not determine the level of health care and access to health care they receive. The New South Wales Government must make improving the availability, funding and delivery of health and hospital services and resources a top priority. The Labor Opposition is committed to making sure the recommendations are implemented in full. I can assure the House that if Labor is elected in March next year and I am made health Minister, I will report back to this Parliament every single session to ensure that at least twice a year this place—the people's House, which is meant to represent communities right across regional and rural New South Wales—is given feedback on the progression of the implementation of this report. The report carries with it the expectation and hope that we as political leaders make sure that we prioritise safe hospitals, better health services, and adequate and improved health services for communities living in rural and regional New South Wales.

This was an inquiry that the Government fought hard to stop, but finally the voices of rural and regional communities have been heard. The report recommends a two-year period for the Government to outline its progress, but NSW Labor believes it can do more and that the emphasis should be on starting this process immediately. Given the extensive feedback from the community and those working in the health sector, the Government needs to take these findings and recommendations seriously, and develop a plan to ensure that the recommendations are a top priority. I have written to the regional health Minister to outline exactly that and to very clearly express my belief that there should be a plan in place, with resources to make sure that the recommendations are delivered.

I want the inquiry to steer improvements, provide clear recommendations and implement change. These communities deserve more and expect more. We must fight for these people, and we will. Finally, I thank all those who have contributed to this landmark inquiry by sharing their stories bravely and, at times, in very difficult circumstances. I also thank the Hon. Greg Donnelly and the Hon. Walt Secord for their tireless work as Labor's representatives on the committee. I look forward to joining Mrs Helen Dalton, the member for Murray, on Friday night to discuss this issue in her community. I thank her for her ongoing contribution to this important issue.

Business interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

ROAD TOLLS

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:59): I move:

That this House opposes the decision of the Government to privatise 100 per cent of the toll roads in Sydney—the most tolled city in the world.

During question time today the House heard answers to questions about the distance-based road tax. To summarise in one word, the Premier said no; as far as he is concerned at the moment, there will not be any distance-based road tax. The Treasurer said no. The Minister for Western Sydney said no. The Minister for Cities and member for Pittwater, who has probably never paid a toll in his life when travelling from Pittwater to Sydney—

Ms Eleni Petinos: The Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Oh, on the way back—maybe one. The member for Riverstone and I have to pay quite a few tolls to get from our area to here. The Minister for Cities rarely pays a toll, and he said no. There were so many noes. But, then again, can we really trust this Government not to add another tax? New South Wales is the most taxed State in Australia, and the Government is saying, "Trust me. We are not going to put an extra tax on." I do not think the public is going to trust this Government saying no for now. I remember that during the great debates of the parliamentary leaders, the third Premier in this revolving-door Government—it has had four Premiers since 2011—said that the M4 would be tolled. Then within 24 hours the Premier had to put out a press release saying, "No, we are not going to extend the tolls on the M4." Can we really trust this Government?

I do not want to teach this Government economics or even basic common sense, but let me get this right: It built WestConnex for \$16.8 billion and then sold it to Transurban for \$11 billion. That is a \$5.8 billion loss. It then sold the future cash flows of the tolls, which over 40 years will probably generate \$200 billion in revenue,

for about \$11 billion. As of this year, Sydney motorists will pay \$2.3 billion in tolls alone. Then the Government wants to tell the people of western Sydney that it is doing them a favour; it is giving them \$5 billion out of the \$11 billion. For the next 40 years, most of us are going to be paying tolls every time we drive up and down WestConnex. We will be paying mega billions over the next 40 years.

The Government has decided to turn western Sydney into 15 council areas. I remember when there were only eight in the original western Sydney councils. The Government excluded Blacktown at that stage; it was not good enough to be part of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis councils. All of a sudden, now there are 15 councils. So \$5 billion goes to western Sydney, but the \$6 billion that we will be paying in tolls for the next 40 years will go around the State and probably pay for NorthConnex, which goes up to the northern suburbs. They will get it for free. Downtown Bargo, which is obviously metropolitan western Sydney, will have a share of the \$5 billion. Our residents will probably be paying \$25 per trip by the time the contract expires. If you live in Riverstone and you are travelling along the road, you will be paying \$25 a trip in the next 30 years or so. Currently some people in the Riverstone area and the growing north-west sector are paying \$9,300 a year in tolls, and Minister Natalie Ward has admitted that there are many western Sydney motorists paying \$6,000.

Government members were also talking about asset recycling, once again going back to the economics. They were talking nonstop about that in question time. They sold all the electricity assets for at least \$37 billion. They sold the land and property information centre for \$2.6 billion, the Sydney Desalination Plant for \$2.3 billion, and the ports of Botany, Kembla and Newcastle for \$7 billion. That is \$50 billion. God knows what else they have sold. Then they "recycled" to build WestConnex. That was part of their promise: sell those assets to build a road for \$16 billion. Now they are recycling that road. Not only have we been left with paying higher electricity prices since 2011, we now have to pay a toll. The Government should stop being so friendly to us. It should leave western Sydney alone—go away and pick on someone else.

What has the Government got against the motorists of western Sydney? When I drive around western Sydney, I feel like I am in Hollywood with the number of cameras everywhere—speed cameras, traffic light cameras, mobile speed cameras and average-distance measuring cameras. There are a lot of cameras on the M4; there is one almost every kilometre. God knows what they do. I understand that Premier Perrottet—and probably Treasurer Kean—is a Beatles fan behind the scenes, which is great. I love The Beatles, especially Ringo Starr, but they do not have to use George Harrison's *Taxman* as a basis for their economic policies:

Should five per cent appear too small
Be thankful I don't take it all

That is very true. We are the highest taxing State in Australia. The song continues:

I'll tax the street
(If you try to sit, if you try to sit), I'll tax your seat

Leave us alone in western Sydney. But do not forget that Perrottet loves the next line:

Don't ask me what I want it for ...
If you don't want to pay some more

That is what is happening in western Sydney. Residents are cheesed off with the number of tolls. The Government is taxing us into oblivion. It is a shameful act. Western Sydney is paying for the State and hardly getting any resources back. No more tolls in western Sydney!

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:06): That was a puzzling contribution from the member for Blacktown.

Mr Ray Williams: That is being kind.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: I think it is because we have to have a toll road before we pay a toll. If it were up to Labor, those roads would not be anywhere in Sydney. If it had been up to Labor, we would not be driving on the M2 to get to the city from the north-west. We would be driving on a series of back roads while trying to find our way to Epping Road, through congested tunnels, intersection after intersection, people's suburbs and local shopping centres, and it would take twice as long as it currently does. If we were trying to get to the city from Penrith without driving on the motorways that the Liberal Party built, we would be driving on the Great Western Highway, again through shopping centres, intersections—

Mr Edmond Atalla: It's cheaper.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: You think so? Have a think about it. You probably would not get to work on time. It would not be viable to use the Great Western Highway to get from Penrith to the city; you could not do it. If the M5 had not been built, members should think about what the options would be to get to the city from south-western Sydney. Carl Scully thought it might be a good idea to have some roads; he just could not do it as

well as us. The Liberal Government built the M2, the M4 and the M5. The Federal Liberal Government built the M7. Not a cent of State Labor money went into that. We have built WestConnex and NorthConnex, and we are building the M6, the M12 and the Western Harbour Tunnel.

Those projects only came about because the Liberal-Nationals Government knew that people needed roads. Nobody likes paying for using the roads, but they like value for money. They like to be able to move around the city and they accept the premise, as members can see from the number of people who use them. There is still the option of using the Great Western Highway from Penrith to get to the city, but how many people do that? There is still the option of using all those back roads through the north-west of Sydney and taking an extra hour to get into town, but how many people are going to do that? The reality is that we need roads and this Government is building them.

The Government's \$108.5 billion infrastructure investment pipeline includes \$71.5 billion in roads and transport infrastructure. That is a stark contrast to what was happening. We would still be waiting for most of those motorways if the Labor Government stayed in power. At the rate that Labor was going, we would not have seen half the projects that have been completed under this Government. In fact, it opposed most of them. I remind members that, when we started to build the north-west metro, the M2 and the WestConnex projects, there was opposition and no support from Labor. Then it whinged about the arrangements afterwards. Those infrastructure projects allow people to get around Sydney and allow them the precious gift of time. If they are capped, as they are in a number of cases, they can provide value for money as well.

This Government has delivered or is delivering eight motorways. They provide increased road capacity, reduce congestion and improve travel time. The cost of congestion in Sydney is estimated to have been around \$9.63 billion in 2020 and would have increased to \$10 billion in 2021 on those estimates. Over 950,000 trips are made on Sydney's toll roads every day because people know it is worth their while. Sixty per cent of non-business motorists in Sydney pay less than \$4 a week in tolls per tag, with more than 85 per cent spending less than \$13 a week. For the small proportion that pay more, there is toll relief available under this Government. The toll relief schemes address those people who rely on the roads more heavily.

Toll relief provides free vehicle registration for drivers who have spent over \$1,406 on New South Wales toll roads in the previous financial year and half-price registration for drivers who have spent over \$843. In the 2021 financial year more than 198,000 people benefited from the toll relief scheme. New South Wales residents can claim a rebate, excluding GST, for trips made on the M5 South-West Motorway using vehicles registered in New South Wales for private use. In the 2021 financial year more than 26.5 million trips were claimed for the M5 south-west cashback. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:11): I thank the member for Blacktown for moving this important motion. It makes perfect sense to those of us in the Labor Party who represent outer suburban or, indeed, regional and peri-urban electorates like Blue Mountains. However, it is presumably a bewildering motion for Liberal members on the North Shore and the Eastern Suburbs who represent electorates that are beneficiaries of not just magnificent public transport services but also relatively affordable tolling regimes. Motorists from Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains knew what was in store for them when this Government introduced distance-based tolling on the M4 but left the fixed-tolling regime of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in place. We knew what was coming when it signed away public ownership of our motorways to a private owner with an entitlement to jack up tolls by 4 per cent or CPI every year. We knew what was coming and we knew why.

Tolls are a major impost on the household budgets of hundreds of thousands of families, yet this Government allowed them to spiral out of control—ever higher with every passing year. The Government did this because it does not care about western Sydney. It does not care about the cost-of-living crisis that grips working-class families or the lived experience of motorists stuck on the motorways in peak-hour traffic day in and day out who are suffering from the double whammy of sitting in traffic purgatory while paying through the nose for the privilege. The same Government refuses to deal with the chronic undercapacity of our main western railway line and refuses to invest in its duplication—the only measure that will meaningfully improve the lives of western Sydney commuters.

Instead of doubling the capacity of our public transport system to meet the needs of today and plan for the obvious needs of the future, the Government has instead condemned us all to a lifetime of toll company direct debits and the interminable beeping of their e-tags. Every time that tag beeps is another \$5 or \$10 coming out of your pocket. The people of the Blue Mountains know that every year that cost goes up and up. The Government comes to the issue of distance-based road user charging with no credibility and no goodwill. People do not trust the Government, and nor should they. It will, no doubt, find a way to turn this charging into a new money-spinning venture for its friends in big business. How many of the crooks, spivs and pickpockets among the New South Wales Liberals will end up working at these tolling companies when the gravy train grinds to a halt here in Macquarie Street at the next election? As they say in the classics, it is a tale as old as time.

The Labor Party opposes the out-of-control private tolling regime presided over by the Government. Tolls have their place in raising money for the salaries of Transport for NSW maintenance workers. But, true to form, those have also been privatised. Remember the flooding earlier this year? The privatisation agenda of this Government saw highways flood in the most remarkable locations. We had flooding that defied the laws of physics because we are governed here in New South Wales instead by the laws of privatisation, cost cutting and pig-headed economic liberalism. We had flooding at Springwood, on the side of a hill—work that out. The Roseville Bridge, which goes across Middle Harbour, was under water. But it was not because the tide was high or the river below was full. We had the remarkable situation of a roadway some 10 or 15 metres above the earth nonetheless being completely under water. Just like the highway at Springwood, Roseville Bridge was under water because the road had not been properly maintained and the stormwater drains were clogged.

So, no, we do not think there is an argument for more road user charging, and we do not think the Government can be trusted to administer it. Given the chance, the Government will devise a scheme that is completely inequitable and inefficient and then sell it to the private sector so that its mates in big business can rort it for 40 or 50 years. In the western suburbs of Sydney and beyond, into the Blue Mountains, we have seen it all before, and we are sick of it. We want investment in public transport before we see another cent raised from long-suffering motorists, and we want a genuine alternative to a life condemned to be spent on the New South Wales Liberals' private tollways.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (17:16): From the outset, I raise a point that the Leader of the Opposition continues to perpetrate quite falsely. He has claimed that Sydney is the largest tolled city in the world. That is quite incorrect. It is a falsehood and a lie. The Leader of the Opposition today is called out and asked to table any information to show he can prove that. He cannot, because it is a falsehood and a lie.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Castle Hill has been exemplary through the earlier parts of the debate. I ask members of the Opposition to not interject.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: It is worthwhile noting for the record that there were a number of toll roads in place under the previous Labor Government. I will go through them and list them off the top of my head. There was the M5, the M4, the M2, the M7, the Cross City Tunnel—what a disaster that was—and the Lane Cove Tunnel. The Harbour Bridge toll is still in place.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: At any time during the 16 years of the term of that Labor Government, it could have chosen to remove any one of those tolls. But it did not remove them. But, just prior to the 2011 election, it removed the M4 toll. Mind you that it was promised two elections earlier. But the Government did remove the M4 toll. An important point relating to tolls is that we can provide roads for our growing communities now. The previous Labor Government could have done the same thing. It could have either built more roads or removed tolls, but it chose to do neither. We have chosen to build roads together with the private sector, which ultimately provide benefits for people travelling to and from work. At the same time, we have also provided alternatives and a growth in public transport. The Government has invested some \$7 billion to give people alternatives in areas such as Rouse Hill and Blacktown that are serviced by the Metro North West Line. If people do not want to sit on a toll road or pay the toll, they can use public transport or other roads.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Londonderry will assist me by ceasing her interjections.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: While recognising that we can bring greater roads and greater connectivity to fruition more quickly by delivering toll roads, we have also provided cost-of-living relief to people through a myriad of different programs such as Creative Kids, Active Kids and the First Home Owner Grant. We have half-price registration, half-price licences and registration rebates. Some \$1,600 a year can be saved through some of the cost relief we have provided to people, recognising that we are imposing tolls on people who want to use roads but at the same time, we are providing relief to those people from their cost-of-living pressures through other measures.

Importantly, toll roads ultimately provide efficiencies. They get us to where we are going quicker. Unfortunately, a cost is imposed, but also there are savings through reduced wear and tear and greater efficiencies in the use of fuel. You need only look at truck movements on our toll roads. Every heavy vehicle driver and company would put their hands up and say they would use toll roads. Ultimately, a toll is a perfectly tax-deductible item. So they are already getting relief back from using the toll roads, which are ultimately getting goods to places more quickly and efficiently, and providing the opportunity for people to get back home and spend quality time with their families. Our toll roads provide many things. We welcome any policy initiatives from the Labor Opposition coming forward and stating how many tolls it will remove. I note that the mover of the motion was

completely wrong when he stated the cost of WestConnex. We recouped \$20 billion from the two sale tranches, which we are reinvesting. [*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Riverstone will come to order before I give the call to the member for Prospect.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:22): I oppose the New South Wales Liberal Government's decision to privatise 100 per cent of toll roads in Sydney, which is, as the motion says, the most tolled city in the world. This Government is the highest taxing Government in Australia—highest amount of tolls and highest amount of tax. Isn't that great? And who gets taxed the most? It is the western Sydney families, time and again. The Government throws bits and pieces and says, "We will give you a benefit and a kickback in this." If Service NSW has not crashed and you finally get onto it online, you will get back a few dollars. But the Government constantly taxes and takes money. A big example of that is distance-based tolling, which bases the charge for road usage on distance travelled.

It will always impact the most on working families in western Sydney. Let's think about it. The Government says it is creating all of this great infrastructure. Then it opens up new real estate areas like Oran Park, but there is no public infrastructure out there, let alone schools. People cannot get the bus or the train, because they are not there. So they must drive. What do they have to drive on? It is on the toll roads that the Government put in place. They have no choice at all. The tolling will always disproportionately affect western Sydney families who have to drive to work. That is the reality. It does not affect those in the eastern suburbs. I will go into the figures of the good old people of the Lower North Shore and North Shore, which members opposite really represent, who pay next to nothing in tolls.

So let's have a think about this. If you are looking at living in western Sydney—say you live in Penrith—from Penrith all the way up to Parramatta, where the first toll is, you will pay at least \$17.74 per round trip each day to go along the M4 to the city. If you live at Hassall Grove and you have to drive to the CBD, it is a \$46.64 round trip each day. That is if you go by the M7, the M2 and the Lane Cove Tunnel into the Harbour Bridge, which is the quickest and cheapest way of getting there. From Everson Park to the CBD is a \$25.10 round trip each day. That is by the M5 and M5 East. And the real kicker: It goes up either 4 per cent or the consumer price index each year, whichever is higher, because who is the Government really looking after? It is not the families of western Sydney. It is their corporate mates. It is the Transurbans. It is those liars who are giving them their political donations and kickbacks—their mates. When we finally get them out of this Chamber, they will go on their boards and do a bit of consulting and lobbying for them. They want to make sure they keep them onside.

