



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday 18 May 2022

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 18 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

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

The SPEAKER: I have been at two functions this morning. The one I have just come from was in the Jubilee Room where the SES is marking Wear Orange Wednesday, a special day recognising the contribution of the SES, and it is particularly appropriate in Volunteer Week. The official part was occurring just before I came in, but I know that they would welcome a visit from other members of Parliament who have not yet had the opportunity to go and acknowledge the wonderful SES workers in our community.

PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA BREAKFAST

The SPEAKER: I also acknowledge this morning that the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia hosted a breakfast attended by both the health Minister and the shadow health Minister, along with Kerry Chant, the Chief Medical Officer. I commend the Pharmaceutical Society for its contribution, particularly in helping to roll out the coronavirus vaccines and general flu vaccines. There is also the opportunity this morning for members of Parliament to get a flu vaccine. If people have not booked in, they might want to think about that. Community pharmacies have rolled out around 2.2 million coronavirus vaccines in New South Wales, which is a great contribution, so I acknowledge them as well.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

GOVERNMENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 11 May 2022.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (09:48): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022, which will implement a number of reforms to remove red tape and expedite the rollout of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program [CCEP]. Firstly, I take this opportunity to thank the Minister and his staff for engaging with my office on this bill and for the work they have done to bring it to this House. The Critical Communications Enhancement Program is an important investment in the Public Safety Network, which supports emergency services to respond in emergencies and natural disasters like the recent floods that have devastated communities across our State. I ask the Minister to detail for the House the telecommunications infrastructure that the Critical Communications Enhancement Program will be upgrading. Will those upgrades include the fibre network? I would like the Minister to make that clear in his response.

As the Minister noted in his second reading speech, the NSW Telco Authority has run into several barriers in rolling out the CCEP, in particular in accessing land to assess its suitability as a potential site to install communications infrastructure. The NSW Telco Authority also requires access to sites to maintain infrastructure to ensure the Public Safety Network is fully operational. I note that the Minister outlined several examples of delays, including process delays due to councils or departments requiring ministerial consent to lease or license land and regulatory delays when a council or department is required to publicly advertise for stipulated time frames before leasing land, along with negotiations with landowners over commercial arrangements. The bill will empower the NSW Telco Authority to roll out the Critical Communications Enhancement Program with powers and provisions that mirror those of the Electricity Supply Act 1995.

I now turn to the contents of the bill. Schedule 1 will amend the Government Telecommunications Act 2018, inserting definitions for an authorised officer into section 3. An authorised officer may carry out inspections in connection with the proposed installation or extension of telecommunications equipment and infrastructure. An authorised officer may also maintain or disconnect telecommunications equipment and infrastructure. The bill also establishes in section 3 the definition of an Emergency Telecommunications Network Operator—referred to throughout the bill as an ETNO—as an emergency services organisation within the meaning

of the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 that establishes or uses an alternative telecommunications network for operational communications. The bill also establishes a definition for a premises in this section.

New section 34A covers deemed access to government-owned infrastructure, enabling an authorised officer to enter land owned either by a government sector agency or State-owned corporation. That power can only be used to install telecommunications equipment on infrastructure owned by either a government sector agency or State-owned corporation. Before entering the property, an authorised officer must provide written notice of their intention to enter the property. New part 5A, division 3, covers powers of entry relating to a private property. New section 34H outlines the circumstances in which either the ETNO or authorised officer may invoke their power of entry. That includes carrying out preliminary investigations about the installation or extension of telecommunications infrastructure, along with installing, maintaining or disconnecting telecommunications infrastructure.

The bill also enables an authorised officer to bring any necessary vehicles or equipment onto both private or government land if it is required to inspect, install, maintain or decommission telecommunications infrastructure. New section 34I is an important aspect of the bill. I understand that the Government has negotiated with stakeholders to include this section to address concerns around accessing private property. Under new section 34I an authorised officer or ETNO must provide the owner of any premises with written notice of their intention to enter the premises. That written notice must state the purpose for which entry is required and the date of entry. The only exceptions to a written notice being issued are if the landowners consent to the authorised officer or ETNO entering the property or if it is an emergency situation. New section 34O outlines grounds for compensation to be paid to premises owners for any loss or damage arising from the powers of entry provisions. I request that the Minister provide the House with clarity over new section 34K relating to the use of force. The bill states:

An authorised officer may use reasonable force for the purpose of gaining entry to premises, other than part of a building being used for residential purposes, under a power conferred by this Division.

Will the Minister confirm that this section only refers to a situation such as cutting a padlock or accessing a gate and not to intersections between the authorised officer and other individuals? I have engaged with stakeholders, who have been supportive of the bill on the whole, but several minor issues have been raised that I ask the Minister to address. Firstly, will the Minister clarify what penalty will apply for impersonating or obstructing an authorised officer or ETNO? Will it simply be 50 penalty units or will a criminal penalty provision apply? Secondly, what dispute resolution process does the Government intend to put in place to ensure that a matter does not end up in our courts or that authorised officers are not put in combative situations unnecessarily?

Lastly, will the Minister advise if authorised officers and ETNOs will have to comply with existing biosecurity legislation and, if not, why that decision was made? The completion of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program is incredibly important to ensure the safety of our communities during natural disasters. We are six years down the road since the program was announced and our State has seen too many tragic bushfires and floods in that time. Labor supports the bill, and I look forward to the completion of this important program. Again, I thank the Minister and his staff. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (09:56): I am pleased the Government has brought forward the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022, which will provide a legislative framework to expedite the delivery of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program, or CCEP, across New South Wales. The Government understands the need to provide better services to ensure the safety of the people of New South Wales, including those in regional and remote locations. By reducing delays to the CCEP, the bill will deliver timely Public Safety Network coverage to enable our emergency services organisations to keep more people and places safe during emergencies and natural disaster events. The bill will address the shortfalls of existing land and property access provisions in the Government Telecommunications Act 2018. It draws on key elements of the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and will empower authorised officers with powers of entry to overcome issues when performing the important work of the CCEP.

The bill introduces penalties to reduce the obstruction of authorised officers carrying out their functions. It will allow authorised officers to access private and public land but will not be used to bypass existing site access protocols and will be used in conjunction with standard consultation and site assessment processes. The bill provides for deemed access approval, which will maintain consistency with the intent of the CCEP: to rationalise government operational communications by allowing Public Safety Network assets to be installed on other government-owned infrastructure. That will not only reduce delays to the Public Safety Network rollout but also reduce the construction of unnecessary and duplicated infrastructure and will provide better value for New South Wales Government funding.

The bill sends a strong message to the community that this Government is serious about public safety and providing our emergency services organisations with the critical communications tools they need and that it is listening to the needs of the community to improve service delivery across New South Wales. I now talk about the requirements to amend the Act. The key driver for the amendments is to support the rollout of the delivery of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program by overcoming delays to site access. The bill overcomes gaps in the access provisions of the Government Telecommunications Act 2018 to enable the NSW Telco Authority and emergency services organisations to gain access more efficiently to sites and infrastructure needed to build, maintain and operate the Public Safety Network.

In rolling out the CCEP, the NSW Telco Authority has encountered significant delays in accessing land to assess its suitability for establishing potential sites; in accessing other government infrastructure for collocation or consolidation into 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 situations.

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. It is expected that the powers may need to be used on only a small number of the approximately 675 CCEP sites. The bill introduces powers of entry to enable more efficient access to private land and deemed access approval to expedite access to government infrastructure, which will improve efficiency of government spending through collocation or consolidation of existing infrastructure rather than building unnecessary or duplicate infrastructure. The new terms of "authorised officer" and "emergency telecommunications network operator" introduced in the bill identify the persons empowered by the new provisions.

Section 34 of the Government Telecommunications Act 2018 currently authorises the NSW Telco Authority to access infrastructure that it owns but for which there is no access agreement. However, there are no provisions for enforcement or related offences, resulting in continuing obstruction to access at such sites. The bill establishes penalties for obstructing an authorised officer in carrying out their functions. This will ensure that the access powers established in this legislation are effective in overcoming barriers to the rollout of our critical Public Safety Network.

The powers of entry 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 powers of entry closely mirror the precedent established in the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and will be selectively applied by the NSW Telco Authority and emergency services organisations to overcome a range of barriers that currently inhibit progress for accessing some potential sites to assess for suitability for delivery of the CCEP and to access existing infrastructure via private land. The powers are an alternative to the use of more intrusive 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 given. Powers of entry will expedite coverage of our critical operational communications so that our emergency services organisations can respond effectively to emergency events across New South Wales.

As I said, the powers of entry established in this bill will be used as needed only for sites where there are significant delays. They will not be used to bypass existing site access protocols but will be used in conjunction with standard consultation and site assessment processes. The NSW Telco Authority and its partners will continue to show due consideration when accessing property, in line with standard access protocols. The NSW Telco Authority is committed to maintaining good relationships with landowners and occupiers of land where there are Public Safety Network sites. In each case when access is required, the NSW Telco Authority will contact the landowner or occupier with adequate notice to inform of intended access and will negotiate appropriate times and manner of access where possible. The Public Safety Network is vital to the safety of people and properties across New South Wales. Farms in areas of inadequate coverage are threatened with the risk that emergency services organisations will have reduced capacity to respond to emergencies, including natural disasters such as bushfires and floods.

Deemed access approval will be used to access infrastructure owned by the NSW Telco Authority and emergency services organisations as well as infrastructure owned by other government agencies. This power will be used to install equipment on any government agency infrastructure and will be used in compliance with site assessment processes. Deemed access approval could be used to overcome instances where a government agency has no direct interest or priority to accommodate CCEP equipment on infrastructure that is technically capable of supporting its presence. [*Extension of time*]

This could avoid a large number of economic inefficiencies though government infrastructure duplication if alternative locations must be sought. This is consistent with a core CCEP objective of infrastructure rationalisation. The powers of entry will often be used in conjunction with deemed access approval where government infrastructure is located on private land or is accessed via private land. Standard consultation and engagement processes with landowners and with government agencies will be followed whenever land or infrastructure will be accessed. Used where reasonably required, the access provisions of the bill will ensure that New South Wales has the coverage required to effectively manage emergency and public safety events by reducing delays to the CCEP rollout.

The proposed penalty provisions in the bill will be used to overcome instances of landowners or land occupiers obstructing authorised officers from undertaking functions of the amended Act. The Government Telecommunications Act 2018 introduced provisions in 2018 for the NSW Telco Authority to enter and occupy land to carry out its functions. However, no penalties were introduced for obstructing the NSW Telco Authority or its partners when exercising this authority, limiting their effectiveness and leading to further delays. The proposed penalties in this bill are reflective of similar provisions of the Electricity Supply Act 1995. These penalties will apply to anyone who obstructs an authorised officer in carrying out authorised functions. The penalty provisions will support the access provisions of the bill to overcome delays in completing Public Safety Network sites to ensure adequate network coverage for our emergency services organisations to keep the people and places of New South Wales safe.

I turn now to the carrier powers. Carriers have certain powers and immunities for accessing property under the Commonwealth's Telecommunications Act 1997, which includes some similar provisions to the bill. While these powers and immunities are now also available to the NSW Telco Authority, it has consistently applied New South Wales-based land use planning provisions, including the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007. The application of New South Wales legislation for land access purposes means that the NSW Telco Authority remains accountable to New South Wales' procedures and oversight processes. Emergency services organisations do not hold carrier licences and are therefore reliant on New South Wales legislation for land access.

With regard to consultation, over the past 12 months the NSW Telco Authority actively engaged with key stakeholders regarding the proposed reforms and the draft bill. This included engagement with New South Wales emergency service organisations and other key stakeholders, including the Rural Fire Service, the NSW Police Force, NSW Ambulance, Crown Lands, Forestry Corporation, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Communities and Justice. In April 2022 the NSW Telco Authority met with the Department of Regional NSW and members of the NSW Farmers Association, who provided further input into the bill.

With regard to cost, the total committed spend for the CCEP is \$1.4 billion including operational expenditure. This represents the biggest investment in critical communications infrastructure in a generation. On its completion, the network will deliver statewide population coverage of 99.7 per cent and land coverage of 85 per cent. Implementation of the amendments is not expected to incur further costs, and faster access to sites may result in cost savings.

With regard to site issues, more than 90 per cent of the CCEP sites require a tenure agreement such as a lease, licence or land access application. Delays with site delivery can be the result of a range of factors including tenure negotiations with multiple stakeholders such as landowners, infrastructure owners, Crown Lands and Aboriginal land councils, which can take six to nine months to complete. However, where multiple agreements are required, or where there are complex legacy tenure issues, negotiations are more protracted. Many can become stalled and can result in 12 months' security or more. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (10:11): I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022. I am pleased to support the bill, which amends the Government Telecommunications Act 2018. I emphasise the importance of the bill for the safety of the people of New South Wales. The amendments within the bill will ensure a faster delivery of the New South Wales Public Safety Network, the vital network used by emergency services organisations during emergencies and natural disasters. The government radio network, the Public Safety Network, is something deeply relevant to my community and deeply important to me personally, given that our community, particularly in the eastern part of my electorate, was so significantly impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires.

Last Saturday I was in Khancoban for the presentation of the Emergency Services Medal with the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, Steph Cooke. It was a pleasure to have the Minister there presenting medals to a number of brigades in the east of my electorate—Bringenbrong, Tooma, Glen Mannus, Maragle and Ournie. For me, it was a good opportunity to meet with those volunteers who gave so much during the 2019-20 bushfires. A particular part of being there on the weekend was reliving some of those memories. One that was vivid for me was the Green Valley bushfire as it extended eastward and met up with the Dunns Road

bushfire, causing a significant impact around the Ournie and Maragle communities. Then on the Friday it looked to threaten Khancoban over the weekend.

I was there during that period of the bushfires, and I vividly remember being around the back of the ute with Adrian Cass, the captain of Bringenbrong, a number of other RFS volunteers and the Fire and Rescue team, led by John Vandeven, that had come from Albury to help protect the Snowy Hydro power stations. I do not think we realised how close we got to losing power across the State because of the impact to the hydro stations near Khancoban. One of the aspects of being there that day and having conversations with both the RFS volunteers and Fire and Rescue was how they were challenged around communications, including the ability to communicate between government agencies and just have communication full stop. That was one of those vivid memories that I had from the 2019-20 bushfires.

It is so important for me to speak to the bill, but it is just as important to acknowledge the \$660 million investment by the New South Wales Government in the 2020-21 budget and to see the government radio network rolled out across our State. I know that this investment, which the member for Camden just spoke to, is going to see land coverage of the government radio network, or Public Safety Network, of 85 per cent of New South Wales and cover 99.7 per cent of our population. I cannot emphasise how important that government radio or Public Safety Network is. I commend the Government for that investment and the rollout.

In that sense, the main intention of the bill is to provide improved access to property and infrastructure to authorised officers to reduce delays to site development and ensure that our emergency services organisations have the coverage needed to best manage natural disaster and emergency events. Again in reference to the 2019-20 bushfires, I will speak briefly on communications more generally in terms of the impact for my community. Since those bushfires, one of the major concerns—we have seen it in the bushfire inquiry and I spoke of it just then in terms of government agencies—is the impacts for our broader community. Since 2019-20 I have been advocating for improvements to elements of the emergency communications infrastructure and also general communications for my community.

Firstly, an example is the Jingellic mobile tower. This mobile tower is operated by Telstra. It was destroyed in the Green Valley bushfire. It literally melted and in due course has been replaced. However, we continue to receive complaints from the community, which is experiencing significant deterioration in signal quality, in particular to the north of the tower. I have had conversations with the NSW Telco Authority. I thank it for its interest in this area. But it remains an issue that our community faces. Secondly, there were issues over having an uninterrupted power supply for the mobile tower at Mount Tumbarumba, again where service was lost during the bushfires.

That had an impact over the whole Upper Murray and South West Slopes. Power lost to that tower at Mount Tumbarumba, which was a repeater station, impacted on a tower located at Ikes Mountain. Again there were significant impacts to communications right across our community. Thirdly, ultra high frequency [UHF] communication for Ikes Mountain suffered due to maintenance issues for its repeater UHF equipment; therefore, it was not able to be fully utilised during the bushfire. This system offers UHF communications across a broad area caught up in the fires, including in Ournie, Jingellic and Tumbarumba.

While for some the bushfires of 2019-20 are starting to recede in memory, for others they remain hauntingly present. I will continue to advocate for those broader communications for my community, but I reiterate how pleasing it is that the NSW Telco Authority is rolling out the Public Safety Network, which is going to increase the critical communication coverage for those first responders working throughout the State. It is important to recognise that delays to accessing sites can mean that there is no Public Safety Network coverage in the surrounding area.

Lack of coverage means a reduced capacity for our emergency services organisations to manage responses to public safety events, emergencies and natural disasters, such as the recent floods in the Northern Rivers or the bushfires of 2019-20, which had such a devastating effect. A lack of coverage could mean that State Emergency Service officers are uncertain about the location of, for example, someone trapped in a car in a flooded area. In terms of bushfires, a lack of effective communication can mean critical time delays for RFS officers responding to a fire, which in turn causes risk to lives and property.

The introduction of powers of entry will allow authorised officers to access private and public land to overcome existing delays. The powers are designed to work alongside existing site access protocols and will be used together with standard consultation and site assessment processes in a staged manner. To ensure that the proposed powers are effective, penalties will be introduced to apply to anyone obstructing authorised officers from carrying out their functions under the Act. Everyone loves improved communications—particularly for use in situations of natural disaster, such as bushfires—but I am conscious that every time a right of access or power

of entry is provided to an authority, government must also provide both a set of limitations and rules and a process for dispute resolution that is fast and fair, at low or no cost to the landholder.

Over the past three years, I have engaged with a number of government agencies and corporations to help smooth the lines of communication with private landowners and farmers impacted by these organisations as they go about doing "good" things. Whether it is a utility improving infrastructure, or emergency services, or boat use on the Murray-Darling, there are always deeply held concerns about letting anyone have a right of access, particularly across active farm or pastoral land. I am no stranger to the passionate advancement of the argument that this is going to be "the thin end of the wedge". The concern is real. The Government must weigh and balance the competing interests of all stakeholders and carefully monitor the situation to detect and deter abuse of any privilege that provides access to private property. However, the provisions of the bill are vital to ensure the timely delivery of the Public Safety Network to give our emergency services organisations the coverage they need to keep our communities safe. For this reason, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (10:21): I speak in support of the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022 as it will promote faster delivery of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program [CCEP], which will provide the Public Safety Network across New South Wales. Of course, public safety is of paramount importance to the people of New South Wales and, indeed, to this Government. I commend the Minister and all stakeholders engaged for their considerable hard work and preparation in connection with the bill. The catastrophic bushfires, floods and other natural disasters that have impacted our State in recent years have highlighted the urgent need to roll out this vital network that provides operational communications to our emergency services organisations to manage such events. Understandably, and quite rightly, in this modern era the community has come to expect faster, more reliable and more effective communications in essential circumstances.

The bill will bring a very substantial—indeed, generational—boost to this critical State resource and deliver benefits across our great State. The main purpose of the bill is to provide improved access powers to authorised officers of the NSW Telco Authority and to emergency telecommunications network operators of emergency services organisations to expedite the delivery of the CCEP. The powers of entry introduced by the bill will allow authorised officers to access public and private land only when needed to carry out the important work of the CCEP. The powers are derivative of those used to access land and property for the supply of electricity through the Electricity Supply Act 1995. The provisions will be used considerably and in conjunction with standard negotiation and site access protocols.

New sections 34H to 34Q of the Act establish powers of entry to permit authorised officers to access public and private land and property for operational purposes including inspection and installation, maintenance, and repair and decommissioning of communications infrastructure. The powers of entry closely mirror equivalent provisions established in the Electricity Supply Act and will be applied selectively by authorised officers to overcome the barriers that currently inhibit access to 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 those 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 once ministerial approval has been given. The introduction of deemed access approval will maintain consistency with the intent of the CCEP, to rationalise government operational communications by allowing Public Safety Network assets to be installed on other government-owned infrastructure. This will not only save time but also provide better value for New South Wales Government funding by reducing the need for unnecessary, duplicate infrastructure. I will now provide some more detail of the deemed access to government-owned infrastructure provisions.

Alongside the amendments I have outlined, the 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. The 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.

The bill also provides for important new penalty provisions. The bill puts in place penalties for hindering or obstructing authorised officers from exercising any function conferred or imposed by the Act. Section 34 of the Government Telecommunications Act 2018 currently empowers the NSW Telco Authority 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 by the bill are effective in overcoming barriers to the rollout of our critical public safety communications network. The new powers contained in the 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.

The 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 or difficulty. 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. They will be used in conjunction with standard consultation and site assessment processes. Therefore, the bill will achieve improved efficiency in government expenditure—the application of taxpayers' funds—whilst delivering greater public safety outcomes in a more timely and efficient manner.

The rollout of the Public Safety Network is vital to ensure that our emergency services organisations have the operational communications tools that they need to manage natural disasters, emergencies and public safety events. I recognise and thank all the staff engaged in this vital area of government infrastructure, including the NSW Telco Authority and all of its staff, so ably led by managing director Kylie De Courteney. I also thank emergency services staff and organisations right across New South Wales.

It appears coincidental but it is timely and fitting that we introduce and speak to the bill on WOW Day, or Wear Orange Wednesday, the day that we thank, recognise and express our deep appreciation to all SES volunteers who give their time, effort and expertise at all hours of the day and night to people and communities in need in times of natural disaster. I was proud to be with our friends and colleagues from the NSW SES prior to coming into the Chamber. We are deeply grateful to that wonderful community and State organisation. This is an important and timely piece of legislation that has been hard worked up and well consulted upon. It brings substantial and generational change and uplift to this area of policy and its resourcing. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (10:31): I support the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022. The bill will expedite the delivery of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program [CCEP] through improved land and property access provisions. The CCEP is the program that will deliver critical Public Safety Network coverage to enable our emergency services organisations to keep more people and places safe during emergencies and natural disaster events. The bill will draw on access provisions of the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and will grant authorised officers with powers of entry and deemed access approval.

The introduction of powers of entry will overcome existing access issues for authorised officers carrying out the important work of the CCEP. It will allow authorised officers to access private and public land. The powers will not be used instead of existing site access protocols but in parallel and only to overcome delays at some important sites. The powers are an alternative to the use of more intrusive compulsory acquisition processes, which cannot commence until after six months of failed negotiations or ministerial approval has been given. To ensure those powers are effective in reducing delays, the bill introduces penalties for obstructing an authorised officer in carrying out their functions. Deemed access approval intends to rationalise government operational communications by allowing Public Safety Network assets to be installed on other government-owned infrastructure. This will not only save time but also provide better value for New South Wales Government funding by reducing the need for unnecessary and duplicate infrastructure.

The bill sends a strong message to the people of New South Wales that this Government is serious about investing in public safety and emergency management to improve the safety of our communities, including regional and remote locations. It has been only in the last handful of years that we have seen our communities right across New South Wales and beyond severely impacted by natural disasters, including bushfires and the recent flood events. Communities in the north of the State have been repeatedly and significantly impacted by flood events. The bill is further demonstration that the Government is taking the issue of public safety seriously and doing all within its power to strengthen public safety protections and infrastructure, and to streamline and fast-track the ability for emergency services personnel to communicate. Often in natural disasters the situation on the ground changes rapidly and communications need to be strong and protected so that they do not fail in those quickly changing circumstances.

The bill will also support the efficient delivery of a statewide interoperable radio network that facilitates critical communication between our emergency services responders to protect lives and property in the field as they manage emergency situations and natural disasters such as bushfires and floods. The key driver for the amendment is to support the rollout of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program by overcoming delays to site access. The bill overcomes gaps in access provisions of the Government Telecommunications Act 2018 to enable the NSW Telco Authority and emergency service organisations to gain access more efficiently to sites and infrastructure needed to build, maintain and operate the Public Safety Network.

In rolling out the CCEP the NSW Telco Authority has encountered significant delays in accessing land to assess its suitability for establishing potential sites in accessing other government infrastructure for collocation or consolidation 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 service 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 situations.

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. It is expected that the powers may need to be used on only a small number of the approximately 675 CCEP sites. The bill introduces powers of entry to enable more efficient access to private land and deemed access approval to expedite access to government infrastructure, which will improve efficiency of government spending through collocation or consolidation of existing infrastructure, rather than building unnecessary or duplicate infrastructure. The new terms introduced with the bill of "authorised officer" and "emergency telecommunications network operator" identify the persons empowered by the new provisions.

The Government Telecommunications Act 2018 currently authorises the NSW Telco Authority to access infrastructure that it owns but for which there is no access agreement. That is explained in section 34 of the bill. However, there are no provisions for enforcement or related offences resulting in continuing obstruction to access at such sites. The bill establishes penalties for obstructing an authorised officer in carrying out their functions. This will ensure that the access powers established in the bill are effective in overcoming barriers to the rollout of our critical Public Safety Network. The powers of entry 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 access processes. [*Extension of time*]

The powers of entry closely mirror the precedent established in the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and will be selectively applied by the NSW Telco Authority and emergency services organisations to overcome a range of barriers that currently inhibit access to some potential sites to assess for suitability for delivery of the CCEP and to access existing infrastructure via private land. The powers are an alternative to the use of the more intrusive compulsory acquisition processes found within 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 given.

Powers of entry will expedite coverage of our critical operational communications so that emergency services organisations can respond effectively to emergency events across New South Wales. The proposed penalties will be used to overcome instances of landowners or land occupiers obstructing authorised officers from undertaking functions of the amended Act. The Government Telecommunications Act 2018 introduced provisions for the NSW Telco Authority to enter and occupy land to carry out its functions; however, no penalties were introduced for obstructing the NSW Telco Authority or its partners when exercising this authority, limiting their effectiveness and leading to further delays. The proposed penalties in the bill are reflective of similar provisions in the Electricity Supply Act 1995.

These penalties will apply to anyone who obstructs an authorised officer in carrying out authorised functions. The penalty provisions will support the access provisions of the bill to overcome delays in completing Public Safety Network sites to ensure adequate network coverage so that emergency services organisations can keep the people and places of New South Wales safe. The powers of entry established in the bill will be used as needed and only for sites where there are significant delays. The powers will not be used to bypass existing site access protocols but be used in conjunction with standard consultation and site assessment processes.

The NSW Telco Authority and its partners will continue to show due consideration when accessing property, in line with standard access protocols. The NSW Telco Authority is committed to maintaining good relationships with landowners and occupiers of land on Public Safety Network sites. In each case, when access is required, the NSW Telco Authority will contact the landowner or occupier with adequate notice to inform them of intended access and will negotiate appropriate times and manner of access where possible. The Public Safety Network is vital to the safety of people and properties across New South Wales.

Farms in areas of inadequate coverage are threatened with the risk that emergency services organisations will have reduced capacity to respond to emergencies and natural disasters such as bushfires and floods. The total committed spend for the CCEP is \$1.4 billion, which represents the biggest investment in critical communications infrastructure in a generation. On its completion, the network will deliver statewide population coverage of 99.7 per cent and land coverage of 85 per cent. The implementation of the amendments is not expected to incur further costs and faster access to sites, and it may result in cost savings. I am pleased to support the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (10:42): The Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022 will expedite the delivery of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program, which is the program expanding the Public Safety Network across New South Wales. The Public Safety Network provides the critical communications for our emergency services organisations to manage natural disasters, emergencies and public safety events. The bill will address the shortfalls of the existing land and property access provisions within the Government Telecommunications Act 2018. It mirrors key elements of the Electricity Supply Act 1995, empowers authorised officers with powers of entry and introduces penalties to reduce obstructions to authorised officers in carrying out their functions.

The powers are an alternative to the use of more intrusive compulsory acquisition processes, which cannot commence until after six months of failed negotiations or ministerial approval has been given. The bill also introduces deemed access approval, which will not only save time but also provide better value for the New South Wales Government funding by reducing the construction of unnecessary or duplicate telecommunications infrastructure. Deemed access approval will support the rationalisation of the Government's operational communications by allowing Public Safety Network assets to be installed on other government-owned infrastructure. These provisions will be used considerably and in conjunction with standard consultation and site access protocols.

The amendments in this bill could save months of delay. Delays to the rollout of the Public Safety Network in areas without coverage could mean catastrophic damage to property or land or potential loss of life that could have been prevented. I speak firsthand about the recent floods in February and March. There were cases when our telecommunications went down. Who would have guessed that the whole of the NBN is fed through a pit in the great little town of Woodburn?

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: What a great town.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I note that the member for Clarence is in the Chamber. The whole of the NBN went down for the North Coast, not for one or two days but for eight days. There was no telecommunications for eight days. In the 2017 floods we lost a couple of mobile towers in the flood zone near the great village of Tumbulgum. They put the fuse box on the ground when they built the towers and the flood came three metres over the fuse box, so there was no telecommunications. I have witnessed towers being built throughout my electorate over many years, and they are probably one of the most controversial issues that you will ever get in an electorate. Everyone complains that they have no coverage, so the telco comes along and puts in a tower and it is like an atomic bomb goes off. It is as though everyone is going to have their brains fried and harmful things will happen. There are public rallies, protests and petitions. Then the tower is built and it all goes away. Just like the tide, it comes and goes.

The entire North Coast community complained bitterly about the lack of telecommunications, except for the lovely township of Mullumbimby. In recent times, delegates from Mullumbimby have come to my office to express their concern about mobile towers. They actually put aluminium foil in their hats to stop their brains from frying. After spending an hour and a half with them, I do not think the foil was that effective. I thought I had seen everything in telecommunications but then, lo and behold, Mullumbimby residents burnt down their mobile tower. They set fire to it and up she went. I have been advised that if you pull off the inspection plate at the bottom of the towers and set fire to them, they go up like a Roman candle. All those lovely little transmitters at the top explode like fireworks. Who would have guessed that, with most people in New South Wales complaining about a lack of telecommunications, the fine folk of Mullumbimby, with their tin foil hats on, would actually set fire to their tower and destroy it? Mullumbimby will probably go back to the old "pigeon with a note on its leg" method of communication. Telecommunications are extremely important.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: A wonderful fable.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: It is a wonderful thing. It is really not a joking matter. Telecommunications can save lives. During the floods I was in boats helping to take drugs, life-saving equipment, water, food, baby formula—

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: Not to Mullumbimby.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Not to Mullumbimby. I was taking those essential items to Tumbulgun, Condong and places like that. That was because there were no telecommunications. They all went down. A number of significant issues will be raised in the flood review that the Government has announced. The report will be handed down on about 30 September. A number of my little communities took it upon themselves to subscribe privately to Elon Musk's Starlink. They created internet hubs up and down the valley, which is quite enterprising. This valuable amending bill will provide the power to enter properties. Giving the Government the right to enter property is always contentious. In my electorate, after negotiation, property was compulsorily acquired for the new hospital, which is currently under construction. Issues about compulsory acquisition of property have arisen with respect to the M4 and various highways around this great State. Those issues are particularly contentious when they concern market value and compensation. But the job is getting done.

When I first came into this place, I was a member of the Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities. One of the issues raised was the resistance from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to having towers on its land. That resistance means that towers often must be placed in suburbia, which causes a great deal of angst within local communities. I implore the Minister to consider expanding this amendment to deal with national parks. The bill allows the installation of towers on government infrastructure, which I assume refers to buildings, bridges, water towers and things like that. But it should also deal with national parks. The heartfelt desire of my local community is that we ensure the towers are flood protected. Who would have guessed that we would lose the whole of the NBN? That was the big difference between 2017 and the recent flood. In 2017 we did not have the NBN, but this time it totally and utterly failed for weeks. I believe some places still have not got their internet back. We live in the age of e-commerce. It is a bit heartless. Could I have an extension of time, please?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: There is very little interest, one way or the other, in the member's request for an extension. But I grant the extension.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I can tell by the enthusiasm and the smiles of the reporters in that great organisation of Hansard that they are hanging on every word, as they do quite professionally every day that Parliament is in session. Telecommunications infrastructure is so important and needs to be expanded. Flood proofing it is a number one priority. I was desolate and really disappointed that it was lacking. During the floods we only lost one life in the Tweed electorate. As we have often heard in this place and witnessed ourselves, the SES and all our emergency workers do a great job. Improving telecommunications by means of bills like this is an arduous task. I have gone to a number of public meetings. They were usually attended by people who are against rather than for a proposal. But I could see the angst and concern in their eyes. Obviously they have been very proactive on the internet and have reams of supporting documentation from learned people who live somewhere else in the world.

The public safety aspect is good. The emergency services are all combining into one system. Many years ago they had separate systems that failed to talk to each other. I ask the Minister to address whether our system is compatible with the Queensland system because, being on the border, my electorate shares zones. In the past, we have had unusual issues. Coming from Lake Macquarie, Mr Assistant Speaker, you are probably not aware that the hose fittings used by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services are quite different to those used in New South Wales. So the trucks on both sides of the border have to carry dual fittings to ensure compatibility. Not only are the train tracks a little thinner but also the hose fittings, radio systems, databases and a raft of other things are different. I compliment James McTavish, the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner, who is working tirelessly to standardise a lot of things across not only the Queensland border but also the Victorian and Australian Capital Territory borders. I will be sitting in a nursing home drinking a lovely coffee and port before that is ever fixed. But at least we can start to try. I commend the bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The contribution of the member for Tweed was very worthwhile and entertaining. I can only imagine that what I thought was a silver Akubra in his office is actually a tinfoil hat. I congratulate and thank the member for Tweed. I call the member for Clarence for the follow-up act.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (10:55): I am not going to follow on with Aesop's Fables, but I do make a contribution to debate on the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022. It is appropriate to be considering this bill today on WOW Day—Wear Orange Wednesday—when we recognise and appreciate our SES volunteers, who rely on critical communications to save lives and property, and quite rightly so. As the member for Tweed pointed out, during the recent floods on the North Coast the telecommunication hub at Woodburn went down, and the Northern Rivers had no communications for eight days. We must think about those people who were stuck on the roofs of their isolated rural properties, waiting to be saved, with only the clothes on their back, and probably their dog and their cat. They were waiting for food and help, not knowing when it was going to come. So telecommunications during natural disasters like floods and bushfires are absolutely vital, and we must do everything we can to ensure that they work efficiently and effectively.

This bill addresses issues about access to property and infrastructure experienced by the NSW Telco Authority and its partners. I focus on the importance of the Public Safety Network and why the provisions of the bill are vital to its timely delivery. The Public Safety Network is a vital tool for our emergency services organisations to manage emergency and public safety events. By way of background, the Public Safety Network was established in 1993 to provide a common platform for New South Wales government agencies and authorities that use mobile radio communications. Today it is one of the largest and most reliable trunked radio networks in the world. The Critical Communications Enhancement Program [CCEP] is a key initiative designed to expand and enhance the Public Safety Network. Through that program, the Public Safety Network will connect 80 per cent of New South Wales and will reach nearly 100 per cent of the State's population when complete.

The Public Safety Network is vital communications infrastructure that ensures the ongoing safety of people and places across New South Wales. In rolling out the CCEP, in a number of instances the NSW Telco Authority has encountered significant delays in accessing land to assess the suitability of potential sites, in accessing other government infrastructure for collocation or integration in the Public Safety Network, and in accessing land where infrastructure is owned by the 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 that could mean a reduced capacity to coordinate responses to bushfires, floods and other emergencies, or public safety events. The Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022 is vital to the timely rollout of the CCEP in the delivery of our Public Safety Network. Key provisions in the bill will overcome access issues at many sites, ensuring that our emergency services organisations have the coverage they need faster.

The introduction of powers of entry will allow authorised officers to access private and public land, but the powers will not be used to bypass existing site access protocols and will be used in conjunction with standard consultation and site assessment processes. The establishment of deemed access approval in the bill will allow authorised officers to install Public Safety Network assets on other government-owned infrastructure. That will align with the intent of the CCEP to rationalise government operational communications, avoiding duplication of infrastructure and providing better value for our tax dollars.

To ensure the new powers are effective in reducing delays, penalties will be introduced to apply to anyone obstructing authorised officers from carrying out their functions. Those amendments could save from two to six months per CCEP site where the use of the powers is appropriate. As much as one to two years could be saved for sites where there have been ongoing delays in negotiations for access. The provisions of the bill will combine to ensure the timely delivery of the Public Safety Network and to provide our emergency services organisations with the coverage needed to keep the people and places of New South Wales safe. I am pleased to support the bill.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government)
(11:00): In reply: I thank all members for their contributions to debate on the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022, particularly members representing the electorates of Swansea, Camden, Albury, Willoughby, Mulgoa, Tweed and Clarence. As stated previously, the bill is essential for the timely rollout of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program [CCEP]. The Public Safety Network, which is being enhanced by the CCEP, provides vital communications infrastructure that ensures the ongoing safety of people and places across New South Wales. The 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. The changes proposed in the bill will help to ensure there are no delays to that essential program.

I now respond briefly to the points made by members. In response to the comments from the member for Swansea, I clarify that while new section 34K permits an authorised officer to use reasonable force for the purpose of gaining entry to premises, such force would only be used in urgent situations where site failure could cause risk to lives or property, and where contact with the landowner or occupier was not possible prior to entry or where the landowner or occupier was not available to facilitate entry. More specifically, reasonable force would be used in relation to physical infrastructure such as a locked gate preventing urgent access to a site. Reasonable force does not relate to physical contact with a person, and under no circumstances will authorised officers attempt to physically engage with a person in carrying out a function such as entry to property.

In relation to penalties and dispute resolution, the bill establishes clear penalties, including for impersonating an authorised officer. Those penalties equate to \$22,000 for a corporation and \$5,500 for an individual. The member for Swansea also asked about dispute resolution, and I am pleased to advise that the NSW Telco Authority [NSWTA] works closely with all private landowners to reach mutually agreed outcomes. The NSW Telco Authority also has internal property specialists and stakeholder engagement teams that support the resolution of any issues or concerns directly with landowners.