But lo and behold, if you live at Dee Why, Mosman, Chatswood, Gordon or Turramurra, guess how much it costs you to come to the city—\$4. So you can live at Hassall Grove or Everson Park where it costs you \$42, or you can live on the North Shore, Pittwater, Manly, Wakehurst, Lane Cove or Willoughby and you will pay four bucks. Tell me who they are really representing when you can say that? When the member for Riverstone and the member for Castle Hill—and I am looking forward to hearing what the member for Hawkesbury has to say—defend this, how can they defend it? How can they defend it when members of their own communities are being slugged almost 10 times more than the ones in the North Shore? That is absolutely appalling. It is those families who can least afford it, and now, through this distance-based tolling, it is going to be even worse for them.

It is bad enough that they do not have the rough schools. It is bad enough that we do not have enough public infrastructure or that the housing prices are so high. But no, now we will have even more taxes on our families through these congestion charges. It is absolutely unbelievable. By 2023, with the opening of the last stage of WestConnex, Transurban will control 13 of the 15 road tolls. Tell me that is not a monopoly. Tell me that is justified. It is not, but it is raking it in. This Government needs to step up and change it, because the families of western Sydney will not forget it and the Government will pay for it in March next year.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:27): I put on the record a correction of the member for Prospect. He referred to the Sydney Harbour Bridge—that is a public asset, not a privatised bridge. I put that on the record for correction. You should know your facts because you stand up and give me a lecture. You should know your facts. Get it right.

Dr Hugh McDermott: I have my facts. You should represent your community. You should not be on that side.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Prospect will come to order. The Clerk will stop the clock. I ask everybody to tone it down a bit. The member for Prospect was speaking to the member for Hawkesbury, who is very well aware of Standing Order 249A, which was used relatively recently. If a member stands and interjects in that way, I will use Standing Order 249A to remove that person from the Chamber. The member for Hawkesbury will direct her remarks through the Chair.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Through the Chair, one other correction for the member for Prospect is that distance-based tolling was first introduced by Labor on the M7.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: What was that?

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: I will repeat that. Distance-based tolling was first introduced by Labor on the M7. I reiterate the comments from my colleagues the member for Riverstone and the member for Castle Hill, and I am happy to do it again because I think the other side needs some reminding, because they have very short memories. I can remember back in the "Bob Carr built nothing" days, you got nothing. You got no infrastructure. The Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to transforming the way we move around Sydney and our motorways network, and it plays a vital role in getting commuters where they need to be with a quicker and more reliable journey. They have choices. They can go on the toll roads or they can go on other roads. Because we have the toll roads, that frees the other regular roads for them to drive on. You heard that from the Premier today.

The Government has spent \$108.5 billion on an infrastructure investment pipeline, which includes \$71.5 billion in roads and transport infrastructure. It is a stark contrast to members opposite. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, critical construction and maintenance work across New South Wales roads and transport networks has kept more than 130,000 people directly and indirectly employed. Game-changing infrastructure projects such as WestConnex, NorthConnex, upgrades to the Great Western Highway and Princes Highway, the M6, the M12, the Western Harbour Tunnel—I know I am boring you with this list that goes on and on, because back in the "Bob Carr built nothing" days, I heard crickets. Nothing was built. None of these projects have been delivered in the "Bob Carr built nothing" days.

Mr Greg Warren: Have you not been on the M2?

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Is that the only one? The M2 provides a cashback for the M5 people living in the western suburbs. Every time anyone goes on the M2, they give cashback funding to anyone on the M5. Remember that in the western Sydney seats. The Government has eight motorways delivered and/or in delivery. Let's compare that with those opposite. We learnt today that, in fact, the *Getting Us There* report by the McKell Institute, where the Leader of the Opposition was a research fellow, supported a congestion tax. I am going to have to remind them of that. New South Wales Labor promised motorways and never, ever delivered them. The M4 East was announced in 2002, 2004 and 2006. The M5 duplication and widening, F3, M2 link, and F6 were all announced; nothing was delivered.

The New South Wales Coalition has promised and delivered the following projects: M5 west widening; WestConnex M4 widening; new M4 tunnels; the M8; NorthConnex; a Pacific Highway upgrade between Newcastle and the Queensland border; Princes Highway upgrades at Gerringong, Foxground and Berry; upgrades at Burrill Lake Bridge, Dignams Creek and Albion Park Rail; and Windsor Bridge upgrade. What a magnificent bridge that upgrade is at Windsor Bridge. It is an absolutely brilliant bridge. I was so proud to go on that. I go on it all the time. It is a wonderful bridge. Six years of protesters tried to stop it—Labor cronies. They did not manage to do that and we built that bridge. I am very proud. I move an amendment to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting all words after "House" and inserting instead "supports the Government's toll relief program".

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:32): I thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this matter of public importance before the House because this is a very serious matter for people across west and south-western Sydney who are seriously cost affected. The reality we know is the pipedream of a Premier who was once the member for Hawkesbury and could not get out of western Sydney quick enough to the more politically opportunistic area on the North Shore, and who has absolutely no idea. Let's make no mistakes, colleagues. This is yet another Liberal Party fat tax on western and south-western Sydney—a further financial imposition on people who simply cannot afford it.

We have a Premier and Liberal Party members who simply come out to western and south-western Sydney for two reasons: a photo opportunity or to whack another tax on us. This is yet another instalment of that. Make no mistake. As I said before, we know that this serious financial cost imposition will hurt business in western and south-western Sydney. It will hurt local families. When you draw a correlation, this same Government at the height of the pandemic whacked and locked us down. We saw businesses close. We saw families driven into the ground. I have spoken with residents in my electorate of Campbelltown who are seriously suffering as a result of this Government's decision. I say to this Government and to this Premier: The people of western Sydney and south-west Sydney matter. They matter and they deserve consideration.

Nearly 1.3 million people move along that western Sydney belt from St Marys to Macarthur and Campbelltown. They need jobs. They need support. They do not need new taxes. They do not need more tolls. This is the idea and the action of a Premier who simply does not get the serious concerns of families and businesses

across west and south-west Sydney. This is a symbolic representation of a government that does not care. I will go further: It is not even that the Government does not care; it does not get it. It has an inward focus approach to matters—

Ms Eleni Petinos: You will never get it because you're always going to sit over there.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Miranda will cease interjecting.

Mr GREG WARREN: I note the interjection from the member for Miranda. I am here with my colleague and good friend the member for Macquarie Fields. His constituents who take a round trip from Edmondson Park to the CBD each day pay \$25.10 in tolls.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: Tell them how much.

Mr GREG WARREN: It costs them \$25.10 every day. Like him, I have constituents, working mums and dads, who simply cannot afford to go to work because it costs them too much to get there—it is not worth their while.

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

Mr GREG WARREN: There is a disproportionate tax on western Sydney and south-west Sydney. It shows that this Government has no idea about the serious matters confronting families in western Sydney and south-west Sydney. I note those opposite refer to roads that have been upgraded and associated work, but the reality is the Government is building toll roads. The Liberals and The Nationals are doing it to profit the private sector, not to benefit public road users, and the Opposition will not tolerate it. On this side of the House we make no excuses. We will forever stand and fight for the people of western Sydney and south-west Sydney, whether in Blacktown, Mount Druitt, Campbelltown, Camden—wherever they may be—and especially Penrith. Where is the member for Penrith? He is absent, absolutely absent. I commend my colleague and friend the member for Blacktown for bringing this debate to the House. I urge those opposite to consider their position and to support the needs, the dreams and the aspirations of their constituents, and the people of western Sydney and south-west Sydney.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:37): In reply: What a riveting debate. We should have more of them. I thank members representing the electorates of Riverstone, Blue Mountains, Castle Hill, Prospect, Hawkesbury and Campbelltown for their contributions. The member for Riverstone talked about the Government's investments—wonderful investments in building toll roads. He must not have listened to me at the beginning of the debate when I noted that \$60 billion of public assets have been sold off, including all the State's electricity assets—or most of them, before the member for Castle Hill corrects me—to recycle into a road that is then sold. Now there are 40 years' worth of tolls to pay and our electricity prices have gone up. Is that a great economic outcome?

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

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Both the member for Riverstone and the member for Castle Hill talked about how lucky people are to have toll roads because otherwise motorists would be travelling on congested back streets, waiting in lines of traffic for hours. But there are plenty of people sitting in traffic on the M7, the M4 and the M2. It is often like sitting in a parking lot, and they are paying for the privilege—\$40-odd each for a return trip. Are they getting their money's worth? The member for Blue Mountains talked about the 4 per cent and CPI index increases that will happen for over 40 years—the impost on families in western Sydney who endure the purgatory of sitting in traffic. But I doubt the Liberal Government paid any attention.

The member for Castle Hill issued the challenge: Where is the proof? He said there is no proof. Those opposite have challenged the Leader of the Opposition to produce the proof. So in order to educate the member for Castle Hill and the entire Coalition Government, I quote Chinh Ho, senior lecturer with the Institute of Transport Logistics Studies at the University of Sydney. He said:

In terms of the kilometres of tolls in the urban area, Sydney has the most in the world.

Sydney has the most expensive network of toll roads in the world. There is the proof—academic studies. We have brought those opposite the proof—unless they doubt the University of Sydney. The member for Prospect spoke about how Sydney has the highest tolls and the highest taxes in the country, if not the world.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will sit down and cease interjecting.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Those opposite say how wonderful it is that the Government offers a Toll Relief rebate. People must spend over \$700 then go to Service NSW and wait two hours to be served and discover whether they might be eligible for it. This Government is ripping people off. It needs to stop ripping off the people of western Sydney. [*Time expired.*]

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will come to order. I will hear the member for Maitland on the point of order.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Mr Assistant Speaker, you told the member for Prospect that members who stand and yell across the Chamber at members with the call will be removed under Standing Order 249A. The Minister, and member for Oatley, entered the Chamber and clearly flouted your ruling. Regardless of whether he heard that earlier ruling, the Minister's behaviour was disgraceful and unacceptable.

Ms Eleni Petinos: To the point of order: The Minister entered the Chamber and was clearly proceeding to his seat.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I do not need assistance from the member for Miranda.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Further to the point of order: If the member for Miranda wishes to take a point of order she should seek the call and wait until it is given. There has been a lot of talk about decorum in this place today and it would be pleasing if Government members would display some. Those who are supposed to help you maintain control of the Chamber, Mr Assistant Speaker, should do that rather than flouting your rulings.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for Maitland for bringing to the attention of the House some of the behaviour that has occurred today. It is a difficult balance to maintain order while allowing debates such as this to proceed in a relatively free manner. I am close to upholding the point of order in relation to the member for Oatley. However, the member was not in the House when I gave that reminder to the member for Prospect. I ask members to listen to my reasoning. I immediately directed the member for Oatley to take his seat and cease behaving in a disorderly manner. If the member had been in the Chamber earlier and heard my original warning, he would have been removed under Standing Order 249A. There are previous examples. I did not remove any other member under that—

Dr Hugh McDermott: But you threatened me and didn't threaten him.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I did threaten you.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: To clarify—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I do not accept that there is a point of order. I am trying to keep a balance. The Minister, and member for Oatley, was directed to cease his interjections and move to his seat, and he did so.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Mr Assistant Speaker, to clarify, if members do not hear your ruling then they do not have to abide by it and will just get another warning. Is that correct?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: If members do not hear my ruling then I will decide what to do. I have decided that the member for Oatley was given sufficient warning to cease his interjections and move to his seat. I warn the member of Oatley that for the rest of this Parliament if I am in the chair and he walks through the Chamber behaving in a disorderly manner then he will be removed. Every member can assume they will receive the same treatment. I will not accept that type of interjection.

Mr Stephen Bali: To the point of order: First, Mr Assistant Speaker, after you told the member for Oatley to resume his seat he continued to yell, which forced me to yell. I felt bullied and harassed. The member walked all the way across the Chamber and ignored your ruling. Secondly, it does not matter whether members are sitting in the House or, as many of us do, sitting in our offices doing paperwork or preparing our speeches with the television on; we are deemed to be in Parliament while it is sitting. Members cannot say, "Well, I wasn't here at that particular time." We are deemed by the taxpayers to be in this place. The member should be removed from the Chamber for at least 10 minutes. Send him to the sin bin, Mr Assistant Speaker.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I have heard the point of order and I will rule on it. As I said earlier, I do not uphold the point of order. I have conveyed my intention from this point going forward. I believe I handled the matter in a reasonable manner, given the tone of the debate that I allowed to continue. If members do not like it, I will be much harsher in applying the standing orders in future. I am sure members do not want that. I think members will agree that it was a spirited debate. I thank the member for Blacktown for his vote of confidence in the Chair, and we shall move on. I do not uphold the point of order, but I thank the member for Maitland for taking it.

The member for Blacktown has moved a motion, to which the member for Hawkesbury has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Hawkesbury be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes43
 Noes35
 Majority.....8

AYES

Anderson, K
 Ayres, S
 Clancy, J
 Conolly, K
 Cooke, S
 Coure, M
 Dalton, H
 Davies, T
 Dominello, V
 Elliott, D
 Evans, L
 Greenwich, A
 Griffin, J
 Gulaptis, C
 Hancock, S

Hazzard, B
 Henskens, A
 James, T
 Kean, M
 Layzell, D
 Lee, G
 Lindsay, W
 Marshall, A
 McGirr, J
 O'Dea, J
 Overall, N
 Pavey, M
 Perrottet, D
 Petinos, E

Preston, R
 Provest, G
 Roberts, A
 Saunders, D
 Sidgreaves, P
 Singh, G (teller)
 Smith, N (teller)
 Speakman, M
 Stokes, R
 Taylor, M
 Tuckerman, W
 Williams, L
 Williams, R
 Wilson, F

NOES

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

Harris, D
 Harrison, J
 Haylen, J
 Hoenig, R
 Holland, M
 Kamper, S
 Leong, J
 Lynch, P
 McDermott, H
 Mehan, D (teller)
 Mihailuk, T
 Minns, C

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

PAIRS

Bromhead, S
 Crouch, A
 Gibbons, M
 Toole, P
 Upton, G

Watson, A
 Li, J
 Daley, M
 Lalich, N
 Hornery, S

Amendment agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only two members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Noes, 2

Mr D. Mehan
 Ms L. Tesch

Motion as amended agreed to.*Private Members' Statements***MORTDALE MASTER PLAN**

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (18:01): The Mortdale master plan in its current form, proposed by the Georges River Council, is strongly opposed by many

residents who live and work in Mortdale. It aims to completely transform Mortdale by rezoning much of the area into medium- and high-density housing and commercial zones. Overall, the plan will see an additional 969 dwellings built within Mortdale, bringing the total number of dwellings up to 2,227. This will be achieved through the construction of multiple high-rise buildings within our community. Morts Road, Cook Street and Victoria Avenue would see six- to eight-storey developments, whilst council-owned properties would have a proposed height of 22 metres or 28 metres with the affordable housing bonus.

The predicted population increase of Mortdale by 2036 will only see an additional 600 residents, requiring 273 new dwellings to cater for this increase; however, the master plan proposes 969 new dwellings, which would accommodate 3,000 new residents. This is an unnecessary increase in my opinion and in the opinion of many other local residents. Not only would this influx of new residents put immense stress on our local infrastructure and put pressure on local families, it would also make parking within the local area even more challenging than it already is. Parking is already a considerable challenge within Mortdale, and the master plan would only further complicate the matter.

I have previously called upon the council to conduct a comprehensive traffic study of Mortdale to ascertain the impacts that the council's Mortdale master plan would have upon local roads, travel times and parking availability. This will ensure that the council and the local community are aware of the impacts that the draft master plan will have on congestion in our local area. The master plan has seen a significant amount of public backlash, with community groups and residents significantly opposing the changes that the master plan would bring to the Mortdale area.

I recently met with the Save Mortdale Village group, and together we discussed the impacts that the plan might have on the local area. The Save Mortdale Village group continues to host public meetings and consult with councillors and community members to advocate for reasonable changes to the master plan. I will continue to work with community groups like the Save Mortdale Village group in order to ensure that the concerns of local residents are taken into consideration and that the voices of the Mortdale community are heard loud and clear.

Last year, in order to further highlight the community's strong opposition to the draft Mortdale master plan, I created a petition which, so far, has been signed by close to 1,000 people. I was also pleased to see that my representations to the former planning Minister, Rob Stokes, resulted in the extension of the initial community consultation period to 30 June this year. That is a massive win for the local community who felt that their voices were not being heard during the original, short consultation period, which was held only online and during the COVID lockdown of last year. That was simply ridiculous. The extension was designed to give locals the chance to have their say on the plan. However, for some time after council granted the extension, it refused to facilitate appropriate in-person consultation.

Only recently has council agreed to provide in-person consultation. However, the 30 June deadline is approaching, so local residents now have only a small window in which to have their say. I am strongly encouraging Georges River Council to give members of the Mortdale community the proper chance to highlight their serious and valid concerns about what the master plan will do to our local area. I have also written recently to the new planning Minister, Anthony Roberts, to request that the 30 June deadline be extended. I truly believe that Mortdale is one of the best places in which to live, work and raise a family. I appreciate the need to prepare for the future. However, the Mortdale master plan is not the right plan for Mortdale. It never has been and never will be.

TEACHER SALARIES

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:05): I speak about the current conditions and salaries of New South Wales public school teachers, which is an issue that is extremely important to the thousands of teachers who live and work in the Ballina electorate. As The Greens NSW education spokesperson, I inform the House that we firmly support the current wage and conditions campaign of public school teachers in this State and the work of the NSW Teachers Federation. Just last week we saw 15,000 teachers take 24-hour strike action outside this Parliament. Thanks has been enough for teachers for way too long. In light of the findings of the Gallop inquiry and after the constant pivots and health risks, stress and anxiety of teaching under COVID-19 for two years, not only is thanks not enough but also we will simply not attract teachers to the profession if business continues as usual.

I am experiencing a bit of déjà vu. For 22 years I was a member of the NSW Teachers Federation. I was also the president of the Barrier Teachers Association and the Federal representative at Broken Hill High School during the Vinson inquiry in 2004. After 2004 teachers received a massive wage increase, based on the inquiry's report and findings. But we are now in this bizarre world of public sector wage freeze and wage caps, which is simply uneconomic. If members do not believe me, they should believe the Governor of the Reserve Bank.

At the best of times teaching is a vocation and a life choice of a career that is founded on noble commitments to children and young people, and to their education and growth as citizens in a global metropolis. In my 21 years of teaching in public schools, I never met anyone who raved about the pay. Common to teachers was a love of young people; dedication to teaching, learning and constant improvement; extreme workloads; and the willingness to give of one's time and not be remunerated for it. As a society, we have exploited that dedication for way too long. Teachers and students are suffering as a result. Yesterday I was explaining to a colleague what a "Meadowbank" is. For the benefit of the House, after a teacher's year 12 students leave early in term four, that teacher is expected to pick up the classes of teachers on leave, despite the fact that a teacher with year 12 classes has probably been doing up to 15 unpaid hours per week for the previous two years. What other profession requires its members to have university degrees, undergo continuous professional learning and work for free to cover the work of colleagues on leave?

In February 2020 the NSW Teachers Federation commissioned an independent inquiry into the work of teachers and principals and how it has changed since 2004. Inquiries of that nature were previously conducted as "work value" cases in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission. In each case between 1970 and 2004 the commission found significant changes in the work of teachers. It adjusted salaries to better reflect their expertise and responsibilities and to maintain the attractiveness of the profession. In 2004 teachers were awarded salary increases of 12 per cent to 19.5 per cent, largely as a result of the findings of the Vinson inquiry. It was about efficiency and productivity.

The New South Wales Government's wages policy now prevents such work value cases being conducted. The Gallop inquiry's key findings are that since 2004 the work and workload of teachers have changed profoundly; many factors contribute to workload intensification; the level of change exceeds that found in previous work value cases, which delivered large pay increases; and salaries have declined relative to other professions, requiring urgent action. The inquiry went so far as to say that the Government's plan to cap wage increases "will make it impossible to fix teacher shortages and recruit the additional teachers required". New South Wales needs to recruit a minimum of 11,000 teachers in the next eight years to meet record growth. That is not going to happen under the status quo.

The Governor of the Reserve Bank has said repeatedly that the public sector wage gap in New South Wales is hurting the economy. It is also hurting our teachers and students. There is no workforce plan that sets out the number of additional teachers needed in different disciplines and different geographical areas, and no plan for the steps that will be taken to ensure supply matches demand. The call for an increase in teachers' pay is not an ideological campaign. The simple fact is that we cannot retain and attract teachers unless we offer competitive salaries and fair work conditions. Currently in hard-to-staff areas we are seeing hundreds of classes per week without teachers. That is no longer enough; we must change the way we do education in New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO VIOLET LORD

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (18:11): I was immensely saddened to hear of the death of Mrs Violet Lord, a truly remarkable South Coast woman, who passed away on the 5 March this year at the age of 88. The organisations and individuals whose hearts and lives were so profoundly affected by Violet Lord will continue to grieve her loss but also reflect on her remarkable life and the incredible work that she did over such a long period. Hopefully many of the volunteers in the South Coast community will be inspired by Violet's life and her incredible ability to make a difference to people's lives. Violet was married to John for some 70 years, and they were united in their work and commitment. Five minutes is not long enough to pay tribute to them in this place.

One of the most incredible aspects of Violet's and John's lives was their willingness to welcome and foster children from difficult or disadvantaged families. The estimate of the number of children they fostered exceeds 100. Yes, over many decades Violet and her husband fostered 100 children. Not only did they foster children but they also welcomed many others into their home to share a hearty meal prepared by Violet. After Violet's passing, her son Stephen noted that often around the dinner table were not only her own children but also up to 20 others who were in need for various reasons. In 2013 I nominated Violet for South Coast Woman of the Year. Unsurprisingly she won. In my nomination I included comments that not only had she fostered children in her home but she also worked tirelessly to establish a breakfast club at Nowra East Public School. Every morning from 7.30 until 9.00, Violet worked at the school canteen to ensure that children had a healthy breakfast.

Violet knew that many children had not been provided with breakfast at home nor with lunch for school. Violet recognised that breakfast was a good start to the day and encouraged attendance at school. As a brief aside, the school has developed a fantastic school garden and outdoor kitchen, which were supported by this Government and visited by the former Premier. The garden and kitchen are also supported by volunteers and teachers. It is a wonderful school. Violet built up a fantastic group of volunteers to assist her with the daily breakfast club roster. They came from all walks of life: doctors, lawyers and community groups. For more than 40 years Violet was an

active member of the Nowra East Public School's Parents and Citizens Association. During my many visits to the school for events and presentation assemblies, Violet was always there, quietly watching with pride the achievements of the students at this remarkable school.

Violet was humble, and probably uncomfortable with accolades, and was deeply loved by the students and teachers. Her awards were prodigious and reflective of her compassion and love for the children in her community. They include the Shoalhaven Gold Medal Award 2013, announced by Shoalhaven City Council, for which there is enormous competition every year; the Emma Geelan Award from the Red Cross for her work with the breakfast club; South Coast Woman of the Year 2013, which I nominated her for, as I mentioned earlier; and NSW Grandparent of the Year 2015, for which she received a special recognition certificate. She really was a remarkable woman, and I refer again to the more than 100 children that she and her husband fostered. Violet Lord was one in a million, and I doubt that we will ever see her equal again—nor that special care she displayed towards Indigenous children and children with disabilities, in particular. The community and all who knew her will miss her greatly. Vale, Violet Lord.

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOODS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:14): The people of my Lismore electorate and all Northern Rivers residents have suffered quite a shock from the flood that smashed us on 28 February. It was unprecedented in terms of height and the damage it inflicted, but it was not unpredicted or unpredictable. It was about 14.4 metres, and we have had credible warnings of floods that could be even higher—even up to 16 metres. Saying it was unprecedented is code for "We could not have predicted it; therefore, we could not prepare for it", and that is factually wrong. We can prepare for any disaster because we do not prepare for what happened in the past; we prepare for "What if". The 1954 flood that caused terrible loss of life and devastation was 12.27 metres. In 1974 the flood was 12.15 metres, and then we had another big flood in 2017. One month after the 28 February flood, we had another one that was 11.4 metres. That is quite a high flood in our area, and people were saying, "Oh, that's not big. We had the 14.4-metre one". But coming on top of the 28 February flood, it was quite a shock.

I will say a little about mental health. The Government's mental health responses so far have been well intentioned and there has been additional money, but I consider them to be ill thought out. I said the night before they were announced that they should not be described as the best thing since sliced bread—just a simple announcement, no grandstanding—and I have to say that was done. But the process involved giving more money to particular providers without a framework around it. The framework is that a collective community trauma has happened that requires a particular response. Again, that is known.

I see those things play out and think we just have to do it a little differently. Of course those providers needed a bit of extra money, but we needed something else. Lismore psychologist Karen Potter was quoted in *The Guardian* on 29 March as saying that her community had been in a "post-traumatic state" for the past month and the recent flood warning had "amplified everything"—and it did. But the mental health responses so far are very individualistic, and we do not have to individualise mental health. We have to approach it as a community—look at what the communities endured and how we respond to that. Of course people need individual help, but I really wanted to make those points.

About the flood itself, on 28 February SES volunteers were stretched beyond their capacity but not beyond their will to do their job. Our local SES volunteers are us; they are our people. We love them and they do the best they can. A person put out a call through the local SES for boats to rescue residents, and I said they needed an award. That callout was then rescinded by the SES because it said it was too dangerous, and I said the way we deal with that situation needs a rethink. But thank God our wonderful community, knowing how hairy and dangerous it was, turned out in droves. They were the true heroes, and I have been very privileged to meet or talk with many of them. They will be named at another time when they step up to get their bravery awards—and some of us are working through that at the moment. The Mayor of Lismore, other mayors and I are looking at what we can do and how we can nominate them.

The last thing on their minds during the rescues in the wee hours and days of this flood, as they saved people, animals, goods and everything, was being heroes. They were just being good neighbours and good citizens and enacting civic duty. After I got out of the flooding house I was in and up to high ground, I watched the flotilla of boats—our own tinnie army—ferry up and down the highway, which had turned into a raging river. I know that happened right across the electorate, with rescues in Murwillumbah and up the Tweed River. It was the same everywhere. Villages were swamped, there were no comms and there were landslips. There was no power and no rescue. Farmers watched animals being washed away. I am out of time, but I will continue this story over the next year.

GILLIESTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:20): I speak today on a topic that I have raised a number of times previously in this House, which is Gillieston Public School. That community of now around 294 students has been growing at an excessively fast rate. The school population has grown by 76 per cent since 2014-15. It has gone from being a very small, tight rural country school to nearly 300 kids, and that is the problem—we have not had commensurate investment in the school. I asked the education Minister a question on notice and received the answer last week. While there has been a growth of 76 per cent in the school population, the Government has spent only \$58,000 on capex in that time. We have a burgeoning number of demountables on the only flat ground, the school playground, so kids are worried they will turn an ankle. That makes it difficult when they are competing against kids from other schools on sports days et cetera, because they are always running either on the slope or in the very small parts of the school that they can run on.

Not only that, but the school has only two permanent buildings. The rest of them are demountables, and the repair and maintenance bill is \$705,000. On average, over the past seven years the school has spent nearly double what it spent previously on repairs and maintenance. It just does not make economic sense. Labor pushed the Legislative Council to hold an inquiry into planning and delivery of school infrastructure in New South Wales. Some 119 submissions have been received through that process, with 32 of them coming from this one school. It is a massive outpouring of anger and frustration from parents at the school—and it is not just them. A whole other population of 570 people who live in the suburbs of Gillieston and Cliftleigh, which are feeder suburbs, should have their kids at the school but only 294 of them do. About one in two families actually sends their kids to the school, and that is a problem.

When four of the parents from Gillieston appeared at the inquiry on Monday, they acquitted themselves wonderfully and communicated the issues well. But I do not understand why the education Minister has not prioritised this school for an upgrade. It is not just this education Minister; the former Minister, Minister Stokes, and Minister Piccoli before him did not prioritise the school either. After my election in 2018 I managed to get the dirt floor in the boys' toilets changed and now there is a portable demountable toilet system. It stinks. The kids lose their balls under all the demountables, including the toilets. Infrastructure needs to do something about that. The toilet system has to be pumped out three times a week. On top of that, all the floods and other severe weather events we have had in Maitland have created more problems for this school.

It is just not acceptable in the twenty-first century that a kid who kicks a ball under a demountable at their school might run across a sewage transpiration site because the toilets are not connected to the town sewer. A new development of 600 houses has been approved just down the road, and there are five or six estates in the area. It has gone from an area with maybe 50 to 150 houses 20 years ago to thousands of residents today, and the situation is just not acceptable. I pay tribute to the four parents who turned up on Monday: P&C president Katie Ferguson, Todd Sellers, Simon Rolfe and Sarah Bird, who appeared by video link. I thank them for their articulate way of explaining the problem to the committee. I understand that the committee is going to be coming to Maitland in early June. I have asked them to invite me and the parents so that they can see it. They can attend at school time.

I hear from parents who cannot get a speech pathologist or other learning support person to see their child anywhere other than at the back of a classroom, in front of all their peers, or in the middle of the school playground—hopefully it is not raining—because there is no space in the school. When the school hall does not have accessibility for students with disabilities, that is not acceptable. This is not something we should accept. There is not even a proper gate and fence system around this school, so kids will go running. When I have raised this in Parliament, what has the Government done? Has it built the school fences that it should have built? No, it has not. It has told the kids that they do not need to wear yellow vests anymore; hopefully they will not get lost on the side of the road. I am very pleased that the Treasurer has just walked into the Chamber. After he finishes his speech I am going to speak to him about the 32 submissions I have had about this school and how in the upcoming budget we need action for Gillieston.

CHRIS GOATLEY AND HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI WOMEN'S SHELTER

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (18:25): Today it is my honour to recognise one of our great local residents, Chris Goatley. Chris' special contributions have been referred to me by Hylette Evans, the manager of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, where Chris has worked in a voluntary capacity for the past seven years. The women's shelter is for women escaping domestic violence and/or homelessness. Women under its care naturally have some challenges, but Chris does an enormous amount of work to support them in their time of need. He is a most humble, caring and compassionate man, and he helps with absolutely everything. His work includes assisting professional tradesmen with any work that they need to undertake on the shelter premises or simply doing the essential maintenance work himself.

Chris Goatley has never sought or expected any recognition for the work he does and probably does not even realise that the shelter simply could not function without him. Without it being his responsibility, he will often see something that needs to be repaired at the shelter, go to a hardware store and return with the relevant material to undertake the repair. He will often do that kind of work without anyone else knowing. The shelter has had so many challenges during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Right through that period, Chris continued to take care of and prepare the shelter, often with special little touches. He does this to make sure it is, and feels like, a safe and secure home for all of the clients.

Chris's voluntary work varies and includes repairing tiles, painting the deck, changing a light bulb, mowing the grass, general maintenance and gardening, and so much more. He has reliably supported the shelter through the pandemic period and during all kinds of terrible weather conditions, amongst other challenges. This includes the full relocation of the shelter premises, which has recently occurred. One personal touch from Chris which made a small but significant difference to the shelter was when he one day asked the shelter manager for one word that describes the facility. That word was "oasis". A few days later Chris was up the ladder, installing a beautiful plaque that he had made himself, which read "oasis".

Chris Goatley is a special part of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter family and our broader community. It is my pleasure to recognise and thank Chris Goatley for the important voluntary work he has reliably performed within the shelter over many years. I take the opportunity not only to thank and acknowledge Chris for his selfless dedication to some very vulnerable members of our community, but also to thank all those involved with the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. It was started a number of years ago. I was at the meeting where we decided as a community to form the shelter. That service has now grown, providing for those in our community and beyond who need support in a very difficult time.

Hylette Evans does an incredible job running the shelter, and there are many volunteers who raise money, support those in need and provide wraparound services which make that community shelter such an important part of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai area. I am honoured to be associated with the shelter. I look forward to continuing to work with those volunteers and the dedicated people who work there to ensure that we can provide a safe haven for those victim-survivors of domestic violence who need that service, and to ensure that continues to be available in our community. People like Chris Goatley represent not only the best of our community but also the best of our country. I thank Chris and the many thousands of volunteers that support victim-survivors of domestic violence across the State and, indeed, across the country. Their work is absolutely critical, and I acknowledge them in the Chamber today.

TRIBUTE TO TOM MCDONALD

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:29): Former national secretary of the Building Workers' Industrial Union Tom McDonald passed on 16 April at the Gosford public hospital, a week short of his ninety-sixth birthday. To the end, Tom McDonald sought to advance the interests of the working class. He was always eager for news of the political landscape and would always offer his analysis of the political situation, as he did the last time I saw him, a few weeks before his death. I was immensely honoured to be invited by Audrey McDonald, Tom's wife, and Daren, Casey, Nivek and the whole McDonald family, to attend the memorial service and funeral service held on Monday 9 May at Sydney Town Hall and Rookwood Cemetery.

Tom's record of achievement for the working class is immense, and the memorial service was a fitting tribute to his work and legacy. Tom's record of service is documented in a booklet called *Tom McDonald 1926-2022: The soul departs, the dream remains*, which I will donate to the State Library. The service was attended by so many who have worked alongside Tom in the labour movement that their names are too numerous to mention in this short statement. I will note a personal moment for me, which was very special and something that I will probably refer to in the labour movement time and time again. It was the moment that I sang *The Internationale* alongside Labor senator for New South Wales Deborah O'Neill. I think it might have been the first time the good senator sang that song.

Many Central Coast people contributed to the service, including Liam Burrows, who sang songs chosen by Tom; Gemma Burrows, Liam's mother; and Vicki Scott, who has been a supporter and companion to Audrey in the days following Tom's death. Tom was part of a generation of communists who were elected to positions of leadership in the Australian trade union movement and who advanced the interests of the working class to the eternal benefit of all working people in this country. I note that same working class chose otherwise at general elections in the country and did not tend to vote Communist in any parliamentary elections held in this country. Undoubtedly Tom's biggest achievement was in the field of superannuation. Whilst the Keating Labor Government made superannuation a universal entitlement for the people of this country, it would not have happened without the work of Tom McDonald and the Australian Council of Trade Unions leadership, under Bill Kelty, to create award superannuation and the industry superannuation model.