I confirm that the NSW Telco Authority and our emergency services organisations take biosecurity very seriously. The Telco Authority is committed to supporting biosecurity measures and minimising the risk of pests,

diseases and weeds establishing and spreading between properties. If a biosecurity management plan is in place, it will form part of the landowner agreement and site access protocol. In general, NSWTA contractors minimise risk by cleaning vehicles prior to site visits and keeping vehicles on the designated access tracks. Overall, the bill demonstrates that the Government is committed to ensuring that New South Wales' emergency services organisations have access to vital and reliable communications infrastructure.

On the issue of interoperability, I note that the Government is working with the Queensland Government for the safety of border communities. It is a major pain point for border communities when their respective State or Territory governments do not communicate with each other to make sure that those citizens get a seamless service. The amendments brought forward today are key to supporting that goal, and I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

STATE INSURANCE AND CARE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 29 March 2022.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:06): I am happy to continue briefly after having been interrupted on this issue on a previous day. As we have heard from a number of previous speakers, the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 involves a number of attempts to address issues that have become apparent in the way the bill works, but to do so through consultation and taking into account the real experience of workers. I turn now to the issue of commutation, on which there has been some agreement about how we should move forward. There has certainly been some discussion. In terms of accepting a lump sum payment rather than an annual or ongoing recurrent payout, there can be advantages to agreements between the parties being more readily available. Where agreement is reached, in some cases prolonged litigation does not need to be resorted to.

There are some advantages for the community in that approach. There is always a balance and there are legitimate issues around setting the criteria for commutation situations, but they can certainly play a productive role in the outcome of that kind of litigation. The amendments put forward provide a framework for expanding the circumstances in which workers and employers may commute or settle claims. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority will consult with stakeholders to ensure that any expansion of commutations strikes the right balance between giving greater access to commutations for workers who want to exit the scheme while at the same time not driving behaviours that lead to poor outcomes for the scheme as a whole. The amendments also confer powers on the independent Personal Injury Commission to review and approve commutation agreements.

Conferring those functions on the commission serves multiple purposes. First, it responds to the recommendation of the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, that any commutations should be subject to approval by the commission. Secondly, there are currently multiple touchpoints in the approval of those agreements involving both the State Insurance Regulatory Authority and the commission. The amendments will create a single location for the approval of those agreements in the commission, making the system easier to navigate for the parties to those agreements. The amendments are designed to provide a framework for expanding who has access to commutations while preserving protections for workers who seek to access commutations. That reflects what His Honour Mr McDougall, QC, noted in his report—that there can be significant psychosocial benefits for workers in settling claims. The commutation amendments also confer the power to approve commutations to the president of the Personal Injury Commission rather than the State Insurance Regulatory Authority. That follows the recommendation of His Honour Mr Justice McDougall, QC, and simplifies the procedure involved in obtaining a commutation.

In terms of protections and oversights provided for workers in this proposed scheme, the administrative function of approving a commutation agreement will be undertaken in the Personal Injury Commission under the delegation of the president. That will allow for adequate protection for those workers that may choose to accept a commutation, as this function will be carried out by the independent tribunal. As part of the approval process, the president also retains a discretion to refer matters to a member of the commission for review as to whether the

agreement is inaccurate or inadequate. A further protection is that a worker will not be allowed to enter into a commutation agreement until legal advice has been obtained. The regulations may allow an exception to this requirement in limited circumstances. The regulations may also require a worker to obtain financial advice, at the expense of the insurer, before the worker enters into a commutation agreement.

The commutation amendments can make it easier for a worker and insurer to commute or settle their claim. The amendments will remove the need for multiple touchpoints in the process of approving commutation agreements, making the process simpler. The amendments also provide a power to make regulations that would expand access to commutations. The regulations will create classes of claims that can be commuted without meeting the existing stringent preconditions. Any such regulations will only be made after detailed consultation with stakeholders.

I understand that that issue has been the subject of some discussion between the parties around possible further amendment and, if that is achieved by agreement, it is a good thing for the parties to work together to achieve even further improvements. I understand that is where we are at this morning. The intent has always been to consult with stakeholders and the various parties, working together to improve legislation that we know is aimed at addressing complex issues—very challenging situations, in some cases—and to do so in a way that supports injured workers and still protects the integrity of the scheme. Where we have landed is likely to be an improvement in that direction, so I am happy to commend the bill, perhaps as amended, to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (11:11): I speak to the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. As a member, I have seen too many workers in my electorate of Swansea being ripped off by the mishandling of icare by the Government and this Premier. I do not want to beat around the bush. The reason the Government has brought this bill before the Parliament is to fix the state of icare. The bill will amend the State Insurance and Care Act, the Workers Compensation Act and the Workplace Injury Management Act to implement several recommendations of the McDougall review. It tells us a lot. They receive recommendations to address issues in the workers compensation system but wait for over a year to implement them.

The bill will seek to clarify the objectives and functions of both the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] and icare. It extends to SIRA's investigative and regulatory powers over the Nominal Insurer along with extending an icare director's term from three to four years and allowing icare's board to advise the Minister about whether a direction it issues is in the public's best interest. The bill will also allow for the settlement of lump sum death benefits and the restoration of some commutation rights by regulation. I note that the shadow Minister, the member for Canterbury, is in the Chamber and she will move an amendment relating to commutation, which the previous speaker alluded to. The amendment is needed because this is such a complex area that it should not be dealt with by regulation; it should be through legislation. Like the previous speaker, I too understand that there is agreement across this Chamber that the amendment will be adopted, and I agree with the previous speaker that that is a good thing.

What the bill fails to do is put an end to performance-related bonuses or incentive payments that have already cost taxpayers in the vicinity of \$4 million. Nor has the Government sought to bring icare procurement in line with other New South Wales public sector agencies under the Procurement Act 1912 that exempts Nominal Insurers from procurement laws. It is unsurprising that this Government, given its track record on workers compensation and its complete disregard for workers, has failed to take this opportunity to appoint a representative for workers to the icare board. It makes sense. Not only are workers unrepresented on the board, but the Government has failed to make returning injured workers to health and employment an objective of icare.

Let us look at the Premier's record with icare. As we know, this is the Premier's baby. He was the chief architect, although "vandal" may be a more fitting descriptor. In July 2020 a *Four Corners* episode exposed the mismanagement and, frankly, the complete failure to support injured workers across this State. Since that episode aired, return-to-work rates have fallen to a near historic low of 62 per cent at the four-week interval. Not only have return-to-work rates plummeted, but icare has churned through its \$3.9 billion surplus, racking up underwriting losses totalling \$4.54 billion in the past three years. Let us not forget how that initial \$3.9 billion surplus was achieved: by expelling more than 5,000 injured workers from the scheme and then cutting the benefits of those who remained. I find this to be absolutely shameful. It does not stop there. The mismanagement is hurting not just workers but also businesses, with premiums rising by 6 per cent in the past two years and with premiums to rise by at least 40 per cent by the end of this decade, impacting 3.2 million businesses.

That is only scratching the surface of the mismanagement of this agency under the Premier's stewardship, which has seen icare underpay 52,000 workers by up to \$80 million. I have not even begun to detail the pay rises and dodgy deals conducted by icare, such as the new icare CEO being awarded a \$120,000 pay rise earlier this year, which now makes him the State's highest paid public servant. This carefree approach to taxpayer funds is not limited to excessive pay rises; it extends to the haphazard approach to tendering for services, such as the

awarding of a \$140 million IT contract in a seven-day tender, despite being warned that this rushed process would end in disaster. This warning has rung true, with the project blowing out to \$360 million, and it is still incomplete.

Icare has also been caught awarding at least \$6 million to Korn Ferry. That was when icare attempted to at least put up a facade of a tendering process. When it comes to the IVE Group, it did not even go that far. Those opposite would know the IVE Group well; it is, after all, the Liberal Party's printer and major donor. It benefitted to the tune of a whopping \$18 million from icare for a project that never even went to tender. If it was not Liberal donors benefitting from icare contracts it was Liberal Ministers, with icare caught paying a labour hire company \$700,000 to hire a former US Republican operative to work in the now Premier's office.

This is a rotten culture that has been established within icare on this Premier's watch. It went right to the top, with the former CEO having to stand aside due to a conflict of interest after it emerged that icare handed his wife a \$770,000 contract without tender. This is the same CEO who, with another top executive, took an undisclosed sponsored trip to Las Vegas paid for by a multimillion-dollar contractor to the agency. This is not a one-off of executives abusing their power. Icare was previously referred to ICAC for handing an \$11 million marketing contract to a company secretly owned by a top executive at the agency.

Further, in the past four years icare's top executives took a total of 36 foreign trips—10 times more than SIRA, their own regulator, did. At the same time as executives were handing themselves and family members government contracts, a 2019 review found that 46 per cent of claims handled by icare failed to follow the relevant law. This led to SIRA, the Auditor-General and even former Supreme Court Justice Robert McDougall slamming icare for its poor governance. So poorly run has the organisation been that the Premier had to rush the approval of a \$4 billion emergency bailout of 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 crisis in June last year. Yet despite the disastrous stewardship of icare by the member for Epping, those opposite looked around and thought, "This is the bloke that should be leading the State." It is past time for this Government to fix the icare mess that it started and to deliver for the injured workers of New South Wales.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government)
(11:20): In reply: I am pleased to deliver the reply to debate on the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I thank members for their contributions to the debate. The bill implements the strong recommendations put forward by the McDougall review. As part of that review, stakeholders were consulted extensively. Submissions considered by the review included those made by the New South Wales Bar Association, Business NSW, the Insurance Council of Australia, the Law Society of New South Wales, the NSW Self Insurers Association and Unions NSW. Following consideration of these and many other submissions, the McDougall review handed down its recommendations. In implementing these recommendations, the bill supports injured workers in clarifying the operation of the scheme and giving additional powers to the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA].

Further consultation on the benefits related to the amendments was conducted by way of a 2021 discussion paper produced by SIRA, for which submissions were received. The McDougall review recommended that all statutory provisions expressed to apply to a licensed insurer apply to the Nominal Insurer, icare and any subsidiaries, the NSW Self Insurance Corporation, and any government self-insurer. It also recommended that SIRA's investigative powers be extended. In responding to these recommendations, the amendments to the regulatory powers contained in the bill are targeted and effective. These additional powers encourage strong regulation and the ability for SIRA to investigate the operation of the scheme and confirm that insurers are complying with their obligations. Workers are better protected by this increased oversight.

The ability for SIRA to issue a direction to an insurer, or for an insurer to make an undertaking, opens another regulatory avenue for SIRA to seek compliance. Strong and effective regulation of insurers provides additional support and protections for injured workers. This is an important regulatory tool to ensure compliance with an insurer's obligations under the legislation. I note that this power to issue a direction to licensed insurers can be used where there has been a breach of a licence, the workers compensation Acts or a requirement made by the authority under the workers compensation Acts. We are not changing the substantive legislation that an insurer must presently comply with and has an obligation to uphold. Rather, this is another regulatory tool to direct compliance where an insurer's conduct is causing a breach. SIRA will, importantly, be able to direct an insurer to refrain from or take action to resolve the breach. The McDougall review noted:

... SIRA ought to have clear powers to give direction to all participants who are involved in managing claims under the workers compensation scheme, even in the absence of a relevant licence condition. In short, while the regulatory power has as part of its armoury any relevant licence provisions, it ought not be limited to those provisions.

Noting the report's endorsement for SIRA to have a meaningful and clear directions power, an enforceable undertaking provision would be a natural addition to such a power. Given the report plainly notes that SIRA ought to have power to direct insurers to take particular action, that recommendation would naturally encompass a power

to agree with insurers that they are to take particular action. The option for an insurer to enter an undertaking encourages insurers to work cooperatively with the regulator for the benefit of the scheme. Insurers can bring issues to the regulator where they have identified a breach and can demonstrate that they are working to resolve the issue. It provides flexibility in directly addressing breaches with targeted resolution strategies to ensure direct outcomes for workers whilst still allowing for formal regulatory action should the insurer breach the enforceable undertaking. It is good policy to support the streamlined resolution of disputes in this way and it will limit unnecessary costs to the scheme and impacts to the court system. This again strengthens the scheme and its operation for injured workers.

I now turn to the expanded definition of "insurer" and the new definition of "claims administration functions". In amending the definition of "insurer", we have taken a functional approach. Any entity that is performing the functions of an insurer under the legislation, particularly if that includes interaction with an injured worker, should be subject to regulation. This amendment acknowledges the complexity of the scheme and the interaction that injured workers have with many entities in the scheme. The definition of "claims administration functions" includes the making of decisions about liability for compensation, work capacity decisions, resolution of disputes, treatment, rehabilitation and return to work. It also includes the giving of notices and the payment of compensation. These are all functions that are performed either by, or under the oversight of, the insurer. The variety of corporate structures in the workers compensation scheme mean that it is sometimes not clear which entity has caused a breach.

Further, SIRA's powers of investigation do not currently extend beyond an insurer. This minor amendment identifies clearly what functions are insurer functions. Even if those functions are performed by a separate corporate entity on behalf of an insurer, SIRA will have sufficient investigatory powers to regulate insurers. The bill also clarifies the operation of the scheme through amendments to the objectives and functions of both the State Insurance Regulatory Authority and icare. These objectives and functions now reflect the current operation of the scheme and have a focus on accountability, transparency and the strength of the scheme. These objectives reflect the number of schemes both icare and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority operate in, and go to the heart of icare and SIRA as entities. The objectives for each agency are also accompanied by the introduction of policy objectives for the State Insurance and Care Governance Act. The McDougall review states:

... a clear statement, in the SICG Act itself, of its objects and purposes would assist in understanding and differentiating the roles, functions and powers of the entities that the Act has created.

This clear statement will be implemented as part of the bill. The objects provision identifies the governance arrangements contained in the Act and clarifies the roles of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority and icare in comparison with each other. I now turn to the amendment related to commutations. The bill allows for the provision of legal and/or financial advice. The proposed approach ensures that preconditions—such as level of impairment, duration of claim and exhaustion of efforts to return the worker to employment—are considered and ensures that the scheme continues to provide ongoing benefits to injured workers, who will best benefit from ongoing benefits rather than a lump sum payment. The reviews mentioned earlier, while agreeing that expansion of commutations is a good thing, also heard that it needs to be considered and controlled.

Importantly, the bill transfers to the Personal Injury Commission all steps in approving a commutation. This is the ultimate protection for workers. The regulations will allow for a considered, controlled and flexible approach to commutations, while ensuring the highest level of oversight and protection. Further amendments to benefits in the bill include those to death benefits. I will correct the record regarding the current lump sum death benefit amount, which has recently been the subject of indexation. The current benefit amount as of 1 April 2022 is \$862,350, which is an increase from \$849,300. Icare has implemented several of the McDougall recommendations operationally. It has considered the issues identified by McDougall and is responding accordingly. Amendments contained in the bill now explicitly include consideration of the public interest. This is a great thing.

When making a direction to the board, the Minister must seek advice as to whether the direction is within the public interest. This is an important amendment that acknowledges the importance of the scheme to all people in New South Wales. This will apply to directions given to the icare board and directions given to the board of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority. This ensures that both the regulator and the service provider are under the same obligation to consider the public interest. Including this provision reinforces the themes of accountability, transparency and good governance in the amendments that have been proposed. These themes have been addressed in the increased regulatory and investigatory powers for SIRA; policy objectives for SIRA, icare and the State Insurance and Care Governance Act; and amendments to benefits. As the Minister for the State Insurance Regulatory Authority—the regulator of the scheme—for a number of years now, I am absolutely grateful for the McDougall review, particularly for its recommending that more power be given to the regulator. As we have seen, in an increasingly complex world, if there is any doubt about the interpretation of any law, the courts should err

on the side of giving more power to the regulator because that is no doubt the will of the Parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Sophie Cotsis and Mr Alex Greenwich.

Consideration in Detail

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: By leave: I shall propose the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 3 and schedules 1 to 3 be agreed to.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:38): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2022-069A in globo:

No. 1 Commutation

Page 2, clauses 2 and 3, lines 5–10. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

This Act commences on the date of assent to this Act.

No. 2 Commutation

Pages 7–9, Schedule 2[2]–[17], line 18 on page 7 to line 15 on page 9. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 3 Commutation

Page 13, Schedule 2[27], lines 17–25. Omit all words on those lines.

I thank everybody who has been a part of this process. We must make sure that we always have the injured workers front and centre, as well as making sure that there is a viable system. I thank everyone who has written to me and to the Government. We have ventilated this issue exhaustively, and I acknowledge the Government, the crossbench and the minor parties for agreeing to this. It is very welcome that the Government will set up its expert panel from small business, the insurers, the unions and academics to make sure that it comes back to this place with a sensible proposal for expanding commutation. I acknowledge the work that we have all done to get to this position.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (11:40): I speak in response to the commutation amendments to the bill proposed by the Opposition. The bill proposed to make two amendments to the scheme for commutations, in line with recommendations by the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC. Firstly, the bill proposes to move the administrative function of approving a commutation agreement away from the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] and to the Personal Injury Commission under the delegation of the president. It makes sense that this be undertaken in the independent tribunal where the agreement is ultimately approved as this will remove the need for multiple touchpoints to have a commutation agreement approved. The involvement of the commission would provide the ultimate protection for injured workers.

Secondly, the bill proposes that regulations will be able to be made that expand access to commutations for certain classes of claims, with appropriate controls to ensure the long-term viability of the scheme. As we have heard through this debate, stakeholders are generally supportive of commutations, though there are deeply divided views on who should have access, under what conditions, and the process to access a commutation. We have heard the views of members of this House and, while we believe the approach proposed by the Government would have achieved the goals of expanding access to commutations in a careful, considered and controlled manner, we will not oppose these amendments. We take the word of the Opposition in good faith that it is committed to allowing commutations for workers who would benefit most from this way of exiting the scheme. We will work with the Opposition on a way to expand access to commutations in an effective and sustainable manner. In the meantime, SIRA will undertake more detailed consultation on the amendments with key stakeholders to ensure that they are carefully targeted. The bill has many important provisions to improve the workers compensation system, and to ensure its passage we are not opposing the amendments.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2022-069A be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:42): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 8 on sheet c2022-085 in globo:

No. 1 Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer

Page 2. Insert after line 10—

Schedule 1 Amendment of Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 No 45

[1] Section 162 Definitions

Insert after paragraph (b) of the definition of *government agency*—

- (b1) the Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer established under section 154 of the *Workers Compensation Act 1987*,

[2] Ninth Schedule Savings, transitional and other provisions

Insert at the end of the Schedule, with appropriate clause numbering—

Provision consequent on enactment of State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Act 2022

Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer

The amendment made to this Act, Part 11, by the *State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Act 2022* does not apply to an agreement for the procurement of goods and services entered into by the Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer before the commencement of the amendment.

No. 8 Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer

Page 9, Schedule 2. Insert after line 15—

[17A] Section 154A Establishment of Nominal Insurer

Omit section 154A(4).

This amendment requires that icare meet the same procurement laws as the public sector. To our knowledge, no other public government entity is exempt from basic procurement laws. The biggest single contract managed by icare, worth \$20 billion, is of employers' money—mum-and-dad small businesses that pay their premiums. This is the single largest contract and it is up for renewal at year's end. If that tender is mismanaged, the result will be catastrophic for employers and workers. I understand that a bill to this effect was introduced in the upper House and was passed last year, and it grandfathers existing contracts. We are talking about an important standard for icare. Amendment No. 8 is line in the procurement amendment No. 1. It includes the Nominal Insurer in the list of entities covered by the regular State Government procurement laws, in line with other functions of icare. I urge the Chamber to support the amendments.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (11:45): The amendment proposes to make the Nominal Insurer a government agency for the purpose of the procurement of goods and services under the Public Works and Procurement Act. The proposed amendment will make the Nominal Insurer subject to the New South Wales Government procurement requirements for the procurement of goods and services. The Government opposes the amendment. The Government engaged esteemed retired Supreme Court Judge the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, to conduct an independent review of icare, the workers compensation scheme and the enabling legislation. The review thoroughly considered icare's procurement policies and evaluated several times when procurement processes did not follow the New South Wales Government procurement framework. The review did not recommend that the Nominal Insurer be subject to the New South Wales procurement policies. The Government has accepted the McDougall review's findings, including on this matter.

The assets held by the Nominal Insurer are not government assets. As such, they should not be subject to the rules around government procurement and could create a risk to the current accounting treatment of the Nominal Insurer and State financial accounting. Further, icare itself is considered a government agency for the purpose of part 11 of the Public Works and Procurement Act, which would capture any non-Nominal Insurer procurement. Applying government procurement rules that are intended to achieve broader social benefits could conflict with the restriction on the Nominal Insurer funds that requires them to be solely used for the purpose of providing workers compensation insurance for employers. Amendment No. 8 is consequential to amendment No. 1, which seeks to make the Nominal Insurer subject to New South Wales government procurement rules, and in the same circumstance the Government opposes the amendment.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:47): I thank the Opposition for its focus on improving the transparency of icare. I will be putting forward an alternative proposal that is a simple amendment that will ensure that icare follows appropriate procedures in the best interests of injured workers and employers. I will not be supporting the Opposition amendment, but I will be proposing my own alternative.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 8 on sheet c2022-085 be agreed to.

Ayes39

Noes43
Majority.....4

AYES

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

Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Li, J
Lynch, P

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

NOES

Ayres, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Evans, L
Gibbons, M
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
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G

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

PAIRS

Anderson, K
Bromhead, S
Crouch, A
Perrottet, D

Saffin, J
Watson, A
Holland, M
Minns, C

Amendments negatived.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:57): I move Opposition amendment No. 2 on sheet c2022-085.

No. 2 ICNSW Board

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 27—

[2A] Section 5 Board of directors of ICNSW

Omit section 5(2)(b). Insert instead—

- (b) the following directors appointed by the Minister (the *appointed directors*)—
- (i) one director nominated by Unions NSW,
 - (ii) one director nominated by the Australian Industry Group (NSW Branch) or Business NSW,
 - (iii) up to 8 other directors.

The amendment requires that the Minister appoint to the board of Insurance and Care NSW one Unions NSW-nominated director, to represent workers, and one director nominated by either the New South Wales branch of the Australian Industry Group or Business NSW, to represent employers and industry. The

appointments would be in addition to the existing independent directors who are directly appointed by the Treasurer. All directors of icare, including those nominated by Unions NSW and the business associations, would have the same fiduciary duties to icare. This is a very important amendment, given the findings of the McDougall review and the Standing Committee on Law and Justice inquiry. Workers and employers—the businesses who pay workers compensation insurance premiums—should both be independently represented on the board of icare.

It is important for transparency and accountability. Independent directors on the board provide expertise in workers compensation and a fresh approach. Those directors will hold each other accountable for the billions of dollars that they deal with and accountable to those most vulnerable people as well as to the mums and dads paying the small business premiums. This is a very sensible amendment and I urge members to support it.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (12:00): I speak against the amendment to mandate the appointment of one additional director nominated by Unions NSW and one additional director nominated by the New South Wales branch of the Australian Industry Group to the board of icare with up to eight other directors. The Government considers that there is merit in expanding the board of icare to ensure that the views of those who provide access for and receive benefits from our State insurance and care schemes in New South Wales are taken into account. However, our public sector organisations should have a wide and diverse pool of candidates available to them. This amendment restricts the pool of talent the Minister can select from in pursuit of the goal to make sure icare is the strongest and most efficient it can be.

The board of icare is required to reach group decisions on difficult, complex issues. Icare carries out vital work each and every day. Membership of its board should be open to all candidates of merit, whether they are nominated by Unions NSW, the Australian Industry Group or many other organisations that represent injured workers and employers across New South Wales. It is also worth acknowledging that the current chair, Mr John Robertson, is the former secretary of Unions NSW and that Mark Goodsell is also on the board. There is scope to improve the operation of the board of icare but the Government believes that it should not be done in this fashion.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:01): I thank the Opposition for its focus on broadening the representation on the board. I do not support its amendment but will put forward my own alternative shortly.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 2 on sheet c2022-085 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes39
Noes43
Majority.....4

AYES

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

Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Li, J
Lynch, P

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

NOES

Ayres, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Cooke, S
Coure, M

Henskens, A
James, T
Kean, M
Layzell, D
Lee, G

Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Singh, G (teller)
Smith, N (teller)

NOES

Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Evans, L
Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B

Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
McGirr, J
O'Dea, J
Overall, N
Pavey, M
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G

Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Williams, L
Williams, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Holland, M
Minns, C
Saffin, J
Watson, A

Crouch, A
Perrottet, D
Anderson, K
Bromhead, S

Amendment negatived.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:12): I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-098D:

No. 1 **ICNSW Board members**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 27—

[2A] Section 5 Board of directors of ICNSW

Omit "8 other" from section 5(2)(b). Insert instead "10 other".

[2B] Section 5(2A) and (2B)

Insert after section 5(2)—

- (2A) At least one of the appointed directors is to be a representative of an employer representative body.
- (2B) At least one of the appointed directors is to be a representative of Unions NSW or another representative body for persons injured in the workplace.

This amendment seeks to increase the number of board directors from eight to 10, in line with the Opposition's previous amendment; however, it addresses it in a slightly different way. It ensures that at least one of the appointed directors is to be a representative of an employer representative body and at least one of the appointed directors is to be a representative of Unions NSW or another representative body for persons injured in the workplace. Each day icare carries out vital work in supporting people injured at work and it has achieved a great deal in helping them with their recovery and ensuring that they return to work. Icare manages complex and difficult issues, with workers compensation being only one of a range of schemes for which it provides its services.

Consensus between those that offer access to insurance and care schemes and those that receive benefits from them is critical to ensuring that the system of State insurance and care in New South Wales is strong into the future. Ensuring that those views are consistently represented in meetings of icare's board will deliver better outcomes that appropriately consider each of those interests. I acknowledge that icare has made a significant effort to update and enhance the diversity of skills and experience of its members, particularly those who have worked with or for injured workers. The amendment to the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 will further support the effective governance of a range of State insurance and care schemes in New South Wales and deliver outcomes for all.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (12:14): The Government supports the amendment to expand the icare board and ensure that at least one of the appointed directors is selected from a group of persons nominated by an employer representative body and at least one is selected from a group of persons nominated by Unions NSW or another representative body for injured workers. The measures proposed in the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 are designed to strengthen the governance of icare into the future and those improvements will be supported further by this amendment.

Employers and those injured at work are at the heart of many of the activities that icare carries out in workers compensation schemes and beyond. It makes sense to source additional directors of the board who have

been nominated by groups representing each of those interests. Strengthening the system of State insurance and care in New South Wales will require consensus and collaboration. Including those additional nominees as part of icare's board from here on is an important step in achieving this. The amendment is in line with icare's previous efforts to bolster the diversity of skills and experience of its membership. Finally, the amendment allows for administrative flexibility in nominating a pool of meritorious candidates who can be nominated from several representative groups across New South Wales.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:15): I acknowledge the member for Sydney for moving this amendment, and I respect that he wants to play an important role in helping to break this impasse. I asked the House previously to support the Opposition's amendment that will appoint an independent director nominated by Unions NSW and an independent director nominated by either the Australian Industry Group or Business NSW. I understand the difference between the member for Sydney's amendment and the Opposition's amendment—which was negatived but will hopefully pass in the upper House—is that the member for Sydney's amendment states that the Government makes a union appointment or an employer appointment.

With all due respect, those organisations are institutions in our democracy in New South Wales. Unions NSW, formerly the Labor Council of New South Wales—which will celebrate its 150th anniversary next week—is a democratic institution in our State. There is a democratic process required when those important appointments are being made, whether they are for State enterprises, State-run organisations or across government or the private sector. That process takes place with the delegation of the union employer representatives and comes from the hundreds of thousands of workers who are members of unions. They elect their delegates, who then go to Unions NSW through their union body, and the executive nominates an appointee through a democratic process.

There is a thorough and considered process in how an appointment is made. There is a precedent for how independent appointments from Unions NSW are made. It is not right that the Government should be able to use its open hand to pick and choose who it wants. That is not independent. It is important that transparency and openness is part of this process; therefore, we should let the democratic institution appoint a nominee who has the expertise and a considered background in workers compensation.

The employers—whether it is AIG or Business NSW—are also democratic institutions that have been operating in New South Wales for decades. They are part and parcel of our global State, which has been trading internationally for the past 200 years. That is what we do in New South Wales. Those important institutions have been set up to represent employers and small business to ensure that their interests are met and that government listens to those interests. It is about a level playing field. That is why those organisations know who are the experts with respect to appointments. Again, the Government should not be directing the employers, Business NSW or AIG as to who should be appointed to the icare board. As I said, they too are democratic institutions. They are given power by their members. Those members should have a say in who is appointed. Therefore, on that basis we will not be supporting the member for Sydney's amendment.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:20): I thank the member for Canterbury for her contribution. I highlight that the Government is a democratic institution as well.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that amendment No. 1 of the member for Sydney on sheet c2022-098D be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes42
Noes40
Majority.....2

AYES

Ayres, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Evans, L
Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J

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

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

AYES

Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S

Preston, R
Provest, G

Williams, R
Wilson, F

NOES

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

Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Li, J
Lynch, P
McDermott, H

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

PAIRS

Anderson, K
Bromhead, S
Crouch, A
Perrottet, D

Saffin, J
Watson, A
Holland, M
Minns, C

Amendment agreed to.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:30): I move Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2022-085:

No. 3 ICNSW staff remuneration

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 30—

[3A] Section 8

Omit the section. Insert instead—

8 Chief executive of ICNSW

- (1) The Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister in consultation with the ICNSW Board, is to appoint the chief executive of ICNSW.
- (2) Schedule 2 has effect in relation to the chief executive of ICNSW.

The amendment requires that the icare chief executive remuneration be set with the oversight of the Minister, not just the board.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (12:32): I speak to the Opposition's proposed amendment to the remuneration of icare staff, including its chief executive. The amendment requires the appointment of the icare chief executive by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister in consultation with the icare board. That change is simply unnecessary. The appointment and removal of a CEO is a key role of any governing board, and removing that from the icare board means that it will not have that important lever for governing the organisation. The Minister—in this case Minister Tudehope—already has several levers regarding appointments and directions, including appointing the icare board and providing binding directions to the icare board, and must be consulted on the appointment of the CEO. Accordingly, the Government opposes the amendment.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2022-085 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes38

Noes42

Majority.....4

AYES

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

Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Li, J
Lynch, P

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

NOES

Ayres, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Evans, L
Gibbons, M
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
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
Upton, G
Williams, L
Williams, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Holland, M
Mihailuk, T
Minns, C
Saffin, J
Watson, A

Crouch, A
Toole, P
Perrottet, D
Anderson, K
Bromhead, S

Amendment negatived.

Debate interrupted.

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

Mr GREG PIPER: I move:

That, in accordance with Standing Order 306 (7), the reports of the Public Accounts Committee, being orders of the day (committee reports) Nos 1 and 2, be considered together.

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:48): As Chair: This take-note debate will deal with both the *Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports August 2019 - June 2020*, report 8/57, dated May 2022; and *Examination of Selected Auditor-General's Financial Audit Reports 2020*, report 9/57, dated

May 2022. In May 2021, the Public Accounts Committee resolved to follow up high-priority repeat recommendations contained in the Auditor-General's 2020 financial audits and, to this end, sought submissions from relevant agencies to ensure that ongoing issues had been addressed. The committee sought and received written responses to requests for further information from eight agencies and, having considered the further submissions and having consulted the Auditor-General, determined that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Transport Asset Holding Entity should be invited to provide further evidence at a public hearing conducted in September 2021.

The report entitled *Examination of Selected Auditor-General's Financial Audit Reports 2020* makes 10 recommendations to improve accountability and governance in the identified areas of responsibility for the following agencies: NSW Health cross-border agreements and reconciliations; Lord Howe Island Board business continuity plan; unresolved loan repayment with Greyhound Racing NSW and the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Crown Land Manager; Transport for NSW contract management framework, governance arrangements for land negotiations and statutory reporting framework for Crown land managers; data integrity of the Victims Services system administered by the Department of Communities and Justice; Transport Asset Holding Entity operating model; and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment cybersecurity strategy. For the purpose of this debate, I will not list all the recommendations; rather, I refer interested persons to the published report.

One recommendation, however, that warrants specific comment is in relation to the TAHE, the Transport Asset Holding Entity. The relatively benign-sounding recommendation should not in any way be seen to underestimate the task that TAHE has before it, nor the significant implications for the State budget if indeed the TAHE model does not deliver on the stated intention for it of the Government. That recommendation is No. 6, which states:

The Committee recommends that the Transport Asset Holding Entity of New South Wales aims to achieve long-term sustainable returns for the shareholders by monitoring the annual access and licence charges to various public rail operators, and seeks additional commercial opportunities to enhance the return on investments.

It is my view that the Transport Asset Holding Entity will have difficulty in moving to a position of being able to return a dividend to the New South Wales budget. There has understandably been a lot of focus on TAHE through the media and within the political system of late. It is in the interests of all residents of New South Wales that TAHE either succeeds as is or can be adapted in such a way that State transport assets are managed to ensure optimal benefit to public transport users. I believe it will be important for the Public Accounts Committee to maintain an interest in the operation of TAHE.

Moving on to *Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports August 2019 - June 2020*, this report reviewed 10 performance audits covering the period from August 2019 to June 2020 conducted into mental health services planning for Aboriginal people in New South Wales; ensuring teaching quality in New South Wales public schools; ensuring contract management capability in government; supporting the District Criminal Court; integrity of data on the births, deaths and marriages registry; Department of Education Local Schools, Local Decisions and needs-based equity funding; Destination NSW support for major events around train station crowding; and funding enhancements for police technology. Recommendation 1 states:

The Committee recommends that the NSW Police Force provides a further update concerning the status and expected benefits of the Body-Worn Video camera project.

Recommendation 2 states:

The Committee recommends that Transport for New South Wales provides an updated report to the Committee in July 2022, detailing improvements to journey times, final costs and benefits realised for the CBD and South East Light Rail project.

The Public Accounts Committee was generally satisfied with the actions and responses from the various agencies, and indeed found that they should be commended for their performance through a time of significant disruption, including the wide bushfire emergency and COVID pandemic.

The Public Accounts Committee has seen a number of changes to membership. However, I wish to thank all those who served through this period on either or both of the inquiries, being the deputy chairs, the member for Bankstown and the member for Upper Hunter; and members of the committee, being the member for Albury, the member for Heathcote, the member for Holsworthy, the member for Keira, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Castle Hill and the member for North Shore.

I thank the Auditor-General and Audit Office staff for their assistance, with particular mention and thanks to Ms Candy Lee of the Audit Office who, while seconded to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly committee staff, provided valuable assistance, particularly with advice around the operation of TAHE. That important work would not be possible without committee secretariat staff, who I also thank, particularly the Public Accounts Committee secretary at that time, Mr Bjarne Nordin, who served not only the Public Accounts Committee but many committees during his 17 years at the New South Wales Parliament. I give my heartfelt

thanks to Mr Nordin for his more than 40 years' service in the public sector, including within the Commonwealth and State parliaments. I know all committee members and, indeed, members of this House wish him well in his retirement.

Reports noted.

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) (12:50): As Chair: I address the House regarding the Legislation Review Committee's report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 43/57*, tabled on 17 May 2022. In the forty-third digest the committee examined six bills introduced in the sitting week beginning 16 May 2022. I draw the House's attention to some of the issues raised in the digest. The RSL NSW Amendment Bill 2022 inserts a new section 15A into the RSL Act 2018, which exempts incorporated RSL sub-branches from being subject to duties under the Duties Act 1997. The meaning of the word "sub-branch" is not defined in the bill. That meaning instead appears in the RSL NSW Constitution, a document that is not tabled in Parliament and that the bill does not require to be tabled. The committee noted that this means the document is not subject to disallowance or parliamentary scrutiny. However, the committee acknowledged that other definitions and clauses in the Act are defined or operated by reference to this document. In the circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

Another bill introduced was the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022. This bill gives the telecommunications authority and emergency telecommunications network operators, such as the SES, powers to enter and occupy public and private premises in emergencies and other related circumstances. For example, entry may be granted to a residential building without the consent of an owner or occupier in an emergency where a warrant is executed under new section 34Q. The committee noted that those powers may encroach on a person's private property rights; however, it also recognised that a number of statutory safeguards exist that may mitigate the extent to which those rights may be impacted—for example, that the powers can only be exercised in an emergency. In the circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

I now turn to a private member's bill. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Climate Change Response) Bill 2022 proposes a number of amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 that require a consent authority to consider whether certain thresholds are met in regards to proposed developments. For example, schedule 1 new section 1.8 (2) requires that exercises of statutory functions be in accordance with the bill's climate change principles. Those principles include terms such as "material increase", "significant threat" and "foreseeable threat", which are not further defined in the bill or the Act. Without further clarification, the committee considered that the bill may reduce the possibility of statutory powers being consistently complied with and enforced. The committee referred this matter to the Parliament for its consideration. That concludes my remarks on the forty-third digest for this Parliament. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest and the secretariat for its support. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:54): It gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on the Legislation Review Committee's forty-third digest for the Parliament, which records the committee's deliberations on 17 May. The committee considered six bills at its meeting: the Dingo Cultural Heritage and Protection Bill 2022, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Climate Change Response) Bill 2022, the Government Telecommunications Amendment Bill 2022, the RSL NSW Amendment Bill 2022, the Water Management Amendment (Floodplain Harvesting Licences) Bill 2022 and the Firearms Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. We commented on all those bills except for the firearms bill.

The committee also considered two regulations but the committee made no comments. The digest does reference those two regulations. In relation to the bills considered—and the Chair has already spoken about this—I will highlight the RSL NSW Amendment Bill for members of this place. Most members have an RSL in their electorate and the bill proposes some important changes to the rules around RSLs and how they operate. It allows RSLs to incorporate without incurring duty on the transfer of property from a trustee situation to an incorporated situation. Members may want to refer to that in discussions that they might have with their local RSL branches. Once again, I thank the secretariat, which supports the committee in its work. I thank my fellow committee members for their attention to their duties. 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 welcome His Excellency Mr Amir Maimon, the ambassador of Israel, to Australia. He is watching question time from the Speaker's gallery and is accompanied today by the CEO of the Jewish Board of Deputies, Darren Bark, and others. I also welcome to the Speaker's gallery consuls general of Japan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Tonga and Thailand. I had the pleasure, with a number of members from the Asia-Pacific Friendship Group, of having lunch with them today. It is great to see them. I hope that we are not too disruptive and are on good behaviour during question time for you today.