Tom's life cannot be understood without mentioning Audrey McDonald, his life partner and also his partner in advancing the interests of the working class and progressive causes worldwide. Their partnership is marvellously documented in their book—one of the few readable autobiographies I have come across in the political and labour movement—called *Intimate Union*. I encourage people who have not had a look at that book to do so. Whenever I visited Tom and Audrey, I would have my lesson and discussion with Tom, which was sometimes hard work. I would always look forward to a cup of tea with Audrey at the end and to hearing her observations on the political landscape as well. Tom would not have been able to do what he did in the labour movement without Audrey, and Audrey's contribution to the labour movement and service in organisations like the Union of Australian Women and the peace movement have contributed to progress in this country.

I first met Tom in the early 2000s. He had retired from full-time work with the union, but he was still active. He was introduced to me as a delegate to the Central Coast Trades and Labour Council, of which I was then the secretary. He sought to impart his knowledge and be a teacher and a force for unity in that group. I am immensely thankful for his service to the labour movement and for what I learnt from him. He would want that I let people know that in the past 12 months he prepared a podcast called *Activist Masterclass: Ideas to inspire, educate and change the world*. He would encourage everyone to take a look at that. Vale, Tom McDonald, and thank you for your service to the labour movement and the working class.

Community Recognition Notices

ANZAC DAY SERVICE – BANKSTOWN RSL SUB-BRANCH

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—It was an honour to attend the ANZAC Commemorative Service organised by the Bankstown RSL Sub Branch at the Bankstown Cenotaph War Memorial on Monday 25th April. ANZAC Day is an essential time for us to commemorate and remember the sacrifices made by our brave servicemen and women who gave their lives so that we may enjoy the freedoms that we have today. With the easing of restrictions, it was great to see our community back in large numbers at the ANZAC service pay tribute to the everlasting legacy of the Anzacs and all of our veterans. I would like to thank the members of the Bankstown RSL Sub Branch Executive for their invitation: President Terry Corcoran, Hon Secretary John Woodley, Hon Treasurer Ian Morrison, Vice President Chien Nguyen, and Vice President/Welfare Officer Jim Wrigley. I recognise Officiating Minister Captain Frank Wang for leading the service. I would also like to extend my greatest thanks to the Bankstown RSL Sub Branch for their hard work and for the many services they provide to support veterans in the community. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

ANZAC DAY SERVICE – CHESTER HILL RSL SUB-BRANCH

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was honoured to attend the combined Bass Hill RSL Sub Branch and Chester Hill Carramar RSL Sub Branch ANZAC Day Dawn Service at the Chester Hill War Memorial on Monday 25th April. ANZAC Day provides each of us to acknowledge and commemorate the memories and stories of our soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice to enable our communities to live freely today. It is a time for the community to pay our respects to the brave soldiers who have fought for this nation. With the easing of restrictions, it was great to see our community back in large numbers at the ANZAC service. I thank the members of the Bass Hill and Chester Hill-Carramar RSL Sub Branch Executives for their invitation: Presidents Ralph Hannaford and Michael Bowman, Vice Presidents Ian Muirhead, Ambrose Dinh, and Ivan Tilmouth, Secretaries Gary Roser and Lloyd Newman, Bass Hill Treasurer Ron Duckworth, and Bass Hill Welfare Officer Greg Brown. Thank you as well for the assistance provided on the day by the Chester Hill Campsie RSL staff. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

ANIC IFTAR DINNER

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I congratulate our Muslim community on the important celebration of the holy month of Ramadan and I am honoured to have attended the National Muslim Community Iftar Dinner on Tuesday 19th April at Waterview, Bicentennial Park. This year Ramadan runs from April 1st to May 1st. My electorate of Bankstown is home to one of the strongest Islamic communities in Australia to which this special occasion is one of the most important celebrations of the year. Ramadan is a special time for many Muslims, it is a time for praying, spiritual reflection, family and community bonding. At the end of every Ramadan day after the sun has set, the fast is broken with the traditional Iftar dinner. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Australian National Imams Council on a successful Iftar Dinner. In particular I would like to thank the NSW President, Imam Shadi Alsuleiman, NSW Vice President, Imam Tahar Mechraou, NSW Treasurer, Imam Jalal Chami, and the rest of the Executive Committee for their kind invitation and warm hospitality. I hope everyone observing Ramadan across my community had a happy and blessed month.

LATE JOHN WELSH

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I wish to inform the House of the sad passing of the late John Welsh of Singleton. Known as a quiet achiever, John was very active and dedicated to the Rugby community. He first started playing the game at the age of 16, then became a coach, manager and administrator for many years. He received Life Membership of the Singleton Junior Rugby Union Club and was also honoured with Life Membership of Newcastle Junior Rugby Union. A Singleton delegate for the Junior Club to the Hunter Valley Zone meetings, John served as President of Hunter Valley Junior Rugby and was pivotal in the decision for Singleton to field an under 16's and under 18's team in the Newcastle competition. John also served as Vice President and President of the Newcastle Juniors, coached and managed teams and was appointed to the Newcastle judiciary. John known as "Welshie" died suddenly last year and my condolences are extended to his family. John Welsh will be remembered for his outstanding dedication to the Newcastle and Hunter Rugby community and his involvement within the broader Hunter Valley community.

ELIZA DE HOOGH & KARA WILLIAMS - THE EDUCATOR'S RISING STARS AWARD

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I want to acknowledge Eliza De Hoogh and Kara Williams as winners of The Educator's nationwide Rising Stars award for 2022. The Rising Stars award aims to showcase young education professionals who have made an impression in the early stages of their careers. Eliza and Kara both teach at the Australian Christian College in Singleton and they have made significant contributions over the past two years particularly during the COVID pandemic. Kara Williams has been responsible for developing policies to support overall student wellbeing with a focus on authentic integration and longevity. Eliza De Hoogh was instrumental in setting up Canvas, the School's online learning program during COVID-19 lockdowns. The Australian Christian College is very fortunate to have these two teachers within their school community. I congratulate Eliza De Hoogh and Kara Williams on their recognition and outstanding contribution to the school community.

SAM WRIGHT

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—I would like to congratulate and acknowledge local resident Sam Wright of Culburra who continues to be an outstanding hockey player, being announced one of 27 athletes selected to the Australian under 21 Burras Squad. Following an intense trial where more than 60 athletes battled it out to become a part of the team and with hard work and dedication Sam did just that. Sam is one of the youngest guys on the team and he was one of five NSW men's players to be named to the squad. Sam has been playing hockey since he was six and after developing a love for the sport and putting in the effort slowly making his way to the top makes him very deserving to be part of this team. Great work Sam I wish you all the best with your future in hockey as you look to bigger and brighter stages as you aim for the national level, I know you will prove your worth and keep heading for greater success.

ULLADULLA BLESSING OF THE FLEET

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—I was pleased to hear what a wonderful turn out this year's, 2022 Ulladulla blessing of the fleet festival and how successful the event was with the sun shining and many people attending to support their local community events. The 2022 Ulladulla Blessing of the fleet was held at the Ulladulla Civic Centre and although there was no parade this year the festival chairperson Leonie Corrin-Smith was happy with the turnout and the event in general. Leonie also mentioned there will be a parade next year for the 2023 Ulladulla Blessing of the fleet, due to COVID-19 this year's Festival was a small version of what is to be expected next year. What a fantastic event for families and friends to be a part of during this year's Easter long weekend, with many locals and many visitors to the area what a great way to bring support to the Ulladulla area. Congratulations to chairperson Leonie and all other members and volunteers involved and a huge thanks for making this event a great success for our local community.

PAUL SCOBIE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Paul Scobie was an environmentalist, conservationist, political activist, man of science, teacher of many, loving husband, father and grandfather. Along with wife, Suska, they established Scobie's Walkabout which pioneered eco tours into national parks and remote areas. He fought for the conservation of the Kakadu National Park against uranium, fought to save forests in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales and fought to put environmentalism on the agenda. Paul was elected to Newcastle City Council in 1999 and served until his retirement in 2008, during which he served as Deputy Lord Mayor. I was fortunate to serve on Council with Paul during some of that time. Paul spent his life highlighting the need to protect our natural environment and was the initial driving force behind the City of Newcastle thinking globally, and acting locally, to address climate change and sustainability, representing the City at the World Summit on Sustainability in 2002. He set the City's path towards our national and international recognition of a local

government authority taking early, and real action to address the climate crisis and sustainability challenges our world is facing today and his legacy is immense in this regard. Vale Paul.

ALESCO SENIOR COLLEGE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—ANZAC Day is such an important day for our community to come together, to honour the sacrifice of all current and former service personnel, along with their families. Without their sacrifice, we would not be the nation we are today. On Tuesday, 26th April, I had the privilege of attending Alesco Senior College at Argenton to join them for their ANZAC Service. The school community honoured the traditions of ANZAC with great pride and reverence. It was wonderful to see the students participate with solemnity throughout the ceremony, extending respect towards the ANZACS to the wider community. I was touched to see our future leaders continue to honour the traditions of ANZAC. It is so important to Australian society. I acknowledge and thank the efforts of Principal, Theresa Pantalone, the teachers and the staff, for their great work at Alesco Senior College. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the students involved Jade, Madi, Liam, Emily, Isabella and Ayla, who all played a part in the Service. A very special ANZAC Service. Lest we Forget.

LAMBTON PUBLIC SCHOOL SPORTS HOUSE CAPTAINS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Late last year, Lambton Public School students elected students to be the 2022 House Captains for the Schools Sporting Houses for the Cook, David, Hunter and Shortland Houses. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement, and I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities and learning experiences. Congratulations to Cook House Captains Frida Borthwick Frostis and Emmett Bartlett, David House Captains Jonathan Nohra and Willow Amos, Hunter House Captains Lola Cunningham and Hugh Pearson and Shortland House Captains HyoEun Yang and Henry Manuel. The Lambton Public School leadership team, led by Principal David Holland, has always aimed to empower students to strive to do their best and act as role models for their peers. Congratulations to Lambton Public School's 2022 House Captains. I wish them all the best for the coming year.

RENOWNED ARTIST BRETT WHITELEY RECEIVES NSW BLUE PLAQUE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—One of the state's most memorable people, an iconic local of North Shore and renowned artist Brett Whiteley, is being celebrated with a NSW Blue Plaque. Brett Whiteley is one of Australia's internationally celebrated artists with many of his prized works depicting Sydney Harbour, which were created here at his home in Lavender Bay. He is represented in the collections of all the large Australian galleries, and was twice winner of the Archibald, Wynne, and Sulman prizes. This Blue Plaque will not only recognise the important contribution that Brett made to the artistic community here in Australia and abroad, but the secret garden that Wendy Whiteley created and nurtured, which is much loved by locals and visitors. Wendy's Secret Garden is an iconic part of the North Shore community. Following the passing of Brett Whiteley, Wendy threw herself into cleaning up and restoring the land between her home and the waterfront. After years of hard labour, Wendy turned the land into the iconic public garden it is today.

RICHARD KELLY WINS NORTH SHORE LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to acknowledge North Shore local, Richard Kelly, who was recognised with a Local Achievement Award for his outstanding contribution to our community as part of NSW Seniors Week. Congratulations Richard on this well-deserved recognition. Richard volunteers at the Neutral Bay Community Centre every day, and is their longest serving volunteer. He is always smiling and welcoming anytime I have visited the Centre and is a much loved member of the community. Richard is described as honest and trustworthy by other members of the Centre and his long-standing service indicates his strong dedication and passion for the work he does with them. Congratulations again Richard, I was very happy to present you with this award from the Minister for Seniors and myself. The Neutral Bay Community Centre does amazing work for our local area with their wide range of programs and initiatives. I want to thank Richard, and all of the other volunteers who give up their time to help others. I also want to thank the Minister for Seniors, the Hon. Mark Coure MP, for this great program.

RECOGNISING LOCAL ORGANISATION MOSMAN PHYSIE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise local group Mosman Physie, a not-for-profit family friendly club that teaches the dance sport "physie". Physie combines different styles of dance, aerobics, and exercise to promote a healthy lifestyle for kids and adults in our local community. The Club took home championship titles in three age groups at the BJP Junior Tea Championships. Congratulations to all of the girls in the 9/10, 11/12, and the 13/14 years categories. You should all be proud of this amazing success. This competition was unfortunately postponed due to COVID so well done to all of the dancers for their patience to compete, and their perseverance with remote zoom dance classes. To be able to put together winning performances

after working so hard at home is no easy feat. I also want to congratulate all dancers who were selected to participate in Nationals in February. I am sure you all represented yourselves, Mosman Physie, and our local community with great pride. I extend my congratulations to everyone involved in the Club's network.

LOFTUS 1 BRAVO RECOGNISED IN ST FLORIAN'S DAY AWARDS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Local RFS Loftus 1 Bravo were acknowledged in an award ceremony coinciding with St Florian's Day on Wednesday 4 May 2022. St Florian's Day recognises the bravery and sacrifice of our firefighters in protecting our community. Loftus 1 Bravo received the Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service award for their bravery, hard work and exceptional service. They were part of just 64 volunteers, staff and teams from the NSW RFS and FRNSW to be recognised with awards and commendations. Late on 19 December 2019, the Loftus 1 Bravo crew received a red message transmission reporting a NSW RFS tanker rollover while on standby at Buxton Brigade station. They rapidly responded and arrived on scene of what proved to be a fatal accident involving the Horsley Park 1A. They provided assistance and first aid in challenging and traumatic circumstances and remained at the scene, to assist the Incident Commander. I commend Loftus 1 Bravo members, they demonstrated exemplary community service and have gone above and beyond the call of duty. They are extremely worthy recipients of this commendation and I thank them for their selfless service to the community.

SYDNEY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)—I would like to acknowledge the incredible achievement of 13 young musicians who reside in Manly who have achieved the significant honour of being selected to the Sydney Youth Orchestras 2022 program. These 13 talented youths will make up the 530 member Youth Orchestra which was selected through a rigorous audition process. It is a true testament to the hard work and talent, that they have been selected. It is constituents like this that make me very proud to represent Manly and I wish them the best of luck with their upcoming performances.

CONNOR WINK

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—When Charlestown musician Connor Wink made it through to season 11 of The Voice recently, on the back of an innovative, acoustic performance of Cher's 'Believe', it came as little surprise to us in Lake Macquarie. I have mentioned Connor in Parliament before—his driveway musical performances during the COVID-19 lockdown, some of which were webcast by Lake Macquarie City Council, brought some much-needed joy. A multi-instrumentalist, Connor is a talented singer-songwriter, a man living with blindness, a local disability advocate—and an absolute Cher fanatic. He was recently nominated for the Lake Mac Artist and Creator Award at the 2022 Lake Mac Awards. Connor was named one of five finalists in his category, which is given for demonstrating excellence in the field of arts and creative production. Apart from his perfect pitch and unique voice, Connor is an extraordinary philanthropist, having raised tens of thousands of dollars for Variety, the children's charity, through busking and fund-raising activities. His nomination is well-earned—and while Connor wasn't successful in progressing through to the Battles round on The Voice, I am sure his talent and unique perspective will continue to take his artistic endeavours to new heights.

LUCA ROMEO

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—At just twelve years old, Kotara South's own Luca Romeo is making waves in the music industry, with his sounds being heard both locally and abroad. Luca was nine when he discovered his passion for the drums, and that passion has already paid creative dividends. Styled as "Luca B", he has been endorsed by SOLOBEAT Drumsticks, an Indonesian drumstick manufacturer who have even launched custom sticks with Luca B branding on a cool design. Luca's talent is undeniable, and his original material is creative and engaging. He was recently nominated for the Lake Mac Artist and Creator Award at the 2022 Lake Mac Awards. Luca was named one of five finalists in his category, which is given for demonstrating excellence in the field of arts and creative production. Luca has also attracted attention from overseas. American rock music drummer Mike Dupke, who was a member of W.A.S.P. and has played with such luminaries as John Mellencamp, is now mentoring Luca. This makes Luca his first-ever Australian student! What an outstanding start to what I am sure will be a long and creatively fulfilling career. Congratulations to Luca on his nomination, and I wish him all the best.

JOEY GILLARD

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—When Joey Gillard began playing First Grade cricket he was fifteen years old. Two years on and Joey, a resident of Dudley, is the second-highest run scorer in the Newcastle District Cricket Association comp—which is one of the reasons why he was nominated as the Lake Mac Young Sports Star at the 2022 Lake Mac Awards. Joey was named one of six finalists for the award, which is given for outstanding performance in junior sports. His achievements on the pitch are very impressive, scoring 130 not out at the State Challenge competition in Dubbo—which made him the competition's highest run scorer. His sporting

prowess isn't limited to cricket, either. He's an AFL player, and was named AFL Hunter Coast U17 Player of the Year in 2021. Joey is noted as showing great sportsmanship and for mentoring younger players as they rise through the ranks. His nomination was well-earned, and he more than deserved his spot amongst the finalists. Congratulations, Joey.

SP & OYSTER

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate SP & Oyster, a Seafood and takeaway store on their recent opening at St Clair Shopping Centre. Seeing a brand new business open is a fantastic sight to see. It is located in the same shopping complex where my office is located as well so I had the pleasure of watching it all come together day by day before it opened its doors to a flurry of customers. I look forward to their growing success especially coming out of a pandemic and once again congratulate SP & Oyster on their opening.

PRAVIN GUPTA

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Age is certainly no barrier for Pravin Gupta, at 75 years of age he is a recent graduate of the University of New South Wales, graduating with a Juris Doctor. For a long time now, Mr Gupta has been active in his community supporting seniors, people on low incomes and others who did not know how to bring their legal disputes to court, how to seek aid from Centrelink or seek help from community legal centres. With an aspiration to be of even more assistance to his community and others, Pravin Gupta set out to become a practising lawyer. He believed in himself despite what others might see as a barrier in his age. Sadly, Mr Gupta's wife passed away in 2020. In her memory, Mr Gupta committed to finishing his degree in dedication to his wife because of the great support she was to him. Mr Gupta has said that he will be working hard for the rest of his life to give back to a community that has given him so much. I want to congratulate Mr Gupta on this enormous achievement and I wish him well.

KEMPS CREEK UNITED SOCCER CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Today I would like to take the opportunity to recognise one of the great sporting organisations that operate in my electorate of Mulgoa, Kemps Creek United Soccer Club. Kemps Creek United is one of the largest football clubs in the Southern Districts competition and is the largest sporting organisation in the western area of Liverpool local government area. They support hundreds of members and players from the surrounding areas and are an important fixture in the community. Kids get to realise their passion, make friends and have fun playing their favourite sport. The management of the club should also be commended as they are strong advocates for the club, advocating for funding that supports a number of projects such as shelters, seating, fencing, and floodlighting. I will always continue to support the club in every way I can and I thank them for all their hard work.

WE CARE CONNECT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang)—Congratulations to We Care Connect for being awarded \$48,000 from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation for a new vehicle. This vehicle will help We Care Connect deliver 45,000 essential items to disadvantaged children across the Central Coast. We Care Connect has been helping out locals since 2016 and over 6,000 children on the Central Coast. Thank you to all the volunteers and staff, for all your efforts over the years and I wish you all the best in the future.

PRATTEN PARK – BEST GROUND IN SYDNEY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to Western Suburbs District Cricket Club on your home ground, the historic Pratten Park, being named the best cricket ground in Sydney. For the uninitiated, one cricket ground might not seem much different to the next. But the perfect cricket ground is all art and science, and the quality of a pitch makes all the difference. Particular congratulations should be paid to Nick Cutler, who plays for Western Suburbs in the NSW Premier Cricket competition and has the role of head groundsman at Pratten Park. After every game, captains and umpires vote on the quality of the pitch, judging things like performance, line markings and outfield quality. Despite a summer of nightmarish weather conditions for a groundsman, Nick's commitment to such a fine ground beat out 19 other ovals across Sydney to claim the top spot. After a difficult few years with COVID and extreme weather, I'm sure this is a welcome boost to the spirits of everyone at Western Suburbs District Cricket Club. I warmly congratulate Nick, everyone at Western Suburbs District Cricket Club and Inner West Council on this outstanding achievement.

TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE SWIM NIGHT

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I congratulate Inner West Council on hosting their first ever trans and gender diverse swim night at Ashfield Aquatic Centre last month. The Inner West is proudly home to a diverse and inclusive community where we acknowledge and respect everyone's right to participate fully in all aspects of

community life. Unfortunately, the initial Facebook post for the event was subject to transphobic vitriol from online trolls, nearly all from overseas or associated with transphobic organisations and groups. Council didn't waiver in their commitment to the event and delivered an inclusive, safe and affirming event that we can all be proud of. Thank you to Dykes on Bikes Sydney for coming to show support and solidarity. The evening was a brilliant success. I was so pleased to see photos in the paper of happy, smiling families, splashing around and enjoying the pool – the sort of every day activity that everyone should be able to do safely, but many of us take for granted. I warmly congratulate council for organising the event and send my best wishes to everyone who took part.

NEWTOPIAN SLEEPOUT

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre held its fifth annual Newtopian Sleepout last night. The Sleepout raises awareness about the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. The focus of this year's event is on boarding houses and boarding house residents and I acknowledge the critical work of the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre in supporting residents in boarding house across the city, including following the tragic events of earlier this year. As part of the Sleepout, participants spend the night outdoors in the heart of Newtown. As well as raising awareness, the event raises money to help fund the important work the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre does to support people experiencing it. Since the beginning of the sleepout five years ago, over \$350,000 has been raised, making a significant contribution to Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, and I understand donations have topped \$90,000 this year alone. The event comes as part of Neighbourhood Centre week, a nation-wide initiative held from the 9th to the 15th of May. This year's theme is "Building resilience by bringing people together". Thank you Newtown Neighbourhood Centre for the work you do year round, and I thank everyone taking part in the Sleepout this year.

RUGBY COMMUNITY OF THE CENTRAL WEST

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the rugby community of the Central West for their generosity and support. Andrew Regan, an Orange local, father and husband, suffered a severe spinal injury while playing rugby for his club Orange Emus on 23rd April, 2022. After medical assistance on the field and initial investigations at Orange Base Hospital, Andrew was airlifted to Royal North Shore Hospital. Andrew underwent emergency surgery, and while Andrew and his family remain hopeful of a best-case scenario, his road to recovery will be long, difficult and expensive. He will require significant support and long-term care. At this stage, the injury has left Andrew an incomplete quadriplegic, paralysed from the chest down. Andrew's family initiated a fundraising page to assist with his medical, rehabilitation and medical equipment costs. The close-knit rugby across the Central West, and beyond, have rallied to financially support Andrew and his family. Support hasn't been limited to just the rugby community, with donations coming from everywhere. I applaud the rugby and broader community for their spirit and generosity in support of Andrew and his family. I join with them in wishing the very best outcome for Andrew's treatment and recovery.

INAUGURAL TORIE FINNANE FOUNDATION EXCHANGE PLACEMENT

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the Torie Finnane Foundation's exchange placement program, and the program's first recipient - Nicole Vautin. The late midwife of Orange, Torie Finnane, tragically died from bacterial meningitis in December 2020, three days after giving birth to her third child, Maisie. Following Torie's passing, her family established the Torie Finnane Foundation, with the purpose of improving maternity services in regional New South Wales. One of the Foundation's goals is to sponsor regional midwives and nurses to undertake work exchanges with metropolitan tertiary hospitals with the purpose of in order to further develop their skills and bring their knowledge back to their country-based hospital wards. Orange-based registered midwife Nicole Vautin was recently announced the first recipient of the exchange program. Later this year Nicole will complete a one month placement in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick. I applaud the Foundation's initiative, which will boost the capabilities of regional maternity wards and tremendously benefit healthcare delivery for patients in the future. I also congratulate Nicole Vautin on being selected for the first exchange, and wish her well for this opportunity of career development and experience.

2022 MOTHER'S DAY CLASSIC

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the 2022 Annual Mother's Day Classic, held on 8th May at Lake Canobolas near Orange. This fundraising event was dedicated to the memory of the late Orange-based nurse, Michelle Murray. Sadly, Michelle passed away on 22nd May 2021 following an 18-year battle with cancer. This year's Mother's Day Classic event was organised by Sarah McIntosh, and the goal was raise money to fund life-changing research through the National Breast Cancer Foundation. In spite of the cold weather on the day, this year's event was well attended with several hundred people turning up. Among the attendees were forty members of Michelle Murray's family across four generations who took part in the event, all of whom are no doubt passionate about this great cause and keeping the memory of their beloved Michelle alive.

Proceeds of this year's fundraising event are expected to double last year's event, with more than \$10,000 expected to be raised, including \$2,000 sponsorship from the Kinross Wolaroi School – a fantastic effort! I congratulate all those involved in organising this event and all who attended and supported this great cause. Well done.

TEMPE HIGH SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ASSEMBLY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I congratulate Tempe High School for hosting a wonderful assembly for International Women's Day on the 2022 theme of Changing Climates: Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow. It was a pleasure to join the school and their students. I would like to especially acknowledge Jasmine Wilson, Jaaran Jaima, Isabelle Henkel, Juliet Berton, Freya Ingelton, Gina Schneider, Brooke Mintzas, Nadia Mostafa, Maia Mariano and Georgia Siorokos as the organisers and performers of the event. The students who coordinated the event - and the staff who supported them - went above and beyond to ensure it was an informative and enjoyable assembly. I thank Tempe High School for organising such a successful event. It is wonderful to see such inspiring women determined to make a difference. Much respect also to the teachers who made the special assembly happen and provided support to the students.

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST AND PANEL

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I thank Newtown High School of the Performing Arts for hosting an insightful and powerful breakfast panel discussion for International Women's Day on the 2022 theme of Changing Climates: Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow. It was a pleasure to join the school for breakfast and to participate on the panel. The panel consisted of wonderful women who have a connection to the Newtown Performing Arts community - including actor Celia Jones, coaching director Sarit Vandengraff, Arrernte and Kalkadoon artist Thea Perkins, and psychologist and researcher Dr Michelle Wong. The students who coordinated the event - and the staff who supported them - including with the catering - went above and beyond to ensure it was inclusive, informative and enjoyable. I would like to particularly note Amity Lees and Stella Clarkson as captains and organisers of the event, alongside their prefect body, and Henry Murray, Zoe Edson and Michelle Gronich for their incredible performances. It is great to see the next generation so determined to make a difference. I thank Newtown Performing Arts for organising such a successful event.

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS P&C

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate Newtown High School of Performing Arts P&C on their successful Community Building Partnership Grant. This grant will be used for the installation of a safety PA, intercom and bell system. Newtown Performing Arts is an important part of the Newtown community, excelling in academic and artistic studies, and the P&C works tirelessly to help the school and its students thrive. Our public schools rely on the contributions of parents, carers and the school community for so much - and it is wonderful to see the contribution made by Newtown Performing Arts' P&C. In these challenging times, I acknowledge and thank the parents and carers for all their hard work, as well as the teachers and administrative and support staff for all they do for our next generation.

BARRY HENRY

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Walgetts's Barry Henry has been recognised with a NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation. As Group Captain Barry was tasked to the Sandy Creek fire in late 2019. Due to Barry's observations and experience in September 2019, Barry noticed a significant change in fire conditions and quickly removed crew to a safe location, saving the lives of crew members. Barry makes a significant difference to his local community, where he gives his time to make the community a better place. After receiving the commendation Barry took the opportunity to highlight the importance of volunteering in the community. I thank Barry for his service to the NSW Rural Fire Service as well as his dedication to his community.

CLAIRE BUTLER

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Claire Butler is the recent outgoing President of the Isolated Children Parent's Association [ICPA]. Claire joined the State Council in 2015 because she had a passion for better internet and mobile connectivity. Claire held both the Publicity Officer and the Communication Portfolio. She has been president of the ICPA for the last three years. Claire has been heavily involved in her community on various committees as well as working full time off farm. Claire is passionate about all children receiving equitable access to education. I thank Claire for her contribution to the ICPA and her continued commitment to explore ways for families in isolated towns to join the ICPA to keep the rural voice strong.

JOE DUFTY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Four years ago, almost to the day, I rose to recognise Joe Dufty of Gillieston Heights for his achievements in the field of performing arts. Joe has since worked amazingly hard to develop his skills to an outstanding level. I congratulate Joe on his recently win in the Men's Classical division of the Youth America Grand Prix an International Ballet Competition. In the past 12 months Joe has won other major ballet awards in Australia including the Royal Academy of Dance, Isobel Anderson Memorial Overall Award for Most Outstanding Dancer. Joe also received a High Achievers Grant for Creative Arts from Maitland City Council in 2021 which assisted him to travel to San Francisco for a final audition. In exciting news, Joe has been accepted into the highest level of the San Francisco Ballet School on a partial scholarship commencing September 2022. Joe has as long-term goal to normalise the creative arts for boys, supporting a goal to end stigma or bullying associated with being a male dancer. I thoroughly congratulate Joe on his development and achievements over the previous four years and I can only imagine what he will achieve in the next four years.

ART AND DEMENTIA PROGRAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—As humans we respond to art in many ways. Encountering art might influence our feelings, emotions, thought lines and perhaps inspire us to create. The Maitland Regional Art Gallery has provided these visceral experiences of art for our community very successfully for many years and I commend them on their ongoing efforts. Today particularly I want to focus on the efforts of staff and volunteers at the Gallery in developing innovative and inclusive programming that encourages community members to both experience and explore their responses to the art collection, as well as exploring their own creativity. The Arts and Dementia program encourages people living with dementia and their carers to engage with the collection and then experiment and create within a group. So many positive opportunities present themselves within this unique program to promote social connection and community membership in addition to the thoughts prompted by the art works. I commend the team at the Maitland Regional Art Gallery for developing this program promoting new connections and creativity for often underserved members of our community and making art more accessible to all.

SERGEANT MAURICE TOWERS RETIRES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—On April 14 2022 a NSW Police Guard of Honour formed as part of the celebration of Sergeant Maurice Towers' 49 years of service to the NSW Police and our community. In 1972 Maurice, aged 19, joined the Force as a probationary constable in Sydney. He served his communities across periods spent in Sydney, Coffs Harbor and Bowraville, rising to the rank of Sergeant. A relocation in 1994 to Maitland allowed our community to benefit from his vast experience and broad range of skills. Over half a century he has supported people across the state through some of our lowest points such as the Bowraville Murders, and some of our most celebratory – such as the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Sergeant Towers is indeed woven into the life of Maitland. I thank him very deeply for his 49 years of serving the people of NSW and the almost three decades serving our Maitland community. I wish him the very best as he sets out to travel around our vast land with his wife and relishes time with his family. Thanks to Meg Francis and Jonathon Carroll from the Newcastle Herald for their wonderful coverage of Maurice's career.

BRENTON CLARKSON CANTEEN RUN

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I know our Premier is a keen runner, but for me, I couldn't imagine running 5km every day for a month! But that's exactly what Mudgee local Brenton Clarkson did in March! Brenton set out to get fitter for AFL – he plays with the Dubbo Demons side in the Central West comp but has to do a lot of his training alone in Mudgee. To help keep himself accountable, Brenton decided to set a goal: run 5km every day for the month of March and in doing so, raise money for Canteen. Canteen supports young people impacted by cancer to deal with their feelings, connect with other young people in the same boat and, if they have been diagnosed themselves, provides specialist, youth specific treatment teams. More than 5500 people took part in Canteen's #cardioforcancer, raising over \$600,000!! Brenton alone raised \$550, smashing his original goal of \$250! Great work Brenton!

ORANA HEIGHTS HEAD SHAVE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I want to commend the entire Orana Heights Public School community for successfully raising more than \$8000 at their recent World's Greatest Shave event! The event was organised by teacher Jacob Sandry, after staff noticed some of the boys were growing their hair out. Jacob thought, why not shave it off for a good cause? And the kids jumped on board. Jacob and fellow teachers Matt Dawson and Matt Adkins led by example, braving the shave – great work gentlemen! I especially want to congratulate the students who put their locks on the line: Joel Edwards, Braley Shipp, Xavier Lee, Jayden Sepping, Toby Luckie, Jeff Leonard, Elijah Sargent, Knox

McLean and Leo McTiernan. Students who didn't want to shave their heads could get their hair coloured for a \$5 donation – all the dye had run out by recess! A big thanks to the volunteer hairdressers on the day: Chelsea Poyser, Sam Lee, Samantha Robbins, Macey Shipp and Brianna Luckie. Congratulations to the entire Orana Heights Public School community – the money and awareness you have raised for the Leukaemia Foundation will make a huge difference!

MANNERING PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2022

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Harry Lalaen, Emerald Martin, Ariyah Mutu and Matilda Tomkins on being named as the Mannering Park Public School leadership team for 2022. Harry, Emerald, Ariyah and Matilda consistently demonstrate an excellent work ethic and represent the Mannering Park Public School community with pride. Each of these students have been involved in a number of school activities and events during their time at the school. They also act as positive role models for their peers. Being named as the Mannering Park Public School 2022 leadership team is a testament to these students. I am sure they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I know that they will also develop skills that will assist them with their future endeavours. I congratulate Harry, Emerald, Ariyah and Matilda on their achievement and wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

VALENTINE PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2022

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Emily Vale, Lachlan Dean, Grace Mueller and Tom Kennewell on being named as the Valentine Public School Captains and Vice-Captains for 2022. I also acknowledge Andrew Watson, James Dare, Harley Bohatko, Sophie Berude, Hannah Keown and Amelia Palmer on being announced as the 2022 Valentine Public School Prefects. These students consistently demonstrate an excellent work ethic and represent the Valentine Public School community with pride. Each of these students have been involved in a number of school activities and events during their time at the school. They also act as positive role models for their peers. Being named as the Valentine Public School 2022 leadership team is a testament to these students. I am sure they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I know that they will also develop skills that will assist them with their future endeavours. I congratulate Emily, Lachlan, Grace, Tom, Andrew, James, Harley, Sophie, Hannah and Amelia on their achievement and wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

JEWELLS PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERS 2022

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Torah-Jude Guthrie, Jakoby Wijnans, Amelia McCallum and Kobie Lockhart on being named as the Jewells Primary School Captains and Vice-Captains for 2022. Torah-Jude, Jakoby, Amelia and Kobie all demonstrate an excellent work ethic and represent the Jewells Primary School community with pride. Each of these students have been involved in a number of school activities and events during their time at Jewells Primary School and act as positive role models for their peers. Being named as the Jewells Primary School 2022 Captains and Vice-Captains is a testament to these students. I am sure they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I know that they will also develop skills that will assist them with their future endeavours. I congratulate Torah-Jude, Jakoby, Amelia and Kobie on their achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

NORTH CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club on its recent success at the 2022 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships. Held on the Gold Coast from 2 to 10 April, the "Aussies" saw more than 7,200 competitors go head-to-head in both land and water events. The club had some big winners, with Maggie Mahoney, Hayley Urquhart, Katie Coghlan, Alysha Lerond and sweep Mark McDonald winning an Australian Title in the Open Women's Surf Boat. In the Australian Open Female Beach Relay, Alex Rampoldi, Emily Rampoldi, Leah Rampoldi and Lucy Flanagan^[1] won the gold medal. Cruz McKee won gold in the U17 Male Shortboard competition. Kaitlyn Williams took home gold in the Under 13s Female Beach Flags, while Kobe Sorenson won the Under 15s Male Beach Flags and the Under 15s Male Beach Sprint. I commend the efforts of the North Cronulla team and thank everyone for their efforts this patrol season.

WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate competitors from Wanda Surf Life Saving Club on their participation and success at the 2022 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships. The championships, affectionately known as "The Aussie's", were held on the Gold Coast from 2 to 10 April. Wanda was Bate Bay's top performing club and finished only 80 points behind North Burleigh, Maroochydore, North Curl Curl and Alexandra Headland. Wanda had success in both water and land events. In the Under 15s Female Board Rescue, Rome Southwell and Jayda Zammit-Mayer finished in first place. Kyle Mason finished first in the

Under 13s and Under 14s Male 2x 1km. Kyle's Wanda teammates took home great points finishing in second place. I also thank everyone at Wanda SLSC for their efforts this patrol season.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I commend Rod Coy, chairman of the Sutherland Shire Relay for Life Committee, and other organisers for the success of the 2022 Sutherland Shire Relay for Life. Held annually, the Shire Relay is a community fundraising challenge with all proceeds directed to Cancer Council NSW. It is Australia's largest Relay for Life. This year, around \$250,000 for cancer research was raised. The event—which runs over 24 hours—attracted over 4,000 people. Community members came together to remember cancer victims, support those living with the disease, and raise money for vital research. The success of this year's event could not have been achieved without the hard-work and dedication of the organising committee. Many thanks also to organisers Alison Todd, Cathy Mason, Craig Winstanley, Holly Dean, Helen Scott, Theresa Cooper, Brett Brosens, Jasper Downes and Richard Mason.

TOCUMWAL LIONS CLUB

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise the Tocomwal Lions Club as part of the 75th anniversary of the Lions Club in Australia. For the last 47 years, Tocomwal Lions have assisted not only the community at large, but also changed the lives of many individuals. Their achievements and advocacy include the construction of a local retirement village and aged care hostel in Tocomwal. The Lions Club is a significant contributor across Regional NSW, supporting and growing local communities. In recognition of their dedication, hard-work and selfless service, I thank the members of the Tocomwal Lions Club.

TENTERFIELD ANZAC DAY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Tenterfield Anzac Day 2022 was back bigger than ever this year after two years of COVID interruptions and restrictions. I was so delighted to see huge crowds attend to pay their respects and honour those in the Tenterfield shire who have served our country in the Australian Defence Forces. Tenterfield RSL Sub-Branch President Dave Smith lead the march down Rouse Street and Brigadier Ben James gave a moving address. The Tenterfield Pipe Band provided excellent music as always and there was a strong presence from Tenterfield High School, Sir Henry Parkes High School and St Josephs Primary School. I thank the students for representing their school communities with distinction. It is vital that young people know the importance of ANZAC Day. I congratulate the Tenterfield RSL Sub-Branch and all involved in organising the day. Lest We Forget.

STEINBROOK HALL ROCK FEATURE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Steinbrook Hall is a wonderful little hall just outside of Tenterfield in the Lismore electorate. It was fantastic to hear recently about the new rock feature installed there by Steinbrook garlic farmer Dick Rochford. It's clear Dick is a man of many talents - a garlic farmer, former teacher, high school careers advisor and a specialist at constructing rock walls and structures. So when Collen Burke from the Steinbrook Progress Association contacted him about this project he jumped in. As a young man growing up in Ireland Dick used to repair the rock walls on the family farm and it is fantastic that he has given his talents to the Steinbrook community. The feature took 6 weeks to complete and local wedding planners have told the progress association that the feature is perfect for photos. It really adds to the hall. The Steinbrook Progress Association have been hard at it bringing the hall back to its "former glory and then some" as Colleen says. They have been successful in building a new septic system, covered barbeque area, cement pathways, a new veranda, kitchen, fireplace and chimney. I congratulate Dick and the association on this fantastic initiative.

PORT HACKING HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Port Hacking High School on their appointment. Port Hacking High School is home to a wonderful group of bright and caring students. Led by Relieving Principal Trevor Price, the school community have enjoyed participating in a number of fantastic initiatives across Term 1. These include the World's Greatest Shave where students helped raise nearly \$8,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation, World Down Syndrome Day where students raised awareness and embraced inclusivity, along with Courage to Care where students were fortunate enough to hear from a Holocaust survivor. Leading by example is the 2022 leadership team who truly embody the values of Port Hacking High School. I congratulate School Captains Ashley Gray and Oliver Cohen, Vice Captains Grace Ryan and Rhea Himmel along with Prefects Lawson Da Silva, Eli Horth, Sophie Dourambeis and Athena Del Rosario 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 throughout the year. I commend the student leaders from Port Hacking High School on their appointment and extend my best wishes for the future.

SYLVANIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Sylvania Heights Public School ("Sylvania Heights") on their appointment. As their motto boasts, Sylvania Heights is home to respectful and responsible learners who always strive to achieve their best. Led by Principal Clint White, the incredible teaching and support staff work hard to ensure that all students thrive in an environment underpinned by collaboration and inclusivity. With the resumption of face-to-face learning, students have enjoyed celebrating Harmony Day, the Easter Hat Parade and participating in a Book Drive for flood affected communities. Leading by example is the 2022 leadership team who truly embody the values of Sylvania Heights. I congratulate School Captains Charlie Herb and Max Bowmer, Vice Captains Naomi Murr and Noah Violaris along with Prefects Tahlia Rakuraku, Noah Mahmoud, Joanna Theouli, Niky Buttaro-Curtis, Taylor Shaw, Cooper Kennedy, Larah Constantopedos and Kade Edmonds 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 Sylvania Heights Public School on their appointment and extend my best wishes for the future.

MIRANDA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Miranda Public School on their appointment. Established in 1893, Miranda Public School is a wonderful school community home to bright and diligent students. Supported by School Principal Michael Duffy, the student leadership have been busy assisting with school initiatives and most recently attended the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch Anzac Day Dawn Service. These students proudly represented their school, displaying excellent behaviour and leadership. To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I congratulate School Captains Sofia Kacanik and Kirby Delic, Vice Captains Preet Hinduja and Andrew Kegai, Prefects Jaylene Wang, Matthew Gargan and Amalia Murphy. I also recognise House Captains Jordan Kranicz, Marina Berardo Carneiro Da Cunha, Alexander Del Rosario, Eva Popovic, Aiden Bosch, Kira Lipatova, Caleb Deng and Aylah Cash along with House Vice Captains Hunter Jessup, Despina Mouhtar, Zachary Chaseling, Mary Stuart-Christie, Landon Bosch, Chante Isaacs, Koby Daly and John Smith on their successful appointment. I look forward to seeing the student leaders from Miranda Public School excel over the coming year and extend my best wishes.

REN AUSBURN

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—After seeing the devastation that a natural disaster leaves behind, many people donate money or goods to help people rebuild their lives. When the floodwaters rose in Lismore Ren Ausburn went further – 600 kilometres further – to assist. Ren joined up with the Trees Not Bombs Café to help in their soup kitchen in the centre of town, working up to 12 hours a day serving hot drinks and meals to volunteers and locals. We know that in times of crisis a cup of tea is often more than a cup of tea, and just through her presence Ren was able to provide a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on. Thank you, Ren, for your compassion. Your contribution is valued.

PHIL AND JUDITH MAHER

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—After seeing the devastation that a natural disaster leaves behind, many people donate money or goods to help people rebuild their lives. When the floodwaters rose in Lismore Phil and Judith Maher went further – 600 kilometres further - to assist. They joined up with the Trees Not Bombs Café to help in their soup kitchen in the centre of town, which served hot drinks and meals to volunteers and locals. As well as assisting on the ground, Phil and Judith used their experience running Hunter Organic Foods and donating to the local branch of Food Not Bombs to source supplies. They also more than doubled their fundraising goal to help with costs. Thank you, Phil and Judith, for your compassion and all your work.

JONO EVERETT

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—After seeing the devastation that a natural disaster leaves behind, many people donate money or goods to help people rebuild their lives. When the floodwaters rose in Lismore Jono Everett went further – 600 kilometres further – to assist. Jono connected with the Resilient Lismore organisation and then hit the road with a ute full of tools – sledgehammers, crowbars, batteries, mops, buckets and cleaning supplies. While Jono got stuck in to helping with the cleaning, he was also able to put his carpentry background to good use to help build staircases to enable access to properties. Thank you, Jono, for your compassion. Your contribution is valued.

ANZAC DAY – KANGAROO VALLEY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—On ANZAC Day I was very pleased to attend a special commemoration service in Kangaroo Valley on Monday 25th April 2022. I would like to acknowledge Rev Andrew Heron from Kangaroo Valley Anglican Church. Father Ronan from Kangaroo Valley Catholic Church and Julie Mairinger who delivered the Prayer for the Nation along with Adelaide O'Connor who delivered a terrific commemoration address on the theme of ANZAC and its great significance to all Australians who served. I also acknowledge the MC Lance Brown and Simon Harrington Rear Admiral AM, RAN (Ret'd) and Annabelle Little who recited the poem 'Sir' by Damian (Dib) Morgan. Thank you to the flag bearers who included Luke Wright, Dylan McCabe, Charlotte Furhagen. Piper was Roger Chapman. The Kangaroo Valley Commemorative Wreath which was laid by Derek Lucas. And to the wonderful ladies on the floral arrangements Mandy Breeze, Olivia Harvey, Gayle Harvey and Gina Myers-Brown. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the wonderful school students from Kangaroo Valley Public School who sang songs so proudly. Thanks also to Kangaroo Valley Voice, Lions, Kangaroo Valley Post Office and Kangaroo Valley RFS who proudly supported this annual event.

ANZAC DAY – GERRINGONG

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—On ANZAC Day I was very pleased to attend a special dawn service commemoration service hosted by the Gerringong RSL Sub Branch on Monday 25th April 2022 at Gerringong Memorial Headland. Attendees were solemn and respectful as we joined in reflection and remembrance all of those service men and women who served and to appreciate and commemorative the spirit of the ANZAC's on this solemn occasion. I also acknowledge and sincerely thank the Gerringong RSL Sub Branch President Michael O'Leary, Secretary Jeff McClenaghan and Treasurer Wes Hindmarsh for their significant and ongoing commitment to our local community and my thanks to Gerringong Lions for their assistance with this service.

GERRINGONG MUSEUM

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Archaeologist Sarah McGuinness will celebrate National Archaeology Week as the speaker in the recently launched 'Night at the Museum' series being held at the Gerringong Library and Museum. Sarah has worked all over Australia, in the Pilbara, Western Australia, as well as sites just one hour from Kiama – rock art sites, artefact sites and various cultural landscapes. Sarah has also worked on contact sites between Indigenous Australians and the early settlers plus historic sites around The Rocks in Sydney, Ned Kelly sites around Glenrowan and throughout Tasmania. The 'Night at the Museum' series is being held on Thursday 19th May from 5:30pm to 8pm at the Gerringong Library and Museum in Blackwood Street, Gerringong, an outstanding facility which I was pleased to secure funding for to help with its establishment for our community.

CONSTABLE LOREN BARTLEY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer my personal congratulations to Constable Loren Bartley who was awarded the Blacktown Police Area Commander's Certificate of Appreciation presented at the Zone Police Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14th April 2022. Constable Bartley received this Certificate for her efforts in responding to an accident between a motor vehicle and motorcycle in Blacktown on Saturday 9th November 2019. The rider of the motorcycle sustained critical injuries because of the collision. Upon arrival at the scene, Constable Bartley acted swiftly and professionally to provide CPR to the rider, with assistance of two other officers. Constable Bartley and the other officers took turns to provide CPR for over thirty minutes. These actions allowed other emergency services personnel to provide vital treatment to the injured rider. I would like to thank Constable Bartley for her hard work, dedication, and professionalism for her actions on the day in her attempts to save the life of the motorcycle rider. Constable Bartley should be commended for her life saving actions under very difficult circumstances. Thank you Constable Bartley for your outstanding service and dedication to our community.

CONSTABLE MATTHEW CHALLENGER

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer my personal congratulations to Constable Matthew Challenger who was awarded the Blacktown Police Area Commander's Commendation Award presented at the Zone Police Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14th April 2022. Constable Challenger received this Award for his efforts responding to an accident between a motorcycle and vehicle at the intersection of Doonside and Easter Roads in Doonside on Sunday 14th February 2021. Upon arrival at the scene, Constable Challenger provided CPR to the critically injured male rider for over fifteen minutes until NSW Ambulance Paramedics were able to attend the accident. A Care flight Doctor later arrived on scene and confirmed the rider had unfortunately, succumbed to his injuries. I would like to thank Constable Challenger for his hard work, dedication, and professionalism for his actions on the day in his attempts to save the life of the critically injured victim. The role of an NSW Police Force officer can be distressing at times but is imperative to upholding law and order and

keeping our community safe. Thank you Constable Challenger for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. You are a very deserving recipient of this Award.

RETIREMENT OF NSW POLICE LEGACY CHAIR, DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT GARY MERRYWEATHER APM

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer the Western Sydney Community's and my personal gratitude to Detective Superintendent Gary Merryweather APM for his service as Chair of the NSW Police Legacy. After four years of service as NSW Police Legacy Chair, Superintendent Merryweather has informed me that he is retiring from his position at this month's Annual General Meeting. He will also be retiring from the NSW Police force after 35 years of service. Superintendent Merryweather joined the NSW Police Force in 1987. He was promoted to the Rank of Superintendent in 2008, taking up Command positions at Monaro, Quakers Hill and Blacktown Police Area Commands. In 2014 he was appointed as Commander, Blacktown Local Area Command, where he was a strong advocate for the prevention of violence towards women. Between 2014 and 2018 Gary was an Executive Member of the NSW Police Association, representing Commissioned Officers, and was a delegate to the Police Federation of Australia. In this role Gary has been active in supporting the welfare services provided to the membership. Thank you Superintendent Merryweather for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. Congratulations on your well-earned retirement.

CHATSWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to recognise and commend the work of Chatswood Presbyterian Church (CPC) in Chatswood in my electorate of Willoughby. In addition to enriching the spiritual lives of its members, CPC adds to the social capital of our community with its activities for men, women and children of all backgrounds. Some weeks ago, I had a very good meeting with the associate pastor, Warren Esdale, and his wife Beth. Amongst other things, Beth oversees the Church's Easy English classes for local women learning English and co-ordinates the Church's extensive missions programme. CPC supports a wide range of charities including Compassion, a child sponsorship programme to support children in poverty; PresAid, the overseas arm of the Presbyterian Church which provides foreign aid to developing countries; Jericho Road, the welfare arm of the Presbyterian Church; and the Allowah Children's Hospital in Sydney, which cares for kids with special needs. I commend the great work of Chatswood Presbyterian Church to the House.

LIFESOURCE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I am pleased to recognise the great work of LifeSource Christian Church in my electorate of Willoughby. Located on Eastern Valley Way in Chatswood, LifeSource is a thriving church of over 1,000 worshippers dedicated to not only loving their God but serving their local community. I was delighted to meet recently with Pastors John and Anne who have been Senior Pastors since 1996. In addition to ministry, the church runs weekly activities for children, families and adults, and LifeSource runs a well-known 'Community Care FoodCare Programme'. Catering for the less fortunate in our community, FoodCare provides free fruit, vegetables & bread, plus affordable groceries at a low recovery fee of \$15 per parcel. Membership of the programme is open to any low-income earner and holder of a Centrelink card at a cost of \$2 a year. Foodcare not only provides its members with discount groceries but offers other types of support and referrals to specialist services, such as free debt counselling. LifeSource Church is outward-looking and generous. It plays a vital role in both nourishing the spiritual fibre of our community and caring for our most vulnerable, I commend its work to the House.

CHATSWOOD GYPSIES CRICKET CLUB

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to acknowledge and commend the Chatswood Gypsies Cricket Club in my electorate of Willoughby. Cricket, of course, is one of our great national sports and the Chatswood Gypsies do great work to uphold and advance the game in our local community. Founded in 2007 and part of the Northern Suburbs Cricket Association, the Gypsies pride themselves on their inclusive culture that welcomes all newcomers to don the 'baggy black'. As well as wielding the bat and ball on the pitch every weekend, the Gypsies recognise that joining a cricket club is about the camaraderie and the chance to make new, enduring friendships. As such, it also runs an active social calendar of barbecues, picnics, raffles, trivia nights, parties and other socials. Each weekend, the Gypsies play at grounds across Northern Sydney, including the Willoughby suburbs of Gore Hill and Northbridge. Affording the opportunity to play competitive cricket in both summer and winter, the Gypsies are a fantastic local community sporting club and I wish them every success.