I acknowledge the presence of Chris Binge, the CEO of Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council, who is in the public gallery. Chris, thank you. Chris played a pivotal role in assisting communities impacted by the 2022 floods that devastated northern New South Wales. Accompanying Mr Binge in the public gallery are Arabella Douglas from Currie Country and Margarita Escartin from Red Cliff Project Consultants, along with Jeremy Vine from SEC Newgate Australia. We welcome you all to the Chamber and thank you for your contributions.

I welcome Lamia Bouzidi, the guest of the member for Kogarah. Lamia is from Moorefield Girls High School, in Kogarah, and is undertaking work experience with the member. I acknowledge the guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, who also are watching question time from the public gallery: teacher Gavin Walker, school leaders and Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group members.

*Announcements***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House 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 Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing.

*Question Time***COST OF LIVING SUPPORT**

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:19): My question is directed to the Premier. On current trends, a typical family in Sydney would see its real wages cut by at least \$6,000 in the coming year. Meanwhile, tolls are going up over 4 per cent, fees and charges up are going up to 4 per cent, and the same family—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 128 (2) (a). Again we are hearing long narratives. The member just needs to ask a question. It is question time; it is not statement time.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order: Standing Order 128 contains 14 criteria in which questions are required. The Leader of the House has not read beyond paragraph (2) (a). There are some others. He is taking a point of order on every conceivable question. The question is only five lines. Chapter 10 of the standing orders sets out the entire framework for questions. He keeps referring to the same paragraph. Under paragraph (a), the questions are unintelligible unless they contain some factual statements. There are very few. The question is only about four or five lines. On his argument, would you cross out one fact or cross out three words? The reality is that he is not genuine in his approach to Standing Order 128. He is only trying to disrupt the Opposition's questions and delaying question time.

The SPEAKER: There is often a fine line between context for a question and creating a statement. The length of the question is creating a statement rather than giving context. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to frame it in more of a context. The purpose of a question is not to make a speech and then ask a question on the back of it.

Mr Alister Henskens: How, when, why.

The SPEAKER: Quiet, please. The member for Ku-ring-gai has made his point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Just because the Premier cannot answer them does not mean that I cannot ask them.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on the point of order. I am trying to be fair, but the question cannot become a long statement.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I can adapt. On current trends, a typical family in Sydney would see its real wages cut by \$6,000 in the coming years. Meanwhile, tolls are going up over 4 per cent—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: I have stopped at exactly the same point as I did on the last attempt. He is flouting your ruling, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I have heard enough. I will hear from the member for Heffron.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order: The Leader of the Opposition has not gone beyond the second line of the question. There is no way the question is intelligible unless the facts are put to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: I accept that some context can be created. I suspect the Leader of the Opposition has truncated his question, as he indicated earlier. On that basis, I will let him continue.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: My question is directed to the Premier, for the third time. On current trends, a typical family in Sydney would see its real wages cut by at least \$6,000 in the coming year. New South Wales is the highest taxing State in Australia. Why is the Premier making it so hard for people to make ends meet?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:24): I completely reject the premise of the question. I will try to be directly relevant in answering it. We know that the Liberals and Nationals have cut tax in every single budget across the board. For 90 per cent of the time that the Liberals and Nationals have been in government, we have had the unemployment rate in New South Wales at or below the national average. What did we see under Labor?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: For 90 per cent of the time, it was the other way around—at or above the national average.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: When you manage money well, as we have done on this side of the House, you are able to put more money into the hands of businesses and families across the State.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is exactly what we have done, whether it is \$9 billion in tax cuts or whether it is \$6 billion in cost of living measures—first home buyer concessions, the School Student Transport Scheme, our energy social programs or public transport concessions. The other day the member for Summer Hill was asking to increase public transport fares across the State. We put downward pressure across board.

Ms Jo Haylen: What are you on about?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yes, you were.

Ms Jo Haylen: I said roll out, not increase them.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I know what you were doing—laying the foundation. We have our toll relief program, which the member for Summer Hill voted against last week. Our preschool program—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

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

Mr Ron Hoenig: The Leader of the House, with great respect to him, is just yelling out, "Liar, liar, liar, you're a liar." The word "liar" is unparliamentary. There are plenty of interjections. That is not acceptable. I ask him to withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear that but I will keep an ear out for it.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We have Active Kids and Creative Kids. Through our strong financial management, we have been able to have strong wage growth in this State. We have led the way in the public sector at 2½ per cent, which encouraged the private sector to follow suit. We have led the way compared with every Labor State in this country. That is what you can do when you manage money well and prepare in the good times for the difficult times that come. Our State's response in a one-in-100-year pandemic has kept people in jobs, has kept businesses open and has kept people safe.

EDUCATION POLICY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:27): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberals and Nationals' focus on education is securing a brighter future for families of New South Wales?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:27): I will. I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question, her strong advocacy in this place for her electorate, and her contribution. Today the great Minister for Education and Early Learning in the other place was talking about the importance of mathematics in education, launching the Maths Hub 3.0 and making sure that we are taking maths not just into classrooms but also into homes. We had musicians and tradies there. It was great to see.

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

Mr Chris Minns: Taxes.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We will get to tax. I will get to tax. Since coming to office we on this side of the House have cut 31 taxes—payroll tax, stamp duty tax and insurance taxes. As I said in response to the Leader of the Opposition's question, that is \$9.4 billion in tax cuts. If you take the last financial year, that is equivalent to the entire amount of revenue we received from transfer duty in one year. It is almost the same. It is higher than what we received last financial year in payroll tax revenue in one year. At the last election, Labor ran a campaign to increase 10 taxes.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: The Premier is running the highest taxing Government in the country.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr Ryan Park: He is presiding over the highest taxing Government in the country.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will resume his seat. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: For the school students in the public gallery, here is the lesson on the difference between the philosophy of the Liberals and Nationals and that of Labor.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yesterday the Federal shadow Treasurer, Jim Chalmers, was defending the virtue of higher deficits, saying, "Who cares about a couple of billion dollars here and there?" Here is the difference.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Those opposite increased taxes 21 times in government. They introduced 11 new taxes. Here is the difference.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I remember, as Treasurer, saying that we were going to increase the payroll tax threshold from \$750,000 to \$1.2 million. Treasury hated it. What happened? Fewer businesses paid taxes as we increased the threshold but more revenue came in. That is the difference. The Liberals and Nationals cut taxes and grow the economy, and more revenue comes in. [*Extension of time*]

Under the Labor way, they increase taxes, businesses lose employees because they cannot afford them, businesses close, less revenue comes in, and what does Labor then do? It increase taxes again. And then what happens?

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is why the unemployment rate was so high under Labor. That is why when we lost 300,000 jobs during the pandemic—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. He was asked a question about education and is nowhere near it, let alone being directly relevant.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Premier.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am giving them an education on the damage the Labor philosophy does to businesses and workers across the State. It is no accident that we have the lowest unemployment rate in

New South Wales in history. We had the highest unemployment rate under Labor. We had higher taxes under Labor and lower taxes under the Liberals and Nationals. More revenue comes in. We deliver higher quality services, more roads, more public transport, more hospitals and more schools for everyone, including the electorate of the member for Mount Druitt. As we know, he has done incredibly well. I am going to give a participation award for the worst contribution in the Chamber. Where is the member for Blacktown? There he is. This is what he said last week—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The Premier is wasting his own time by not resuming his seat. What is the point of order? The Clerk will stop the clock. I am not going to allow the Premier to waste time, but I am not going to allow the member for Heffron to waste time either.

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. We are 4½ minutes into the answer and the Premier is not talking about education and now he is attacking the member for Mount Druitt, which is irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Premier. He has 10 seconds remaining before he concludes his answer. Does the Premier want his last 10 seconds?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:32): My question is directed to the Premier. Why is the Premier ratcheting up every lever that his Government has to get money out of families and people across New South Wales when real wages are going backwards 4.4 per cent and taxes under his Government have gone up 9 per cent in the past year, in the most tolled city on earth in the highest taxing State in Australia?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:33): The Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House. I do not know where those facts come from, but I have provided the education to those opposite in relation to cutting taxes. The facts are that we cut \$9 billion of taxes while the member for Keira at the last election wanted to increase taxes on every small business. Where is the Leader of the Opposition getting that from? If he is getting it on tax revenue, tax revenue comes in when you grow the economy. And who has the strongest economy in the country? New South Wales. That is the difference. They are economic illiterates on that side of the House. This is exactly what is meant to happen.

That is the reason the State went backwards for 16 years. For 16 years the State was bankrupt. The State was bankrupt and this Government fixed it. We fixed it by cutting taxes, by growing the economy, turning it around. That is why New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in history. This Government's philosophy is to put people back into work. Labor-led States have higher unemployment rates. That is the difference between the Coalition and Labor. Look at the tax rates. The tax rates are lower under the Liberal-Nationals than under Labor.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Labor opposed cuts to stamp duty at the last election. Labor opposed tax cuts for every single small business in this State and those opposite have the hide to come into this Chamber and talk to Government members about taxes. This Government is building the infrastructure of the future. Back to the member for Blacktown, now that I have a minute. He said:

I do not want to teach this Government economics—

What about tolls?

—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.

He just forgot the \$9.26 billion that the Government made on the first tranche of the sale. Whoops! Talk about education. I do not want the member for Blacktown teaching the Government about economics or teaching anyone about economics. Even on the member's own logic, the Government made a profit of \$5 billion, which it invested in western Sydney—in the member for Blacktown's own electorate. You do not have to have the money. You are an economic financial illiterate and you will probably become the next shadow Labor Treasurer, you are that bad.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (14:36): My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and the Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer update the House on why only the Liberal-Nationals can be trusted to manage the New South Wales economy?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:36): I can.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will be heard in silence. The Deputy Premier is not assisting.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: This had better be good. Government members will come to order. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 128. The question is clearly designed to incite debate and it is very suggestive. As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, that is not consistent with the boundaries of the standing orders. I ask that the question—

The SPEAKER: I do not think that is Standing Order 128. If the member for Campbelltown cites a relevant standing order then I am happy to hear the point of order, but that is not part of the standing orders.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on the point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: I want to raise—

The SPEAKER: I have just dismissed the point of order. Does the member for Ku-ring-gai have a new point of order?

Mr Alister Henskens: I am drawing—

The SPEAKER: Does the member have a new point of order? No. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: The member for Campbelltown might not want to hear why the Coalition Government is a better economic manager but a lot of people do. I thank the member for Vaucluse for her excellent question. She knows that only the Coalition Government can be trusted to manage the economy. Yesterday as Anthony Albanese was fleeing the cameras he left something behind.

Mr Paul Toole: What is it?

Mr MATT KEAN: The "Labor Policy Manifesto". When I open it up—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: When I open it up, it is blank. It is blank. There is nothing in it.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 130. The Treasurer is debating the answer to the question instead of being directly relevant and providing information.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: There is only one other copy floating around in circulation, and who owns it? Christopher John Minns. It is the blank policy manifesto that Labor is going to take all the way to the election. We on this side of the House have policies to create jobs, to lower cost of living pressures and to grow our economy, because that is what Coalition governments do. When it comes to creating jobs, the proof is in the pudding and that is why this Government is presiding over one of the lowest unemployment rates our State has ever seen. That is right—a 3.9 per cent unemployment rate. That is on the back of one of the worst pandemics that the world has ever seen. Because of policies like JobSaver, this Government was able to protect the fabric of the economy and ensure that, through our stimulus packages, New South Wales was able to bounce back better on the other side of COVID.

When it comes to easing the cost of living, this Government has introduced a number of programs—billions of dollars to support families dealing with cost of living pressures. There are rebates for families to assist with the cost of before and after school care. This Government is helping families through the Active Kids voucher and Creative Kids voucher programs—the brainchild of the Premier. This Government is encouraging people to go out and have a good time using Dine & Discover vouchers and, in doing so, to support the restaurants and hospitality businesses that have done it tough through the pandemic. The hospitality sector has struggled and that is why the Coalition Government has policies in place to support it.

We know that families are doing it tough when it comes to the cost of energy. That is why the Government has a number of programs to ease cost of living pressures to support pensioners, to support low-income households

and to ensure that people can afford their energy bills. That is on the back of the Government's policies that are designed to reduce the cost of household electricity prices. *[Extension of time]*

It is not just about plans to lower cost of living pressures for families and businesses across this State—the Government also has policies that will grow a strong economy. That is why the Coalition Government is presiding over a record infrastructure program that is transforming this city and the State for the better. With its investment in roads—building things like WestConnex and NorthConnex—the Government is not only helping people get around Sydney easier, it is also creating jobs and turbocharging the State's economy. This Government is building schools throughout the State because we know that the best way to set a kid up for life is to ensure that they get a great education. That is only possible because of this Government's strong financial management, which means that it can build the schools and infrastructure that kids need to thrive.

When it comes to health, the Government's record investment in hospitals is ensuring that the people of New South Wales can get quality health care, when they need it, in state-of-the-art hospitals. That is in stark contrast to those opposite, who have no policies, no plans and no ideas. It is very surprising because the Leader of the Opposition used to love policy. In fact, he loved it so much that when he was working at the McKell Institute he wrote a policy about increasing the cost of tolls across New South Wales.

Ms Jo Haylen: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: That is right, when he worked for Carl Scully, he was the architect of the New South Wales tolling program.

Ms Jo Haylen: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question related to the Liberal-Nationals' policies, not Labor's policies and the Treasurer is talking about the Labor Opposition.

The SPEAKER: The question did include a sufficient comparison.

Mr MATT KEAN: Chris Minns once loved increasing tolls, now he opposes increasing tolls. He does not believe in anything. Everything he has ever stood for he is now against. He is so negative, even his friends call him "Chris Minus". That is how negative he is. He is the most negative Leader of the Opposition this State has ever seen. *[Time expired.]*

PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:42): My question is directed to the Premier.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: Today it was confirmed that workers in New South Wales are experiencing a real wage cut, yet the transport department is recommending increasing revenue from public transport fares. Why is the transport department working around the clock to make life harder for working families?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:43): What happened to you? You are not the Jo I used to know. You have changed.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Look at the Government's track record. This Government has subsidised public transport more than any other State in the country. The Opposition come out time and again, with leaked reports, somehow saying it is the Government's policy when it is not. Labor critiques the Government on its public transport fare policy almost every year.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Almost every year the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal comes out with an increase in public transport fares, and we do not do it, because we are in a strong financial position and we manage money well. That is why when you look around you see that Labor States increase the cost of public transport at greater rates than we do in New South Wales. We actually build public transport as well, unlike Labor that did not build anything. The people of the north-west can now use the Metro North West to get to work. It never happened under Labor.

Members opposite talk about wages when New South Wales has led the way on wages compared with any other State. The only thing Labor has led the way on with wages was the Leader of the Opposition's 80 per cent increase on his own wage for stabbing Jodi. Lady Macbeth opposite got 50 per cent for stabbing Jodi and Jo—twice the work, half the pay rise. Where is the pay parity in that? There is none at all. I worry about the member for Mount Druitt. As the jobs Minister said last week, we are very worried about you.

Mr Edmond Atalla: I'm worried about you.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Are you worried? We are worried about you.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

When she sees who is running against her. You should be. If you need your preselection sorted, I fixed ScoMo's. I can help you out.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: My point of order is pretty obvious. The Premier should direct his comments through the Chair and should not engage in quarrelsome behaviour.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The boys in the SDA will help you out, don't you worry.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

What was that?

Mr David Harris: How's Penrith going?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: He's fine.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Anyway, our candidate is really good. What is that phrase? Be alert, not alarmed. You should be both.

VIVID FESTIVAL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:46): My question is addressed to the Minister for Tourism and Sport. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government's investment in the visitor economy is ensuring a bright future for New South Wales?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:46): I thank the member for North Shore for her question. The member for Mount Druitt can come and run in Penrith any time, particularly when he needs to free up the spot.

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

Dr Hugh McDermott: We've got a great candidate for you, don't worry. We'll announce it. You'll see.

Mr STUART AYRES: You are going to get sorted out by your own team. We don't have to worry about you.

Dr Hugh McDermott: We have a great candidate waiting for you, mate.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: Keep them coming. The member for North Shore is a passionate advocate for the visitor economy. Through her role as Parliamentary Secretary she is doing some fantastic work supporting the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and engaging small businesses right across New South Wales and particularly across Sydney that are recovering from the damaging impacts of COVID. Right now there is a fantastic opportunity for everyone to put a smile back on their face. Visitors are coming back in, the economy is strengthening and there is a low unemployment rate. We hear about none of those things from members opposite, who are constantly talking the economy and our community down.

Members on this side of the House are all about creating a brighter future for people across New South Wales. There is no better way to do that than to have Vivid back. After two years of not being able to have Vivid, it will be a real showcase of Sydney and Australia on the global stage. It is fantastic right now to have the Australian Tourism Exchange in Sydney. Over 1,000 tourism businesses are connecting with each other, setting up new trade opportunities and new businesses. Vivid will light the way for everyone to come back into New South Wales.

Vivid kicks off on 27 May. There are over 51 light installations and eight kilometres of Light Walk. It will be amazing. Yarrkalpa will light up the Sydney Opera House, and it will be one of the most spectacular things that we have seen. This is all about creating confidence and making sure that small businesses, particularly across the Sydney CBD, can get people back in their shops and people back staying in our hotels. These things are about

creating a bright, prosperous future. It goes well beyond the light show that we know Vivid is famous for. There are also over 111 music events.

Vivid Live at Sydney Opera House will have for the first time Paul Kelly and Thelma Plum playing live. It will be an absolutely cracking show; members should definitely get along to that. We also have all the wonderful ideas festivals. There is the talk with Baz Luhrmann about his new show, *Elvis*. Members should get along to that. Gretchen Carlson will talk about women's rights. That will definitely be a thought-provoking session. Aaron Sorkin, the writer of *The West Wing*, will also appear. All of Chris Minns' speechwriters will be there getting new ideas for their future speeches. [*Extension of time*]

All those *The West Wing* nuts who live in the building can get down there and enjoy that fantastic show. We are also seeing a lot of confidence across western Sydney. The Sydney Zoo in western Sydney is conducting its GLOW Light Festival, which has sold 57,000 tickets in the first four days. That is a great vote of confidence. It is doing a fantastic job and it shows how confident families are under this New South Wales Government. The Government is keeping people employed and putting money back into people's pockets, which means they are getting back out and spending. On top of what is happening at Sydney Zoo, one of the stars of Vivid is Taronga Zoo in the electorate of the member for North Shore, which is one of the great cultural institutions in New South Wales. It does wonderful research but it will also be right at the forefront of everything that we do at Vivid.

Members on the opposite side of the Chamber constantly talk down our State and the economy when what people want to hear right now is about the confidence that the Government has built so they can get back out and spend. They want a smile on their face. They have battled hard for the past two years. Members on this side of the Chamber recognise that. We want to be upbeat and confident, and we will constantly reject the negativity that keeps coming from the other side of the Chamber.

SOLAR BATTERIES

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (14:51): My question is directed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy. Given the strong support for solar batteries, particularly since the extended electricity blackouts of the recent flood events, will the Minister deliver a rebate scheme for solar batteries in New South Wales to make them more affordable?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:51): I thank the member for Ballina for her question, and I recognise her interest in this important area of public policy. I note that we have a number of sustainability initiatives that support access to affordable, renewable energy solutions for households and businesses. As the member knows, we have the Empowering Homes Solar and Battery Loans Program that supports households to access solar battery solutions by offering the opportunity to access a no-interest loan for battery or solar battery systems. It is currently being run as a pilot to ensure that the delivery model is effective, particularly in light of new products coming in the private market and the cost and availability of batteries in the system. The uptake of the pilot has been lower than expected due to a range of factors. New installation standards, COVID-19 and global supply chain issues have all had an impact. There are also now many competing low- and zero-interest finance products in the private market that assist homeowners to seize clean energy opportunities at home, including when it comes to batteries. We are assessing whether this program is still fit for purpose.

The Government has a range of other programs that the member would be familiar with and policies that are aimed at improving and supporting energy affordability for households and businesses across the State. I draw the member's attention to the Peak Demand Reduction Scheme, which is a crucial initiative to drive the uptake of household batteries. That is well positioned to support household battery systems and storage solutions on a retail scale across New South Wales. The scheme aims to support solutions like household batteries that deliver enduring benefits for the energy system as well. It is also helping us to manage the system security right across the network. We are working through some of the technical aspects of that.

The Government is also committed to ensuring that low-income households can access the benefits of rooftop solar. That is why we are committed to expanding the successful Solar for Low Income Households program. We will have more to say about that to the member for Ballina shortly. This program enables eligible low-income households to save money on their electricity bills by providing them with free three-kilowatt solar systems in place of the Low Income Household Rebate. The benefit of that is you are getting productivity improvement because the solar scheme would lower bills more than the rebate would give, and it helps drive our policy goals more across the system. The Government wants to give consumers choice; it does not want to force them into anything. If it stacks up for them, the Government wants to make sure they understand that choice is available.

The Government also has a number of energy rebates on offer, which the member will be familiar with. There is the Seniors Energy Rebate, the Family Energy Rebate and the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme, which assist households with their energy bills. I assure the member that this Government is focused on ensuring reliable and affordable energy supplies while supporting the transition of the electricity system. I am excited about the future of clean energy in New South Wales and look forward to announcing additional support for households in the upcoming budget.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:55): My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on how local government is working collaboratively with the Federal Government to secure a brighter future for families across New South Wales?

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (14:55): I thank the member for Clarence for his question. He knows all too well the importance of local government working with State and Federal governments to secure brighter futures for families across New South Wales. Members on this side of the House have been on the ground in communities across the State following the significant damage and destruction caused by the floods and storms in February and March 2022, particularly in the Northern Rivers region. I have seen firsthand the impact of the storms and floodwaters in communities across the State, particularly in the Northern Rivers and the Hawkesbury. I have met with mayors, general managers and residents to assure them that the Government's priority has been, and continues to be, making sure that those affected have the support of every level of government as we collaborate to help with the clean-up and the rebuild.

That is why this Government has delivered over \$3 billion in support since the first disaster declarations were made on 1 March this year. There is \$1 million to support the 60 natural disaster declared councils with their immediate response and recovery, as well as the \$120 million Local Council Support Package. This package includes an additional \$2 million for the eight most highly impacted councils in the Northern Rivers and the Hawkesbury to further support their immediate response and recovery, and an \$80 million loan facility to support councils with their cash flow to alleviate financial hardship following from the management of rates within their community. The package is in addition to the significant support provided to councils by the Government in a range of areas, including but not limited to \$300 million for clean-up costs in flood-affected local government areas and \$145 million for urgent replacement and repair of critical water and sewer infrastructure.

The Government recognises the many challenges faced by councils over the past few years and has provided support to councils with the emergency services levy contribution. I recently announced \$43 million in support of next year's invoices, meaning the State Government has provided over \$93 million in support to local councils to pay their emergency services levy contributions over the past three years. It would be remiss of me not to highlight that the Morrison Government has also contributed billions of dollars to our State to help communities across New South Wales rebuild so that we can continue to back in those businesses and residents that need support and secure a brighter future for families.

In the Coalition's March budget for 2022-23, the Federal Government committed an additional \$500 million to the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program. It goes without saying that we have not seen any commitment from Labor in this regard. There is an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that says there are no pledges of infrastructure from Labor. We cannot afford to have a Labor government in power because the local government councils and communities of this State cannot afford it. Labor does not support the local government sector.

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

NEW INTERCITY FLEET

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:58): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Does the Deputy Premier agree with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, who said yesterday in the Legislative Council regarding the overseas-built New Intercity Fleet, "I don't really think the community is really honestly concerned where they got built"?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:59): I am glad that the member for Cessnock takes a great interest in the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and acknowledges that he is doing an incredible job in that particular space. While he is in that job, he is actually delivering on the record investment that this Government is providing in the space of regional transport and roads. We all know that, in the bush, investment and critical infrastructure is so important.

Ms Kate Washington: Manufacturing jobs are too.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: If the member for Port Stephens wants to ask the question, she should get up and ask it next time. Yesterday I noticed that when a question was asked about the Great Western Highway, which is a project for the regions, the member for Blue Mountains ran out the door before the question was asked—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —because she did not want to put on record her position on the Great Western Highway.

The SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock rises on a point of order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Then she snuck back in after the question had been answered.

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

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. My question was about a very specific quote from the Minister in the other place and whether or not the Deputy Premier agrees with it.

The SPEAKER: I draw the Deputy Premier back to the question. I am happy for him to respond to an interjection, but it was not from the member for Blue Mountains.

Ms Trish Doyle: And you're a buffoon.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The truth hurts, doesn't it, member for Blue Mountains? In relation to the question that was asked by the member for Cessnock, this Government and communities across New South Wales want to see those trains on tracks. They are modern, safe trains that are being built. I have seen those trains, and they are ready to go right now not only on the Central Coast but also on the Blue Mountains line and going south.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: People want to see these trains operating. These trains are wider, smoother and have more comfortable seating. They have the ability for people to be able to do work on them. They have bike racks that have been installed.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: They have up-to-date toilet facilities. This is why people want to see—

The SPEAKER: Stop the clock. The Deputy Premier is being relevant to the question. Is the member's point of order about relevance?

Mr Clayton Barr: Yes. My question was very specific.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that point of order. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The public wants to see the trains on tracks; they do not want to see the trains being locked up in yards around the State. This is exactly what the Opposition's mates in the unions are doing. They are actually denying the people of New South Wales these brand new trains, which they could be using right now on train lines across the State. We spoke about the V sets being replaced. They are 30 years old—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier's time has expired. He will resume his seat.

NATIONAL PARKS INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (15:02): My question is addressed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. I respectfully ask the Minister to update the House on how families across New South Wales are benefiting from the Government's record investment in national parks infrastructure.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:03): I thank the member for Monaro for her question and acknowledge the beautiful part of the world that she looks after. I look forward to getting down there and visiting that beautiful part of the world and the complex alpine landscape that she looks after. Each year more than 60 million people—

The SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. There is too much audible conversation on both sides of the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Each year more than 60 million visits are made to national parks, which in turn generates more than \$18 billion worth of investment and provides more than 74,000 direct and indirect jobs. Over 75 per cent of national parks' economic value is delivered outside of Sydney, making the Government's investment in national parks a critical component of regional economies and regional recovery. Over the past few years, New South Wales national parks and the environment have endured the same hardships as many communities: droughts, fires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with the Commonwealth Government we have been improving conservation outcomes. We have been partnering and co-investing with it on a number of important initiatives: \$8.2 million for threatened species and ecological community projects, more than \$11 billion for pest control, more than \$5.7 million for weed control projects, and more than \$730,000 for post-fire assessments and hazard reduction. The member for Monaro will be interested to know that a lot of work has also gone into alpine feral horse control, deer control and supporting the complex alpine regions in her electorate.

Since the pandemic and the park closures, our parks have reopened to record visitor numbers. In 2021, 678,000 visitors stayed overnight in a national park. That is an increase of nearly 30 per cent on the 520,000 visitors in 2020. In response to that, with the support of the Commonwealth Government we are funding the development and upgrade of more than 36 campgrounds; 10 new, iconic multi-day walks; and 61 new and improved picnic and visitor areas. We are investing in more than 750 kilometres of new and upgraded walking tracks right across the State. As we support our national parks by constructing those walks, we are employing local tradespeople and suppliers in every corner of the State. Whether in Coffs Harbour, Coonabarabran, Dorrigo, Jamberoo, Jindabyne, Katoomba, Port Macquarie, Port Stephens, South West Rocks or Batemans Bay, right across the State we are investing in national parks. Under our leadership, we will continue to invest in national park infrastructure, providing access to world-class conservation and recreation tourism opportunities. That is a clear indication that a better and brighter future for our environment is to elect a Liberal-Nationals Government.

REGIONAL JOBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (15:06): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday in the Legislative Council, when asked about the overseas-built new intercity fleet, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads said, "I honestly do not think the community is concerned with where they got built." Does the Deputy Premier really believe that the people of Newcastle would have no interest whatsoever in 600 well-paying jobs building infrastructure in Australia?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (15:07): He's got me! I have been asked two questions in a row. The member has caught me by surprise. I make the point again: People in this State care about those trains being out there on the tracks. They are brand new trains that the public is being denied. I say again that those trains are sitting in yards around the State, and the public is seeing them. The public realises that the Labor Party and the unions are saying, "Let's not put them on the tracks." They are denying the public the opportunity to use those brand new trains in our communities. People in Newcastle have a number of options or choices when it comes to public transport. Some communities are relying on these trains that are being denied to them.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Does the Deputy Premier care about jobs in Korea and South Korea, or does he care about jobs in Newcastle? The question refers specifically to Newcastle. The planning Minister in South Korea would be jealous.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. I have heard enough from the member for Newcastle.

Mr Alister Henskens: To the point of order: Contrary to Standing Order 131 (9), the member for Newcastle is using a point of order to make a statement in response. He is not raising a point of order and he is being highly argumentative.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. I uphold the point of order taken by the Leader of the House. I do not uphold the point of order taken by the member for Newcastle. I will not call the member to order on this occasion, but if he behaves in that manner again I will call him to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I will not be lectured in this Chamber about jobs that are created in this State. This Government is investing over \$110 billion in infrastructure across the State. That is creating thousands of jobs in regional New South Wales.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is about the location of manufacture of the trains and the creation of jobs in Newcastle. The Deputy Premier has gone nowhere near that.

The SPEAKER: In light of the question and the answer, I will hear further from the Deputy Premier.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We will continue to grow and invest in jobs in regional New South Wales and right across the State. This Liberal-Nationals Government is creating a bright future and opportunities for people right across New South Wales.

ASSET RECYCLING

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:10): My question is addressed to the Minister for Corrections. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is recycling assets for the community's benefit?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will wait for silence.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (15:11): I thank the member for Seven Hills, who is a champion for his local community. As the Minister for Corrections, I thank the member for his service in his past role as a police prosecutor. He sent many clients to our great facilities. I will endeavour to keep them locked up for as long as possible. I acknowledge all the wonderful corrections officers in this State. We have 10,000 people working on the front line. Often we talk about our frontline teachers, nurses and police. But our corrections officers are keeping the community safe 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Our corrections officers are the best. They are doing a wonderful job.

The question is about recycling of assets for the community's benefit. I use the case study of Parramatta jail in my electorate. The jail was closed in 2011 and handed over to the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council in 2015. Now the land council has wonderful plans to recycle that asset for its community. Members on this side of the House understand the use of asset recycling. Just like the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Coalition Government understands that asset recycling is important for communities. We recognise that people and communities change, and that we need to deliver for the community. We understand that is what responsible government does. That is why the Liberal-Nationals Government is best placed to deliver in response to State and Federal problems. That is the sensible decision. That is why this Government is delivering \$110 billion worth of infrastructure over the next four years.

In Parramatta, we are recycling assets. That is why we are spending over \$800 million on the Powerhouse Parramatta, which those opposite opposed. That is why we spent over \$300 million on CommBank Stadium, which those opposite opposed during the 2019 election. When we opened the stadium, those same Opposition members were first in line at the buffet to get their salt and pepper squid—an appalling hypocrisy! We know that good local MPs deliver for their communities. The only thing that those opposite want to recycle is their candidates. They recycled their boy from Bellevue Hill. They tried to run him in Dobell on the Central Coast but that was not close enough to home, so now they are trying to parachute him into Parramatta. The people of Parramatta know better.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Dr GEOFF LEE: They understand that the best thing for Parramatta is to elect a local.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Selection of candidates has nothing to do with the question asked. The Minister has gone on for long enough.

Mr Stuart Ayres: To the point of order: This is absolutely about recycling. Those opposite have flown her in in a helicopter, a *Ride of the Valkyries* into Fowler. It is all about recycling.

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

MATHS TEACHERS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:14): My question is directed to the Premier. On 7 May *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that one in five New South Wales maths classes had been left without a qualified maths teacher. Why has the Government failed to recruit enough maths teachers, which has led New South Wales Programme for International Student Assessment outcomes in maths to fall behind Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia and Queensland?

The SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle will remain silent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:15): Just going back to the last question, I agree completely with the Minister for Jobs about recycling. A candidate should not be running for an electorate if they do not live in it. What Labor is doing across western Sydney is an absolute disgrace. What the Government is doing in schools is giving our kids the best education and the best start in life. We are seeing that right across the board, including in the tutoring programs that the Government started during the pandemic. That was a very difficult time that many young children went through when they did not have that face-to-face learning. I thank all of our teachers, who did an amazing job ensuring that our kids did not go backwards during that time. When it comes to our schools, we are investing record amounts not just in frontline teachers and counsellors but right across the board.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As we move through this next period we know very well that there are significant challenges in relation to labour shortages, not just in teaching but also in health.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: This issue is not unique to New South Wales. It is not even just a national issue; it is a global issue.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In our State, the Government has invested record amounts not just in frontline services in every single budget—in our teachers, nurses and police officers—but importantly, in education. We also continue to build record numbers of schools right across our State. The Government has built many schools.

Ms Kate Washington: How is Medowie going?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Really well. We are building schools everywhere.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I remember former education Minister Rob Stokes coming into my office and saying, "We're going to build record schools." I was not so sure if we could afford it, but we found a way.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time. The Clerk will stop the clock. I am sorry to interrupt the Premier, who is giving a good, serious answer. I will not tolerate interjections given the nature of the answer.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that impartial support. I have lost my train of thought.

Mr Rob Stokes: You were talking about me.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was talking about Rob and all of those schools that we are building. Labor members closed 90 schools when they were in government, and they had a secret plan to close 100 more—not because they meant ill but because they did not have the financial capacity to deliver. With everything Government members have done in terms of cutting taxes, asset recycling and making better use of the budget, we have been able to do things that Labor could never do—build metros that the member for Summer Hill could only dream about; build hospitals right across the State, from east to west and north to south; build schools everywhere; and provide the best education and the best start in life for our kids in New South Wales.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:18): My question is addressed to the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales and Federal governments are working to secure a brighter future for New South Wales small businesses?

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 128. Does the term "brighter" not ask for an opinion as opposed to a statement of fact?

The SPEAKER: The question is in order.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:19): I acknowledge the member for Heathcote and thank him for the question so that we can talk about the bright future that New South Wales small businesses have. The past few years have certainly posed some of the

most enormous challenges for small businesses in this State and throughout the country, certainly in our lifetime and also over the next hundred years, but that is why it has never been more important that small businesses in this State have strong Federal and State governments to provide them with support in tough times. Only a Liberal-Nationals government can be trusted to deliver a strong economy and manage the books to provide small businesses with the support they need to get through tough times.

Throughout the pandemic, New South Wales small businesses have received extensive support from both levels of government. The New South Wales Government has provided more support to small businesses than any other jurisdiction in this country. That includes the Small Business Support Program, the Small Business Fees and Charges Rebate, the rapid antigen test rebate and the commercial landlord hardship grant. Government members have also worked with our Federal counterparts to provide over \$1.9 billion in combined funding to support flood-affected regions. That includes a fifty-fifty split of funding for the \$50,000 Flood Disaster Recovery Small Business Grant and the \$10,000 small business northern flood grant, as well as up to \$130,000 for the concessional loans for small businesses and primary producers.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to pause her answer. I know it is getting towards the end of question time, but about a dozen conversations are going on in this Chamber. Members who wish to have private conversations will do so outside the Chamber.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: It is only because of that support that small businesses in this State have grown by 4.1 per cent in the past 18 months. The Prime Minister has said that a re-elected Liberal Government will create 400,000 new small businesses across the country. Many of them will be in New South Wales, which this Government welcomes. That is a stark contrast to anything the Federal Leader of the Opposition has said. In fact, he has no policy for small businesses—or it may be that he simply cannot remember any of the details. The biggest risk to a brighter future for small businesses is Labor's support of the year of the strike, because the year of the strike will happen under those opposite.

There will be no trains or buses. People who work in small businesses will not be able to get to work. Small business owners will not be able to open the doors, and if they can then those opposite will be closing the schools. Those hardworking small business men and women will have nowhere to leave their children because of those opposite, and that is a shame. There is only one way to deliver a brighter future for New South Wales small businesses and that is to re-elect a Liberal-Nationals government.

REGIONAL POLICING

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:22): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Police. Police do amazing work and are often the only government service embedded in regional communities. Incentives and the designation of remote and special remote status can help to attract and retain police, especially to hard-to-fill positions. What is being done to maximise the effectiveness of incentives and location status to ensure the attraction and retention of police in regional communities?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (15:23): I thank the member for Barwon for his question. Having been a police officer, the member also understands the importance of policing in regional communities. We know the challenge of finding frontline workers in rural and remote communities, and the New South Wales Government is working to ensure that we can attract police to those areas. As Minister for Police I have visited a number of those stations in the far west of the State, including those in Narrabri, Bourke, Broken Hill and Deniliquin, and I am keenly aware of the role that the local police play in those communities. The local police officer in the bush is actually a part of the community. They are there not only to keep the locals safe but also as a part of the community—someone who volunteers, may be part of a sporting organisation, has their spouse in town or whose kids go to the local school.

In remote locations the incentive package includes an annual cost of living allowance, a one-off incentive payment for a personal computer, police residence at 3 per cent rent and other reimbursement for costs such as internet access. In remote locations such as Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett there are further incentives available, including a spousal allowance, a tenure extension payment and travel reimbursements. We want to attract police officers but, importantly, we want to keep those officers and encourage them to be long-term members of these communities. The NSW Police Force is committed to ensuring a holistic approach towards removing barriers to police recruitment specifically in regional, rural and remote areas.