GOLDSBROUGH BUILDING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the cutting-edge sustainability work by the Goldsbrough Apartments Owners Corporation in Pyrmont. Goldsbrough was one of the first buildings to carry out a sustainability assessment through the City of Sydney's Smart Green Apartment

program over a decade ago. Leveraging off this, the committee invested to futureproof the building, reducing energy consumption by 30 per cent, saving owners money and lowering their carbon footprint. This was achieved through common area LED lighting with infrared sensors, heat exchange to heat pool and spa with heat from the hot water system, and variable speed drives for plant, lifts and equipment. Following significant hailstorm damage in 2018 the owners corporation used the need to replace the roof as an opportunity to install a 391 solar panel 176Kw solar system, saving 202 tonnes CO2/annum. Goldsbrough is also installing a new hot water system using heat pumps and gas back-up including an embedded network to supply hot water to all apartments and save an additional 897 tonnes CO2/annum. Goldsbrough has significantly reduced the building's energy use and carbon emissions. I congratulate the Goldsbrough Owners Corporation and Oaks Building Management on leading the way on sustainability.

MSIC 21 YEARS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I congratulate the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre [MSIC] on 21 years of service to the community on 6 May. The MSIC was a key outcome of the 1999 Drug Summit, championed by then Bligh MP Clover Moore with strong support from residents and business operators who saw people dying and slumped in public from drug overdoses, along with used syringes. Rev Harry Herbert and the Uniting Care courageously took on managing the centre after the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney stopped the St Vincent's Hospital Sisters of Charity from running it. Three independent evaluations showed the MSIC has saved lives with no deaths or serious injury, successfully managing thousands of client drug overdoses. The MSIC has also referred thousands of clients to drug and mental health treatment. Ambulances and hospital emergency presentations dropped dramatically along with syringes in public places. I thank the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre for this amazing contribution and am pleased that the City of Sydney has granted the keys to the city to MSIC in recognition of lives saved, vulnerable people helped and amenity improved.

QTOPIA SYDNEY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend QTOPIA Sydney, the volunteer group working to establish a safe and inclusive space that will celebrate, remember, educate and increase awareness of the rich history of Sydney's LGBTQIA+ community. Former High Court Justice The Hon. Michael Kirby and publisher and broadcaster Ita Buttrose are patrons for the group. It aims to celebrate LGBTQIA+ history, educate the wider community, promote an inclusive culture and work towards financial viability. QTOPIA hopes to have an interim LGBTQIA+ museum in Oxford Street to operate during Sydney WorldPride 2023. I've met with QTOPIA representatives and committed to support their project, including advocating for the government to allow access to the former Darlinghurst Police Station, which has symbolic power as the place where those arrested at the first significant gay rights rally in 1978 were taken. Many have said they want an LGBTQIA+ museum or keeping place and it is great to see there is now a group they can help make this a reality. I commend QTOPIA Sydney for their work to recognise Sydney's LGBTQIA+ history, acknowledging the civil rights achievements and work for equality still to be done.

NICHOLAS "NIKO" LIPOVAC – 25 YEARS COMMERCIAL RADIO

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I congratulate Nik Lipovac from Port Macquarie for his recent milestone of 25 years in commercial radio. Described as a stalwart presenter and radio personality, Nik Lipovac was recently presented with a 25 year service award at the Super Radio network studio for his longstanding commitment to broadcasting. Nik began his radio career in 1989 at 2Day-FM. Over this period he has worked in half a dozen radio stations in New South Wales and Tasmania before moving to the beautiful Hastings region in late 2003. A man of many titles and career positions, Nik has undertaken roles in banking, real estate, retail store management and most recently in December he was elected Councillor of Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Government Area. Born and bred in the Camperdown/Newtown area of Sydney, Nik relocated to Port Macquarie to take on a role with Triple M radio before transitioning to Super Radio Mid North Coast FM93.5 Radio 531 where he still works today. In his spare time Nik coordinated the annual Hospital fundraiser, "Give Me 5 for Kids" and is heavily involved in Hastings Cricket. Congratulations Nik for your stellar career in radio.

RILEY TATTERSALL – GREYWOLF AWARD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I congratulate Riley Tattersall from Camden Haven Sea Scouts for completing the Grey Wolf Award which is the highest honour for a Cub Scout. Described as an integral member and leader of Camden Haven Sea Scouts, Riley was presented with the Grey Wolf Award on 5th May recognising his completion of the Cub Scout Leadership Course, six special interest area projects, an adventure journey that he planned and led as well as his milestone 3. Riley Tattersall joined the Camden Haven Sea Scouts as a Joey Scout in October 2016. In 2017, Riley completed the Commissioner's Challenge and in the Effort and Dedication in Scouting Award. One of Riley's major accomplishments in Sea Scouts was completing

his Joey Promise Challenge in 2018 which is the highest award for a Joey Scout. The Grey Wolf Award is the ultimate award for a Cub Scout. To attain the honour a Cub Scout must participate in a number of outdoor activities and Level 2 Achievement Badges and Special Interest Badges. It is not surprising that Riley has been elected School Captain for 2022 given the impressive example he provides to his peers. Congratulations Riley!

PORT MACQUARIE PERFORMING ARTS 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Congratulations to the team from Port Macquarie Performing Arts who recently celebrated their ten year anniversary at Sails Resort Port Macquarie. The celebrations of this milestone recognising the provision of high-quality dance lessons to children across the Hastings was officially recognised on Saturday 7th May with past, present and future students and parents attending this special occasion. Like many landmark events in the past two years, the Port Macquarie Performing Arts team had deferred celebrations due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Principal Stacey Morgan acknowledged the valuable contribution the studio has made to the next generation of passionate choreographers. The organisation's ethos is to strive to assist their students become the best version of themselves through a passion for dance is admirable. The Port Macquarie Performing Arts studio offers Classical Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Musical Theatre, Contemporary and Dance Acro classes from ages 1 to 100. I congratulate Stacey Morgan, Peter Gill, Angela Jamieson, Brendan Bradshaw, Kye Maurer, Kate Lineham, Lazette Johnson, Kristi Deacon and Rebecca Graham for this impressive achievement and wish them all the best for another decade of dance.

BAYSIDE GARDEN CENTRE AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY FOUNDATION

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge the continuing success of the Bayside Garden Centre, a joint venture between Bayside Council and the Intellectual Disability Foundation [IDF] of St George. The Centre provides meaningful work for those with an intellectual disability in the St George area. Under the agreement, Bayside Council and the Intellectual Disability Association of St George each receive a quarter of the Centre's profits which goes straight into community projects, with the other half reinvested into the Garden Centre. Council's share goes into parks projects, whilst the IDF uses its share to assist families and provide programs to benefit those with an intellectual disability. The Centre continued its successful operation last financial year, which enabled funding of over \$35,000 to go to Bayside Council and the St George IDF. Congratulations to all involved in this fine venture and its valuable work.

BEXLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I want to commend the hard work and diligence that the members of Bexley Congregational Church have put in to keep their historic church open. The church, situated along Forest Road, has had their doors open for more than 100 years, welcoming all those who wish to attend. Though recently faced with hardship due to a dwindling of numbers, they have stayed resilient, bouncing back to find a new pastor, and embracing more than 20 people who now make up the congregation. The church currently holds a community market on the second Saturday of every month, and they are considering on further expanding their activities into the community such as holding community clubs or distributing food parcels. I take this time to acknowledge the church's secretary Gloria Meti and Pastor Jim Seru, for their ongoing commitment to the local community.

GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL – ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I take this time to recognise and thank the work of the Georges River Council, in my electorate, who, on the 10th of March, won three awards from the Institute for Public Works Engineering Australasia at its 2022 state conference. The council was recognised by this body for its work in the 'New or Improved Techniques' category, for the council's standardisation of amenity blocks across the local government area. This new innovation aims to ease the maintenance and repair costs, improve the cleanliness and ensure streamlined construction of the facilities. Notable among these is the new sporting amenities building in Kogarah Bay, which includes a canteen, gender neutral bathrooms, storage, changing rooms, medical room, public amenities and a BBQ area. As our community returns to normal after the lockdowns and isolation, we need our facilities to encourage the growth of local business and the local area, and to build upon our reputation as a community. Once again I thank the council for the work they have done for our community, your dedication makes us stronger.

GEORGE AND EDITH KABEL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Mrs Edith and Mr George Kabel of Moree for playing their part in an important time of Australia's history. World War II had ended and Australia sought skilled workers to build the infrastructure for the new nation. From war torn Germany, George was looking to the future and he saw an advertisement for contract workers to build the accommodation for those who would construct the Snowy Mountain Scheme. Within three years the contract had completed, Edith, engaged and waiting in Germany, joined him, and as a newly married couple they settled in Moree with the intention of

eventually returning to Germany and their families. However, the promise of a developing nation and all that Australia offered changed those plans and they stayed in Moree building a business, raising a family and contributing to community service which makes for good citizenship. This year they celebrate 70 years in Australia. I congratulate Edith and George on their 70th Wedding Anniversary. I commend Mr and Mrs Kabel on making such a success of their decision to remain in Australia, becoming the citizens that have made Australia the lucky country.

GRAVESEND 100 MILE LONG LUNCH

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Gravesend's 100 Mile Long Lunch committee on hosting yet another sold out event on April 2. The bi-annual event saw 200 tickets sold out weeks in advance, all in the name of Gravesend Public School. As the name suggests, local produce is sourced within a 100-mile radius of Gravesend. A three-course menu was then created and prepared by The Goods Catering Company and the afternoon included a charity auction along with a major raffle. Funds raised through the auction and sponsorship will go towards extending the covered outdoor learning area and walkways to the infants room and front gate. The previous long lunch saw the School build an alfresco kitchen, and before that a trip to Canberra. The concept of the Gravesend 100 Mile Long Lunch is to get people out in their local community, incorporate local produce whilst fundraising for such a worthy cause. It's really a calendar event not to missed. I want to congratulate President Loretta Brown and the committee, Karen Withers, Treen Barwick, Carolyn Barwick, Kerri-Lynn Leachey, Polly Quinn and Kate Warby for their commitment and dedication for hosting another signature Long Lunch raising funds for Gravesend Public School.

JESSICA KASTELEIN –2022 ROYAL EASTER SHOW CHAMPION

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Jessica Kastelein as champion of the 2022 Agricultural Shows Australia National Merino Fleece Young Judges Championships during the 2022 Sydney Royal Merino Sheep Show. Jessica has worked hard to claim this prestigious title under the tutelage of Macintyre High School teacher Deb Snaith. The competitors have all proved to be exceptional young wool judges handling the wool competently as experienced wool handlers, making Jessica's win especially admirable. Australian agriculture looks towards young Australians to carry the industry forward. Jessica's win is a great encouragement to ensure this will happen. I congratulate Jess for her consistent achievements leading to this significant win for the Merino Fleece Young Judges Championship. I commend Jess and her teacher, Deb Snaith who demonstrates consistent commitment to her students in achieving excellence.

ANZAC DAY- BARGO

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—On Anzac Day this year, I had the opportunity to attend a local service held at the Bargo Sports Club in Bargo. It was a fantastic, well organised service, bringing the local community together, with many sports and community groups laying wreaths and paying their respects, as well as schools and the RFS. The students from Yanderra Public School contributed in a special way by making poppies for a display at the entrance to the service. We know the importance of teaching our children about the sacrifices that so many made to give them the life they can lead today. I was very pleased to see them getting involved. Thanks to all who contributed to this years' service, whether by speaking on the day, planning the details in the lead up or simply your in-person presence on the day. A special thanks to Dave Clayton and the Bargo Sports Club for all your efforts in organising a fitting tribute.

BILL AND CARMEL VAN DIEMEN

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Willow Vale couple, Bill and Carmel Van Diemen, drove their 'Lion King' themed car, along with other cartoon-themed vehicles from Albury to Coffs Harbour in Camp Quality's EsCarpade fundraising event in early April. The event raises money for kids dealing with cancer, in their own diagnosis or the diagnosis of a loved one. The cars and dressed up participants would usually stop at schools along the route and talk to kids about cancer, but this year due to COVID restrictions they were only able drive by and make a lot of noise. Despite this restriction, much joy was spread to many children and smiles were put on faces as the cars drove through town. This year EsCarpade raised over one million dollars, of which \$6,600 was contributed by the Southern Highlands couple. The couple have been raising money for the charity for nearly ten years, after a former neighbour who had a child with cancer shared about their positive experience with Camp Quality. Since that time, the Van Diemen's have raised more than \$50,000, helped along by sponsorship and donations from the Mittagong RSL and others. What a fantastic effort from the Van Diemen's!

CHEVALIER COLLEGE'S CHARLOTTE FREER

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—A student from one of our local high schools, Chevalier College, came second in the Norman Lethbridge Award, which recognises students and cadets ages 16 to 25 who study across the agriculture industry. Charlotte Freer was nominated by her school in late 2021 and had to submit

a resume and was interviewed by an expert panel earlier this year. As runner up, she received the Wendy and Des Stubbs Encouragement Award from Angus Australia, which was presented to her at a ceremony at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Miss Freer aspires to have a career in agriculture and whilst not having much prior experience, said she was honoured to even be nominated for the award. I congratulate Miss Freer on this achievement and I wish her every success in her career in agriculture.

ASQUITH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL NEW BOOK

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—I had the privilege of flicking through a copy of a recently published book called, "Asquith Boys High School Celebrating 60 Years". This very impressive publication covers in detail the six decades of the school, from 1960 to 2020, with production of the book being slightly delayed because of the pandemic. Co-ordination of the production and the Editor of the school's book was undertaken by Chris Kent who was amongst the school's first 300 students, in 1960. Chris later went on to teach Art at the school for many years. After retirement he founded and ran the Old Boys Club for Asquith Boys High School, making him the perfect person to produce the school's history. Since opening Asquith Boys High School has produced thousands of fine young men including many high academic achievers. In addition, the school has always had an excellent reputation for its sporting achievements across a wide variety of sports, as well as producing a number of talented artists. I congratulate Asquith Boys High School's students, teachers and volunteers, both past and present, for their fine achievements and successes. Many of which are recorded in detail in the school's new publication.

SOUTH COOGEE PUBLIC SCHOOL ANZAC DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I congratulate South Coogee Public School for hosting another excellent ANZAC Day commemoration event. The school's student leaders led a moving service that paid solemn tribute to the original diggers and all those who have followed in answering the call to defend our country in the 107 years since that fateful morning in Gallipoli. I wish to acknowledge in particular the South Coogee Public choir whose rendition of Lest We Forget put tears in the eyes of even the most battle-hardened active-duty service members in attendance. South Coogee Public School has a proud record of supporting the families of Australian servicemen and women and their ANZAC Day memorial service was a true testament to this, I'd like to give special thanks to Defence School Mentor, Laura Chilton, not only for her work in organising this ceremony but all she does day in and day out to assist Defence families in the South Coogee Public community. Finally, I wish to thank the many current serving members of the ADF in attendance and acknowledge their ongoing hard work and sacrifice in the service of Australia's safety. Lest We Forget.

RANDWICK PUBLIC SCHOOL ANZAC DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I wish to thank Randwick Public School for inviting me to pay my respects at their ANZAC Day commemoration event and congratulate the school for putting together a reverent ceremony that truly honoured the memory of all those who have fought to protect our country in the century since ANZAC troops first landed in Gallipoli. This was the first year since 2019 that the school has been able to hold an ANZAC service in person due to the pandemic and they made light work of making up for lost time, with outstanding student speakers and a stellar performance throughout by the school's band. Thank you to Co-Principals Susan Allen and Kate Cohen for having me, and I would like to also take this opportunity to formally welcome Ms Cohen to the Randwick Public School community on behalf of the Coogee electorate. Special thanks must also go to the Coogee-Randwick-Clovelly Returned Services League sub-Branch for taking the time to speak at the event and offer a unique and accessible perspective on the meaning behind ANZAC Day and why it is important to celebrate.

ALKESAA ASSOCIATION IFTAR DINNER

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Alkesaa Association for hosting their annual community Iftar Dinner on Wednesday 27th April 2022 to which I was delighted to attend. The association strives to bring the community closer together through their ongoing work. The annual Iftar Dinner is one such event that brings all people together. I especially pay tribute to the Alkesaa Association for their work during the 2021 lockdown assisting the community with Public Health Order translations into Arabic. Also the association participated in the distribution of care packages in the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program. I would once again like to thank the Alkesaa Association for all their work in the community and commend them for hosting a successful event in the Iftar dinner.

DUSTIN DAO

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish to congratulate Dustin Dao, youth representative for Fairfield in the 2022 YMCA NSW Youth Parliament and I have great faith that Dustin will be a great voice for Fairfield in the Youth Parliament. Currently Dustin is studying a Bachelor of Arts (Majoring in Politics)/Law at the University

of Sydney. I am sure Dustin will be a passionate advocate for Fairfield, with his focus in the Youth Parliament focusing on education and employment opportunities for local youth and infrastructure investment by government for the area. I look forward to witnessing Dustin's contributions in the Legislative Assembly as Fairfield's Youth Parliament representative and I wish him well in his future endeavours.

GOOD360 AUSTRALIA 7TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish a very happy 7th birthday to Good360 Australia who celebrated the occasion with a get-together on Wednesday 27th April 2022, which I was honoured to attend. I thank Good360 Australia for their work on so many fronts, environmental, social and financial. Good360 provide brand new goods that were destined for land fill to people that need it most. Some of the goods donated to charities include: sanitary and cleaning products, PPE, clothes, books, stationery, furniture, white and electrical goods. The re-distributed products would not be available to individuals without the generous logistical support from transport partners. Good360 make good happen through their dedicated staff and team of volunteers. In 2021 during the lockdown Good360 were the driving force behind the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program which assisted thirteen charity partners in Fairfield and South Western Sydney distribute essential health and hygiene items. I commend Founder and Managing Director Mrs Alison Covington, Board of Directors, staff and volunteers for their support of the community and once again wish the organisation a happy 7th birthday.