We know that a number of factors impact recruitment and retention of police officers in remote and special remote locations, but housing is first and foremost. Due to the complex nature of the police residential housing portfolio and the financial and non-financial incentives, the NSW Police Force currently has two separate steering committees tasked to address this very issue. I am more than happy to sit down with the member for Barwon to talk about any ideas that he might have and also talk about what comes out of the committee as well, which may

assist in policing in the far west of the State. It is vital that we ensure these programs are effective and working as well as possible. I look forward to updating the House on this matter in the coming months.

NSW SENIORS CARD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:25): My question is addressed to the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors. Will the Minister update the House on how the Liberal-Nationals Government is securing a brighter future for New South Wales with cost of living measures for seniors?

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (15:26): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. She cares deeply about families and seniors right across her electorate.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order.

Mr MARK COURE: Port Macquarie is an electorate that I have visited many times, and I look forward to visiting it many more times in future. Our priority is to ensure that seniors in New South Wales are safe and have access to the best possible services. Seniors have worked incredibly hard and have made many sacrifices. That is why we on this side of the House are helping our seniors right across New South Wales. One of the ways we are doing that is through the NSW Seniors Card. In fact, on this side of the House we have a long, proud track record of delivering for seniors. It was a Liberal-Nationals government that introduced the Seniors Card in 1992, which is now the largest rewards program of its kind in Australia.

Mr David Elliott: In the world.

Mr MARK COURE: In the world, Mr Speaker, and it has been easing the cost of living for our seniors across New South Wales for 30 years. More than 1.8 million seniors are able to access discounts and rebates. Each month over 5,000 new members join the Seniors Card program, giving them access to savings and, of course, cost of living measures. Members are able to locate discounts near them by visiting the Seniors Card website or using the Seniors Card mobile app or the Seniors Card directory. In fact, I publicly put on record that Minister Dominello and I have been working extremely hard to provide seniors with a greater choice.

To celebrate 30 years of the Seniors Card, the Government is digitalising the program via the Service NSW app, and I am proud that thousands of members have already taken up this service. Service NSW is reporting a 90 per cent customer service satisfaction rate with the digital application process. Importantly, this is in addition to the 80 rebates available through Service NSW that help to ease the cost of living for seniors. Surprisingly, it is not just this Government that is delivering for the cost of living for seniors across New South Wales. In fact, across Australia the Morrison Government has also announced savings for seniors. Indeed, a re-elected Morrison Government will expand the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card to include 50,000 more senior Australians. Only a re-elected Morrison Government can manage the economy so that businesses can offer discounts and the Government provide cost—

Mrs Leslie Williams: I request additional information.

The SPEAKER: I will grant an extension of time, but the Minister will return to the substance of the question.

Mr MARK COURE: As I was saying, seniors in New South Wales cannot afford an Albanese government because, Mr Speaker, it won't be easy under Albanese—I wanted to get that into the *Hansard*. We on this side of the House are delivering cost of living measures for our seniors, making sure it is easy for seniors across New South Wales. In fact, State and Federal Liberal-Nationals governments are delivering cost of living measures for our seniors and making it easy for seniors across New South Wales.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 17 May 2022 Melinda Jane Pavey was elected chair and Justin Paul Clancy was elected deputy chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services.

Inquiry

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services has resolved to conduct an inquiry into improving

crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I congratulate Kiya-san, the Consul-General of Japan, on lasting through question time. I ask that, if he does want to talk, he leaves the gallery.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That:

- (1) (a) Pursuant to clause (2) of schedule 2 to the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, Nathaniel Gerard Smith be appointed to serve on the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Stephen Bruce Bromhead.
- (b) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Membership

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105:

- (1) General business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 3126 to 3154 have lapsed.
- (2) General business order of the day (for bills) No. 1 [ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2021 (No. 2)] will lapse tomorrow.

REORDERING OF GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:33): I move:

That the general business order of the day (for bills) No. 5 [Government Grants Administration Bill 2021] have precedence on Thursday 19 May 2022.

I note that on 7 May the Department of Premier and Cabinet reported a review on grants administration in New South Wales. It contained 19 recommendations, including urgent action to increase the integrity of grant programs in New South Wales. The Government has not responded to those recommendations but has a chance to do so by adopting this bill, or at least participating in a debate forthwith. Obviously, there is horsetrading in relation to the business of the House tomorrow, but we believe it is important that the bill have precedence. I understand that some members have concerns about follow-the-dollar provisions contained in the bill. We are open to discussion in good faith about this provision if the House is prepared to accept the need for urgency and to get this bill into legislation before the budget is delivered. The bill, in operation and in effect, is essential to the integrity of public funds in New South Wales.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (15:34): The Premier announced a review of grants administration in New South Wales on 2 November 2021. The Hon. John Graham, MLC, then introduced the private member's bill that is the subject of this motion on 16 November 2021. As the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, the final report on the review was only recently delivered to the Government and it has been made public. The Government has not yet responded to the review, but I indicate that it is clearly seized of the matter and is certainly willing to have it considered. A range of options are available to the House and we can examine those tomorrow. The Government does not oppose this reordering of general business

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

STATE INSURANCE AND CARE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Consideration in Detail

Consideration resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:36): I move Opposition amendment No. 4 on sheet c2022-085:

No. 4 ICNSW objectives

Page 4, Schedule 1[5], proposed section 9A, line 2. Omit "operations.". Insert instead— operations,

(c) to promote the restoration of workers to health and employment.

Opposition amendment No. 4 proposes to include that an objective of icare is to promote the restoration of workers to health and employment. We are proposing to insert the words "to promote the restoration of workers to health and employment" instead of the word "operations" into the Act. This amendment is sensible and important. It is wanted by all workers. Businesses also want to see their employees back to good health and wellbeing. That employees are able to come back to work healthy and well should be one of the objectives of icare. It is very simple and makes a lot of common sense. It should be a key priority. That is why it should also be set in the objectives. I acknowledge the advocacy of the Injured Workers Campaign Network in raising the issue. Many of the injured workers have done it really tough. Not only have they gone through COVID but they have also endured the bureaucracy of this system. This is an acknowledgement of them. I hope that the Government supports this very important, sensible and considered amendment.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (15:40): I speak against the amendment to include the additional wording of "to promote the restoration of workers to health and employment" in the proposed objectives of icare. As members know, icare operates in schemes outside of the workers compensation scheme. This amendment would enshrine a scheme-specific objective in an Act that is not scheme specific. The proposed objectives in the bill go to the establishment and broader organisational objectives of icare. Icare is an entity that provides services to other authorities and schemes, including ones not related to injured persons. The State Insurance and Care Governance Act should remain scheme agnostic and icare's objective should not be limited in this way.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 4 on sheet c2022-085 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes37
Noes42
Majority.....5

AYES

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

Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Li, J
Lynch, P

McDermott, H
Mehan, D (teller)
Mihailuk, T
O'Neill, M (teller)
Parker, J
Scully, P
Smith, T
Tesch, L
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Zangari, G

NOES

Ayres, S

James, T

Roberts, A

NOES

Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Henskens, A

Kean, M
Layzell, D
Lee, G
Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
McGirr, J
O'Dea, J
Overall, N
Pavey, M
Petinos, E
Piper, G
Preston, R
Provost, G

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

PAIRS

Holland, M
Minns, C
Park, R
Saffin, J
Watson, A

Crouch, A
Perrottet, D
Conolly, K
Anderson, K
Bromhead, S

Amendment negatived.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:52): I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-086A:

No. 1 Reporting

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 2—

[5A] Section 11A

Insert after section 11—

11A Report of procurement of goods and services

- (1) ICNSW must, before 31 October in each year, prepare and present to the Minister a report of the following matters for the year ending on the preceding 30 June—
 - (a) the activities of ICNSW, in acting for the Nominal Insurer, involving an exempt procurement,
 - (b) an explanation of the reasons for each exempt procurement.
- (2) The Minister must lay the report or cause it to be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as practicable after receiving the report.
- (3) In this section—

exempt procurement means a procurement of goods and services that—

 - (a) is conducted otherwise than in accordance with the *Public Works and Procurement Act 1912*, section 176, and
 - (b) would, if the Nominal Insurer were a government agency within the meaning of the *Public Works and Procurement Act 1912*, Part 11, be required to be conducted in accordance with that section.

The purpose of the bill is to improve public confidence in icare. With that comes the need for new transparency and oversight measures, which is what this amendment seeks to achieve. The McDougall review recommended that icare be bound by the procurement and probity framework to, at a minimum, the processes used by government agencies following a thorough assessment. In response, icare reviewed its procurement procedures and adopted a process in line with New South Wales government requirements and expectations. However, the Nominal Insurer was exempted because of the competitive market it operates in.

The exemption is not blanket, however. The default position for icare is now to follow normal New South Wales government procurement processes, with a mechanism for probity when the exemption is used. That mechanism requires an icare executive to provide a briefing note on the rationale for the procurement, the reason for the exemption, details of the contract, a risk analysis and a mitigation strategy to the icare board. The briefing note is then discussed at the next board meeting, where a final decision is made and minuted. If a procurement

needs to proceed before a board meeting, it can, based on the briefing note alone. However, this is only done for urgent matters. I understand that it has only occurred once.

Since 2021 the board has not approved any new contracts outside New South Wales government procurement procedures, except to renew eight legacy contracts that were required in the interim while a new contract was established through tender processes in line with New South Wales government procurement policies. I accept that the Nominal Insurer needs the level of flexibility the current procedures provide, but the community needs certainty that exemptions are only ever used for the benefit of injured workers and employers in the scheme.

My amendment will add new transparency and oversight to this process by requiring icare to provide the Minister with an annual report for tabling in Parliament on instances when the exemption is used, showing the reason for its use. The Parliament will be able to investigate how the exemption was applied and take action if normal New South Wales government procurement processes are not being applied appropriately. This simple amendment will ensure that icare follows appropriate procedures in the best interests of injured workers and employers. I commend the amendment.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (15:55): The Government supports the amendment moved by the member for Sydney. As members would be aware, the Nominal Insurer is exempt from part 11 of the Act as it occupies a unique function in its administration of premiums collected from New South Wales employers. Those funds are non-government assets safeguarded by the Nominal Insurer for the payment of workers compensation liabilities. It is important to note that the procurement exemption applies only to the Nominal Insurer and not to icare as an organisation, nor to those other schemes icare is responsible for managing. Under the amendment, icare must report to the Minister each year on when the exemption is used and why, and the Minister must table the report in Parliament. The Government supports the amendment because it aligns with the Government's commitment to bring greater accountability and transparency into New South Wales' system of State insurance and care, as reflected in the bill. The amendment balances oversight with recognition of the non-government nature of these assets and, as such, it is not opposed.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:56): The Opposition and the shadow Treasurer would have much preferred that our amendment regarding procurement was supported, in light of the fact that in the next few months the biggest single contract that is managed by icare, worth \$20 billion of employers' money, is up for renewal. We are very conscious of that. I accept what the member for Sydney has put forward. The Opposition, the shadow Treasurer and I will not oppose the amendment, but I reiterate that it is very important that there not be an exemption to the procurement rules. Openness and transparency are critical in fixing the system.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-086A moved by the member for Sydney be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:57): I move Opposition amendment No. 5 on sheet c2022-085:

No. 5 Reporting

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 2—

[5A] Section 12A

Insert after section 12—

12A Reports of insurance liabilities

- (1) A report of the insurance liabilities of the Nominal Insurer required to be prepared by ICNSW for the purposes of any Act must include the results of an assessment of the insurance liabilities determined using the funding ratio in accordance with accounting standard AASB 1023, *General Insurance Contracts*.
- (2) ICNSW must not engage a person to provide actuarial services—
 - (a) for a continuous period of more than 5 years, or
 - (b) if the person has provided actuarial services to ICNSW within the last 5 years.
- (3) In this section—

actuarial services means actuarial services provided for the purpose of the preparation of a report, or undertaking a peer review, of the insurance liabilities of the Nominal Insurer, but does not include actuarial services provided by an employee of ICNSW.

The amendment is to ensure transparency of icare's financial position by requiring icare to publish the more rigorous funding or accounting ratio standard figures as well as the insurance ratio. The Auditor-General has noted

its concern in its most recent report on icare about the move to publish the less rigorous insurance ratio. The amendment ensures the highest standards of accountability and transparency for taxpayers, workers and employers using the scheme. It requires that the actuary services contracted by icare be changed at least every five years to ensure that the highest standards of transparency are maintained. I urge members to support the amendment.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (15:59): I speak in opposition to the amendment. The Australian Accounting Standards Board accounting standards already require icare to use the accounting ratio, which is reported in icare's financial statements and annual report alongside the insurance ratio. Use of the accounting ratio as the primary measure for capital management is not supported as the accounting funding ratio is subject to volatility from movements in risk-free government bond yields that do not change the underlying financial position of the scheme. It also does not account for the scheme's investment strategy when valuing its claims liabilities. Using the accounting ratio for capital management purposes also creates a disconnect to the pricing approach for the Nominal Insurer where investment income is used to lower the premium required. If that is not considered, it would create unnecessarily high premiums. For that reason the Government opposes the amendment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 5 on sheet c2022-085 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes39
Noes41
Majority.....2

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Holland, M	Crouch, A
Minns, C	Perrottet, D
Park, R	Conolly, K

PAIRS

Saffin, J
Watson, A

Anderson, K
Bromhead, S

Amendment negatived.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:08): I move Opposition amendment No. 6 on sheet c2022-085:

No. 6 **ICNSW staff remuneration**

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 2—

[5B] Section 15

Omit sections 15 and 16. Insert instead—

15 Salary and conditions of staff

- (1) The regulations may make provision about the employment of staff of ICNSW, including the conditions of employment and the discipline of staff.
- (2) ICNSW may fix the salary, wages and conditions of employment of staff employed under this Division as far as the salary, wages and conditions are not fixed—
 - (a) under this section, or
 - (b) under any other Act or law.
- (3) Despite subsections (1) and (2), a member of staff of ICNSW is not entitled to the payment of a performance-related bonus or incentive payment.
- (4) Regulations made under subsection (1) about the conditions of employment and the discipline of staff of ICNSW apply subject to—
 - (a) an award made by a competent industrial tribunal, and
 - (b) an industrial agreement or enterprise agreement to which ICNSW is a party.

The amendment has been circulated. It relates to bonuses. The amendment will introduce a ban on performance-related bonuses being paid to icare employees, including the CEO. Given that insurance premiums are going up and key metrics of performance for icare executives have gone backwards in the two years since the *Four Corners* investigation, there is no justification for bonuses being awarded. Over 200 icare employees are entitled to bonuses, even after a blizzard of scandals have been revealed. I acknowledge the extraordinary work done by the shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, to expose the failings of icare and to hold the Government accountable. The shadow Treasurer put forward his own bill in the other place because he believes it is a serious and important matter which must be brought to the Parliament for review. That bill was not supported by the Government.

I will give some examples of the bonus entitlements of icare staff. Those staff hold well-paid positions. Keep in mind that icare is not Macquarie Bank—"the millionaires' factory". I understand that the top people with the best brains are needed in those roles. Some fantastic, very smart, highly educated, specialist staff are working at icare. It is imperative that icare have such people, but graded salary scales apply to public sector executives and those should be used as a comparative. I mean no disrespect to the CEO of icare, but there is an issue when their position is paying \$800,000—\$120,000 more than was paid to the previous CEO—plus a performance-based bonus when icare's performance has not changed. Why are bonuses being paid?

As I said, over 200 icare employees are entitled to performance-based bonuses. I do not accept, for example, that the Group Executive for digiTECH should be entitled to a bonus of \$172,456. Those bonuses are paid from employers' money, which needs to be properly invested so that injured workers can be supported. Bonuses like this are excessive, particularly in light of low wages growth. A parallel universe is operating here in which wages growth is the lowest it has been in a decade and inflation is running hot, but we have an organisation that is giving itself the green light to pay bonuses. We need experts and specialists working at icare. They are educated and highly qualified people. It is imperative that icare has the very best staff—the cream of the crop—and there may be a need to recruit people of that calibre from interstate or overseas.

I understand it is a competitive market, but those big salaries are already high and comparable to the top level of the New South Wales public sector. In addition, bonuses of \$172,000 and \$32,000 were paid. The Group Executive, Risk and Governance was paid a bonus of \$184,000; the General Manager, Customer Experience was paid a bonus of \$58,000. They are good people, but that is not the issue. I am being very objective about this matter. It is about the results and the performance.

Injured workers are not customers; they are people we have to look after to get back to work. Employers and small business owners have customers. But when I talk to them they are frustrated with icare. They are pulling their hair out, especially after what they have been through in the past couple of years. I can give members a metric, which is anecdotal evidence. I urge Government members or the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government to come with me to talk to some of those small businesses that pay their premiums. They are trying to do the right thing and they are paying their taxes. Yet people working in customer experience are getting bonuses of \$58,000. The Workers Compensation Group Executive was paid a bonus of \$180,000. This system is not fit for purpose and is flawed. The bill is an attempt to make some repairs, but there is a long way to go.

I urge Government members to think about this amendment, because if they vote against it they are voting against the people in their electorates. If members representing the western Sydney electorates of Mulgoa, Riverstone, Penrith, Holsworthy or Camden vote against this amendment, they are voting for the parallel universe. Those members talk in this Chamber about how much their communities have been through. Those areas were locked down by this Government. Let's not forget the tail of two cities. Let's not forget the restrictions and what our communities have endured. If Government members vote against this amendment they will show their true faces to the workers and small business people who are working 18 hours a day to recover what they have lost. Some small businesses are still waiting to receive grant relief. I respect the fact that people who are critical, specialist, very important and highly qualified are in demand. Their salaries are indicative, but to pay bonuses on top of that is a parallel universe in light of what we are going through. I urge members to support the amendment and not bonuses.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government)
(16:18): The Government opposes the amendment moved by the member for Canterbury. The proposed amendment creates a new regulation-making power to create a provision with respect to the employment of icare staff, including conditions of employment and discipline. The amendment specifically prohibits icare staff from being entitled to performance-related bonuses or incentive payments. These are excluded from the regulations. This is a significant power to be included by way of regulation. The McDougall review thoroughly considered icare's executive remuneration and did not think the proposed measures were necessary. Mr McDougall, QC, noted he did not think icare's executive remuneration was excessive, that icare's general approach to remuneration was reasonable and that there was benefit to allowing icare to set its salaries in a way that is competitive against the broader insurance market and allows it to attract appropriate talent. The Government accepts the McDougall review's findings on this matter.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 6 on sheet c2022-085 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes38
 Noes42
 Majority.....4

AYES

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

Donato, P
 Doyle, T
 Finn, J
 Harris, D
 Harrison, J
 Haylen, J
 Hoenig, R
 Hornery, S
 Kamper, S
 Lalich, N
 Leong, J
 Li, J
 Lynch, P

McDermott, H
 Mehan, D (teller)
 Mihailuk, T
 O'Neill, M
 Parker, J
 Scully, P
 Smith, T
 Tesch, L (teller)
 Voltz, L
 Warren, G
 Washington, K
 Zangari, G

NOES

Ayres, S
 Clancy, J
 Cooke, S
 Coure, M

James, T
 Kean, M
 Layzell, D
 Lee, G

Roberts, A
 Saunders, D
 Sidgreaves, P
 Singh, G (teller)

NOES

Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Henskens, A

Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
McGirr, J
O'Dea, J
Overall, N
Pavey, M
Petinos, E
Piper, G
Preston, R
Provest, G

Smith, N (teller)
Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Williams, L
Williams, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Holland, M
Minns, C
Park, R
Saffin, J
Watson, A

Crouch, A
Perrottet, D
Conolly, K
Anderson, K
Bromhead, S

Amendment negatived.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:29): I move Opposition amendment No. 7 on sheet c2022-085:

No. 7 ICNSW staff remuneration

Page 5, Schedule 1. Insert after line 2—

[9] Schedule 2 Provisions relating to chief executive of ICNSW

Omit Schedule 2, clauses 2–4. Insert instead—

2 Conditions of employment

- (1) The ICNSW Board may, with the approval of the Minister, fix the conditions of employment of the chief executive of ICNSW to the extent that the conditions are not fixed by or under any other Act or law.
- (2) The chief executive of ICNSW is entitled to be paid remuneration, including travelling and subsistence allowances, as the Minister may from time to time decide on the advice of the ICNSW Board.
- (3) Despite subclauses (1) and (2), the chief executive of ICNSW is not entitled to the payment of a performance-related bonus or incentive payment.
- (4) The ICNSW Board may require the chief executive of ICNSW to enter into performance agreements.

3 Removal from office

The Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister in consultation with the ICNSW Board, may remove the chief executive of ICNSW at any time, for any or no stated reason and without notice.

[10] Schedule 2, clauses 5(1) and (3)

Omit "ICNSW Board may" wherever occurring. Insert instead "Minister may, from time to time,".

[11] Schedule 2, clause 5(1)

Omit "or during a vacancy in the office of chief executive of ICNSW".

[12] Schedule 2, clause 5(2)

Omit "The ICNSW Board". Insert instead "The Minister".

[13] Schedule 2, clause 5(4)

Insert after clause 5(3)—

- (4) The removal from the office of the chief executive of ICNSW is taken to have created a vacancy in that office.

[14] Schedule 4 Savings, transitional and other provisions

Insert at the end of the Schedule, with appropriate Part and clause numbering—

Part Provisions consequent on enactment of State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Act 2022

Definitions

In this Part—

amending Act means the *State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Act 2022*.

commencement date means the date of assent to the *State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Act 2022*.

existing chief executive means the chief executive of ICNSW, including a person appointed to act in the office of chief executive, immediately before the end of the transition period.

existing employee means a person employed by ICNSW under the Act, Part 2, Division 3 immediately before the commencement date.

transition period means the period commencing on the commencement date and ending immediately before 1 July 2022.

Application of amendments to existing employees

- (1) Subject to this clause, the amendments made by the amending Act to sections 8 and 15 and Schedule 2 do not apply to—
 - (a) an existing employee, or
 - (b) the existing chief executive.
- (2) Despite any determination or agreement made before the commencement date—
 - (a) section 15(3), as inserted by the amending Act, extends to an existing employee, and
 - (b) Schedule 2, clause 2(3), as inserted by the amending Act, extends to the existing chief executive.
- (3) If an existing employee is a senior executive within the meaning of section 16 of the Act as in force immediately before the commencement date, section 16 continues to apply to the senior executive despite its repeal.
- (4) Subclauses (2) and (3) cease to apply to a person referred to in the subclause if the person—
 - (a) is appointed to a different role as a member of staff of ICNSW, or
 - (b) ceases employment with ICNSW.

This amendment requires that icare staff remuneration is governed by similar rules as State-owned corporations. Like State-owned corporations such as Sydney Water, the icare board would be required to set its salaries and conditions with ministerial oversight. I note that the amendment grandfathers existing employment contracts. I make it clear that it would only apply to new employment contracts. There was a bill to this effect introduced by Labor, which was passed by the New South Wales upper House last year. I urge members to support this amendment.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (16:30): The Government opposes the amendment because it makes the following changes to the remuneration of the chief executive of icare: the board can fix the conditions of the chief executive on the advice of the Minister; the Minister sets the remuneration of the chief executive on the advice of the icare board; the chief executive is not entitled to performance-related bonuses or incentive payments; and the icare board may require the chief executive to enter into performance agreements. The McDougall review thoroughly considered icare executive remuneration and did not think the proposed measures were necessary. His Honour Robert McDougall, QC, noted that he did not think icare's executive remuneration was excessive. He thought that icare's general approach to remuneration was reasonable and that there was benefit in allowing icare to set salaries in a way that is competitive against the broader insurance market and that allows it to attract appropriate talent. The Government accepts the McDougall review's findings on this matter and, in the circumstances, opposes the amendment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 7 on sheet c2022-085 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes38
 Noes42
 Majority.....4

AYES

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

Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Li, J
Lynch, P

McDermott, H
Mehan, D (teller)
Mihailuk, T
O'Neill, M
Parker, J
Scully, P
Smith, T
Tesch, L (teller)
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Zangari, G

NOES

Ayres, S
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Gibbons, M
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
Petinos, E
Piper, G
Preston, R
Provest, G

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

PAIRS

Holland, M
Minns, C
Park, R
Saffin, J
Watson, A

Crouch, A
Perrottet, D
Conolly, K
Anderson, K
Bromhead, S

Amendment negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that clauses 1 to 3 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 3 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended agreed to.**Third Reading**

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.*Community Recognition Statements***NATIONAL RIDE2SCHOOL DAY**

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:43): Well done to the students of Warnervale Public School who participated in National Ride2School Day on 25 March. On National Ride2School Day, which is organised by the charity Bicycle Network, students across Australia are encouraged to ride their bikes or scooters to school to promote healthy lifestyles. National Ride2School Day is Australia's biggest celebration of active travel. It contributes to children's recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity and helps to improve their

concentration. It is also good for the environment. I hope the morning ride was a fun experience for all students who participated.

NSW GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNER ITA BUTTROSE, AC, OBE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaocluse) (16:43): On Friday 8 April I attended the Annual Women's Lunch of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. The event was hosted by local resident and director Louise McElvogue. University student Niley Lawson presented her first acknowledgement of country on behalf of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation. Ita Buttrose, AC, OBE, was the guest speaker. It was my pleasure to present her with the NSW Government Community Service Award. Ita's address captured why she is admired for her courage and trailblazing spirit, as do her long list of professional achievements in journalism, publishing and business leadership. However, the award acknowledged Ita's community work, including as a trustee of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, Dementia Australia ambassador, patron of Macular Disease Foundation Australia, founding member of Chief Executive Women and chair of the Australian Mental Health Prize Advisory Group. Ita is well deserving of the NSW Government Community Service Award from the Premier. It was my privilege to congratulate her on behalf of our New South Wales community.

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:44): On Wednesday 30 March 2022 I was pleased to attend the celebration of 2,400 years of the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria at the Parliament of New South Wales. Organised by the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Egypt Committee and the Australian Egyptian Forum Council, the event was an opportunity to bring together Egyptian-Australians as well as our Greek, Maltese and Armenian communities to celebrate the growth of the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria. It was also an opportunity to discuss multi-faith dialogue between those different multicultural communities.

We heard from guest speakers including Yasser Abed, Consul-General of the Arabic Republic of Egypt in Sydney, and the Hon. Mark Coure, MP, Minister for Multiculturalism. That was followed by two short presentations about Alexandria's multicultural and multi-faith history. Finally, wonderful entertainment was provided by Egyptian performers celebrating Alexandria's rich cultural history. I thank president Amir Salem and secretary Sara Nour of the Australian Egyptian Forum Council for hosting this fantastic event. It was an honour to celebrate the 2,400-year history of Alexandria with them, and I hope to attend events celebrating that ancient multicultural city again in the future.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:46): On 6 May I was glad to attend the opening of the Southern Highlands Netball Association courts at Eridge Park. Four of the six courts underwent resurfacing to address cracks and inconsistencies in the surface level of the courts. The repair work was particularly important to ensure that the courts can be safely used by players and umpires and was achieved with funding from the Stronger Country Communities Fund. During the 17 weeks of the winter netball competition season, the courts are enjoyed and utilised by more than 630 players and umpires. The space is also used by five representative teams, who train twice a week, as well as by coaches. Between the months of October and December, a twilight competition sees 100 players and coaches using the courts. Over the whole year, that equals approximately 18,000 people using the now restored courts. I congratulate the executive, in particular Kate Bow, Kylie Gillespie, Renae Lewis and Cecelia Marmont.

SYDNEY ROSE OF TRALEE EVENT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:47): I was honoured and thrilled to attend this year's Sydney Rose of Tralee event, which was a wonderful night of celebration and community. I congratulate Tom O'Keeffe and the Kerry Association and the Sydney Rose Committee, who made the event such a success, as well as all the organisers, the passionate members of the Irish diaspora, the sponsors and all of the entrants. After a two-year COVID hiatus, it was a jubilant return of a favourite community event. Each year the Sydney Rose of Tralee seeks to highlight and celebrate the young women who best represent the values and achievements of the Sydney Irish diaspora and to select a role model to represent Sydney at the Rose of Tralee International Festival. I congratulate this year's Sydney Rose, Mairéad Brennan, who I am confident will represent the Irish diaspora in Sydney with grace, pride and honour. I congratulate all the entrants this year, who all did themselves and their community so proud. I also congratulate the previous Sydney Roses on their commitment to representing the best of Ireland.

QUEANBEYAN DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (16:48): I recognise the Queanbeyan District Cricket Club [QDCC], one of the oldest cricket clubs in Australia. Its origins can be traced back to the 1860s. The recently concluded 2021-22 season will be remembered as one of the greatest seasons in the club's 162-year history.

Queanbeyan dominated the Cricket ACT awards, and QDCC was named Club of the Year. It was a finalist in all grades of the John Gallop Cup and in all grades of the T20 competition. In third grade it won the Douglas Cup and the women's side won the Glenda Hall Shield T20 competition, having qualified in fourth position for the semifinals. This year the club also said goodbye to Australian Indigenous cricketer Neil "The Legend" Bulger. The hard-hitting left-handed batter and left-arm medium-pace bowler was a mainstay of the Queanbeyan side in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Legend played 25 seasons for Queanbeyan across all grades, scoring almost 8,000 runs and taking 384 wickets—a legend indeed.

AUSTRALIAN CAMBODIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:49): On 28 April I had the great pleasure of attending a very special event at the Mingyue Lay Temple, where the Australian Cambodian Chinese Association graciously raised and donated \$6,150 to support the flood-affected communities throughout New South Wales. The horrendous floods that have occurred throughout New South Wales have wrought devastation on so many communities and left many families with nothing. I am incredibly proud of the generosity of the Australian Cambodian Chinese Association, whose donation will help many families who have lost so much. On behalf of the broader Cabramatta community, we are all incredibly proud of the Australian Cambodian Chinese Association and its ongoing efforts to help those in need, far and wide. I thank Australian Cambodian Chinese Association president Mr Shao Jian Guan, who presented the cheque to State member for Lismore Ms Janelle Saffin, and St Vincent de Paul Society regional director for the north-east Ms Claire Van Doorn.

SHOALHAVEN HOMELESS HUB

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:50): I acknowledge and congratulate the Shoalhaven Homeless Hub, which is set to occupy a new home thanks to New South Wales State Government assistance. The hub has operated out of its current Nowra location for 23 years and is finally being relocated. As its current lease is coming to an end, it had to quickly find somewhere to relocate. To the delight of customers, clients and managers, it is set to relocate from its current premises in Junction Street to its new location in Plunkett Street. A \$60,000 funding announcement from the State Government made recently by Minister for Families and Communities Natasha Maclaren-Jones will cover two years of rent and relocation costs and has made the move possible. The funding announcement was well received by all when we visited two weeks ago. I congratulate the Shoalhaven Homeless Hub on the work it does to assist vulnerable people in our community. I look forward to hearing about the success of the move and hope the new location is more accessible and more suitable for all clients and staff.

NSW POLICE FORCE MULTICULTURAL LIAISON OFFICER PROGRAM

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:51): The NSW Police Force multicultural liaison officer program was recently awarded the Premier's Multicultural Community award for business excellence, the Local Government Medal. I congratulate all of the officers in the program, but in doing so I particularly congratulate former Wollongong Police District multicultural liaison officer Rima Elhage. Rima has long been a driving force behind the multicultural liaison program and has been a fantastic point of contact with local police for multicultural communities in Wollongong. Bridging the gap between many multicultural communities and the police is often a difficult task that means addressing and overcoming the deep-seated mistrust of police developed through some people's experiences before they arrive in Australia. Rima is well known and highly respected in Wollongong, particularly among the many multicultural communities that call Wollongong home. She has worked incredibly hard over many years to develop relationships and is an active participant in community events. There is no doubt in my mind that she is one of the key contributors to the success of that NSW Police Force program.

CUDGEN HEADLAND SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:52): I congratulate Cudgen Headland Surf Life Saving Club on reaching 100 years in operation. This weekend will see the club celebrate that amazing milestone. All of the members since its inception in 1922 would be very proud of that achievement. All the time that they have volunteered to keep our beaches safe does not go without our thanks. The club had a big win this year, taking home its fifth country surf title in a row. A couple of special mentions to president Grant Rogers, director of surf sports Adam Mills and director of membership Kim Holdom. They should be proud of their club.

SYDNEY MAY DAY RALLY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:52): I congratulate the unionists, activists and community members who came out for the annual May Day rally and march in Sydney. May Day commemorates and celebrates the achievements of workers internationally to unite and also recognises their ongoing struggles. It was heartening to see such a large number of people coming out on the streets and demanding urgent action on workers' rights and wages, including the right to strike. I thank all the speakers at the Sydney May Day rally, including local unionist

and representative of the Maritime Union of Australia Sydney branch Natalie Walmsley, who spoke passionately about the need for workers to stand up for their rights and for governments to ensure that those rights are upheld.

Members of the Nurses and Midwives' Association; the Teachers Federation; the National Tertiary Education Union; the Health Services Union; the Public Service Association; the Community and Public Sector Union; the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union; the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union; the Electrical Trades Union; the United Workers Union; my own union, the Australian Services Union; and so many other unions echoed the calls to improve workplace conditions and scrap wage caps. Solidarity to all of those who marched.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEER MICHAEL BROOME

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:54): I commend Mr Michael Broome for his longstanding contribution to the Hawkesbury region through his service in the local SES unit. Today being Wear Orange Wednesday or WOW Day, it is appropriate to recognise in this House SES volunteers for their effort in this year's storm and flood events. As Hawkesbury battled another major flood event in February and March of this year, Michael was one of the outstanding SES crew members who kept me informed around the clock as the crisis unfolded.

I was delighted to attend the New South Wales SES Metro Zone Awards ceremony recently when Michael was finally able to receive his award for 35 years' service. It was wonderful to formally honour Michael and many other SES volunteers for their hard work and sacrifices across multiple decades. Our SES volunteers play a critical role in Hawkesbury and I know our community is very grateful to them for their ongoing resilience as they respond to emergencies which threaten our region. Until recently this group of local heroes had been prevented from gathering due to previous COVID-19 restrictions, but I am pleased that Michael has received the recognition he duly deserves.

PORT STEPHENS-HUNTER POLICE DISTRICT AWARDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:55): Last week I was honoured to attend the Port Stephens-Hunter Police District Awards ceremony at Tocal College. The ceremony was hosted by District Commander Detective Superintendent Chad Gillies, alongside Deputy Commissioner Peter Thurtell and Assistant Commissioner Peter McKenna. I pay tribute to all of the recipients of awards and thank them for going above and beyond to keep our community safe, especially Sergeant Bradley Moore, Sergeant Michael Innes, Senior Constable Joel Price, DSC Michelle Lawson, Senior Constable Mark Price, retired Senior Constable Cain Emslie, Senior Constable Ashley Gattenhoff and Senior Constable Peter Boys, who were all awarded the prestigious National Police Service Medal. Special mention also of Sergeant Russell Lloyd for receiving his sixth clasp on his New South Wales Police Medal, representing over 40 years of service. Finally, I formally farewell District Commander Detective Superintendent Chad Gillies, and thank him for his support of our community during the most difficult of times, and welcome Detective Superintendent Wayne Humphries, who now returns in the role of District Commander of Port Stephens-Hunter Police District.

AQUINAS HOLY FAMILY COLTS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (16:56): I acknowledge the incredible Aquinas Holy Family Colts Junior Rugby League Football Club. Founded in 1992 as a direct result of the Holy Family Primary School entering teams in the Cronulla-Sutherland schoolboy knockout competition, the Colts are comprised of over 400 members participating in male rugby league teams and female tag teams. I am pleased that the Colts have received a one-off \$7,570 grant from the Premier, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, MP, to repurpose existing storage space for the expansion of the club's canteen facility. This upgrade will ensure the health and safety of community users and cater to the club's increasing membership. Of course, none of this would be possible without the hardworking group of volunteers behind the organisation. I particularly acknowledge Darren Elliott, Peter Kingham, Brett O'Farrell, Shane Canavan, and Andrew and Marian Matheson. I thank Aquinas Holy Family Colts Junior Rugby League Football Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and extend my best wishes for the season.

VESAK DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:57): On Sunday 15 May 2022 I joined the Vietnamese Buddhist community of the Phuoc Hue Temple, Wetherill Park, to celebrate Vesak Day. The Phuoc Hue Temple has been at the centre of the local Vietnamese Buddhist community since the 1980s. The temple is the headquarters of the United Vietnamese Buddhist congregation in Australia and New Zealand and is the international training and practice institution for ordained and lay Buddhists. It is always an honour to be in the company of Senior Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, OAM, Senior Venerable Thich Phuoc Vien and the executive committee.

I acknowledge them for hosting the Bathing of Buddha religious ceremony along with the cultural celebration in the surrounds of the temple.

ST CLAIR AND DISTRICT MEN'S SHED AND MAX DESSMANN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:57): Congratulations to Max Dessmann who has been awarded the St Clair and District Men's Shed's first honorary membership. The decision was a unanimous one for the executive committee members. On Wednesday 4 May 2022 President Paul Tarlinton and other shed members presented the honorary membership to a very surprised Max. Max Dessmann is the technical representative for Rondo, a great local company. Max earned his honorary membership by his professional, insightful and friendly expertise during the fit-out of the new men's shed at Mamre homestead. The executive committee approached Rondo for help to line the interior of the shed and, fortuitously for the members, Max was sent to see if he could assist with the internal fit-out problems. The initial meeting turned out to be the start of a long-term relationship not only for Max but also his very generous—to the men's shed—employer. To the shed members, Max is a friend and a magician. He turned sometimes vague ideas that they had into finished products that have made the interior ambience of the shed something very special. Congratulations, Max, on this well-deserved honour.

Business interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

TAFE NSW REGIONAL SERVICES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:59): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the importance of TAFE education and training in regional New South Wales.
- (2) Notes the change in opportunities for regionally based students to access TAFE courses.

We can all agree that TAFE has played an essential and integral role in the vocational education and training of our workforce, particularly in rural and regional New South Wales. Many of us in this Chamber may have been previous graduates of TAFE at some point. I was, and I see the member for Tweed putting his hand up. TAFE has provided a world-class vocational training facility for students and apprentices over many decades and played a pivotal role in upskilling, teaching and building our State.

In our society we all rely on an endless number of trade services—both in the country and here in the city. In turn, the businesses that deliver those services to us rely on confidence in quality-assured technical and further education which their apprentices and staff can reliably access to help deliver their services to us. Currently there is a huge skills and trades shortage in the country, and businesses are hobbled as a result. The future growth and prosperity of our country towns hinges on available trade services. TAFE is a vital element in developing a skilled workforce to underpin growth and prosperity in the regions. I have often spoken about the challenges we face in the country, and the centralisation of our government services is draining vitality and viability as businesses follow suit.

TAFE is a perfect example of an organisation that the New South Wales Government has centralised. It has been further skeletonised as cost-cutting has slowly but surely reduced the variety and number of courses being offered, and staff cuts have reduced the organisation's capability to deliver timely and quality education and training. There is an obvious effect on the organisation's reduced capabilities, but the staff cuts and increases in minimum class sizes have caused enormous pressure on TAFE teachers and the workforce of trainers who are being asked to do more with less. Administrative staff have diminished and there is less support for frontline educators. Teachers are doing enormous hours. The feedback I have received is that some are working hundreds of hours overtime per year just to try to keep up, so much so that they are being burnt out. Teachers are burdened with compliance requirements that far exceed those required of private training providers.

A recent staff survey undertaken by TAFE resulted in one-third of employees reporting that they were happy in their job and one-third of the respondents reporting that they have confidence in their employer. We are now seeing TAFE teachers walking away from their jobs. That is worsening an already dire situation and having an impact on courses. Whilst I am not shocked to have learned that overseas companies have been contracted to write, deliver and assess TAFE course material, as a patriotic Aussie who puts our country first, I am disappointed to hear that. TAFE long held a reputation for the gold standard in technical and further education throughout New South Wales. Unfortunately, that could not be said of the organisation now, which has been eroded and cut to the bare bones, especially in the bush.

As I mentioned earlier, in the bush we are burdened with challenges not faced by those in the city. In many communities we do not have access to public transport, which is an impediment for many in accessing

employment and educational opportunities. As a result, many young country folk may be challenged to realise their professional and financial potential and, for some, it will be a case of the poor getting poorer. Many young people do not have the money to purchase a vehicle to travel the vast distances to access TAFE education and training. Those who are lucky enough to have one are driving long distances, day and night, to attend TAFE and cannot afford overnight accommodation in the distant centres that offer the training. Therefore, they are driving fatigued and dodging the kangaroos and other wildlife on the road. And the cost of fuel is a huge impost to a financially challenged young person, or those who are unemployed, in travelling to access trade-based education such as TAFE.

We are now in the digital age and many organisations see potential efficiencies—and read that to mean cost cuts—that the digital platform may deliver. I say "may" because, paradoxically, in rural and regional New South Wales many people do not have access to the reliable digital or mobile connectivity that their city cousins benefit from, which is an inequity and a disadvantage to country people being able to access education and training. A large proportion of the remaining courses on offer are delivered off campus or via virtual classrooms. As I have pointed out, while that is good for those who do not require face-to-face training or hands-on education and who have the good fortune to own a laptop or a tablet and have access to reliable internet service, many do not.

I have previously touched on the increase in minimum class sizes brought about due to "efficiency measures". However, we are now seeing that, when the minimum class size of 18 is not met, the class or course is removed as an offering and the other 17 applicant students are left without an option, which might also mean they are left without a job. Some school leavers are hands-on, practical students, especially farm and country kids from the bush. A trade provides a magnificent career pathway for young individuals—whether they work for themselves, work remotely or work anywhere around the world—with the added bonus of not having a HECS debt when they finish university.

The benefits that trades provide for many of our young farm or country children and school leavers, such as career progression and prosperity, are magnificent. We cannot have growth without trade-based services; we cannot have trade-based services without businesses; we cannot have businesses without skilled workers; and we cannot have skilled workers without TAFE education and training. I cannot put it more simply than that. I note that there are students who have to drive several hundred kilometres to access TAFE. Metal engineering is one such course that is not offered in the Central West. Many metal engineering and fabricating companies have approached me and said that there is no local TAFE to send our students to. Those students have to go to Sydney at great inconvenience to them and great impost to the companies. For those reasons, I commend the motion to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:06): I make a contribution to the public interest debate. TAFE is very important. To be up-front, I am a TAFE graduate in cookery and chef skills. I started at east Sydney and then went to Ryde. I went on to become a TAFE teacher at Padstow. So I am fully aware that TAFE is a magnificent organisation. The New South Wales Government delivered a record \$1.9 billion budget for TAFE this year. In the past 12 months 1,550 students living in regional areas were enrolled in TAFE. TAFE teachers have increased every year since 2016.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: What happened before then? One-third of the staff sacked and gone.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: That is not right. I have sat in the Chamber and heard him put down TAFE for a long time. He is such a negative individual. I am shocked by the way he criticises the poor TAFE teachers and the poor students. I tell him now that TAFE NSW is Australia's largest and best training provider, helping people get the skills they need for jobs.

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

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: We delivered 100,000 free apprenticeships and 70,000 free traineeships to help people get their first jobs. Enrolments have increased at the TAFE in my area. When Labor comes to my town, people in my electorate do not protest about TAFE cuts in front of the TAFE because they know it is a fabrication. Apprenticeships in my electorate are up 30 per cent. So if you show your face there we will laugh at you because you are peddling lies and misinformation.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Tweed will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Newcastle will be mindful of Standing Order 249A.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Currently we are building a \$19 million dollar vocational education training facility at Tweed River High School. How good is that? It will allow students to access a large number of industries. Guess what the TAFE in my electorate did? Newcastle did not do this. It had an evacuation centre that most nights slept up to 600 people. The TAFE quickly turned that over. A lot of the teachers and students came

to volunteer. We are offering a variety of courses there. Our enrolled nurse courses are oversubscribed. Our social media and media courses are oversubscribed. Guess what? We are running a certificate III course on surfboard shaping now, which we are encouraging locals to do. The most amazing things happen in the Tweed. NSW TAFE charges a bit more than TAFE Queensland, but our enrolments are up and Queensland's are down. Why? That is because we provide a quality product for teachers and students. It is all about looking after the students, with carpentry and engineering. We even have courses running for Movie Maker.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: I am having trouble hearing the incredibly proud contribution of the member for Tweed, who is making an excellent case in the debate today. Sometimes I have trouble hearing him over the member for Newcastle. I ask that the member for Newcastle be brought to order.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I uphold the member's well-embellished point of order. The member for Newcastle will come to order. I referenced Standing Order 249A earlier. I will use that mechanism if needed; it may not remove the member from the Chamber for a vote but it will put him out to calm down and allow the member for Tweed to continue unassisted. The member for Tweed has the call.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for your good ruling. Importantly, TAFE worked incredibly hard to make sure classes returned as soon as possible once the floodwaters subsided, because TAFE NSW is a critical part of my region and the whole of regional New South Wales. There is a need to train tradies and apprentices who will rebuild our region and help us recover from the floods. I am proud of Kingscliff TAFE in my electorate and the incredible job it continues to do in education but also, as I said before, in assisting during the evacuation and looking after those people displaced during the floods. I see it growing in strength. I was a TAFE teacher back in the mid-1980s. I know what we had then and I know what we have now.

I am incredibly proud to support TAFE, particularly in our regions, because it shows the leadership and the strength-building of our local communities. All of us in the regions need tradesmen. It does not matter whether it is Broken Hill, Orange or Tweed Heads, there is a lack of tradies. They are all proud to go through their courses. They are turning up day after day and getting their qualifications. There is nothing better than seeing lots of trades and courses and people completing them and doing extra courses to enhance their capabilities. I thoroughly endorse that. I dismiss the continual negativity that I hear in this Chamber about our TAFE. I am proud of TAFE and I continue to support it.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:12): The skills shortage in Australia has reached a critical point. On my travels across my electorate I am often told by people that they cannot get hospitality staff, tradespeople or other kinds of skilled workers. While I know this problem is much more widespread than just my electorate, it is particularly acute in Barwon because of the deterioration of TAFE services across western New South Wales. Funding has been cut and the schools have been restructured or forced to compete with private colleges for funding. As a result, courses that were once the mainstay of trades in country towns are no longer offered. Teachers are overworked; they have to spend too much time on admin and work long hours, and morale is low.

It is a sad state of affairs, given TAFE's proud heritage of providing education. Before technical colleges existed it had been the tradition for one generation to pass on its skills to the next. A craftsman father would pass on his knowledge to his sons or an apprentice, or a mother skilled in a range of areas would pass on her knowledge to her daughters. But as communities grew larger, societies became more complex, creating a bigger demand for skilled tradespeople. During the industrial revolution, much of that training was often given over to outside institutions. In 1799 British academic, physician and philanthropist Dr George Birkbeck began giving free lectures to working men in Glasgow in an effort to improve their knowledge of the mechanics of centrifugal pumps. It led to the setting up of mechanics institutes and schools of arts across Britain and in Australia.

Mr Adam Marshall: Did you research this, Roy?

Mr ROY BUTLER: I certainly did. Tasmania led the way with its mechanics institute established in 1827, and in 1833 the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts was opened. Originally most were set up by or supported by money from philanthropic businessmen as places where working-class people could learn new skills. Over time the government became more involved, granting land to those schools as well as funding them, importing experts from England to teach and setting up new schools. By the twentieth century, many had become an essential part of the government education system. They later became known as technical colleges and played a significant role in Australia's history, building our cities and our industries. During World War II, these schools were vital for training people for the war effort. They became institutes of Technical and Further Education, or TAFEs, in the 1970s, training generations of young people in trades and various professions. But, in recent times, various measures have led to a decline in TAFE colleges across the State, particularly in Barwon.

In the Far West, the biggest issue is the travel required for apprentices to complete their theory study for their qualifications. Many TAFE campuses that are part of TAFE Western no longer offer the full range of more traditional trade courses, such as carpentry, joinery and electrical trades, for face-to-face learning. It really does depend on the trade. We have been contacted by constituents who travel from Broken Hill to Dubbo, 750 kilometres, for their apprenticeship theory in spray painting. This is at their own expense, and their employers are without their apprentices while they travel to attend these course requirements. TAFE Western locally flies in staff to teach the building and electrical courses when there is a full course. At the moment, there are courses running on metal fabrications and boilermaking but, ironically, they do not have enough apprentices to fill these classes.

To complete a plumbing apprenticeship in Broken Hill requires students to travel 300 kilometres to Mildura—again at their own expense—forcing them to take time away from their work, at the cost of their employers. Added to this is the fact that apprentices are on a comparatively low wage when they start their apprenticeship, which is not making it attractive to enter the trades. Teacher shortages are impacting also on what is offered in Broken Hill. Hairdressing and beauty students need to travel 500 kilometres to Adelaide for trade schools. There are similar problems with travel in other parts of the electorate. In Cobar there is a new connected learning centre, which has replaced the older TAFE and is further away from the CBD. The centre offers a range of courses, including cooking, floristry, hospitality, shearing and wood harvesting. But, for courses on many of the trades, students need to travel to Dubbo.

For several Condobolin students with disability, the hospitality course they want to take is offered only as an online course. But a mother of a student wrote to us, saying, "Online learning is not a suitable learning experience. Some of our people need to be kept motivated and engaged. Our people need the full learning experience to gain the maximum benefits." Some of those students either do not have a computer or have problems with internet connectivity. Narrabri has a fully functioning TAFE but, because many courses are not offered locally, there are stories of people having to travel from Narrabri to Tamworth. The way in which the courses are structured often means that, for up to four years, the students are travelling weekly for just one day of learning, or the classes are not within public transport times so they are still forced to find another way to get TAFE.

Often students need to go the night before, or they have to be up for an early start. That is costing them money for fuel, accommodation and food. The reimbursement they receive for accommodation and travel is not adequate. It is not enough even to nearly cover the expenses. At a time when people are desperate for skilled workers, we should be doing everything we can to encourage people to take up apprenticeships and to study to enter the workforce. But our proud heritage of educating our youth, passing on skills to the next generation, is in danger of being lost.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (17:17): I make a contribution to the public interest debate. At the outset, I thank the member for Orange for bringing this motion before the House today and acknowledge his sincere and genuine interest in technical and further education. I also thank his colleague the member for Barwon for a wonderful history lesson about how TAFE began in New South Wales and its importance across rural and regional New South Wales. Indeed, TAFE NSW has the largest physical footprint and highest student and teacher numbers of any registered training provider in Australia, which is something to be celebrated and supported.

Paragraph (2) of the member's motion notes the change in opportunities for regionally based students to access TAFE courses, which is something I will touch on in my brief contribution. In the Northern Tablelands we have four TAFE campuses, which we are very proud to have. A couple of years ago the agricultural industry community identified a significant shortage of shearers, which is not unique to the Northern Tablelands. The Central West and southern parts of New South Wales have the same problem. For many decades, we have been heavily reliant on New Zealand shearers to come to our country to shear flocks of sheep. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the wool industry's structural weakness of relying heavily on overseas shearers. We should be investing more in growing and developing our own.

So a group of farmers contacted me. We then formed a working group with Regional Development Australia Northern Inland, TAFE NSW and some local high schools. Together we developed the Glen Innes shearing school, using the facilities of the Department of Primary Industries and its wonderful six-stand shearing shed. For the past three years, we have been running shearing schools twice a year. Around 40 high school students come in for a fortnight. TAFE teachers and wool producers are there. Australian Wool Innovation has now come on board. They do wool classing as well. The students get a taste of it and are then offered places to learn wool classing at TAFE NSW. After three years, we have already turned out more than 30 wool classers, who are working within our region, and we have some shearers who are working full time. Some of those young people have not come from farms or had anything to do with the wool industry. Their first introduction to wool classing

or shearing was through that shearing school, in partnership with TAFE NSW, and now they are working in that industry. The young people love it and our agricultural industry loves it.

That is an important change. We now have in our region a group of teachers and campus managers who are keen to work in a bespoke way to address skill shortages. If we have the demand or the interest in that particular skill set or course, then we can find a way to make it happen. It is a great model that I would like to see rolled out across the State. As long as you have the facilities, you will have no shortage of school students. As long as you have the willingness of involved industry, it can be a success. After three years, the results speak for themselves. Even during the height of the pandemic, we were still able to run the shearing school. I do not know whether we abided by all the restrictions of the time, but skill shortages needed to be addressed, so we did that and everyone was safe in the end.

I finish where I started by thanking the member for Orange for bringing this motion forward. It is indeed a changing landscape in the skill space. We have seen connected learning centres come on board. In my area they have more than tripled the number of available courses, which we could not deliver to our local communities, particularly the smaller ones, before. The shearing school at Glen Innes is one example of the bespoke way in which TAFE in the Northern Tablelands—which is all I can speak to in this debate—works now. Our region is all the better for it. I again thank the member for Orange.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:22): The member for Northern Tablelands talked about the fantastic model from the Coalition. If you do not believe in the public provision of vocational education, this is the model. First, you sack a third of the staff of TAFE, which is what has happened since this Coalition has been in government. What happens then? The enrolments go right down. What happens after that? The Government shuts down the courses. Then what does it do? It sells off the campus. That is the Coalition's model for those who do not believe in the public provision of vocational education.

If the campus is sold, you ain't got no access to TAFE in regional New South Wales. In fact, last year we saw the Scone TAFE campus flogged off in favour of private investments and then a glorified computer lab put in town. The Minister said that it would be fully functioning, catering to more face-to-face and practical courses, and that the campus would remain. In March the Secretary of the Department of Education said that there were no divestment plans. By August, Racing NSW expressed an interest in the site. What happened? The divestment was approved. When was it approved? It was on the very same day. That is not the only campus in regional New South Wales this Government has flogged. In September 2020 the Government said, "Let's sell 19 campuses." This is a great model. Since then, it has sold off two regional campuses—Mudgee first and Goulburn second—and we are debating a motion moved by the crossbenchers on TAFE in the regions. Well, this Government loves to flog them off. Let us talk about course access.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for South Coast will cease interjecting.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP: The member for Tweed was talking about rebuilding after the floods. I wonder how people in his electorate are going to do it because no-one can study bricklaying, floor or wall tiling between Newcastle and Queensland. Can you believe that, with the destruction caused by the floods and the need for skilled tradespeople in that region? It absolutely beggars belief. In fact, the only places where someone can study a certificate III in wall and floor tiling outside of Greater Sydney are Newcastle and Bathurst. When those courses were cut on the North Coast and mid North Coast, I heard the story of a bricklaying apprentice in his second year who had to travel to Newcastle from Coffs Harbour to complete his studies. I congratulate the Coalition Government, which is a great believer in regional TAFE campuses. He was a P-plater who had to get up at 3.00 a.m. to drive to Newcastle, go to TAFE and then drive back home. That is very unsafe.

There was a trades hub put in at Coffs Harbour, but it was not big enough to accommodate all the students who had been enrolled at the Coffs Harbour TAFE campus. Meanwhile, in Bega a Connected Learning Centre [CLC] was opened. The community was concerned about what that meant for the TAFE campus on Barrack Street because, as history has shown, once there is a CLC you can kiss your TAFE campus goodbye. Clearly, they were on to something because the Government decided to build a trades hub right next door. Let us look at staff and access to TAFE in regional New South Wales. The decimation of and reduced access to TAFE is reflected in staff numbers. TAFE teachers in New South Wales have been cut under this Coalition Government. A third have gone from Ballina, and two-thirds have gone from Broken Hill, Cessnock and Gunnedah. How many have gone from Maclean? Ninety per cent. How can a regional TAFE run with 90 cent of its staff gone?

A huge part of accessing education at TAFE is being able to access wraparound services, but tranche two of the Government's cuts to library, disability support and counselling services is happening now. There are big concerns about cuts to counsellor numbers in the western region. That is what this Government gives to TAFE in the regions—cuts, cuts, cuts. It makes cuts to the wraparound services and to teaching staff. The student numbers go down and so it cuts the courses and sells the campuses. What a great model!

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:27): I thank the member for Orange for moving this motion, because the issue of labour and skills shortages in rural and regional New South Wales is becoming critical. Having a strong regional TAFE network is an important part of solving that issue. A National Skills Commission survey showed that 2020 was the first year that employers in regional areas had more difficulty recruiting staff than employers in capital cities. In June last year, Regional Development Australia Riverina released its Riverina Skills Study. It showed that 78 per cent of respondents reported difficulty recruiting staff and nearly 50 per cent of vacancies were unfilled. Importantly, nearly three-quarters of respondents felt that skills would change in the next five years, leading to a need to reskill our workforce. The top industries with vacancies included accommodation and food services, agriculture, forestry and fishing, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and professional scientific and technical services.

Those concerns were reinforced in April this year at the Wagga Wagga Business Summit, hosted by the Committee for Wagga. Participants agreed that a labour and skills shortage was the limiting factor in development of the region. An important part of addressing the skills shortage is the need to provide strong local pathways for training and retraining, especially through the vocational education sector. In 2012, 156,000 people were in apprenticeships or traineeships in New South Wales. In 2020 there were just 85,000, although it did go up to 106,000 in 2021. Nevertheless, that means a remarkable drop in those accessing a career in trades. We are not training enough people in the skills we need. We are not encouraging our young people to look at the enormous potential of a career in the trades. We need to encourage families and our communities to look at those options, but we also need to have attractive and relevant training available in our regions—that is where we need a strong, modern TAFE network.

Let me give an example. Computer numerical control [CNC] machines are playing an increasingly important role in manufacturing. Those computer-controlled machines provide a level of efficiency, accuracy and consistency that is difficult to achieve through a manual process. A company in Wagga, called Flip Screen Australia Pty Ltd, is using this technology to make innovative recycling equipment. It has been invented, engineered, commercialised and now exported from Wagga to all over the world. The machines are recognised as the best in the world. Flip Screen is creating a 40-hectare industrial park, and the first of seven 2,000-square-metre factories will be completed by February 2023. Managing director of Flip Screen, Sam Turnbull, a strong advocate for modern training pathways, said:

The problem is that we cannot attract and train school leavers to learn how to run our robots and our CNC machines because TAFE does not have any robotic training and while the local TAFE has perfectly functioning CNC machining centres it is not running CNC courses.

It is said that the reasons for this are that there are not enough teachers, not enough students, or that the machines are too old. In fact, the machines could be used, but there are not enough students because there are no courses. This is an example of a company that can offer students an exciting and attractive career; it has interesting training with jobs ready to go to. It would help solve the skills shortage in the regions. Unfortunately, we have to address the issue relating to accessing regional TAFE.

As other speakers have said today, TAFE training is an important part of training in our regional locations, where so often other options are simply not available. We need to take up the challenge to ensure that TAFE in our regions has the resources it needs to serve our young people, our workers and our communities. TAFE must provide an avenue where people can seek an attractive career. It must compete with the university sector so that young people know that TAFE is an option for their future, which can be pursued locally. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (17:32): I have been very impressed by the sincerity of the contributions of members this afternoon—other than that of the member for Newcastle. It is a very important topic. We all agree that TAFE and skills training is incredibly important. I want to correct a few of the things that have been said—mostly by the member for Newcastle—because there are many encouraging statistics relating to the opportunities for regionally based students to access TAFE and that needs to be properly acknowledged. More than 150,000 people from regional New South Wales were enrolled in TAFE NSW courses last year. Unfortunately, all we hear is Labor—and in particular the member for Newcastle—talking down TAFE, and its hardworking teachers and students. The Opposition has no policies about TAFE NSW, other than to talk it down.

We have heard the falsehood perpetrated by the member for Newcastle and the Teachers Federation about teachers being sacked. It is a matter of public record as recorded in the annual reports of TAFE NSW that teacher numbers have increased year on year every year for the last six years. The member for Newcastle also talked about administrative staff. The most recent TAFE NSW annual report shows that there are more administrative staff now than there was six years ago. The member for Newcastle will never let the facts get in the way, unfortunately for him.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: In terms of accessibility to skills and training in regional areas, as we announced with week, in under two years there have been more than 200,000 job trainer enrolments in that program that gives fee-free courses and skills training in New South Wales. Some 90,000 of those have been outside Sydney, delivered by TAFE NSW or registered training organisations. That is focused on high-demand skill sectors, as it should be. Almost 60 per cent of those 200,000 have been women. That is important in terms of equity and access to economic opportunity.

The Government has invested \$120 million in 22 connected learning centres in regional areas, as the member for Northern Tablelands referred to. Nineteen of them have been opened and three are in progress. A number of those centres are the first presence ever of TAFE in those regional areas. They have also contributed in other areas to a doubling of the number of courses that have been available. That is a significant, positive change for regional opportunity and students. Mobile training units now offer a range of courses that were never available before. The member for Barwon made an important contribution. He would acknowledge that, for example, in Wilcannia there is now offered a certificate II in hospitality. It is one of the most remote TAFE campuses in our State. That has expanded the opportunities. Wilcannia has a population of only 549 people but we are offering that course in that regional area.

There was discussion about the importance and difficulties of digital connectivity. Our connected learning points have contributed to greater access to a range of subjects in regional areas. Students in Dubbo can participate in virtually delivered classes by lecturers on the Central Coast and so on. That is very important. The member for Newcastle talked about the accessibility of bricklaying courses between Newcastle and the Queensland border. On my calculation there are at least seven places between Newcastle and Queensland where a certificate III in bricklaying can be studied: Northern Rivers, Coffs Harbour, New England, Tweed and the mid North Coast, delivered by the Master Builders Association, GL Marketing and Distribution, and Construction Trade Qualifications. The member for Newcastle needs to stop misleading the House and perpetuating falsehoods about the availability of skills and training. [*Time expired.*]

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (17:37): By leave: I make a small contribution to the public interest debate. I taught in TAFE and I am very keen on the institution. It is important, particularly in country areas. In 2012 the national agreement opened up funding access to the private sector, which resulted in significant underfunding of TAFE. There has been a decline of around 26 per cent since 2004. Along with the growth of the private sector there was a decline and the gutting of TAFE.

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

Mrs HELEN DALTON: The private sector should complement TAFE, there is no doubt about that, but there are some unscrupulous people operating in the sector. Some of the problems that I have identified have been subcontracting and delivery of some of the courses to avoid oversight. This is by some of the private providers. I am not having a go at TAFE at the moment, not yet. It is a fact that some of the private providers are delivering little or no training. They often do not have premises and their trainers are a highly casualised, untrained workforce. Private providers are making 30c in every dollar. Their involvement is driven by profit and not what is best for the education of our young people. I am not saying it is all private providers, there are some very good ones, but there are some unscrupulous ones. It is the responsibility of the New South Wales Government to make sure that our young people are not being ripped off.

The fees of private providers are unregulated, unlike TAFE. This is a job for the Minister to sort out. There has been significant growth in student loans and 80 per cent of them go to private providers. A significant number of students who borrow to study at these facilities never finish their qualifications. That is a real concern. I believe that 80 per cent of students will never complete their qualifications and 40 per cent of those students will never earn enough to pay off those debts. Our young people are being ripped off. This is the Minister's remit to sort out. Some of the private providers are undermining the delivery of TAFE courses and the long-term viability of TAFE. That is what the Minister should be looking at. I believe the privatisation of vocational training places has at times allowed for the unscrupulous growth of private providers.

Mr Alister Henskens: Do your research.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: You do yours! The Government needs to step up and make sure that our young people are not ripped off, are well educated and are ready and prepared to work. I spoke to the Minister about advertising TAFE courses in local papers because many people in my area either lack digital connectivity to search for the courses or are not digitally savvy. I have asked for that small thing to be done. It would make an enormous difference if the courses were advertised in the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times*, *The Riverine Grazier*, *The Area News* in Griffith and *The Irrigator* in Leeton.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: In *The Land*.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: And in *The Land*. If the Government opened its pockets and advertised, some of those kids would know what is going on. We do not all live in the city. The Government should govern responsibly for all of New South Wales, not just the city.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:41): In reply: I thank the member for Tweed, the member for Barwon, the member for Northern Tablelands, the member for Newcastle, the member for Wagga Wagga, the Minister for Skills and Training and the member for Murray for their contributions to the public interest debate. As I indicated, this is especially relevant to TAFE students in regional and rural communities. A number of members have spoken about students having to travel hundreds of kilometres to access a course that is being offered on a subject that they are interested in or employed in. The member for Barwon, whose electorate covers a huge area of the State, gave some chilling statistics about students having to travel 500 kilometres to Adelaide for hairdressing courses and 300 kilometres from Broken Hill to Mildura to undertake plumbing courses. A young lad travels 200 kilometres each way from Condobolin to Orange to do his block at TAFE.

These students are generally young people on their Ps, if they have a car. Issues such as the rising cost of fuel affect the capacity of people to drive these distances. This is essentially an issue about the country not having the equivalent services of the city. People in the city do not have to travel 200 kilometres to access their closest TAFE facility to undertake their courses. There is an inequity, an unfairness and a disadvantage that people in regional communities face about these issues. It is an important debate and that is why I moved the motion in the House.

I heard the Minister talk about the connected learning centres. They should be a supplement, not a substitute, to TAFE in regional communities. They are great in some settings, venues and courses but, if someone wants to learn carpentry, mechanics, electrical, plumbing or welding, they need hands-on courses, not courses conducted over a computer screen and via the internet. They need facilities in classrooms where they can do that. We are talking about skills and trades shortages and rebuilding the State after the floods and other natural disasters. That is why this motion is so important. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Community Recognition Statements

MAITLAND ELECTORATE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNITS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:45): On this Wear Orange Wednesday, I congratulate the SES Maitland Unit at Rutherford and the SES Hunter headquarters, which is located in my electorate at Metford, for their ongoing and continuous support of our communities through floods, storms and all sorts of other emergencies. I first came into contact with my local SES unit just after I got elected during the April 2015 super storms. The professionalism of those volunteers, their dedication and the help they provide to communities is something that Maitland has needed. It is a flood-prone area. In fact, the SES started in Maitland after the 1955 floods, so we have a strong connection to the SES. I recognise them on this very special day and thank them for their contribution to our community and their ongoing help and support.

SHIRE RELAY FOR LIFE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (17:46): I recognise the amazing efforts of the Cancer Council and the Sutherland Shire community for yet another successful Shire Relay for Life, which is Australia's largest Relay for Life. Fighting together on one movement, the Sutherland Shire community bands together every year to raise vital funds for cancer research. This year there were over 1,000 registered attendees, with 1,400 people on the day, and an outstanding \$180,000 was raised. I commend the efforts of all volunteers for organising another powerful event for our community. I acknowledge Chair Rod Coy, Deputy Chair Glenn Nicholas, Cathy Mason, Richard Mason, Blake Williams, Craig Winstanley, Stef Wisniewski, Jasper Downes, Teresa Cooper, Brett Brosens, Helen Scott, Bronwyn Mitchell, Jenny Nicholas, Linda Burg, Sharon-Sue Shephard, Sue Haynes, Moira Campbell, Brent Collier, Phoebe Downes, Kristina Wisniewski, Beth Standalof, Mel Dale, Tony Dale, Tony Cain, Lorraine Donne, Rob Stanley-Jones, Abi Simpson, Vicki Hansen and MP liaison Alison Todd.

PARRAMATTA POLICE AREA COMMAND

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:47): I recognise and thank outgoing Parramatta Police Area Commander Julie Boon for her service to our community over many years. I also congratulate Barry Vincent for being appointed as the new Parramatta Police Area Commander. I look forward to working with Barry on a

number of issues that affect our community across the Seven Hills electorate. I also thank the officers attached to the Parramatta Police Area Command for the great work they do in our local community, in particular the crime prevention team, which recently attended the Constitution Hill Retirement Community to speak to residents about many things, including fraud, elder abuse and how to stay safe in the community and at home. I also recognise the efforts of officers attached to the youth and school liaison unit for all of the great work they do in our local schools, particularly at Pendle Hill High School.

EURELLA COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANISATION

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:48): I recognise and celebrate the important work being done by community service organisation Eurella. It provides vital support and services for people of all ages with disabilities and their families and has been doing so for nearly 70 years. I visited Eurella in Burwood and heard from parents who spoke of the long-term—in some cases over 50 years—person-centred care delivered by the passionate staff. Eurella was described by one parent as "a very special place", and it is not hard to see why. Beyond providing care to their clients, the staff at Eurella are invested in supporting families to navigate complex bureaucratic systems and advocate for more attention to the interconnected issues of health, services, employment and housing that many people with disabilities face. The Eurella housing strategy is one initiative being driven by the Eurella CEO, Patricia Abraham, in partnership with other organisations that are committed to socially equitable outcomes. The driving ethos underpinning this strategy is that the provision of appropriate housing for people with special needs is a vital component of care. I commend the commitment and dedication of the staff at Eurella and thank them for their service to the community.

1ST MOSMAN SCOUTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:49): After two years of COVID Zoom meetings, our scouts groups across New South Wales are getting back to what they love doing—being outdoors, learning bush survival skills and forging a strong sense of comradery. Last weekend I joined with the 1st Mosman Scouts for their annual presentation at the newly renovated Freeston Hall. I was able to support this renovation project through the Community Building Partnership, and I am glad to say the results have been transformative. Thanks to the work of 1st Mosman Scouts parent Alistair Hyslop and his building company, Cassins Constructions, Freeston Hall has a new kitchen, new electrical and plumbing work, new windows and has been freshly painted, inside and out. I say a special thank you to the committee, which is made up of Jenny Jackson, James Baird, Jad Kovse, Sarah Wolcott, Colleen Godsell, Paris Giannakis, and Tara Wienman, for its efforts in keeping the 1st Mosman Scouts going through COVID. I also thank all of the scouts who gave me such a special welcome. While the parents held the annual general meeting, I enjoyed seeing the scouts do what they do best—practising their fire skills and playing tug of war.

CITY OF STARS SHOWCASE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:50): I was thrilled to attend this year's highly anticipated Randwick Girls' High School and Randwick Boys High School showcase, City of Stars. It was a phenomenal success. I congratulate all of the students who participated and displayed their amazing talents in the performing arts. The cast included graduating students from 2020 and 2021, who had previously missed out on the annual showcase due to COVID. Not only were talents such as dancing, choreography and singing showcased, but the dedication, enthusiasm and hard work of all students truly shone through. They should all be incredibly proud of themselves. I congratulate the talented cast, the dedicated crew and the passionate organisers, Kylie Fagan and Alysia Jarvis. I thank and congratulate all of the teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the school community who worked to make City of Stars a night to remember. The set design, stage management, props and other behind-the-scenes work that goes into highlighting the talents of the students was truly flawless.

CASTLE HILL ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (17:51): I acknowledge the Castle Hill and District RSL sub-Branch, the Rotary Club of Castle Hill, the Rotary Club of Kenthurst and Annangrove Progress Association, which all held Anzac Day commemorative services this year. Every one of those services was extremely well attended by the local community, who acknowledged the services of personnel across all of the forces, including those who may have served in peacekeeping forces, those who may still be serving and, ultimately and importantly, those who paid the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf for the freedoms and liberties that we now enjoy. The event held by the Castle Hill and District RSL sub-Branch is second only to the event in Martin Place, but all of those organisations should be praised. The young people who turned out were admirable.

KIDS' EARLY LEARNING BLACKTOWN CITY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:52): I offer my personal congratulations to Kids' Early Learning Blacktown City for organising a successful charity gift drive for Mother's Day 2022. Kids' Early

Learning Blacktown City is one of the largest childcare centres in the Blacktown community, with over 1,700 children enrolled. In under a week, the educators and staff organised over 400 gifts to be donated to a local charity, Ward Angels. The donations were gifted to children in local hospitals and healthcare facilities across western Sydney for their parents and carers on Mother's Day. It is wonderful that, through challenging times, our western Sydney community comes together to support one another. Those acts of kindness from our dedicated educators and staff bring joy to our children and their families. The ongoing support of community members is inspiring and is a testament to everyone who participated. I thank and commend the manager, Robert Sullivan, the management team, staff and all of the educators at Kids' Early Learning Blacktown City for their fundraising efforts. I also thank the parents and school community for their continuous efforts in supporting our children.

GYMEA TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL DUX JET PRICE

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (17:53): I recognise the academic achievements of GyMEA Technology High School's 2021 dux, Jet Price. Known for his determination and stoic approach to his studies, last year Jet placed equal first in the State in HSC technology course industrial technology multimedia, achieving a mark of 99 per cent. In recognition of Jet's incredible efforts in achieving band 6 results in economics, legal studies and industrial technology, and the quality of his major project for industrial technology, he was also named a 2021 HSC Distinguished Achiever by the NSW Education Standards Authority. Jet's multimedia major project was selected to be showcased for the Shape 2021 exhibition currently being held at the Powerhouse Museum until 14 August 2022. The 3D game adventure, which tells the story of an explorer who finds a crown on an obstacle course, has been recognised for its outstanding level of industry quality application. I congratulate Jet on his outstanding achievements and extend my best wishes for the future.

VESAK DAY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:54): On Saturday 30 April I had the great honour of attending the Bathing of the Buddha festival to celebrate Vesak Day. The Buddha bathing ceremony is organised by the Australian Buddhist Association. It is held each year to commemorate the birth of Buddha and symbolises purification and the purgation of sins. Each year the celebrations are held at Freedom Plaza in Cabramatta, and they always get a tremendous turnout. Every year this wonderful tradition celebrates Vesak Day. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to participate in this year's celebrations with residents from my local community. I thank the president of the MingYue Lay Buddhist Temple, Mr Vincent Kong, OAM; the chairman, James Chan, OAM; and members of the board for arranging such a wonderful celebration.

SEAFORTH RAIDERS UNDER-13 GIRLS RUGBY TEAM

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (17:55): As patron of the mighty Seaforth Raiders, it gives me great pride to inform the House that the under-13 girls team took out the Pink Tiger Cup. The team absolutely destroyed Randwick Magic at Bantry Bay, scoring 15 tries in 40 minutes, which was terrific. The Raiders rugby club, led by some wonderful people, is a pillar of my community. I pay tribute to president Luke Hannan, registrar Penny Ferguson, vice-president Robyn Smart and the entire team of dedicated community members who ensure that Seaforth Raiders continues to be a wonderful junior rugby club on the northern beaches.

DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT CHAD GILLIES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:56): I thank outgoing Detective Superintendent Chad Gillies, the district commander of the Port Stephens-Hunter Police District. Chad Gillies came to Maitland at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. He brought new energy and enthusiasm to his role as leader of the police across Maitland and the broader Port Stephens-Hunter command. I have seen Chad's genuine commitment to addressing social justice issues, such as antisocial behaviour; engaging with troubled youth; and, importantly, supporting victims and survivors of domestic and family violence, and sexual assault. Chad has demonstrated an incredible work ethic, an authentic engagement with the most vulnerable people in our community, and an open and transparent relationship with local community leaders, including me. Every time I meet with local police, the admiration and respect they demonstrate for Mr Gillies is visible. He has worked hard to get an upgrade to the aging police station at Maitland to make it a safer place for all who use it, including victims of crime, detainees and police. I thank Chad for his important contribution to our community at a difficult time, and I welcome our new superintendent Wayne Humphrey. I wish them both all the best for the future.

MOSMAN BOWLING CLUB

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:57): This year Mosman Bowling Club celebrated its 120th birthday. Formerly known as Mosman Recreation Club, it began prior to 1901. Lawn bowls commenced at the club in 1902 when the greens were completed and the club was officially opened. Until the club amalgamated

with the Mosman Women's Bowling Club in the seventies, membership was exclusively for men. I acknowledge the Mosman Bowling Club board members: patron Ian Renton, president Jenny Hole, treasurer Richard O'Brien, secretary Paul Ward Harvey and directors Barbara Anderson, Scott Denham, Caroline Duhigg, Stephen Lewis, Bruce Bodinnar and Robin Bower. When the club celebrated its 120th birthday recently, it also farewelled Ian Renton. Ian joined the club in 1988 and will soon move interstate. He was chairman of Project 2000, the goal of which was to overcome membership complacency and grow member numbers. It was a great success and increased the club's membership by over 50 per cent. Ian also served as president from 2002 until 2005. As patron, Ian has kept all members entertained on Patrons Day, which is filled with fun and frivolity. He has convened monthly lunches and served on various subcommittees. I congratulate Ian and Mosman Bowling Club.