GARRARD'S 2022 MIRACLE MILE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Earlier in the year I had the pleasure to attend Garrard's Horse and Hound Miracle Mile Barrier Draw and Awards Dinner at Menangle Country Club. I congratulate Luke and Belinda McCarthy from Cobbitty Equine Farm on their three starters for the Garrard's 2022 Miracle Mile race, including favourite King of Swing in barrier 1, Sprit of St Louis in barrier 2 and Expensive Ego in barrier 6. I am also pleased to announce the seven-year-old King of Swing won the Garrard's 2022 Miracle Mile. King of Swing is the first pacer to win three Miracle Miles in a row and now after a very promising career, King of Swing retires to stud. Happy retirement King of Swing.

MINI WOOLWORTHS IN ACTION AT MATER DEI SCHOOL CAMDEN

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I am delighted to announce a mini Woolworths has opened at Mater Dei School Camden. This initiative will help students who have an intellectual disability or development delays to gain valuable hands-on learning experiences in a retail environment. The mini store has been established to mimic the operations of an actual Woolworths Supermarket with baskets for fresh food, shelving for groceries, ticketing and branded uniforms to create a fully immersive experience. Using fully operated Fujitsu registers, the students learn to scan grocery items as they learn money handling and processing sales. What a fantastic partnership between Woolworths and Fujitsu to come together to create an amazing learning experience for the students of Mater Dei School Camden.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF RIVERVIEW AT CARRINGTON CARE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—It was a pleasure to attend the official opening of Riverview at Carrington Care with the Hon. Mark Coure MP, Minister for Multiculturalism and Minister for Seniors last month. Located on the historic Carrington Estate, the assisted living apartment features one or two bedrooms, kitchenette and a private balcony as well as an ensuite bathroom and laundry. Riverview is Carrington Care's first release that fills the gap between independent living and aged care. Congratulations to the team at Carrington Care on what has set the benchmark for senior living. I also thank and congratulate the work of Chief Executive Raad Richards and Approved Chairman 2018 and Non-Executive director Alek Jankowski.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—For 100 years, the Country Women's Association has been advocating for people in rural NSW, particularly for women and children. Indeed, a century of advocacy culminated in the 2022 Country Women's Association of NSW's state conference in Sydney last week. About 1000 members from around NSW, including the Wagga Wagga electorate, met at Royal Randwick Racecourse to help determine future policy direction and priorities, and to celebrate the centenary of the association. More than 25 motions proposed by branches throughout the state were debated, encompassing education, health, the environment, transport and telecommunications. Measures to minimise the impact of flooding on vulnerable communities, improved obstetric services for country areas, the need for more affordable housing and initiatives to help curb the rates of domestic violence in rural and regional communities were all up for discussion. The range of topics debated at the conference demonstrates the broad range of issues CWA members are willing to take on as they continue to advocate for improvements to the lives of rural people. This is an organisation that, for decade after decade, has never been afraid to take on the politicians of the day. I hope members retain that radical fighting spirit.

MISS WAGGA WAGGA QUEST

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—It was wonderful to be at the recent launch of the Miss Wagga Wagga Quest for 2023 and to celebrate the 75th year of the quest. Over that period of 75 years, nearly 800 women have participated in the quest, which has continued to focus on personal growth and empowering young leaders for our community, while at the same time raising nearly \$2 million for charity. The Miss Wagga Wagga Quest is perhaps the oldest and longest running quest of its type in Australia. Miss Wagga Wagga and Community Princess hold their titles for a year, and are involved in many community activities as ambassadors for the city. A big congratulations to this year's entrants, Haylee Burkinshaw, Ashlee Janic, Marnie Gilmore, Kate Pevere, Celine Sharp, Courtney Harp and Ricki-Sue King, for the inspiring speeches they made on "What Wagga Wagga means to me". It was fantastic to see the networks and bonds formed by the quest, with each entrant from last year present for this year's launch. A big thank you to Ali Tanner and her committee, and to Miss Wagga Wagga, Jessikah McCarthy, and Community Princess, Rachael Bowering, for acting as MCs for the evening.

SNOWY VALLEYS RESILIENCE HUB

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—As the Dunn Road bushfire approached Batlow, residents were told their town was undefendable. But Batlow was defended. While the fire caused enormous damage, Batlow wasn't knocked out. In two years since the bushfire, the Batlow community has shown incredible strength and determination as the effort to rebuild and renew has continued. It has been an inspiration to watch Batlow pull itself back up and while so much has been achieved, there is still a lot of work to do. The Snowy Valleys Resilience Hub is going to be a great help in the next stages of the community's recovery. I was delighted to be at the official opening of the Resilience Hub, which was funded through a \$300,000 government recovery grant. Project manager Anne Hallard and project co-ordinator Helen O'Meara are already hard at work, helping to identify community needs and working with partnering agencies. A huge congratulations to the community members who worked hard to get this great new facility up and running. I want to particularly commend hub chairperson Ray Billing and his team and Do It For Batlow for their vision and determination to see this project delivered for Batlow.

JOHN MCKENNA

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today, I recognise the outstanding service to our North Coast community of John McKenna, who is retiring after 12 years as Chief Executive Officer of North Coast Community Housing. Mr McKenna's professionalism and humanity have set a high bar in the administration of public services, particularly during the challenges of the last few years. He has been a steady hand at the NCCH, overseeing the provision of secure and affordable homes to more than 5000 people, and has demonstrated a commitment to growth that has seen the organisation increase its portfolio to over 1000 properties. Mr McKenna has shown vision and "big picture" thinking in the role, delivering excellent programs such as Together Home that have led to an increase in tenants' social and economic engagement in society, and increased community capacity. Following the region's devastating floods, his efforts at all levels of government to advocate for more affordable housing in the Northern Rivers has been incredible. John has established a solid foundation for NCCH going forward and we wish him every success in his future endeavours.

CAITLIN REILLY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I acknowledge the contribution to the Northern Rivers arts community and the region's social consciousness by Byron Shire artist Caitlin Reilly. Caitlin is the owner of two art galleries and a tireless advocate for the work of a range of local emerging artists. She has recently extended this selflessness into the public realm, by creating a body of work that highlights a problem that can be found throughout Australia but which is particularly acute in Byron Bay – homelessness. Exhibiting at Lone Goat Gallery in Byron Bay this month is Caitlin's collection of paintings titled "Streets of This Town", which depicts a number of anonymous rough sleepers in and around Byron's CBD – a sight that is increasingly and terribly common following the double flood disaster across the region. Caitlin is keenly aware of the disparity between the rich and poor in the Northern Rivers, and the subjects of her paintings are represented in a visceral, poignant and beautiful way. I commend Caitlin for her work highlighting the experiences of vulnerable people in our community.

100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALLEND BEEN SOLDIERS MEMORIAL HALL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the 100 year anniversary of the Wallendbeen Soldiers Memorial Hall. The hall was opened on Anzac day in 1922, built as a communal place for returned soldiers, their families, friends and village residents to come together and pay their respects to our servicemen and women. This tradition has lived on through years gone by, going from strength to strength each

Anzac day, with the 2022 service the biggest the hall has seen in recent years. The immaculate condition of the 100 year old hall is testament to the amazing care provided by generations of Wallendbeen locals determined to ensure the memory of our Anzac soldiers lives on. The building is also widely used by the public including hosting the regular Wallendbeen Community Association meetings and the annual Wallendbeen Red Cross Christmas Fair. I congratulate the current committee including President Alex Baldry and Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Thorburn on the fantastic work and planning put in to this years Anzac Day service and furthermore thank them for their valuable service to the community through the upkeep of the Wallendbeen Soldiers Memorial Hall.

BETTY MOLLOY WW II VETERAN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the service of WW II veteran, Betty Molloy of Gundagai. On the 1st of July 1943, Betty enlisted in the Australia Air Force, becoming a member of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force. Throughout her postings to various RAAF bases including RAAF Base Wagga Wagga, RAAF Base East Sale, RAAF Base Amberley and RAAF Base Richmond, Betty worked in aircraft maintenance which involved the up-keep, repairs and preparation of warplanes. Later in her career with the RAAF, Betty became a record keeper where her efforts can be greatly attributed to the large collection of historical war documentation that Australia has today. Following her contributions to the war, Betty joined the Gundagai RSL Sub-Branch and the RSL Auxiliary committees where she is one of the longest serving members. During this years 2022 Anzac Day ceremony at Anzac Grove in Gundagai, Betty was presented with a framed memento in recognition of her service by the RAAF. This memento also celebrated another big milestone of Betty's as she turned 100 in December last year. Thank you for your service Betty.

JUNEE POKER RUN AND BLUES NIGHT

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to congratulate the Junee Poker Run on their fundraising efforts, with \$20,000 raised for CanAssist. The Poker Run through their event were also able to raise enough money to also donate \$1000 to the Junee Show Society, \$500 to Junee Tennis Club, \$500 to Junee VRA, \$500 to Junee Fire Brigade and \$500 to Junee Rural Fire Service. Having become an annual tradition, this year the Junee Poker Run and Blues Night raised its largest amount to date and was the largest event in the history of the poker run. There were some small hurdles, including changing venues and the route a few days beforehand, but these hurdles were overcome by Junee Poker Run Committee, and this incredible team ensured it was still a wonderful day and everything ran smoothly in the end. I would like to once again congratulate the team behind the Junee Poker Run and Blues Night and the sponsors and volunteers who enabled this event to go ahead. Thank you for all your fundraising efforts for these deserving recipients in Junee.

TOONGABBIE LEGAL CENTRE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise the Toongabbie Legal Centre (known as TLC) and in particular to recognise the work done by this free legal service. The TLC held its 14th Annual Fundraising Dinner on Saturday 30 April at the Blacktown Leisure Centre. Reportedly, over 800 people attended. TLC commenced operations in 2005 with the free service being formally opened in October 2007. Over their 14 years of serving the community over 10000 people have been provided with assistance. TLC looks forward to completing 15 years of community service this year. There are over 50 volunteers helping to make TLC run. They include barristers, solicitors, law students and others with a professional background. The Chief Guest at the Fundraising event was His Honour Justice Stephen Gageler AC, a Justice of the High Court of Australia. Also present was patron and long-time supporter of TLC, the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC. This is a community based organisation aiming to assist vulnerable and marginalised communities. They do very good work. They should be congratulated.

GRAND MUFTI INTERFAITH RAMADAN DINNER

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise the Grand Mufti, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed who held an Interfaith Ramadan Iftar Dinner on Saturday 9 April. The event was held at the Head Office in Chullora of the Australian National Imams Council (known as ANIC). The Grand Mufti regularly hosts an Interfaith Dinner during the Holy Month of Ramadan (although the pandemic posed difficulties). The speakers at the event included the Grand Mufti himself; Sheikh Shady Alsuleiman, NSW President of ANIC; Michael Stead, Anglican Bishop of South Sydney; and Vincent Long, Bishop of Parramatta. Also present was Rev Dr Patrick McNerney. There were also presentations by representatives of young Muslims. Such interfaith events are a useful initiative in multi-cultural and multi-faith Sydney. They are an affirmation of cultural and religious diversity in our community. They declare the importance of defending the right to that diversity. The Grand Mufti should be congratulated for this initiative.

PENRITH DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney)—It was my pleasure to join Penrith District Netball Association at the Opening Ceremony for the 2022 netball season and to also celebrate their 50th anniversary. Due to inclement weather, the traditional March Past was a little different with representatives taking a route up the stairs and through the clubhouse. Netball remains one of Penrith's largest female sports with Penrith District Netball Association currently having approximately 3,500 players making up 343 teams from their 20 clubs. In addition, this year they have introduced a mixed team competition. I thank Penrith District Netball Association, its clubs, players and officials for the effort put in to ensure the success of the 2022 season launch and the 50th anniversary celebrations.

CHARITY BOWLS DAY FUND RAISING FOR KELLY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the residents of Tumbarumba and their successful fundraising campaign of \$25,000 for local teenager Kelly Duffy who at 18 was diagnosed with leukaemia. The fundraising event was organised by Sue Morey and Tumbarumba Bowling Club's Holly Richards and Leisa Bradley. The event consisted of raffles, barbeque, bowls entries, personal donations, and a Go Fund Me page. There was also an auction run by Glenn McCallum from Tumbarumba Pharmacy. The items auctioned were donated by the Tumbarumba business community. I congratulate all concerned and join in wishing good health to Kelly, with so many friends, family and neighbours in the Tumbarumba Community who are there for you with a helping hand, supporting you along this journey.

RIDERS GIVE ROCK STAR RECEPTION AS HUGE CYCLE DRAWS TO A CLOSE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Matt Kean, principal of Lavington's Holy Spirit School, for the school's great efforts in raising more than \$70,000 for the ride to fight cancer known as the 'Melanoma Ride'. All proceeds being donated to the Melanoma Institute Australia and the Amie St Clair Melanoma Trust. This experience was a personal one for Matt, who in 2016 was diagnosed with the disease, followed by two years of immunotherapy treatment. The Melanoma Ride was two years in the making. Matt and his team rode 1000km across the Riverina from Albury to Lake Cargelligo, with the support of the students and staff of Holy Spirit and with the good wishes of many more friends. Well done Matt and team, what a great effort!

ALBURY CITY MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—Congratulations to Ian Burton and Laxna Bhujel, 2021 graduates of Xavier High School Albury and Trinity Anglican College respectively, in earning a medical scholarship for 2022. The Albury City medical Scholarship, worth \$5000 is to assist them in their studies of medicine at the University of New South Wales Rural Medical School. The aim of the Scholarship is to provide opportunities for graduates to return to regional towns after completing their degree and serve their community where their healthcare skills will be highly valued. I wish Ian and Laxna all the best in their medical endeavours and trust that they will enjoy their time and experience studying in regional New South Wales.

YOUR LOCAL CLUB ACADEMY GAMES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—The Your Local Club Academy Games were held in April at Wagga Wagga with the Central Coast represented by over 100 athletes, coaches and managers from the Central Coast Academy of Sport. The games saw a total of over 1,300 athletes from 11 regional academies compete in a range of sports including Basketball, Cycling, Golf, Hockey, Indoor Volleyball, Netball and Triathlon. After many delays and uncertainty whether the event would be able to go ahead, it was great that the athletes were able to travel to Wagga Wagga for the games and test their skills against some of highly competitive and like-minded athletes. Thank you to Managing Director of CCAS, Ian Robilliard and Event Manager Emily Burgess-Moore for making this all possible. Congratulations to all the athletes who were able to showcase the best of the Central Coast.

NSW TOP TOURISM TOWN AWARDS 2022

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Each year towns across NSW are nominated in the NSW Top Tourism Town Awards. This year in the category of Top Tourism Town with a population of over 5000 the Central Coast received three nominations. Long Jetty was nominated for its cafes, vintage and modern boutiques. Woy Woy was highlighted for its waterways perfect for fishing and famous seafood lunch at the recently upgraded Woy Woy Wharf. Wyong has been nominated for its fields of farmland, grazing animals and rich history. The public has the opportunity to vote in each of the categories with the winners representing NSW at the Australian Top Tourism Town Awards. Last year Ettalong Beach neighbouring Woy Woy won a judges choice award for the most compelling itinerary. Mister Speaker, 2022 is a more important year than ever for tourism across NSW with

people now able to travel much more freely intra and interstate revitalising towns that were affected across Regional NSW. It is great to see three locations on the Central Coast nominated in these awards.

JAY SEENEY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—There are a plethora of talented musicians in Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur region. Guitar-extraordinaire Nathan Cavaleri grew up in Ruse while The Ruebens also hail from our local area. Now we can add Jay Seeney to that incredible list. Jay has been making waves in the country music scene for years. His reputation as an enormously talented singer, songwriter and musician extends far beyond the boundaries of Campbelltown and Macarthur. The Appin resident – who is also a videographer – recently picked up his first golden guitar at the Tamworth Country Music Festival. It was actually his work as a videographer that saw him win the award for his with Ash Dallas and Luke O'Shea on the song Long Way 'Round. The accolade really is a reward for how hard Jay has worked at his craft. Given Jay's dedication and drive, it is highly unlikely that this will be the last award he receives at the Tamworth Country Music Festival. On behalf of Campbelltown and the entire Macarthur region, I would like to once again congratulate Jay on an incredible achievement. Here is to many, many more in the future.

MADELINE STEPHENSON

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—It is an honour today to congratulate and applaud Madeline Stephenson on receiving the 2022 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award. Madeline is a local businesswoman who works at Stephenson Real Estate whilst also caring for her sick husband, Neville. But that doesn't stop Madeline. She also teaches dancing lessons to disabled children and groups of seniors who travel around local nursing homes providing entertainment to residents. As a member of the Country Women's Association's Umina Beach branch, Madeline has also helped raise funds for local community projects and charities, and provides help to her elderly tenants to access government assistance. I thank Madeline for her love of community and for all the help she provides to our elderly residents, seniors and disabled community. You are one-of-a-kind.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:36 until
Thursday 12 May 2022 at 9:30.**