WAY IN NETWORK THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:58): I congratulate the Way in Network on its thirtieth anniversary. In 1992 the Way in Network was founded to create a supportive network for migrant women during the settlement process in Australia. Its members are mostly professional women and business owners who migrated to Australia from Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Taiwan. In addition to supporting migrant women, the Way in Network has raised over \$3.6 million for Australian charities, the local community, medical research, international disaster relief and other causes. I attended the network's thirtieth anniversary dinner, where I heard firsthand about its amazing work under its outstanding leaders, including president Annie Tang and vice-president Jessie Xiao and past presidents Dr Helen Sham-Ho, Annie Tang, Linda Tang, Elsa Shum, Florence Chau, Linda Wong, Lavender Tsim, Rita Yip, Emily Hung and many others. I congratulate the dedicated and hardworking committee and members of the Way in Network on its thirtieth anniversary.

FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:59): On Friday 5 May 2022, I had the honour of launching Fresenius Medical Care's [FMC] new manufacturing site at Smithfield. I offer the congratulations of our community and my personal congratulations to FMC on the launch of its manufacturing site, which will create many new jobs in the western Sydney community. FMC is a medical technology company that manufactures medical care products. The new manufacturing plant will manufacture renal medical care products, such as renal dialysis care sets, which will assist to improve the renal health of vulnerable patients in our community. FMC prides itself on prioritising local manufacturing. It distributes products to domestic markets in Australia and also exports products internationally to the Asia-Pacific market. I acknowledge the leadership team of FMC, including vice-president Jean DeSombre, managing director ANZ and Singapore Anbu Srinivasan, general manager John Amiradaki and marketing manager Ashleen Singh. I congratulate FMC on a successful launch. I look forward to FMC's contribution to the community through the creation of local manufacturing jobs and world-leading healthcare products.

NORTH SYDNEY ART PRIZE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:00): The North Sydney Art Prize showcases some of the best contemporary art from across Australia. The Coal Loader in Waverton in my electorate has been transformed to provide a unique backdrop for visitors to experience a broad range of artworks—from immersive, site-specific installations within the underground chambers and tunnels to sculptures dotted throughout the surrounding parklands. I congratulate this year's winners: Alyson Bell, who won the Major Open Award for her work *The Twilight Hour*; Stevie Fieldsend, who won the Award for Sculpture; Saskia Everingham, who won the Site Specific Award; Ryan Andrew Lee, who won the Emerging Artist Award; Ariella Friend, who won the Work with Paper Award; and Sylvia Griffin, who won the Award for Drawing for her work *Material Palimpsest*. On the weekend I joined with those winners to congratulate them on their work, which explores sustainability and the impact of climate change on our local community and across Australia. I congratulate all artists who have pieces in this year's exhibit and the sponsors: North Sydney Council, Australian Catholic University, Primrose Park Art & Craft Centre, and the Royal Art Society of NSW.

COMMUNITY BANK FRESHWATER

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (18:01): I acknowledge the twentieth anniversary of the Community Bank Freshwater and, in particular, Kasey Kaye, the branch operations manager, and the wonderful team that works there. The bank is situated in the main street of Freshwater and does outstanding work throughout the community by providing sponsorship to all manner of volunteer organisations, sporting clubs and institutions in the Manly electorate and up and down the northern beaches. Community Bank Freshwater celebrates 20 years of serving the community as a wonderful local community bank, which serves the needs of small and large businesses in the Freshwater area. It does outstanding work. I congratulate all current and past members of the team at Community Bank Freshwater and wish them the best of success for the next 20 years of the bank's operation.

*Private Members' Statements***TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT ARCHIE CUNNINGHAM****Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (18:02):**

Today I acknowledge the outstanding efforts that were made across the Lane Cove electorate to commemorate Anzac Day. The landing of Australian and New Zealand soldiers on the shores of Gallipoli sparked a fire in which the Australian spirit was forged. The horror that faced those diggers, many of them still boys, on a daily basis is unimaginable to many of us today. Yet from this horror emerged the attributes that form the basis of our Australian identity: the notions of mateship, tenacity, bravery, ingenuity, perseverance and a fair go. The date 25 April is not only a commemoration of our brave members and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice, but also an opportunity to reflect on the national ideals that they fought to protect. This year I joined the memorial service organised by Lane Cove Council and the Lane Cove RSL Sub-Branch to commemorate the 107th year since that first landing.

As the member for Lane Cove, I am rarely prouder than when I look around to see the thousands of men and women, young and old, coming out and paying their respects. What is so unique about the Lane Cove service is its annual commemoration of a Lane Cove digger, providing locals with the opportunity to learn the story of one of their own. This year we had the privilege of hearing the story of Sergeant Archie Cunningham as told by his son Lindsay. The story of Archie mirrors that of many of his contemporaries. He was a man dedicated to his country, his family and his mates. Early life was not easy for Archie. Born in 1919, he was raised by a single mother, having lost his father to the Spanish flu at only three months of age. Aged only 12, he was forced to leave school to help support his family.

When war was declared in 1939, Archie was one of the first to enlist, at only 20 years of age. He was posted as a signaller with the 16th Brigade and sailed with the first convoy to the Middle East. Archie was never in one place for too long during the war, fighting in Palestine, North Africa, Syria, Sri Lanka and finally New Guinea on the Kokoda Track. Whilst in New Guinea, Archie contracted malaria and was repatriated back to Australia for treatment. In 1944, while still on leave in Queensland, Archie would marry his beloved wife, Winifred. Winifred and Archie would go on to have five children: Nan, Lindsay, Megan, Barbara and Peter. In 1951 the growing family moved to Landers Road in Lane Cove.

Archie lived in Lane Cove for over 40 years before he passed away in 1996, and during that time he became involved with our local community. He helped found the Lane Cove Businessmen's Club, was involved with Lane Cove Legacy, served as a justice of the peace and was a passionate committee member of the local cricket and rugby clubs. We must endeavour as a nation to keep the life stories of veterans like Archie alive, because there are so many more just like him. Men and women who dedicate their lives to service, their nation, their community and their family are rightly seen as role models for younger generations. The example that those men and women have set is something that every Australian can and should strive towards. Lest we forget.

LONDONDERRY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (18:05): I address the infrastructure needs of my electorate in north-west and western Sydney in the lead-up to the 2022-23 budget, which is due to be handed down in June—a matter of weeks away. My community in north-west and western Sydney certainly thinks Premier Dominic Perrottet and his Liberal Government have been off with the fairies in recent months. I cannot put it in any stronger terms: They need to start focusing on doing their job. Key projects need to be prioritised in the coming budget to address the clear lack of infrastructure to support the growing population in the part of Sydney's west that I am privileged to represent.

In 2019, right on the eve of the election, the Liberals promised a high school for Marsden Park. With no progress to be seen after the election, I was proud to work with local parents to build a community campaign to push for that high school. Three years later, after a strong community push, funding has been awarded and the planning process has finally begun. I was pleased to update the community earlier this month that planning approval will also be sought for a primary school in Melonba adjoining the new high school. However, there is still no time line for when construction will begin or when those schools will be open. The need to prioritise the high school is crystal clear in the eyes of my community. We need the high school fast-tracked through both planning and construction, with funding awarded in this year's budget.

Local residents and members in this House know well of another pressing need in the community I represent, which is a high school in Jordan Springs. Jordan Springs Public School opened in 2020 and now has 940 students. The school is already over capacity, with demountables on the playground, while the urgently needed stage two is only just starting to be built. But guess what? Despite the huge student population at the primary school, the Perrottet Government says the high school is not needed. It shows just how out of touch the Government is with the needs of working families in Sydney's west. The Perrottet Government is letting down

almost 1,000 students and their families. Where are students supposed to go after year 6? We desperately need that high school in Jordan Springs.

At Ropes Crossing we have another case of a failure to deliver education infrastructure. The community has known for many years about the overcrowding and the need for more classrooms at Ropes Crossing Public School. It is almost 400 per cent over capacity, with 750 students more than its enrolment cap. It has 30 demountables in the playground, but still the Government refuses to act. That needs to be rectified in this year's budget. In north-west Sydney the need to build the thrice-promised but still unstarted Rouse Hill hospital is also crystal clear. After a strong local campaign supported by Labor MPs in north-west Sydney, Rouse Hill hospital will now be built with an emergency ward. My community never deserved a second-rate facility, and I am so pleased that our community power won through. It is now incumbent on the Government to build that hospital and get it open for community use.

There is a central theme when it comes to this Government; I have said it before and I raise it again tonight. The infrastructure issues are the direct result of a Liberal government and a Premier who do not see north-west and western Sydney as their priority. I am reminded of the new Premier's record when it comes to Sydney's west. When he used to represent a seat that was west of Parramatta, he said it was too far for him to travel to. Nothing paints a clearer picture of the Premier than thinking the Hawkesbury region was too far to travel for him to represent.

My constituents are just asking the Government to deliver basic infrastructure to meet the needs of our rapidly growing community. The Government collects the stamp duty from our new suburbs—\$59 million in Jordan Springs, \$136 million in Schofields, \$144 million in Box Hill and Gables, and \$148 million in Marsden Park and Melonba. The Government has raked in hundreds of millions of dollars in stamp duty while the promised infrastructure constantly remains undelivered. While Premier Dominic Perrottet is long gone from western Sydney, quick to abandon the region, the infrastructure issues that my constituents face remain. It is long past time that those projects were funded. It is time for the New South Wales Government to end its delays and fund those projects in the upcoming budget.

TRIBUTE TO WENDY "BANJORA" GAME

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (18:10): Today I pay my respects to the late Wendy Game, who was affectionately known in her Scouting family as "Banjora", an Indigenous word for koala. Wendy volunteered in various roles during her two decades with the Scouting movement, and loved every single minute of it. No matter how exhausted she was, Wendy always had a smile. Wendy began her Scouting life as a parent helper when her son Thomas started as a Berowra Joey Scout. It did not take long for her to sign up to be a Joey Scout leader herself, with her second son, Stephen, joining the ranks soon after.

Wendy had a passion for Scouting and was always on the hunt for new adventures for her Joeys. They went everywhere and did everything. Bushwalks, canoeing and visits to various locations were always on her program. Many of those adventures would include her husband, Howard—affectionately known as "Mr Banjora"—helping her and the other leaders along the way. Not only was Wendy dedicated to her Joeys but also she was a trusted team leader and a wonderful mentor to all new leaders who joined the mob. She had the natural ability to know when to lead from the front and when to support others from behind. Wendy was able to instil a sense of self-esteem and confidence in the newest of leaders and reassurance in the youngest of Joeys when they faced new challenges. For more seasoned leaders, she was always a source of strength and sound advice.

There came a time when 1st Berowra had to share Banjora with other Joey mobs as she began to help with district and regional activities and support other groups as she volunteered as the district Joey leader. She also became the region Joey commissioner. Her love of Scouting extended further afield in those roles, and her tireless efforts ensured that Joeys across the region were able to enjoy regional Joey fun days, district campfires and other awesome activities. Banjora could not run those activities alone. She would rally the troops and always had a team of leaders, Rovers and parent helpers on deck to bring to life her visions for the benefit of the Joeys.

Wendy loved a good campfire, whether it was a small Joey campfire, the Saturday night campfire, the Benowie District Scout Easter campfire or even a non-fire campfire at Cuboree. Wendy was there with bells on, joining in the songs with all the actions and a giant smile and encouraging others to have a go. Wendy involved herself in lots of different non-Joey events and was a regular at Scout hikes. The Scouts always enjoyed a visit from Banjora, and she would delight in seeing her once small Joeys, now older Scouts, joining in all the camp sports. The excitement on her face was brilliant as she cheered on the Berowra tug-of-war team.

An annual highlight was the Joey Christmas party, where Wendy introduced a slightly different approach each year. There was no way the Joeys would end the year without a visit from Santa and gifts for all. She often blew the Joey section budget ensuring that every Joey received a fabulous, useful Scouting gift and their famous

Christmas badge. Wendy always managed to rope in many dads to help with Santa's visit, and everyone always had a great time. Getting the Joeys outdoors was her priority, and she loved a bushwalk. The local tracks around Berowra were walked a thousand times by Wendy, but each time it was like a new adventure for her Joeys. She always knew the perfect time to bring out the jelly beans to ensure everyone had the last little burst of energy to make it up that final hill at the end.

When the pandemic hit, Wendy adapted to online Scouting and the Joey Mob continued to meet virtually. It was not her favourite thing, but Wendy knew how important it was for the Joeys to continue being connected at a time when they were physically isolated. Wendy had many positive attributes and those that knew her described her as being warm, compassionate, genuine, joyful, giving, understanding, patient, encouraging, energetic, vibrant, cheeky, wonderful, friendly and helpful, and having a great sense of fun. Over last few months she was also described as determined, positive, optimistic and courageous.

The Berowra Scouting Group nominated Wendy for the Scouts Australia Silver Wattle Award for outstanding service, which she proudly received. Wendy made such a positive contribution to literally hundreds of people's lives over the years. To quote one of the parents, "Banjora was pinnacle in our children's first experiences in Scouts. As Joeys, they loved her and, as Venturers, they still love her." She was very proud of her first Berowra Scouts family and relished being a part of all aspects. She loved seeing her Joeys grow into strong, confident young adults, and she welcomed her new families into the group with open arms. She was so proud of her Scout kids. She was most proud of her two favourite Joey Scouts, Thomas and Stephen, and took great delight in helping her sons grow into the amazing young men that they are today. Rest in peace, Wendy "Banjora" Game.

SUPERINTENDENT JULIE BOON

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (18:15): It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the extraordinary work that Superintendent Julie Boon has done in the Parramatta community. Superintendent Boon commenced duty as a trainee with the NSW Police Force on 29 April 1990 and, after attesting as a probationary constable on 26 October 1990, was stationed at the Newtown patrol where she performed general, beat and traffic duties. On 19 February 1995 she transferred to Byron Bay police station, where she performed general duties in a regional context and successfully qualified as a member of the then heavily male dominated Operations Support Group.

On 18 April 1999 Julie returned to metropolitan Sydney and was promoted to the rank of sergeant on 11 June 2002, and inspector on 22 June 2004. On 23 September 2007 Julie transferred to what is now Metropolitan Field Operations and took up a position as a duty officer at the Harbourside Local Area Command [LAC]. On 17 April 2011 Superintendent Boon transferred to operational programs and took up the position of manager of what is now the Domestic and Family Violence team. While there, she oversaw significant and much-needed improvements in the way in which the NSW Police Force investigated and responded to crimes of this type.

On 17 February 2013 she was transferred to Mudgee police station and again took up a position as duty officer. While there she gained valuable experience working with vulnerable elements of rural communities, performed extensive periods of higher duties relief at the rank of superintendent and undertook the NSW Police Women's Leadership Program. On 16 November 2016 Julie was promoted to the rank of superintendent as commander of the North Shore Local Area Command. On 7 January 2018 she transferred to the position of commander of the Parramatta Police Area Command. Since that time she has performed further periods of higher duties relief at the rank of Assistant Commissioner, including as the commander of the North West Metropolitan Region, Human Resources Command, Professional Standards Command and, most recently, the Capability, Performance and Youth Command.

I highly commend the work of Superintendent Julie Boon and have been consistently impressed by her passionate commitment to her work. While at the Parramatta Police Area Command she played a critical role in the initial human resource and, later, operational policing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period Julie worked tirelessly, putting the needs of the organisation, staff and the community ahead of her own in order to ensure the safety of staff and community as well as effectively managing and resolving multitudes of, at times, rapidly emerging incidents and issues. She also assisted in maintaining the overall continuity of normal policing operations, whilst keeping an eye on her substantive command and supporting her family.

As a local member, I have worked with Julie on many occasions over the last three years. Julie has been open, dedicated and efficient in solving issues in our community—ranging from helping community members to stay safe to organising large operations, including CommBank Stadium, Parramatta Park and Rosehill racecourse events. Her innovative leadership, strategic organisational skills and her empathetic approach to victims of crime, community members, subordinates and peers is impressive.

Julie's commitment to the community, her subordinates and peers, including the Indian, Chinese and Muslim communities in the Parramatta area have encouraged the community to trust the local police in their fair and objective approach to decisions without prejudice. I have been consistently impressed by Julie's leadership and involvement in charity events, both on and off duty, and her high level of professionalism. I wish Julie all the best in her new role, and I am sure she will continue to do extraordinary things for the people of New South Wales.

WYONG DRAINAGE CHANNEL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:20): Tonight I raise an issue that is affecting both Wyong Race Club and Wyong Golf Club: a drainage channel has become blocked with weeds, which is affecting both of those venues financially. I have received a copy of a letter that the race club wrote to the Central Coast Council asking for assistance. I have also made representations on behalf of the race club and golf club previously, and I have written to the Minister for Lands and Water. This issue is affecting the operation of both organisations and is impacting the finances of the clubs and, in terms of Wyong Race Club, employment. On a race day, a large number of local people who are employed part-time and full-time at the race club lose money because of what is happening. The race club wrote:

Having lost a full race meeting 26th March and being unable to complete two meetings in April (14th and 28th) the Club's reputation as a reliable racing venue has been significantly tarnished. This comes on the back of a similar issue in March last year. None of these meetings we cancelled due to direct rainfall on the day but as a consequence of water retained in the track profile due to the height of the water table in the areas surrounding the track's 1350m chute which extends out into the wetlands.

In previous responses to WRC's concerns about poor drainage of the surrounding wetlands, Council officials made the following comment that:

"With such significant rainfall, and charged groundwater tables, groundwater is still only around 1.7m above the river level. For this groundwater to drain to the river requires it to drain a distance in the order of 2 kilometres. The groundwater table therefore is draining at a very low gradient of <1% over a significant distance and will continue to take time before its impact on the racecourse is reduced."

Given Council has identified these challenges in getting excess water to the river, one would expect that maximising the holding capacity of bodies of water and maintaining clear water channels to allow water to flow the 2kms to the river would be critical and a priority.

While no doubt the rainfall of the past few months has been significant and prolonged, I contend that valuable water storage of the wetlands has been lost due to the rapid and uncontrolled encroachment of the formerly classed 'noxious weed' coral tree and other vegetation and debris, which I believe is displacing water towards the track as it endeavours to flow easterly to exit from the wetlands precinct at the Hope Town School culvert under Pollock Avenue.

Once in this drainage system, water is not able to flow at maximum output due to vegetation growth and other debris in the water channels.

As you would be aware WRC is a significant driver of economic activity on the coast, through its operations and the business activities of its resident trainers.

WRC would like to continue to grow its operations, enhancing its economic and social impact for the benefit of Wyong and the Central Coast as whole. Having a reputation as a venue that cannot deliver its racing program jeopardises future third party investment in our venue.

Wyong Race Club is not asking the council to do it all by itself; the club is offering to help, but is finding it very, very difficult. The race club says:

We understand that the Central Coast Council has some financial challenges to overcome—

that is an understatement—

Mindful of this, please could you ask your team to review what can be done to improve the drainage performance of the wetlands acknowledging its gradient has some inherent challenges e.g. expanding culverts, regular clearing of culverts, removal of debris natural and manmade from water channels, removal of trees (problem weeds, former noxious weeds or even native) if they impede the effective flow of water.

Realising that this matter is multifaceted and not going to be fully resolved quickly, the Club will be approaching Racing NSW with a view to making some adjustments to the vulnerable areas of its track to better protect it from periods when the surrounding water table is high.

I ask the council to sit down with the race club and the golf club to try to resolve these issues and make sure that both venues can continue to operate. It is not because of rainfall days but because water simply cannot flow away. It is an issue about maintenance. It is an issue that the race club wants to address and the council needs to assist it.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE FESTIVALS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:25): Festivals are helping people across the Coffs Coast emerge from the despair and devastation of COVID, floods, bushfires and drought by simply allowing them to have fun. Festivals are about celebrating inspiration and creativity, appreciating new perspectives, and admiring

and respecting the contributions of the participants. The recent 2022 Screenwave International Film Festival, better known as SWIFF, is a Coffs Coast signature event and is increasingly popular with locals and visitors—so much so that just over 10,000 people attended this year's SWIFF, which is proudly locally produced and sponsored. The festival patron is Australian film and screen icon and Coffs Coast resident and legend Jack Thompson. The seventh annual SWIFF was a full 16-day festival with more than 130 sessions to enjoy, bringing us an even larger world cinema program with titles direct from Sundance and the international circuit.

We celebrated world premieres, Australian premieres and an extensive selection of Australian films with the launch of the inaugural Ferguson Film Prize. SWIFF is driven by the passion and dedication of founder and artistic director Kate Howat and founder and festival director David Horsley. They and their festival team worked tirelessly to deliver a challenging, exciting and unique festival experience while a small army of volunteers made the festival hum. I will paraphrase one of the guest speakers from the opening night. They said that art is meant to challenge us. Some of the films I saw at SWIFF were enjoyable and other films fell into the more challenging category. This year's opening night film certainly fell into the latter. It was enjoyable nonetheless.

This year SWIFF saw the addition of STORYLAND, a new live music, installation arts and performance festival within a festival. I am proud to say that STORYLAND attracted some \$700,000 in funding from the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments. It was originally set down for 23 April at Park Beach Reserve but the constant wet weather presented significant obstacles for the organisers. They are now working towards a date in the near future. STORYLAND is a one-day playground of live music and art thanks to the talented creative directors Alison Page and Nik Lachajczak and their extraordinary team. From the moment the gates are thrown open, we will farewell Gumbaynggirr country to enter STORYLAND, a world built by light and sound that will immerse us in the mythology of stories and take us back to the place where stories were created.

The inaugural Coffs Coast Food & Wine Festival, which received \$225,500 in New South Wales Government funding through the Regional Events Acceleration Fund, will be celebrated across various local venues from 4 to 13 June. I know that Amplify Events director Dave Mansfield, festival director Lindsay Russell and their entire team look forward to presenting the Coffs Coast Food & Wine Festival to our community. It promises to be a major drawcard for local foodies and visitors who are set to spend up in local shops, cafes and businesses. The festival will be a mixture of dining sessions, workshops and digital experiences, featuring live music and art installations to create an immersive, multi-sensory dining experience.

In April I was honoured to be at the Jetty Memorial Theatre for the official launch of All One Under the Sun, a "remedy to racism" campaign created by young people from all backgrounds on Gumbaynggirr country. All One Under the Sun received \$250,000 in funding from the New South Wales Government through Multicultural NSW and is a partnership between the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors [STARTTS], Blue Sky Community Services, Coffs Harbour & District Local Aboriginal Land Council, headspace Coffs Harbour and Coffs Harbour City Council. The All One Under the Sun campaign promotes inclusion, belonging, connection and education.

Through arts-based activities, anti-racism training and youth action, All One Under the Sun seeks to build resilience in our community to stand with young people against fear, hate and division, and to develop our capacity to be allies to those experiencing racism. Young musicians involved in the project include Marko Kisose, Jaslyn Walker and Leevon Young. I am looking forward to the family-friendly All One Under the Sun festival scheduled for 29 May at our beautiful North Coast Regional Botanic Garden. I particularly thank the Coffs Harbour youth development project worker at STARTTS, Dianne Jacobus, for her passionate advocacy, which is helping All One Under the Sun to be such a success.

OATLEY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (18:30): I inform the House of local improvements to education outcomes and infrastructure upgrades in the electorate of Oatley. This Government is focused on providing the children of New South Wales with the best possible start in life. Investing in our schools means investing in our communities. The Government is rolling out more than 200 new and upgraded schools across the State, including four in my own electorate: Penshurst Public School, Hurstville Grove Infants School, Hurstville Public School and Penshurst West Public School. The brand-new Penshurst Public School includes 47 state-of-the-art classrooms and a new library, hall and covered outdoor learning space. This is in addition to open play spaces, including playing courts, seating, shade structures and running tracks. There are new administration and staff facilities along with new staff and student amenities. This year marks the first anniversary since I opened the new school alongside former Premier Gladys Berejiklian and education Minister Sarah Mitchell.

At Penshurst West Public School, the works are done and dusted and the students are absolutely loving it. The upgrades to Penshurst West Public School include new modern teaching spaces and facilities, seven new

learning spaces, classrooms, a new student amenities building, a special programs room and enhanced open spaces. Hurstville Grove Infants School, which is just up the road from where I live, has also received a brand-new multipurpose facility that can be used as an additional learning space, a special needs area or for before- and after-school care area. It also features kitchen facilities, air conditioning and a quiet room for additional use. Hurstville Public School now boasts an upgraded inclusive learning space designed for collaboration and it has the technology to match it, with audiovisual screens and speakers throughout. This is fantastic news for the people, the kids, the boys and the girls at Hurstville Public School.

These schools service a vast proportion of our region and ensure that every student can access the best possible education. The Government is investing heavily in our schools. It has also committed to ensuring their future prosperity. That is why we are empowering students and schools to make their learning environments more sustainable through our Sustainable School Grants program. The \$10 million program gives schools the opportunity to develop hands-on sustainability projects, enhancing the school learning environment and teaching students important lessons about sustainable practices. I was also thrilled with the success of the Government's Share Our Space program over the past two summer holidays. Share Our Space gives public schools the opportunity to offer their play spaces—playgrounds, ovals et cetera—to the local community during school holiday breaks. This places schools at the heart of our communities, promoting their importance and giving locals more facilities to use. Investing in education invests in our future. Our investment stretches across all stages of education from early childhood education to primary and secondary schools through to our TAFE network.

I give a special shout-out to my two sons, James and Sammy, and countless others who are benefiting from our bold and ambitious investment into schools and education across New South Wales. I of course give a big shout-out to my wife, Adla, who is a high school teacher in Cronulla. Her passion for education is inspiring, and that passion has rubbed off on me and many others. I am incredibly proud that our Government is continuing to invest in our education system right across our State. I should note that Adla was recently appointed president of Mortdale P&C, where my son goes to school. So, for us, education is personal. I look forward to keeping the House up to date on any further developments of our education system across the area.

TURBANS 4 AUSTRALIA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:35): I address the Chamber to acknowledge the great work of Turbans 4 Australia in providing invaluable support to local communities in the electorate of Prospect and throughout New South Wales. As one of Australia's leading charitable organisations, Turbans 4 Australia has now assisted over 10,000 Australians by providing them with donated products. I congratulate Turbans 4 Australia on reaching this incredible milestone. Since 2015, when it was formed, Turbans 4 Australia has illustrated the Sikh ethos of equality, respect and benevolence to vulnerable people in need, no matter the circumstance.

During the charity's first year of service, Turbans 4 Australia volunteers delivered approximately \$3,000 worth of groceries to drought-affected farmers in the Dubbo region. I remind members of this silent, creeping natural disaster of drought, which caused mass devastation to much of the north-west of New South Wales. Also during its first year, Turbans 4 Australia drove seven semitrailers full of hay to drought-stricken farmers in Coonamble, to show Australian farmers that Turbans 4 Australia appreciated their hard work and acknowledged the struggles these farmers face. Turbans 4 Australia consolidated its charitable actions at a national level when it provided \$4,500 worth of supplies to those affected by Cyclone Marcia in Queensland, in 2015. Later that same year, Turbans 4 Australia assistance was enhanced to an international level when its volunteers collected over \$4,000 worth of groceries for the people of Vanuatu, after Cyclone Pam. I am sure all members will agree that this is an impressive list of achievements for a charity's first year of service.

In 2016 Turbans 4 Australia assisted our western Sydney community by helping to renovate a community hub at Mount Druitt. Volunteers donated and installed three new air conditioners, which was of great benefit to many in our community. I particularly commend the volunteers of Turbans 4 Australia for their efforts during the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. Dedicated volunteers travelled to the South Coast to deliver food, water and groceries to vulnerable persons affected by these devastating bushfires. Personally, as a volunteer firefighter with the Rural Fire Service, I understand all too well how desperately support was needed in these communities at that time.

The efforts of Turbans 4 Australia volunteers more recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic in western Sydney and throughout New South Wales, must be commended. During the COVID-19 Delta lockdown, the local government areas of Fairfield, Blacktown and Cumberland were named in the New South Wales Government's list of LGAs of concern. From these lockdowns, a plethora of issues were created. Many individuals and families lost their jobs and struggled financially. Turbans 4 Australia volunteers worked day in, day out, to provide nutritious, hot meals and hampers containing staple grocery items to our western Sydney community. A large proportion of the recipients were elderly, disabled or homeless members of our community. Further to this, volunteers assisted those with chronic health conditions who were self-isolating. At this time, I had the pleasure

of assisting Turbans 4 Australia volunteers during one of their shipments. Volunteers delivered grocery staples and fresh bread to The Parks Community Network, based at Wetherill Park, from where these essentials were later distributed to vulnerable families by the NSW Police Force and the Australian Defence Force. I cannot thank volunteers enough for this support.

Finally I must commend Turbans 4 Australia volunteers for their recent flood relief efforts along the North Coast. During the flood crisis, volunteers served 1,500 meals each day to affected families in Lismore, along with donating groceries and even whitegoods to flood-devastated communities in Taree. By extending a helping hand to those who need it, Turbans 4 Australia delivered the Sikh belief of *sarbat da bhala*: welfare for all. Regardless of their faith, ethnicity or social status, all who need help deserve help. All of the work of Turbans 4 Australia has been done by volunteers. The millions of dollars worth of goods donated to our community when in need was provided by private volunteers such as Turbans 4 Australia. This is proof that volunteer organisations such as Turbans 4 Australia are doing more for our community than both the Federal and State governments.

I must raise before this Parliament an issue of serious concern. Unfortunately, Turbans 4 Australia will not be able to continue to provide welfare for all without further assistance of government funding. Our New South Wales community has faced drought, fires, floods and a pandemic. Grassroots organisations such as this are on the ground and making a genuine difference. I call on the New South Wales Government, in particular the Treasurer, to sit down with Amar Singh, the founder of Turbans 4 Australia, to discuss what is needed to keep this invaluable organisation functioning and supporting our community. Turbans 4 Australia must not be forced to close due to the New South Wales Government's inaction and lack of support.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE SURF LIFESAVING AWARDS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:40): The annual surf lifesaving award presentations in Port Macquarie and the Camden Haven were held last weekend to recognise the outstanding volunteers who regularly undertake patrolling, leadership, training and administrative roles that enable the continuation of this vital service in our community. As National Volunteer Week 2022 is officially underway, it is fitting to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of our surf lifesaving club members who go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that our beaches are safe for all locals and visitors.

This year we come together as a community to celebrate our amazing volunteers who mould and shape our regions into the beautiful place we call home. Through adversity and the struggles faced by so many in the aftermath of the 2019 bushfires and then the March 2021 floods, our volunteers across all emergency services were instrumental in offering assistance to save the lives and property of those enduring the impacts. The theme for National Volunteer Week 2022 is Better Together, which reflects the strength and resilience of our communities and the bringing together of people from all walks of life to create a better society for everyone.

Surf Life Saving NSW articulates its mission as "Save lives, create great Australians and build better communities". The annual award event for the Port Macquarie Surf Lifesaving Club was, as always, a special occasion to recognise the incredible work undertaken by our stalwart volunteers and to highlight the sporting achievements of the club and its members throughout the season. The proud president, Paula Stone, applauded the milestones accomplished throughout the year, which are a testament to the organisation's defined structure and the countless hours invested by its members. I congratulate all of the award recipients and thank them for their outstanding contribution to surf lifesaving.

Club person of the year was Maree Mackenzie, and the president's award was given to Rob McCue. The club captain award went to Hugh Mackay, and Rex O'Rourke and Andie McGrath shared in being named club patrol person of the year. Patrol of the year was Patrol No. 5, and the honour was accepted by the patrol captain, Rex O'Rourke. The under-15 patrol persons of the year were Patrick Field and Lily Barlow, while Jackson O'Rourke and Angele Field received the under-17 patrol person accolade. Molly Kemp and Lachlan Suitor were honoured by being named under-19 patrol persons of the year. Recognised for an exemplary attendance record for patrols were Ken Wilson, Gareth Davies, Jamie Harrison and Tobey Suitor. Committing to more than 70 per cent of patrol hours throughout the season were Tony Wright, Rob McCue, Rex O'Rourke, Terry Mauer, Hugh Mackay and Jamie Harrison, which is certainly an impressive contribution to the club. Laura Granville was crowned the club swim champion, while Larry Brook claimed the prestigious club board championship. I applaud both surf lifesavers for their dedication and commitment.

On Saturday night, Don and I were honoured to attend the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club's annual presentation evening, and I was so pleased to have the opportunity to personally congratulate all members on their tireless efforts and achievements throughout the 2021-22 season. The president of the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club, Michelle Garvan, thanked the members for their dedication and commitment, noting the challenging times the club's members had faced over the past few years, in particular those who were directly impacted by the floods. I know that the club is working alongside stakeholders, including the council and Crown Lands, to progress

its plans for a new clubhouse, and I took the opportunity to reassure the club that I will assist in whatever capacity I can to make this vision a reality.

I congratulate and commend to the House the dedication and expertise of the award recipients: the surf lifesaver of the year, James Langley; the volunteer surf lifesaver of the year, William Hosick; the volunteer of the year, Nicole Crowe; the youth volunteer of the year, Jim Dwyer; and the rookie of the year, Peter Bagnall. I acknowledge the highly commended rookies of the year, Eden Kaminski, Finlay Baird, Kingsley Threlfo and Natasha Hodgkinson. Named the senior club person of the year was Tony Worton, and the youth club person of the year was Brianna Rumsby. On behalf of our community I sincerely thank all our incredible volunteer surf lifesavers for their selfless contribution to making our beautiful beaches a safe haven for us all to enjoy.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (18:44): As Parliamentary Secretary for the North Coast, I commend the private member's statement made by the member for Port Macquarie. I am the chair of the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving. I have not had the best patrolling record for the past 12 months, but I acknowledge my mate Jamie Harrison and his family from the Port Macquarie branch for their great efforts. I am sorry to have missed the Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club's presentation. I thank the member for Port Macquarie.

HATE CRIMES

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:45): I address the Chamber on an issue of great importance to multicultural and diverse communities in the electorate of Prospect, throughout New South Wales, and indeed throughout the nation. I speak about Australia's statutory response to hate crimes—meaning crimes motivated by hostility, bias or hatred—which is lacking and falls behind comparable Western nations. In the United States of America, hate crimes have been criminalised since 1980. Lawmakers in the United Kingdom and Canada soon followed suit. However, in 2022 the Australian legislative response to hate crime barely exists.

Mamud Hawila, a barrister, wrote in the Summer 2021 edition of *Bar News: The Journal of the New South Wales Bar Association* that Australia's sluggish response to hate crimes is partly due to a lack of official crime statistics. In fact, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research contains no statistics under the titles "hate crime" and "bias crime". Mr Hawila states that the lack of statistics causes a catch-22 effect whereby the police—who are the individuals responsible for the collection, analysis and reporting of official crime data—struggle to report any data as there are no hate crime laws to enforce. This creates a situation where lawmakers have no political will to enact hate crime laws, as there are no official hate crime statistics to inform an evidence-based decision. This is an incredibly toxic cycle that will continue to negatively impact our diverse communities until parliaments, such as ours, enable action.

The State of New South Wales is in an opportune position to enact a modern sociolegal response to hate crimes. With the oldest hate crime policing unit in Australia, the NSW Police Force is willing and capable to meet the challenge. However, the Parliament of New South Wales must take the lead to bring about change by developing comprehensive hate crime legislation. This contemporary sociolegal response to hate crime must occur before it is too late. We must look to our international counterparts and utilise the penalty enhancement model that would see increased maximum penalties and punishment for crimes involving social harms. However, this must be utilised in addition to therapeutic and restorative justice initiatives to rehabilitate offenders, work to repair harms caused to the victims and overall create a more inclusive environment in our nation.

Although, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research may lack official statistics on hate crimes, this does not mean hate crimes are not occurring in our State. Scientific and qualitative data exists that reveals Australia has a growing hate crime problem. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry [ECAJ] conducts regular victimisation surveys to monitor and document hate crimes in Australia. The 2020 ECAJ antisemitism report documented 331 antisemitic incidents, of which 188 were physical. The majority of victims were women and children. I see similar issues arise in my community. As the proud member for Prospect, I regularly express in this Chamber how grateful I am to represent such a wonderful multicultural community. I have the opportunity to speak with hundreds of families and community leaders from a diverse range of backgrounds, many of which include refugee and/or persecuted, marginalised communities.

Although time and again I hear positive stories of families settling well into our western Sydney community, I am saddened to report that I also hear the negative experiences of our diverse community. Unfortunately, hostility, bias and hatred exists throughout our community. Our multicultural families are suffering. Legislative change must occur now to protect these families from hate crime. I take the opportunity today to call on the New South Wales Government, which has done so little on this issue to date, to begin the process of criminalising hate crimes in New South Wales. We must break the cycle that prevents our law enforcement officers from properly reporting and enforcing against hate crimes.

The New South Wales Government created a large divide in our community with its COVID-19 response. Multicultural communities felt the brunt of extended lockdowns and health orders that were not applied equally across the State. The New South Wales Government owes it to our multicultural communities to address this issue properly and begin the process of criminalising hate crimes. I offer my bipartisan support for any legislative changes that would see higher penalties imposed on offenders of hate crimes and better protect our diverse communities. All families in Australia deserve to feel safe and respected. I thank the House.

SCONE HORSE FESTIVAL

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:50): I inform the House that green shoots are emerging in the post-drought fields of the Upper Hunter and, as the electorate learns to live alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, things are looking good. It is with great pride that I report the Scone Horse Festival 2022 has been staged over the past fortnight, with more than 20 events across 10 days. I acknowledge the organising committee, led by president Lee Watts, which only resumed meeting again late last year after the COVID lockdowns ended. In just a matter of months, the committee came up with the theme "Back In The Saddle" and then pulled together the program of events that thousands have watched or participated in, and thoroughly enjoyed. The program included the junior rodeo and Jack Johnston Memorial Gala Day for young riders—consisting of horse sports events spanning the disciplines of tent-pegging, polo and showjumping—and two days of horseracing to showcase the thoroughbred breeding industry.

The Scone Horse Festival is also about cultural activities, including arts, crafts, yarns and trivia. The Scone Horse Festival was established in 1980 to give depth and history to the development of Scone as the Horse Capital of Australia. Horses have been bred in the Upper Hunter for almost 200 years and the region now ranks among the top three centres of Thoroughbred Breeding Excellence in the world. In the thoroughbred breeding industry, Scone is spoken about alongside Kentucky in the United States and Newmarket in the United Kingdom. The Upper Hunter industry boasts more than 200 stallion and broodmare farms—the second largest concentration of thoroughbred breeding studs in the world—and is home to the largest equine hospital in the Southern Hemisphere.

There is also a sophisticated network of equine support industries that are dependent on Australia's premier breeding industry. The Hunter Valley thoroughbred breeding industry contributes over \$5 billion annually to the national economy and \$2.6 billion annually to the New South Wales economy. It supports over 230,000 jobs throughout Australia. A highlight of the Scone Horse Festival is the Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association's Annual Awards night, which acknowledges local industry achievements. In addition to recognising the equine stars like champion sire Snitzel and champion broodmare Meerlust, the 2022 awards also honoured respected contributors to the industry—people like Yvonne Clerke, owner of Glastonbury Farms, who was presented with the Murray Bain Service to Industry Award. I really enjoyed meeting Yvonne at the Scone Cup on the weekend, where we talked about her award.

The award honours the outstanding achievements of those who champion exceptional service to industry and hands-on practice in the local horse industry. Yvonne's commitment to nursing and caring for foals is legendary and she has provided practical input for many Hunter-based research projects related to mare fertility. Off farm, Yvonne is a member of the Scone Horse Festival Committee, coordinates the Scone Horse Festival Fete and runs the Scone Rugby Club.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: What does she do in her spare time?

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: Indeed. She is a very busy lady. The honour of the 2022 Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association President's Award for Lifetime Achievement was bestowed on John Sunderland. The award recognises the recipient for their many years of dedication to thoroughbred breeding, research and development, and campaigning to preserve and protect the thoroughbred breeding industry and its heritage. Like many others in the industry, John Sunderland's official thoroughbred career began with Coolmore in Ireland in 1986. He travelled to New Zealand to work for two years before coming to Australia. John's thoroughbred breeding and stud management skills were honed at Bhima, Yarraman Park and then with the global thoroughbred breeding operations of Darley, now known as Godolphin. A proud father of two, a respected industry leader, a passionate industry advocate, valued industry ambassador and committed community member, John Sunderland has contributed significantly to the development of the Upper Hunter industry, and continues to do so.

With the industry awards presented last Wednesday night the Horse Festival headed to Scone Racecourse for the richest country racing carnival in Australia with almost \$2 million in prize money on offer. I congratulate Scone Race Club Chairman Alastair Pulford, chief executive Steve Keene, events manager Suzi Craig and racecourse manager Jody Rodgers on this year's Scone Cup. Newcastle trainer Kris Lees took home the maiden Scone Cup on Friday evening after jockey Kerrin McEvoy rode Rustic Steel to victory. Well done to the Scone Horse Festival committee and all those supporting the equine industry in Scone.

COOGEE ELECTORATE OVERDEVELOPMENT

AFFORDABLE QUALITY HOUSING

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:55): Unsustainable overdevelopment is becoming a systemic issue in my community, which brings with it a raft of secondary problems that disrupt and destroy people's lives. Developments prioritise profits over quality and standards of living, building code violations go unchecked, there is a loss of social housing—and the list of concerns go on. Many of my colleagues in the Chamber have similar issues in their electorates. This problem is because development and planning policy that is meant to futureproof is in the hands of a government that is more concerned about privatisation and short-sightedness. That is not because privatisation and short-sightedness brings the best policy, it is just what its developer mates want. What developers want is what they get under this Government. Once again, the community loses at a stacked game.

It goes without saying that in a growing city like Sydney a planning regime must have integrity. If we get it right, we get a beautiful city, and there are examples of that all over the world. If we get it wrong, it is no exaggeration to say that poor planning can lead to a reduction in the quality of life of citizens. Many factors contribute to a good planning system—fairness, integrity and certainty are just a few. As a result of this unsustainable overdevelopment policy, affordable housing is non-existent in my electorate. Young people, students and critical essential workers have been pushed away from their families and places of work by a government that does not want to consider them. Our essential workers have a right to live close to where they work. Instead, this Government expects our lowest paid staff to travel for hours on end. It is shameful.

I have three world-renowned public hospitals in my electorate and the critical essential staff that make those hospitals world renowned have been ignored and forgotten by this Government when it comes to affordable housing. The porters, cleaners and cooks who take care of us and our family members when we need them are forced to travel for hours on end after gruelling shifts, day and night. Where in my community has this Government provided affordable housing? When is this Government going to do its share and take care of the people who take care of us? The Government does not want to provide affordable housing. Instead, it is throwing it away and handing it back to developers. There are countless examples of this across the city. The Coogee Studio Apartments in my electorate is one example. Its website states:

Located in the highly desirable area within almost equal distance to Coogee and Clovelly beaches.

...

Whether you are staying for business or leisure, our studio apartments offer all the necessities you need complete with a contactless check-in and out system. Book your stay with us now!

What a strange description for a development that was approved under the New South Wales boarding house State Environment Planning Policy [SEPP] in 2016 to provide affordable housing for the local community. According to the website, the weekly \$700 minimum rate per week for a single studio apartment is perfect for the solo traveller. How on earth can a developer get approval for a boarding house and turn it into a high-end luxury hotel and get away with it? Where is the Government when developers do this, when they break the law, when they take affordable and low-cost housing off the market, and breach their development applications? It is sitting on its hands. Rather than enforcing its own laws and ensuring strict compliance and investigating fraud, it is happy to let the property market turn into the wild, wild west.

It is not the Government nor the developers who are missing out, it is the people who clean their children's schools, care for their parents and care for us in our hospitals. It is no wonder people have lost faith in this Government. It knows that the rules do not apply to it and its pockets are thick. Using private enterprise to help build affordable and low-cost housing makes sense in theory. But it only works if the Government ensures that enforcement tools are used to ensure that buildings are used for their intended purpose. I call on the Government to start enforcing its SEPPs. People in my community desperately need affordable housing.

CROOKWELL DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (18:59): I inform the House of the official opening and delivery of the newly refurbished emergency department and wellness centre at Crookwell District Hospital. I am particularly honoured to inform the House of the opening and the delivery of the hospital upgrade, as it was one of my 2019 election commitments. Crookwell District Hospital is an 18-bed acute care facility providing general medical services to the Upper Lachlan shire region. The hospital emergency department operates 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Patients, visitors and staff will benefit from a range of new and improved public and clinical facilities, including an improved emergency department, with two holding bays, a resuscitation bay, an intravenous dialysis sitting room, a triage assessment room, three public toilets and emergency shower, a medication room, a staffroom and toilet, a reception counter and waiting room.

The new emergency department is a welcoming space with its own reception desk and well-designed public and ambulance access. Designed with broad stakeholder consultation, the facility guarantees the best patient and staff experience. The refurbishment was made possible by \$2.5 million in funding from the New South Wales Government. Part of those moneys was used to upgrade the hospital's medical equipment, including electrocardiogram machines, a defibrillator, a transport ventilator, a new floor in the Hutton Wing and increased nurse call capacity. The funding was also used to upgrade the Crookwell Wellness Centre, including providing a new kitchen, new floors, an upgrade to the shower facility, widening of doors to improve access, and external ramp access. Paramedics now have direct access into the hospital via an airlock ambulance bay, while the public will access the emergency department via an airlock located on the right side of the building, which was the existing main entrance. Hospital administration offices have been relocated to the first floor to make room for more clinical services on the ground floor.

I commend the Crookwell District Hospital staff for persevering with the building works while managing the local COVID-19 response as well as the interruptions caused by lockdowns and supply chain issues. The refurbishment team should also be congratulated on overcoming those challenges and delivering an improved health facility to the Crookwell community. Crookwell District Hospital staff have now transitioned to the newly completed emergency department and are already welcoming patients and visitors. I make note of an element that I found particularly fascinating in the refurbishment. During the construction of the original building known as Crookwell Cottage, which opened on 19 April 1907 at 9.00 a.m., a porthole on the north-east side of the building was installed with the objective of securing as much of the morning sun as possible inside the hospital. During the refurbishment design process architects captured the exact position of the porthole sunbeam as it was on 19 April at 9.00 a.m., the date of the Crookwell Cottage construction, and modelled a vinyl outline on the floor. This is a stunning acknowledgement of the rich history in the modern building.

The Crookwell emergency department is part of the New South Wales Government's record \$10.8 billion investment in health infrastructure over four years to 2024-25, with nearly a third of the capital allocation in this financial year going towards regional and rural health facilities. We know that the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening health care in rural and regional New South Wales with the recently established Regional Health Division of NSW Health. The Government has delivered more than 170 hospitals and health facilities across New South Wales, with more than 110 projects completed in rural and regional areas. I am proud to have been a part of the delivery of the Crookwell District Hospital redevelopment, which is welcomed by our beautiful community of Crookwell and surrounds.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)
(19:04): I acknowledge the incredible Sutherland Shire Football Association, which is celebrating its seventieth anniversary this year. Although the Sutherland Shire Football Association in the form that we know it today was formed in 1952, football has been played on a competitive basis within the Sutherland shire since the 1920s. As recalled by George Swatridge, there were only three clubs that played competitive football in the winter of 1929, being Cronulla, Miranda and Gynea. With only three teams in the competition, each played the others four times throughout the year, with Cronulla winning the Sutherland competition in 1929. The following year a fourth team, Sutherland United, was formed and joined the competition, with another three teams joining two years later. With the opening of the Georges River bridge, Sutherland United started competing in the St George competition when all competitive soccer ceased in the Sutherland Shire in 1934.

It is unclear what happened to the original three teams, but Sutherland United was the only team that continued playing. However, after a difference of opinions as to the direction of the club, several members split and formed the Casuals Soccer Football Club, also known as the Casuals. They fielded teams in the under-16 and under-18 divisions and continued to play until the competition was suspended due to World War II. There was a huge resurgence of interest in football in the Sutherland shire following the end of World War II. The Casuals were once again able to field strong teams in the St George competition, with 1949 being arguably the most successful year in their brief history. Numbers continued to grow, and teams were playing and winning in the St George Association, the Canterbury Association and the Metropolitan Soccer League.

Unfortunately, due to a dispute with the St George Association over the loss of points, the Casuals formed an amateur soccer association in the Sutherland Shire. After a lengthy and heated meeting that took place, it was eventually resolved that a separate association could be formed in the Sutherland shire as it was considered a growth area. In 1950 the Sutherland Shire Association was reformed after it had been disbanded in the 1930s, with the formation of the Sutherland Shire Junior Soccer Association to follow in 1952. Today the Sutherland Shire Football Association is the second-largest football association in New South Wales and Australia and has the second-largest female participation base in the State. With 26 member clubs and over 19,000 registered players, the association is committed to providing every player with the opportunity to be the best they can be.

This mission is possible through the SSFA Academy, which strives to strengthen grassroots football by providing access to high-quality coaching and player development opportunities.

The academy offers year-round tailored training programs designed for one-on-one coaching, team coaching, women's football and skills development. Earlier this year I had the pleasure of joining the Sutherland Shire Football Association to help them officially launch the 2022 football season. Although the commencement of the season was delayed due to the unprecedented wet weather conditions, the association and participating clubs worked hard to ensure the season finally got underway. None of the association's success and continued growth would be possible without the dedication and hard work of every single volunteer. I especially commend the 2022 executive committee, including president Matt Brady; vice-president Laura Cowell; treasurer Giulio di Stefano; committee members Paul Gallagher, Jim Hankins, Barry Jones, Chris Lockwood, Russell Marsden and Keith Ward; and chief executive officer Jeff Stewart.

I also acknowledge the fantastic efforts of Laura Cowell, who is the association's first female vice-president. She was appointed as the local Get Onside 2023 community bid ambassador for the Australia and New Zealand bid for the FIFA Women's World Cup. There are 32 teams in the FIFA Women's World Cup, with 16 of those teams utilising Australian clubs as a home base. Laura has led the community bid, which is still in contention, to host a visiting national team that will use the Harrie Denning Soccer Centre in Kareela as its training base throughout the tournament. This amazing opportunity would provide an unrivalled experience for our local community, with football fans seeing some of the world's best footballing talent and providing inspiration for the next generation of young players, especially for our women. I commend Laura and the entire association for their outstanding efforts and commitment in continuing the bid for our community. I congratulate the Sutherland Shire Football Association for 70 amazing years and look forward to joining its celebrations later this year.

ISLAMIC WOMEN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER ANHAAR KAREEM

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (19:08): The past few years have taught us many lessons about how we organise our lives and our community. One of those lessons is the importance of including the voices of young people in conversations that directly impact their lives and futures. We have seen this in the School Strike 4 Climate; in the passion of young people around inclusion, race, gender and sexuality; and in their calls to be included in discussions on vaccines. I recognise one remarkable young woman from my electorate of Strathfield, Ms Anhaar Kareem. At just 14 years of age, Anhaar's achievements and commitment to social justice are an excellent example of youth engagement in action. Anhaar is a writer, volunteer and advocate for young people in her community. She has been volunteering with the Islamic Women's Welfare Association, which was established by her grandmother Abla Kadous, since she was nine years old.

She has been recognised as an exceptional young voice in both her 2017 winning and 2021 shortlisted entries in the Whitlam Institute's What Matters? Writing Competition. Her writing explores contemporary politics and belonging. Anhaar makes and sells handmade jewellery, including charity earrings, with profits going to First Nations communities and Palestinian children. In a time when social upheaval and uncertainty has left many young people feeling excluded and disconnected, particularly those from culturally diverse backgrounds, Anhaar is an important voice and role model. In her role as Wellbeing Health & Youth commissioner, Anhaar has advocated for the rights of young people to be involved in the decision-making processes around health. In the wake of continuing Islamophobia, Anhaar has written on the rights of young hijabi women to feel safe and included at all levels of society, including at school, walking down the street and understanding what it means to be Australian. In her recent article in *The Guardian*, Anhaar wrote:

From the perspective of a 14-year-old hijabi, I am urging you to stand in solidarity with us—to call out racist behaviour and attacks on hijabis anywhere you see it.

I say to Anhaar and all hijabi women that we see you and we stand with you. The wonderful diversity of Australia is reflected in my electorate of Strathfield. We are all richer when we respect and celebrate our differences, trust and support each other and reject attempts to exclude or marginalise based on differences in gender, religion, race or sexuality. On top of all of this, Anhaar supports the diverse voices of her peers and offers free tuition in writing and public speaking to young people. She supports those who would follow in her footsteps. Too often, young people are relegated to the margins to deal with the world we make for them. Anhaar demonstrates that young people engage beyond this narrow space carved out for them. On behalf of the Strathfield electorate, I congratulate Anhaar Kareem and commend and support her in her advocacy for young people.

WESTFIELD MOUNT DRUITT

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:11): Recently I was privileged to attend the official opening of a new and impressive dining, entertainment and lifestyle precinct at the rooftop of the Westfield Mount Druitt shopping centre. The impressive project could not have been delivered at a more critical time, considering the broad implications of the COVID pandemic generally and the specific additional challenges brought about by

a stricter lockdown across western Sydney that affected all industries, including construction. It is merely a short walk away from my electorate office, which is conveniently situated and easily accessible within the same centre.

Westfield, including its present incarnation as Scentre Group, has had a well-established presence within the core of the Mount Druitt CBD since its acquisition of the centre in the early 1990s. The earliest built parts of the centre were constructed in the early 1970s, together with the establishment of a new Mount Druitt town centre. Many in my local community would have fond memories from over the decades of trips down to the local mall to shop, enjoy a meal, socialise and be entertained. Scentre Group, and their joint venture partner, Dexus Wholesale Property Fund, invested \$55 million to deliver this new rooftop precinct. The centre generates \$340 million in annual retail sales. The substantial nature of this investment is made particularly apparent given that merely a portion of that turnover goes to the owners of the centre for its ongoing operations, with most of it going toward redevelopments of this kind, with all of the overheads and high stakes risks they entail. It would take some serious searching to find a context in which those figures could be considered small change.

I am encouraged to see a clear example of the private sector seeing the potential in western Sydney more broadly, but especially in the Mount Druitt community that I am part of. That redevelopment has brought about a substantial improvement of presentation in the core of Mount Druitt. Through tangible bricks and mortar, it manifests a constant striving for better. I congratulate Westfield on investing in Mount Druitt to give the community a place to be proud of. The high standard of the development is a rare find and is a welcome addition to the many other impressive pieces of infrastructure, such as the Mount Druitt Hub and library, and the proposed Dawson Mall development. We ask the State Government to pay attention to western Sydney and provide the necessary health, education, transport and other critical resources. Only then will the region be able to reach its true potential.

GRANVILLE ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:15): In a few weeks the budget will be handed down, so I speak about the needs of the Granville electorate. Last year's budget was triumphalist and bizarrely oblivious to the spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19. Its projections were out of date within hours. What has happened since then? The Liberal Government divided our city in two. Western Sydney, including the community that I represent, was divided from the rest of Sydney through curfews, work permits, police helicopters and military checks. We were allowed out to exercise for only an hour a day. One set of rules applied to us in the west and a different set applied to those in the east and on the North Shore. Our area was affected the worst by COVID-19. Until the Omicron variant came, the death rate in Guildford in my electorate was the highest in New South Wales.

People lost jobs and businesses suffered. Unemployment remains well above average. Westmead Hospital was overwhelmed. Many in our community felt that Sydney became more divided than ever as a result of the restrictions. What has not changed is that we are all still paying the toll on the WestConnex M4 and local Granville roads remain clogged with rat-runners who are dodging the toll. What has changed is that the toll has increased to \$8.87 for a single trip along the entire length. Motorists have a 5 per cent increase to look forward to when inflation is factored into the next price rise. What has changed is that the M4 widening project—part of the rationale for bringing back the toll—has been paid off, yet we will continue to pay tolls to Transurban, which will increase by a minimum of 4 per cent per year for the next 35 years.

One would expect a government that talks about choice and personal responsibility to provide public transport alternatives, but not this Government. Instead, it took away Granville station's express trains, making trips to the city or Westmead longer. At the same time, the Government approved the construction of 5,000 units next to the station. In March 2019 the Liberal candidate for the Granville electorate announced that express train services would return under a Liberal government. Of course, nothing changed. In addition to cancelled express services, trains on the T1 Western line do not stop at Granville at all on weekdays. When Omicron hit, the Government introduced a temporary public transport timetable that reverted to having more trains stop at Granville on weekdays. People were thrilled. I wrote to the transport Minister to pass on compliments from locals who wanted permanent express services. The reply from the Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Cities, Transport and Roads stated:

Dear Ms Flynn—

he was off to a good start by spelling my name incorrectly in the opening line—

... Although I understand your request to add Granville Station to the T1 Western Line, this would be a major undertaking, which may cause significant over-crowding to existing services, and would require a complete timetable restructure.

This Government cannot even take a compliment when something good happens or accept that no overcrowding occurred under the temporary timetable. What has happened at Granville TAFE? Sadly, not much. It used to be one of the State's biggest TAFE colleges. Many local people have fond memories of their apprenticeships and traineeships there. But this Liberal-Nationals Government has removed two in five staff, sold TAFE property in

South Street and cut course options. Now more than ever, jobseekers and young people need more training opportunities. But a decade of damage inflicted by this Government has reduced their opportunities.

What has changed in relation to a new school for Westmead? Pre-pandemic, Westmead Public School in my electorate was the largest primary school in the State, with 1,620 students. Some 20 demountables are on site, but the school has no land on which to build new classrooms. Last year, after years of campaigning, the Liberal-Nationals Government finally allocated \$5.4 million towards a new school for Westmead. But—and it is a big but—there is still no site and no construction timetable. A new school costs around \$50 million to build. But the full amount has not even been allocated yet. The Merrylands motor registry, which opened in August 1987, served our community well. Many years ago I got my P-plates there. In May 2016 this Government closed it.

Since then, people have been sent miles away to Silverwater or Wetherill Park for driving tests. Now, after six long years, hoardings are up for a Service NSW site in Stockland Mall. But there will be no driving tests at the new location, and it will not accept cash. I expect that people who are happy to pay by card will do so by phone, if they can get through, or pay online. Cash is still legal tender. My electorate is full of cash-only businesses. Older people and newly settled migrants who do not have bank cards will be severely disappointed that this Government is building an office that will refuse to accept legal tender for transactions. The final New South Wales budget before the election is in a month's time. I will not hold my breath waiting for this Liberal-Nationals Government to support my community. It divided Sydney and turned its back on western Sydney. But these changes are needed desperately. I implore the Government to implement them.

REGIONAL COST OF LIVING

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:20): Although things are definitely improving for people in the bush—plentiful rains, bumper crops, a tourism boom and even signs of population growth in the regions—there is an undercurrent that threatens to hold country people back. For decades, those living in regional, rural and remote areas have been affected by disadvantages, many of which continue today. We have to live with and adjust to some of them, like the long distances and the cycles of drought, but we can do something about many of them. Living in an isolated community means having to travel far from home to do a range of things, such as shop, seek medical treatment and go to school. That means spending more money than most city people on fuel, vehicle maintenance and transport. Therefore, fuel price rises often have a bigger impact on rural people than on city people. Fuel price hikes also impact the cost of food and other basic necessities—essentially anything that has to be transported—many of which are usually higher than they are in the cities, without an oil crisis.

Country people are also disadvantaged by their lack of choice in necessities like schools, medical practitioners, phone and internet providers, banks and other essential services. Many country people have only limited access to electronic communications. So things like internet banking, which has become more of a necessity since the closure of many bank branches in regional areas, becomes difficult or impossible. Many interactions with government have gone online, making even the simplest interactions complicated when the internet is not up to the job. Often country residents have to travel to the city to do things that cannot be done remotely or to access services that they cannot access in the regions—for example, specialist medical treatment. But again they are unfairly disadvantaged. The Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme—or IPTAAS—exists to give some help to people living far from large medical centres. But it has many drawbacks, such as relatively low subsidy rates and a complicated application form, which will hopefully be fixed following the impending review of IPTAAS.

But there are other problems, especially if people have to travel to Sydney, which has become particularly difficult to navigate because of road changes—no left turn, no right turn, one-way traffic—roadworks and construction. Even native Sydneysiders find it hard to get around. Most of the motorways into the city have tolls that add to the cost. Parking in Sydney is prohibitively expensive. A recent media story reported on a discussion about a congestion tax, which would add another burden for visitors to Sydney if it were ever introduced. It seems that those who live in the country are penalised for doing so. But things can be done to ease the financial burden and the stress of navigating the tangled maze of Sydney's streets. For example, an Opal card that provides free or subsidised travel for people from regional and rural areas would assist them to get around more easily, without the need for a car. That would remove more cars from city roads, which is the Government's intention. It would not be favouritism but simply an attempt to shift the imbalance and bring it closer to parity for people who choose to live outside Sydney but have to visit and find it expensive and confusing to navigate.

Toll subsidies or waivers, or perhaps parking concessions, might also make things easier. The Government could issue something like the Dine & Discover vouchers to pay for parking when a person needs to travel to the city for essential services. Accommodation vouchers would reduce the financial burden of staying overnight and avoid people being subjected to the dangers of driving home at night after conducting their business in Sydney. Improving train, bus and air travel between regional New South Wales and Sydney will not only benefit people

from the country but also encourage more people to get out of the city and spend tourist dollars in regional New South Wales.

They are small things that are not budget breaking, but they will have a long-term benefit. Making it easier for regional, rural and remote dwellers to get to and from the city would also be of benefit to everybody in the city. A happier, healthier rural population means a more productive rural sector, which has flow-on effects for the cost of food and other produce coming from the country to the cities. Paying a bit of their way evens things up and pays off for city folk in the long run.

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:24): Recently an increasing number of patients, friends and relatives of patients, and staff in the local health system have contacted me to express concerns about the ongoing capacity of Wollongong Hospital to meet the needs of our community. Those concerns generally stem from an experience related to the emergency department and are usually about long waiting times from high levels of demand, no matter the time of day or night. Hundreds of residents have already signed a petition addressed to the Minister seeking greater support in the June budget for Wollongong Hospital. Apart from the two periods of lockdown, presentations at Wollongong Hospital emergency are typically around 18,000 a quarter. For the past year and a half, the median time to leave emergency has been around four hours—one of the longest in the State. For about the same period, the number of people who leave the emergency department within four hours has hovered around half. As I have said, those statistics show a hospital under pressure, and the people who have been contacting me are the proof point of that pressure.

As we all know, the health system—from primary care to aged care to hospital care—is a network. There is no doubt that shortcomings in other parts of the extended health network are impacting on the performance of the hospital system, particularly emergency. In the past two years the Illawarra has lost around 200 aged-care beds. The staff of aged-care facilities are under pressure, with many of their colleagues leaving the sector to pursue work opportunities that pay more in order to deal with increasing cost-of-living pressures. However, that creates bottlenecks in the health and hospital system as more people from the aged-care sector are treated in hospitals and more people who are admitted to hospital are staying longer as they await a place in a suitable residential aged-care facility. That impacts on the bed capacity at Wollongong Hospital in what many know as "bed block".

Similarly, a number of local GPs have ceased bulk-billing services, meaning that people are required to pay out-of-pocket costs to go to their GP. Given that so many other costs are increasing, the last thing many households can deal with is an increase in the cost to see a doctor. Consequently, we are likely to see more emergency presentations recorded in the statistics in the coming months. We then overlay population growth. As members may have seen, communities outside Sydney have experienced stronger population growth than predicted as people move out of large cities and university students are brought back to campus.

When I raised my concerns with the Minister, I received a response from the Parliamentary Secretary that acknowledged my concerns and expressed appreciation for my advocacy. I appreciate the recognition. The response then went on to try to convince me that everything was okay because over the past nine years, on average, there had been an annual increase of a little over 3 per cent in the budget allocation to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. When I previously asked the Minister whether he could tell me how many of the additional nurses the Government promised at the last election had come to the Illawarra, he could not confirm it. Nor would he confirm how many staff had been employed since 2011, but the Parliamentary Secretary did. According to that response, 586 additional nurses have been engaged since 2012, but there was no clarification of when they were engaged or whether that was a total or a net number.

Whenever I raise problems in the House, I try to propose solutions. In this case, there are solutions within the Government's reach. For nearly 18 months—and I am glad the Parliamentary Secretary and member for South Coast is in the Chamber, because she was part of this process—my colleagues in the Illawarra and I worked in a bipartisan manner to develop a health infrastructure network solution for the region. We were successful in achieving an announcement of a series of new and improved facilities almost a year ago to the day. On 20 May last year the Government announced the construction of a new hospital at Shellharbour, a new community health facility at Warrawong, upgrades to Wollongong Hospital and a new ambulance station for Fairy Meadow—great news. We all thought that we were well on the way and that those projects would move rapidly and relieve pressure on the system, yet a year later there has been no substantial progress.

Now is the time for the Government to set and stick to a time line that will quickly see those facilities built, opened and staffed. We know that the Shellharbour Hospital site has been identified, but we are no clearer on the construction time line and when the new hospital will open. We know that the Warrawong community health facility and Fairy Meadow ambulance station site selection process are underway, but we are no clearer on the construction time line and when those services will open. I acknowledge that the upgrades to Wollongong Hospital

have been done, but they still need support, which should come in the June budget. That support must allow the region's principal referral hospital to keep up with the growing health and population demands of the region.

It will take some short- and medium-term initiatives to address the pressures being experienced in the Illawarra system. Labor and I worked in good faith with people like the Parliamentary Secretary at the table to develop a medium-term solution for our growing health needs. The Government must acknowledge that there are immediate, increasing pressures on Wollongong Hospital. They must be dealt with because, behind the dismal monthly statistics, there are real people who are suffering pain and chronic illness. Those immediate and increasing pressures can and should be dealt with and addressed in the 21 June budget.

Community Recognition Notices

CONGRATULATIONS DANNY PHEGAN!

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate farmer and singer-songwriter Danny Phegan of Walla Walla, who appeared on the blind audition of 'The Voice' and made it through to the second round. Danny with the support of his school sweetheart and now wife Caroline along with their six children, Jess, Tilly, Bill, Emily, Adelaide and Patty, has been singing for the past thirty years, and is keen to make memories for his family from his career in music. For good luck Danny performed with his hand crafted guitar. He made this instrument himself using wood from his three favourite hotels and opals from his property at Lightning Ridge. Being a farmer has meant Danny has faced many tough challenges over the years, and along this journey the proceeds from his singing have helped pay the bills. I wish Danny great success with his music, particularly as it clearly has already brought joy and happiness to a wide audience across Australia.

NEW LEASE ON LIFE FOR FORMER REFUGEE PREM

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge constituent Prem Khadka, a refugee from Bhutan who has found confidence and a sense of purpose after settling in beautiful Albury. Prem spent his first 20 years living in a hut in a camp in Nepal without running water or electricity. He has also had to overcome obstacles presented by his disabilities in order to make a life for himself across the world in Australia. In March this year, with the support of his bilingual support worker Tika Poudyel, Prem was offered a role as a production line worker in a facility on the border. I understand this positive response has provided Prem with a boost to his confidence as he works hard to establish a life of independence. Tika has also helped Prem to enrol into Albury TAFE's Adult Migrant English Program. I also thank and acknowledge the efforts of all support workers like Tika Poudyel, for their care and selfless service to those in need and who call our border community home.

LITTLE LEGS FOUNDATION

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge the contributions that the Little Legs Foundation have made to our community, along with their recent exhibit in the Eggsville Community Art Trail. Eggsville Community Art Trail recently invited twelve community groups, who play essential roles in the Georges River Area, to submit designs for giant eggs that are now spread around Westfield Hurstville in time for Easter. One of the eggs displayed is the Little Legs Egg, which holds a special place in the Vasiliou's family heart. One of Westfield's previous 'Local Heroes', Sue Ellan Vasiliou and her family established the Little Legs Foundation after their daughter passed away from brain cancer. Their foundation aims to raise support and awareness and research to help aid in the fight to find a cure for brain cancer. Mrs. Vasiliou designed an egg that included her late daughter's drawings and handwriting. These eggs are now displayed around Hurstville Westfield for all members of the public to view and interact with. It is part of a wider initiative to support local businesses and encourage more people to return the bustling CBD area.

ST GEORGE ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate St George Athletics Club on their 100th birthday. Over 100 years ago, at a meeting in Colvin's Hall Hurstville, the St George District Amateur Athletic Club was officially formed. On the 2nd of April 1921, the club conducted its first ever race on a 21 and a half mile scratch road course from Hurstville Post Office along Forest Road to Willison Road at Carlton. Now based at Scarborough Park, Kogarah, the club has provided consistent weekly winter cross country competitions for people of all ages and abilities and free coaching services for all track and field disciplines. The club has been a vital part of my local community for decades and it has also been very successful. 13 club members have represented Australia at the Olympic or Paralympic Games and many club athletes have won NSW, Australian and World Championship titles at junior, open and masters event levels. I would like to acknowledge in particular President; Greg Breen and Vice Presidents; Colin Wilson, Ray Russell and Alan Staples. I wish St George Athletics Club all the best for the future and look forward to many more milestones.

IRENE MAHONEY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I wish to recognise the marvellous devotion and commitment of Irene Mahoney, a Senior Occupational Therapist at St George Hospital. Irene constantly ensures that all her patients are taken care of - not only in the hospital but once they have left as well. Primarily taking care of the elderly, Irene goes out of her way to source equipment and modifications for their houses, supplying necessities such as safety rails and pressure relief mattresses. Irene shows passion and dedication in her work, immeasurably helping those vulnerable in our community. A constituent has recently informed me of the persistent care that she has provided to his mother, making her life better as a result. It is with immense gratitude that I thank Irene, along with every one of our healthcare workers, for their exceptional work and contribution to our community.

OUR LAWYERS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Congratulations are truly in order for 'Our Lawyers', a Mittagong based firm who brought home the award for Business of the Year, Professional Services of the Year and the Local Business Awards in December last year. Due to the COVID lockdowns, the team had to adjust and adapt like many businesses, and quickly learnt how to function well in an online context. This included navigating online court attendance, virtual signing of court documents, wills, contracts and so forth. Throughout this period of change, the team continued to provide a high level of legal service to their clients and the community. The 'Our Lawyers' team is passionate about the Southern Highlands and is always ready to support individuals and businesses with their legal needs, whether that be helping a new business get started or helping a family reach an amicable settlement. I thank the team at 'Our Lawyers' for their dedication and hard work and also congratulate them on being recognised by the Local Business Awards.

SOHI SPIRITS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—The only thing better than a family run business that is passionate about promoting beautiful, quality produce is one that not only serves their customers with excellence, but also supports local growers and producers in a way that puts Wollondilly on the map. Alex Doughty, now a Bowral local, is the founder of SoHi Spirits, a true passion project that is taking the best of the terrain and talent the Highlands has to offer and combining it in a very appealing manner. Alex clearly wanted his spirits to appeal to all our senses: aesthetic, olfactory, and emotional - with beautiful packaging, great taste, and the knowledge that you are supporting local growers. Their 'Potato Crisp Vodka' is made using potatoes from Hill Family Potatoes in Wilds Meadow Robertson, the lavender used in the 'Garden Envy Gin' is from Cottle Wolly Lavender Farm in Crookwell, Alto Olives come from Crookwell, and most special of all, the gin botanicals are from our very own Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens in the heart of Bowral. I wish Mr Doughty well with this business and encourage those wanting a taste of true Highlands' quality to give his spirits a try!

'THE STUDIO' – OXLEY COLLEGE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—On 4 May I attended the opening of 'The Studio' at Oxley College in Bowral. This fantastic new space was designed by the Oxley College Building Committee for Design and Technology and Visual Arts students. The studio space utilises the old groundkeeper's maintenance shed, which has been renovated and revamped to create a place for students who wish to pursue their passions in visual arts and technology. The studio was opened by Oxley parent and Archibald prize-winning artist, Ben Quilty, who inspired current students about the importance of the visual arts. I myself am not an artist, but certainly as a parent I know the value of our local schools having adequate facilities to allow children to find and pursue their individual passions and talents, in whatever field they lie. I am sure this studio will allow creative young minds to open and expand, and I am very pleased to see the continual increase of opportunities for students in Wollondilly.

DAMON GAMEAU

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the contribution to the protection of the environment made by filmmaker Damon Gameau. Damon's film 'Regenerating Australia' recently had its 72nd and final commercial screening in Australia and has been requested by more than 650 libraries, schools, councils and community groups. Set at the end of 2029, it looks back at the current decade as it could have been – with Australia taking action on climate change and transitioning to a fairer, cleaner, more community focused economy. The film features interviews with journalists, politicians and business leaders as well as coal workers, teenagers and tradespeople about their vision for a greener, more vibrant future. Damon and his creative team previously made the award-winning film '2040' and offered a positive alternative to the impending environmental catastrophe, if some of the world's best-practice innovations are put into action. The result is a narrative with a powerful, emotive message: that we have a responsibility to countless future generations and that we have the power to change the path we are on. I congratulate Damon for his work.

JACK BROWN

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Every Club has that one person who goes above and beyond and for the Wallsend District Cricket Club, that is Jack Brown. Jack has been an integral part of the greater Newcastle Cricket community and recently celebrated his 60th season. Jack's passion for cricket and love of the game and his Club is second to none. He first joined Wallsend in 1962 as a 17 year old and after a 15-year playing career started scoring matches in 1977. Jack has remained in the scorer's chair for the last 45 seasons, scoring in excess of 850 matches for the Club. This includes over 600 first grade matches, with Jack holding the first grade scoring position at the Club since 1984. Incredibly, during this time Jack has only missed one match. Jack is a keen statistician and not only keeps statistics for Wallsend but also for various players and clubs in the Newcastle competition. Jack puts an incredible amount of time and effort into maintaining his statistics and they will certainly provide valuable historical data of the Newcastle competition in the coming years. Thank you for your dedication Jack.

MINMI PUBLIC SCHOOL KOALA FUNDRAISER

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—In February, Elaina, a Year 3 student at Minmi Public School approached the School Principal, Alison Fittler, with an idea she had about raising some money so that the School could adopt one or more koalas at the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary. Leaping at the idea, Ms Fittler arranged for Monday, 21st February, to be an opportunity for students to come to School out of uniform and bring a \$2 donation toward this very worthy cause. With the students on board, the out of uniform day was an absolute success. The students and staff raised in excess of \$200 to adopt a Koala from the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary. In fact, the day was so successful that Minmi Public School was able to adopt not just one, but four koalas at the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary. Thanks to Elaina for this wonderful idea and to her classmates who helped with the really difficult decision of who to adopt! Minmi Public School are now the proud adoptive parents of Maree, Spring, Tilly and Basil. Congratulations Elaina, Ms Fittler and the Minmi Public School community.

LAMBTON LOCAL 8 YEARS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Everyone loves a local community newspaper and for 8 years The Local has been the paper of choice for residents and businesses in Lambton, North Lambton, New Lambton, New Lambton Heights, Broadmeadow, Hamilton North, Kotara and Jesmond. I would like to congratulate Mark Brooker and the team at The Local on reaching 8 years of circulation of their fantastic and informative local newspaper. Mark has built and nurtured The Local brand since May 2014 when the first edition went to print. With the love and support of his family and friends Mark was able to begin his own newspaper that would bring local news to the people of Lambton and other surrounding suburbs. The Local continues to focus on the greatness of local community by highlighting the sporting and academic achievements of local kids, raising awareness of families in need, calls for the community to support local charities, recognising award winners and bringing the latest on big news stories. Congratulations Mark on this outstanding achievement! It has been a pleasure to know you and work with you for the last 8 years. I look forward to seeing you celebrate the many milestones ahead. Well done!

SHAPLA SHALUK LIONS CLUB MULTI-FAITH RAMADAN IFTAR AND LIONS DINNER

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 24 April 2022 I was delighted to attend Lions Club of Sydney South Shapla Shaluk's Multi-Faith Ramadan Iftar and Lions dinner at Lachlan's restaurant at Old Government House in Parramatta Park. The Bangladeshi Australian community is made up of a diverse and vibrant group of people who have enriched our community in many ways. Multi-faith iftar dinners such as this one help build cultural ties between by giving us the platforms needed to acknowledge the contributions of our many faith communities. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and the holy month of fasting. The iftar is the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset. I was delighted to join the participants as they broke their fast at the time of the call to prayer (adhan). It was a great honour to join with friends, church and mosque and community leaders at this special occasion. My thanks go to Club President, Dr Moinul Islam, club members for their kind invitation.

MUSIAD SYDNEY RAMADAN IFTAR

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 5 April 2022 I was delighted to attend the MUSIAD Sydney iftar dinner which was hosted by Sheikh Sonur Coruhlu at Sydney Olympic Park. MUSIAD Sydney is an independent industrialists and business people's association. They represent over 300 offices across the globe with approximately 70,000 members employing approximately 2 million people worldwide. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and the holy month of fasting. The iftar is the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset. I was delighted to join the student leaders as they broke their fast at the time of the call to prayer (adhan). Many Muslims believe that feeding someone iftar as a form of charity is very

rewarding and in Australia, and the rest of the world, we see it as a symbol of friendship, understanding and social harmony. It was a great honour to join with my parliamentary colleagues, Ambassadors, Consuls-General from a number of nations, their trade attaches and so many friends and attendees at this special occasion. My thanks go especially to Sheikh Sonur for the kind invitation.

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA AND ST COLUMBAN CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IFTAR

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 20 April 2022 I was delighted to attend the Iftar Dinner hosted by Catholic Diocese of Parramatta and the St Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations. I was delighted to meet with faith leaders and community members involved in interfaith dialogue locally at Novotel Sydney Parramatta. What was evident from the dinner was the hard being done by some many in our community to improve and foster positive relations between people of different faiths as well as promoting the value of interfaith relations. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and the holy month of fasting. The iftar is the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset. I was delighted to join the participants as they broke their fast at the time of the call to prayer (adhan). It was a great honour to join with friends, church and community leaders at this special occasion. My thanks go especially to the Most Rev Vincent Long Van Nguyen, Bishop of Parramatta and father Patrick McInerney, Director, Columban Mission Institute for their generosity and good will.

CRONULLA RSL SUB-BRANCH - 2022 ANZAC DAY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I thank the Cronulla RSL Sub-Branch for organising a moving ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Cronulla Park, Cronulla. This year, the Sub-Branch had the extra challenge of moving the Dawn Service from the traditional venue Monro Park to Cronulla Park, due to wet weather rendering Monro Park unfit for use. It was also the first time since 2019 that the service had been conducted "normally". The Cronulla Dawn Service had a great local turnout, estimated by some at 5,000 people. I acknowledge President Cory Rinaldi and members of the Cronulla RSL Sub-Branch Committee including Paul Zaat, Tony Di Betta, Matt Coady, Jenny Weir, Ross Edwards, Stan Grimshaw, Vince Pistilli, and Andrew Humphrey. They worked tirelessly to organise a memorable event that gave locals an opportunity to honour our service men and women. I also thank office manager Kristy Nichols, and Cronulla RSL Memorial Club President Ian Bourke and CEO Sue McNeill, for their efforts. Lest We Forget.

KEN HUTT FROM THE ROTARY CLUB OF BERRY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Rotary Club of Berry member and paraglider Ken Hutt has taken on a challenge that few would dare attempt – climb and fly from Everest. This is not the first time Ken has taken on a daunting challenge. During May 2014, Ken spent five weeks in Tibet in preparation for climbing Mount Cho Oyu – the World's sixth highest mountain at 8201 metres which is only 600 metres short of Everest – then jumped off and paraglided to Advanced Base Camp, a six kilometre flight. Ken was also associated with Father Chris Riley AM and headed to Banda Aceh as the first response team to the Asian Tsunami in 2004. Previously he climbed Kilimanjaro as part of a team representing Amnesty International. This time Ken is again motivated to raise awareness and funds for the PolioPlus Campaign. Congratulations and well done to Ken Hutt from Berry.

NOWRA CROQUET CLUB TURNS 100 YEARS OLD

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales congratulates Nowra Croquet Club on celebrating its magnificent century of play this year. The centenary event also coincided with the launch a book acknowledging and celebrating 100 years since the Club's inception. The Secretary of Nowra Croquet Club, Karen James, was the inspiration behind the production of the book. It proudly highlights a unique feature of the club — being largely women-only for a majority of its history. I would also like to acknowledge Brian Rosen, Doug Cornish (Vice-President and Grounds Coordinator), Pam Harrison and David Knott from the Nowra Croquet Club. Those who play croquet say it is 15 per cent skill and 85 per cent psychology. Nowra Croquet Club now supports over sixty members and makes up an important part of the local Shoalhaven community. I congratulate Nowra Croquet Club and its members on this distinguished centenary milestone.

KIAMA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ATTEND THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE FORUM IN LONDON

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges three outstanding students from Kiama High School, Alexa Farland, Nina Teague and Ella Johansson, who have been selected to attend the International Youth Science Forum at Imperial College in London in July 2022. The three students also appeared on an ABC radio 'The Science Show' podcast with presenter Robyn Williams to discuss their passion for science and STEM subjects and the role social media plays for young people accessing science stories. The three Kiama High School students have received support from Rotary in Kiama and are seeking

assistance from the local community to support their travel to London. I wish to congratulate Alexa, Nina and Ella on this outstanding achievement and wish them well during their participation at the International Youth Science Forum which is an eminent summer camp and two-week STEM program empowering young scientists to become connected global citizens.

LUMINARY LEADERS CENTRAL COAST YOUTH WEEK AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Last month Central Coast Council held its first ever Central Coast Youth Week Awards. The awards honoured 17 young people who are doing great things across the community from diverse backgrounds and abilities. There were 4 awards in the Luminary Leaders category. Youth Entrepreneur of the Year was awarded to Ashlee McGonigal. Youth Leadership of the Year winner was Jayden Delbridge with finalists Libby Payne and Willow Robinson. Willow is also on this year's Regional Youth Taskforce. Youth Volunteer of the Year is Samantha Laundess and finalist Mathew Baxter. Mikayla Maiden was awarded Youth Volunteer Mentor of the Year. I would like to thank Central Coast Council for launching these awards to recognise the fantastic youths across the Central Coast.

SHERWIN HENSBY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to recognise the contribution to the Central Coast community of Sherwin Hensby of Yattalunga who has volunteers for over 48 years across multiple organisations. Sherwin volunteered for the Rural Fire Service between 1969 and 2001 in catering and training for first aid and using radios. He began serving as the Operations Director of the NSW Government Radio Network developing training programs for NSW Government employees including for the Olympics, where 15,000 radios were used by over 25,000 volunteers and staff. In 1992, Sherwin joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and eventually became the Central Coast Unit's lead trainer. He became a member of Marine Rescue NSW when it was established in 2010 and established the organisation's first aid program. In addition, Sherwin was a volunteer counsellor for Lifeline and Zone Commander for Brisbane Water Marine Watch between 1962 and 2018. For his dedication, Sherwin has received both state and national long service medals. This is an impressive history of volunteer work. The Central Coast is lucky to have so many dedicated volunteers and I would like to thank Sherwin for his fantastic contribution.

AFIC'S IFTAR DINNER

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I congratulate our Muslim community on the important celebration of the holy month of Ramadan and I am pleased to acknowledge the Australian Federation of Islamic Council Iftar Dinner on Saturday 9th April at Al Aseel Restaurant in Greenacre. 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. The Iftar dinner is a unique cultural experience and an important community moment. I take this opportunity to recognise the Australian Federation of Islamic Council on a successful Iftar Dinner. In particular I would like to congratulate President, Dr Rateb Inied, CEO Keysar Trad, Secretary Harun Abdullah, and Executive Members Bilal Rifai, Mohammed Berjaoui and Sister Siddiga Adam. I hope everyone observing Ramadan across my community had a happy and blessed month.

MALEK FAHD ISLAMIC SCHOOL'S IFTAR DINNER

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I congratulate our Muslim community on the important celebration of the holy month of Ramadan and I am pleased to acknowledge the Malek Fahd Islamic School Iftar on Friday April 8th. 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. The Iftar dinner is a unique cultural experience and an important community moment. I take this opportunity to congratulate Malek Fahd Islamic School on a successful Iftar Dinner, Malek Fahd Islamic School's Principal Dr Zachariah Matthews, the Execute Team, teachers and administrative staff. I hope everyone observing Ramadan across my community had a happy and blessed month.

ANZAC DAY SERVICE – GEORGES RIVER GRAMMAR

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was proud to attend the Georges River Grammar ANZAC Commemorative Service on Friday, April 29th. It was an honour to attend this service and acknowledge the significance of ANZAC Day and pay respects to the servicemen and women who gave their lives so that we may enjoy the freedoms that we have today. ANZAC Day is an opportunity for us all to unite and reflect upon the

sacrifices made and the hardship endured by our brave soldiers. I would to thank the School Principal, Ms Raquel Charet for her invitation as well as Georges River Grammar's Board Chair, David McGregor, Treasurer John McKenzie, Director Vernon Falconer and special guests, Garry Williams of the Bass Hill Sub-Branch, the Honourable Kristina Keneally and Mrs Wendy Lindsay. Well done to Georges River Grammar's High School Captains, Ethan Foss and Alyssa Bullock, High School Vice Captains, Blake Horsnell and Chloe Chea, Primary School Captains, Luca Algie and Eliana Jovanovic, and Primary School Vice Captains, Alexander Georgievski and Thea Luttrell, for their terrific work in leading the service. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

INNER WEST DISABILITY PRIDE FEST

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I congratulate all those involved with the Inner West Disability Pride Fest held on 9 April 2022 at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. This is the second successful event of its kind and aims to increase visibility, reclaim identity, instil pride and reduce stigma for people with disability. As the royal commission has shown, people with disability continue to face ableism, mistreatment and suffering. The event is an important way to highlight and address the suffering many people with disability experience as a result of ableism and to celebrate people with disabilities as unique, valuable, valid and distinctive with a right to be proud of who they are. The event is part of a local movement celebrating Disability Pride and seeks to connect the Inner West and Sydney to cities hosting similar events all around the world. I congratulate the organisers of this important event, as well as the volunteers and attendees who made the day so impactful and powerful. I also acknowledge all people with disability in our community and thank you for the invaluable contribution you make to the Inner West.

LESBIAN VISIBILITY DAY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—April 26 marked Lesbian Visibility Day, where we celebrate the lesbians in our lives and acknowledge the barriers and challenges they continue to face. According to LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, over 80 per cent of lesbians aged between 14 to 21 report high or very high levels of psychological distress, almost half aged between 16 and 71 have received a diagnosis of depression, anxiety or other mental illness, and almost 20 per cent aged 18 and over have experienced homelessness. It is critical that we continue to work to address discrimination lesbians face and to affirm and recognise the contribution lesbians make in our local community. We must also continue to work to ensure our health system, social supports and broader community connections are inclusive of lesbian, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and queer women. I warmly thank organisations including Twenty10, ACON, QLife, Sydney Mardi Gras, Dykes on Bikes Sydney, the Gender Centre, and the many other organisations and individuals who provide critical support for lesbians and other members of the LGBTQ+ community. This Lesbian Visibility Day, we thank and acknowledge the wonderful local lesbians that enrich our lives, families and communities and thank them for all they do.

PAT ALDERMAN OAM – CWA EAST MAITLAND STALWART

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Mrs Pat Alderman OAM for her selfless involvement with the East Maitland branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW [CWA NSW]. Due to her husband's work, Pat moved around NSW and participated in many CWA branches. However, when Mrs Alderman joined East Maitland, she took on positions at branch level, always willingly partaking in functions as well as group meetings. Pat has attended many State Conferences throughout her 32.2 years, too. Her most recent role at East Maitland, of hall convener, was very much appreciated. Pat's bookwork was impeccable, she had everything in order and always gave very good reports at the meeting, letting the members know exactly what was happening with the hall. Now in her 90s, Mrs Alderman also contributed to the Red Cross. On 8 June 2015, she was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for community services with the Red Cross and CWA NSW. Congratulations Pat, and thank you for your contribution. It is wonderful to be able to acknowledge you in this centenary year of the CWA.

MAVIS HENLEY – EAST MAITLAND CWA MEMBER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—The East Maitland branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW [CWA NSW] is fortunate to boast four ladies, all in their 90s, who have been long-time contributors and supporters of the organisation, including Mrs Mavis Henley. With her involvement totalling almost 29 years, Mavis has made an enormous contribution to the East Maitland branch including playing the National Anthem on the piano at meetings, while holding many positions, including handicraft officer. Mrs Henley also won awards, over consecutive years, for the best report at group level. She has held the role of culture officer, winning awards again at group level for her reports and activities. Mavis loves challenging others at scrabble as well as teaching them the game on friendship days. Her love of singing and poetry is a delight to all members. She always has a verse ready to recite. It is a pleasure to attend CWA when Mrs Henley is there. Congratulations Mavis and in this Centenary year of the CWA of NSW, it is a real pleasure to thank you for your enormous contribution to our community over nearly three decades!

SHIRLEY LAYTON – CWA EAST MAITLAND STAWLART

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I acknowledge Mrs Shirley Layton, from the East Maitland branch, for her dedication, friendship and commitment over three decades to helping others in the Country Women's Association of NSW [CWA NSW]. Shirley has been a member of the organisation for almost 33 years. Mrs Layton is still a regular at both monthly meetings and craft/friendship days. Whenever a function is staged, Shirley is one of the first to offer her services. She has also been a welcome support to all newcomers, sharing her wide knowledge of protocols and procedures as well as assisting others with their handicraft. Shirley's friendship is recognised by members in the way they return their friendship to her. Even at the spritely age of 95, Mrs Layton continues to make items for the CWA to sell at their Market Days to raise money. Shirley has been a very much valued as a member of the East Maitland branch and it is wonderful to celebrate her contribution in this Centenary year for the CWA.

REDHEAD LIFEGUARDS 2021-22

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—With huge swells, flood water, bluebottle visits and waves of foam, it was a turbulent season for beaches up and down the NSW coast, and beaches in the Charlestown electorate area were no exception. Lake Macquarie City Council recorded a 40 per cent drop in visitor numbers, but that didn't mean our life guards got off lightly. It was still a busy season for patrols, with Lake Macquarie lifeguards performing 160 rescues and providing first aid to almost 900 people. Life guards are an iconic part of an Australian summer, and I would like to acknowledge and thank the life guards who patrolled Redhead Beach over the 2021-22 season for their vigilance, professionalism and courage. Every year, they help countless beachgoers and I am sure I speak for the entire Charlestown electorate community when I thank them and all the volunteer Surf Life Savers for all the incredible work they do. The 2021-22 beach season came to an end with the last patrol of the year on Sunday 24 April. Thank you once again for keeping us safe every beach season.

TREES IN NEWCASTLE OPEN DAY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—It is hard to overstate how important greenery can be in an urban environment. In Australia it's particularly important that we plant and cultivate our unique native flora—and there's no better way to encourage native animals and birds to visit your garden. Trees in Newcastle is a volunteer run organisation which collects local indigenous plant seed, propagates and nurtures them for locals to use in their homes and on properties. They have done so much to encourage the planting of native trees in the Charlestown electorate and surrounding areas, and I was very happy to go along to their Open Day on Saturday, 7 May. I picked up some very affordable pea flower shrub and sea celery tube stock, and I was encouraged to see so many other locals at the event. I want to give a particular thanks to volunteer Maya for the help she gave me in deciding what would work for me. The Trees in Newcastle volunteers are always friendly, informative and helpful. I want to thank Trees in Newcastle for all the work they've done, and I look forward to joining them again.

KOTARA VENTURER ALYSSA WHARTON

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The Queen's Scout Award is the highest honour that can be earned by a Venturer. Venturers are Scouts aged 14-17, open to all regardless of gender, with a focus on community involvement, personal growth, leadership development, study/life balance and, of course, adventure and responsible risk taking. Kotara Venturer Alyssa Wharton's journey to the award was a huge undertaking, and she took on challenges including hikes, learning sign language and sewing sustainable face masks. It was my pleasure to help celebrate this amazing young woman's achievement with her troop on 6 May. Scouting runs in Alyssa's family—she's the fourth generation to wear the woggle, and she was presented her award by her proud dad, Chris, with her mum and grandparents looking on. It was my pleasure to meet Alyssa at the award ceremony. She is young woman who has already achieved so much. This award is so well-deserved, and I am sure Alyssa will continue to make our community so proud.

CHALDEAN LEAGUE OF NSW VOLUNTEERS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish to acknowledge the efforts of various volunteers and members of the Chaldean League of NSW for their efforts in supporting the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend Rouwell Shammass, Marwan Yousif and Randa Goriya who organised food vouchers and the delivery of food to members of the community in isolation or generally in need. I acknowledge Marlin Toma who also delivered food to members of the community in need as well as playing a pivotal role in organising activities for women in the community. I commend the efforts of Wilson Hajo and Sivan Kena who took on an IT role throughout the pandemic, broadcasting zoom activities live through Facebook to reach a wider audience in the community. I thank the Chaldean League of NSW members and volunteers who gave their time and effort to assist the members of the community in need throughout the pandemic, and I commend them for their continuing work to service the Chaldean community in our area.

CHALDEAN LEAGUE OF NSW

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish to commend the efforts of President of the Chaldean League of NSW Mr Laith Alchinno and Mr Sam Yousif for their efforts in serving the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Alchinno organised zoom meetings during the pandemic in which he connected doctors and the community to speak about COVID-19 as well as psychiatrists who could assist with the mental health issues which inevitably arose for many in the community throughout the pandemic. He also maintained contact with members of the community in isolation and provided them with food. He also maintained contact with both State and Local Government and NSW Police in order to be able to report to members the latest and most relevant information in relation to COVID-19. Mr Sam Yousif also provided assistance to members throughout the pandemic by organising food vouchers to people in isolation, and participated in zoom meetings to provide the community with the latest and relevant information about the virus. I thank Mr Laith Alchinno and Mr Sam Yousif for their efforts throughout the pandemic and for their continuing support of the community through their work with the Chaldean League of NSW.

FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL – FADES AND BRAIDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish to acknowledge Fairfield High School Head Teacher of Student Engagement Ms Zaynab Siddiqi and all the students who have taken up the challenge of barber and hair braiding training in the "Fades and Braids" programme which runs at the school. This programme has been introduced to Fairfield High School to teach new and interesting skills and also as a means of giving students who are interested in this craft a potential head start in what could be a promising career. Charles and Lucianne Lomu are running the programme at three Western Sydney high schools, including Fairfield High. Students have the opportunity to learn a new skill that will give them employment opportunities in the future. As well as practical skills of barbering and hair braiding, the programme also teaches students social skills of interacting and communicating with others, and learning how to serve others. I commend the efforts of the students who have signed up for this programme and wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

GYMEA TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Gymea Technology High School ("Gymea Tech"). Gymea Tech is a beloved environment where all students are given the opportunity to grow and succeed both academically and socially. Led by outstanding Principal Peter Marsh, Term 1 has been an exceptionally busy time for students offering many exciting opportunities including the school athletics carnival and participation in Miranda RSL Sub-Branch's Anzac Day Dawn Service. Leading by example is the 2022 leadership team who truly embody the values that make Gymea Tech such a wonderful place to learn and grow. I congratulate School Captains Maya Simmons and Alexander Arnold, Vice Captains Laura Cox and Benjamin Porter and Prefects Jacob Allen, Ziggy Badans, Natasha Brabant, Lachlan Miller, Teresa Potts and Taylor Napier. To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud, and I look forward to seeing the opportunities they embrace throughout the year. I commend the student leaders from Gymea Technology High School on their appointment and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

PLAY 'N' AROUND EARLY LEARNING CENTRE ILLAWONG

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I acknowledge the wonderful team at Play 'n' Around Early Learning Centre in Illawong for the work they do in caring for the little minds in our community. Established in 2010 by Jessica and Nick Freeman, the Centre is built on a passion and love for teaching children in the formative years of their lives. Their strong sense of community and family is the foundation on which they build each child's experience and help foster a love of learning. On 25 March 2022, I visited Play 'n' Around Early Learning Centre Illawong and met with the team of dedicated teachers and their little learners who shared with me their knowledge of our Australian flags. I take this opportunity to recognise the amazing team at Play 'n' Around Early Learning Centre Illawong including Yasmin Scheuerer, Lisa Bulman, Sarah DeCelis, Courtney Hogan, Rosie Sanderson and Jasmine Catts. I thank the team at Play 'n' Around Early Learning Centre Illawong for their warm welcome and for their commitment to educating the next generation of confident and capable learners.

THE JANNALI HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of The Jannali High School on their appointment. With a proud tradition of academic excellence, The Jannali High School is home to a wonderful group of bright and diligent students. Led by their incredibly dedicated Principal, Rick Coleman, students have been busy participating in a number of school events across Term 1 including Harmony Day, the school swimming carnival and the World's

Greatest Shave where students helped raise over \$26,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation. Leading by example is the 2022 leadership team who truly embody the values that make The Jannali High School the place to succeed. I congratulate School Captains Phoebe Dunn and Bailey Pawson, Vice Captains Olivia Willis and Desharn Dzeperoski and Prefects Jessica Comber, Max Dobson, Olivia Hall, Max Harwood, Jenna Searle and Jack Williams. To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud, and I look forward to seeing the opportunities they embrace throughout the year. I commend the student leaders from The Jannali High School on their success and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

AMITY COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS IFTAR DINNER

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise the Amity College Annual Student Leaders Iftar Dinner held on Thursday 28 April at the College. Amity College is located in Prestons and is an impressive institution with which I have been associated for some time. The event was also supported by Affinity Intercultural Foundation and the Sule-Amity Graduates Program (known as SAGA). The MCs for the event were Ameer Maarabani and Joumana El Hassan, Vice-Captain of the Amity Boys and Girls High Schools respectively. A welcome address was delivered by Mehmet Koca, Executive Principal of Amity College, followed by opening addresses by Taha Khan, Captain of the Boys High School and Shamara Haque School Captain of the Girls High School. Later in the evening a keynote speech was delivered by Emeritus Professor Stuart Rees discussing elements of leadership and peace with justice and positive peace, and answering questions from the floor from students. As well there were musical performances by Zeyneb Sacan and concluding speeches by Aminty College Illawarra School Captain Jana Abdul and Vice-Captain Zayne Dghaich. There were also some very interesting contributions by students about leadership and peace.

VESAK DAY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Phuoc Hue Temple at Wetherill Park and the Celebration of Vesak Day this year – 2022 in the Gregorian calendar and 2566 in the Buddhist calendar. The event was held on Sunday May 15. Vesak Day is a day to commemorate the birth of Lord Buddha. I also acknowledge Senior Venerable Thich Phuoc Vien and other members of the Sangha. The temple is part of the Phuoc Hue Buddhist Monastery that was originally founded in 1980 by the Most Venerable Thich Phuoc Hue, the first Vietnamese Buddhist Monk to settle in Australia. The current Temple was finally completed on its present site and officially opened in December 1991. The Temple is an important community asset and has achieved a worldwide reputation. For many years Vesak Day has been celebrated at the Temple. It is an important part of multicultural Sydney.

GEOFF AND HELEN SEE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to acknowledge Geoff and Helen See for the many years of dedication they've given to the Lake Macquarie Rural Fire Service Welfare Brigade. Geoff and Helen joined the Rural Fire Service in 1999 and since then have proved to be absolutely invaluable assets, primarily through their catering roles. Geoff and Helen work hard to ensure Lake Macquarie-based RFS volunteers are provided with fresh and delicious meals during major incidents, hazard reduction burns and training days. They prepare up to 200 meals at a time, and I should note that these meals are highly regarded by volunteers. For more than a decade Geoff has been on call as the brigade's catering captain while Helen is the brigade's deputy catering captain. To date their efforts have been acknowledged with RFS long service medals in 2010, life memberships in 2018, and the Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation in 2020. I recently had the pleasure of joining Geoff and Helen when they were presented with their National Emergency Medals which recognised their sustained service during the 2019 – 2020 bushfire season. I acknowledge their efforts and thank them for their extraordinary community service.

RITCHIES MACLEAN

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to the management and staff of Richies IGA Supermarket in Maclean who recently were named Store of the Year at the Queensland/Northern NSW IGA Awards. The supermarket has only recently opened in Maclean and have done remarkably well in a very short amount of time. The supermarket has been extremely well received by the locals as well as patronage from the Lower River. They received 7 nominations and three wins in the awards. I wish Store Manager, Matt Saunders and the team every success at the National Awards being held in July.

HELEN JAKOBSSON

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—All of us here have supporters who become friends. They are the ones who will always have your back; always offer a kind word of encouragement, and who always help out. My dear late friend Helen Jakobsson of Macquarie Fields was one such friend. While Helen was a staunch supporter of mine, she was so much more. She was the devoted wife of Bill – they met when Helen was

still in her teens and were as madly in love at the end as on the occasion of their first date. They loved going to the annual seniors concert together holding each other's hand. Helen was the devoted mother of four – sadly two of her children predeceased her. Gratefully though, Helen's two surviving children, Peter and Katherine, along with one of her grandchildren, spoke lovingly of her at her funeral this week. Helen had a varied career including running and owning a chicken farm and working for Home Care. Helen was a doer and she rarely sat still for long. She was proud of her family and proud of her community. Helen Jakobsson was my friend and I will miss her.

SO DANCE JUNEE FUNDRAISING FOR SICK KIDS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I recognise and warmly encourage the ongoing efforts of So Dance Junee, as they dance to fundraise in support of families with sick children. Their fundraising efforts, led by studio director Shannon Oke, team members Stephanie Starr, Sienna Riley, Megan Callow as well as the 117 children who take part in their weekly classes, is aimed at providing accommodation for a family in need of a home-away from home through Ronald McDonald House Charity. This initiative by So Dance Junee is all about trying to ease the burden on families because we know when a child is unwell, injured or seriously ill, it affects the whole family, with lives turned upside down or put on hold, and members of the family under a lot of pressure emotionally and financially. Every little bit counts and to do so through a love of dance is absolutely to be commended. Well done to So Dance Junee on their efforts for such a worthwhile cause.

MATES HELPING MATES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I recognise West Wyalong Masonic Village, in conjunction with the Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution, for their support of the Rotary Clubs of New South Wales Men's Health Education Rural Van. The Van has recently been in West Wyalong, providing locals the opportunity to get a free check-up from a registered nurse with mental health experience. As part of the visit, there was also a series of social and fundraising events including a welcome morning tea together with the Waratah Association, and supported by Bland Shire Council, as well as a sausage sizzle, movie event and trivia night. It is fantastic to have had this initiative in town, aimed at encouraging men living in regional communities to get their health checked. I am sure it was very well supported on the day. Since the program began in 2017, the Van has visited over 100 communities providing more than 10,000 free health checks so thank you once again to West Wyalong Masonic Village for their support, allowing this initiative to make its way to West Wyalong.

TOWN2BEACH NARRANDERA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I recognise the tremendous efforts of Narrandera Bidgee Boxing and Bolters Committee on their successful Town2Beach Marathon held at Narrandera Showground last month. In particular, I congratulate event organiser Ms Rachael Hyde who is a huge part of this event and the success that it is – well done Rachael! This particular event is a run, walk or ride over a seven, 13 or 21 kilometre course, with a one kilometre course also available for the youngest of competitors on the day. With over 200 people getting involved from near and far, including entrants from New Zealand, Melbourne, Cowra, Wangaratta and Tumut, the event was a huge success with all funds raised going to the upgrade and purchase of equipment at the Bidgee Boxing gym. These kinds of events in support of local organisations is what small communities is all about and would not be possible without a tremendous team working incredibly hard behind the scenes, not to mention the amazing support of over 30 local sponsors. Congratulations once again to all involved and hopefully next year I can join in the fun too!

PENDRAGONS DRAGON BOAT CLUB

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I congratulate and recognise the Pendragons Dragon Boat Club who celebrate their 20th anniversary this year. Founded in 2002, they currently have approximately 45 members with room to grow and they encourage people to come along to their "Come and Try" days. Dragon boating provides the opportunity to get fit, make friends and compete at varying levels and importantly having fun. Fabulous milestone Pendragons!

LYNETTE MARGARET COOPER

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police)—Lyn made Bathurst her home in 1985 and quickly became involved in the community. As a teacher at West Bathurst Primary School Lyn initiated several programs at the school including the Anti Bullying Program and was a representative for the Western Area on the Child Protection Program. Lyn also introduced an after-school activities program for children of working parents and was responsible for the school's

media promotion. Lyn's career also included working at Charles Sturt University where she assisted overseas students as Practical Student Liaison Officer as well as lecturing in Human Society and Its Environment [HSIE]. Outside of education, Lyn has been heavily involved in junior soccer, introducing the Gender Equity Program in both Bathurst and the Western Region. She has held the position of Western Region coach for girls soccer at least four times. She has coached the Under 12, 14 and 16 years girls teams as well as the Bathurst representative team which has claimed the prestigious Canberra Cup. Lyn has helped build the Saturday girls soccer competition and the Proctor Park Challenge for girls teams from Sydney and the Western Region. She has served as Vice President of the Bathurst District Football Association.

MAUREEN ANN MARKWICK

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police)—Maureen has volunteered with the Bathurst Hockey Association for 48 years, holding positions including President, Secretary and Treasurer. She has also coached for the entire 48 year association with the club and is a strong supporter of junior sport. Hockey NSW awarded Maureen the highest achievement in volunteering in the sport in 2021 when she was recognised with the Community Distinguished Long Service Award. In 2007 she was awarded the Jean Alexander Award for Administration Excellence. She has been awarded life membership of Bathurst Hockey, Bathurst Womens Hockey and Bathurst Junior Girls Hockey. For more than 30 years Maureen has also worked tirelessly to support the homeless in the community, helping adults and children secure safe affordable housing.

MR & MRS BLACKMAN'S 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Today I wish to congratulate two of my Engadine constituents, Leo and Betty Blackman as they celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on 26 May 2022. I hope they have a wonderful day and enjoy all the beautiful memories that come with the celebration of a diamond wedding anniversary. I trust they are accompanied by their closest family and friends as they mark this special milestone. I take this opportunity to wish Leo and Betty many more years of fun, enjoyment, happiness and good health together.

THE FONTANA'S 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I send my sincerest congratulations to Dante and Valerie Fontana of Gregory Hills who will celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary today on the 18th of May. Reaching 60 years of marriage is not only an incredible milestone, but also a time to reflect on the importance of your commitment to each other through good times and bad. I wish Dante and Valerie a delightful day commemorating their special occasion with their closet family and friends. Once again, I congratulate them on their diamond anniversary and I hope they have many more happy years together full of happiness and good health.

CAMDEN SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL AFL ACHIEVERS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Congratulations to Camden South Public School students Rose Santana, Elaina Nicholls, Ella Salisbury and Sophie Stevens who were all successful in gaining a spot in the Metropolitan West School Sport Girls AFL Team. Rose, Elaina, Ella and Sophie will all be representing the region at the State Championships at Coffs Harbour. I also congratulate Archie Dobbs who was also successful in securing a spot into the Sydney South West Boys AFL Team. Archie will also go on to represent the region at the State Championships in Coffs Harbour. What a wonderful opportunity to represent your school and Camden to show off all your hard-earned talent. I wish Rose, Elaina, Ella, Sophie and Archie all the best at the State Championships next month.

2021/22 MACARTHUR FC MEDAL NIGHT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Last week I had the pleasure to attend the 2021/22 Macarthur FC Medal Night along with my colleague the Hon. Nathaniel Smith MP, Mayor of Camden Therese Fedeli, Mayor of Campbelltown George Greiss, and Camden and Campbelltown Councillors. Macarthur FC delivers its community programs in collaboration with its key partners including the Macarthur Football Association, Southern Districts Football Association and many more, who collectively represent more than 120 clubs and 40,000 players. Macarthur FC is committed to delivering incentives that address health and wellness, community cohesion and Indigenous Programs. Congratulations to all the award winners including Golden Boot Winner Ulises Dávila and Macarthur Medal Winner Lachie Rose.

MUSWELLBROOK RESCUE HELICOPTER GOLF DAY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—When you look for unifying causes in the Hunter Valley there is one that has majority support – the Hunter Region based Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. Each town or community across the Upper Hunter Electorate has its own way to help with fundraising and for Muswellbrook that includes a day on the town's golf course. On Friday 6 May 2022, Muswellbrook RSL and Golf Club hosted

32 teams to play a four person Ambrose on the Bell Street layout. Participants included long term event supporters from the local coal and electricity generation industries along with teams from the local community. The day of charity golf drawing almost \$30,000 for the rescue helicopter including the host club chipping in a \$3,000 donation. The Matthew Family Trophy for the tournament winners was presented to the Muswellbrook RSL and Golf Club team of Brodern Adam-Smith, Peter Ryan, Jamieson Reading and Jason Taylor. An invitation has already been issued by the host club for the Rescue Helicopter Charity Golf Day to return in 2023. Community support like the Muswellbrook golf day contributes to keeping the rescue helicopter fleet servicing the Hunter and northern NSW flying all day-every day.

STROKE FOUNDATION 2022 AWARD RECIPIENT KYLIE FACER

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—It is often said that the first step of any journey is the hardest, especially when it involves the health of your baby. I congratulate Kylie Facer of McCullys Gap in my electorate of Upper Hunter for taking that first step and what her journey has so far achieved. Kylie Facer and Dee Banks of Ballarat have recently been recognised with the Stroke Foundation President's Award at the 2022 national awards for their work to establish the Little Stroke Warriors support group. They may live around 1,000 kilometres apart but Kylie and Dee found each other during a time of person crisis following the diagnosis that their children had suffered a stroke. Little Stroke Warriors began in 2017 and has now become a larger network with hundreds of parents. It has also helped the Stroke Foundation develop a suite of hospital resources about childhood stroke to help families with their journey ahead. Kylie and Dee's advocacy has also helped to secure \$4 million in research funding from the Medical Research Future Fund. Again, congratulations Kylie on your award and the change that Dee and yourself have already achieved with the Little Stroke Warriors.

SENIOR CONSTABLE ADAM BODKIN

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer our community's and my personal congratulations to Senior Constable Adam Bodkin for being awarded the Blacktown Police Area Commander's Commendation Award presented at the Zone Police Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14th April 2022. Senior Constable Bodkin is a very worthy recipient of this Award for his efforts following the successful investigation, charging and prosecution of a male domestic violence offender who had a lengthy and serious history of domestic violence. Senior Constable Bodkin's work to review and transcribe hundreds of phone calls are impressive and led to identifying breaches of existing apprehended violence orders. Senior Constable Bodkin also provided invaluable support to the victim and her children. Thanks to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of Senior Constable Bodkin, the case was resolved successfully with the prosecution of 126 charges and the securing of apprehended domestic violence orders for the victim and her children. This case was also used by the NSW Police Force to recommend change to phone call procedures within Correctional Service Centres. Thank you to Senior Constable Bodkin for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. You should be incredibly proud of your achievement.

SERGEANT MEHMET SAGKOL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer our community's and my personal congratulations, to Sergeant Mehmet Sagkol on being awarded Commissioners Unit Citation and Counter Terrorism and Special Tactics Command's Commendation presented at the Zone Police Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14th April 2022. Sergeant Sagkol is a very deserving recipient of these Awards for his professionalism and dedication as an investigator for Operation Castrum and his meritorious performance of duty in response to the Lindt Café Siege in December 2014. As an investigator for Operation Castrum, Sergeant Sagkol was part of a team who operated under an extreme set of circumstances that had ever been undertaken or tested by the judicial process. During the Lindt Café Siege, which lasted seventeen hours and required one of Australia's largest immediate police responses, Sergeant Mehmet Sagkol's contribution to protect and rescue the hostages and maintain the safety of the city on that day should be commended. Thank you to Sergeant Sagkol for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. The experience and professionalism displayed in your role is a testament to your commitment to go well above and beyond your normal duties.

SENIOR CONSTABLE HOLLY MILLS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer our community's and my personal congratulations to Senior Constable Holly Mills on being awarded the Blacktown Police Area Commander's Commendation Award and the North West Metropolitan Region Certificate of Merit, which was presented at the Zone Police Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14th April 2022. Senior Constable Mills received both Awards for her efforts following the successful investigation, charging and prosecution of multiple male domestic violence offenders. These offenders had lengthy and serious histories of domestic violence. Senior Constable Mills worked tirelessly to review and transcribe hundreds of phone calls to identify breaches of existing apprehended violence orders. Senior Constable Mills also worked closely with the victims to provide invaluable support. Thanks to the

hard work, dedication and professionalism of Senior Constable Mills, these cases led to the successful prosecution of 126 charges for one offender and the prosecution of 43 Domestic Violence offences for another offender. The work of Senior Constable Mills has set an example for the NSW Police Force to revise phone call procedures within Correctional Service Centres. Thank you to Senior Constable Mills for your outstanding service and dedication to our community

3BRIDGES YOUTHZONE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I congratulate the 3Bridges YouthZone team on receiving an important funding investment from the NSW Government. Anyone who has visited the 3Bridges YouthZone in Hurstville would know the excitement surrounding their beloved pool tables. Thanks to a discretionary grant from former Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, 3Bridges has received much needed funding to re-surface and repair one of these pool tables. These pool tables are used for tournaments between staff and visitors as well as friendly game play. It was an honour to head over to the YouthZone centre to meet with the team to announce the funding. I want to thank Chief Executive Officer, Raj Nair, Vanessa Gauci and the entire team for their ongoing commitment to our local youth and for creating an inclusive and inviting space for them to gather. The 3Bridges organisation and their YouthZone staff are fantastic advocates for supporting the health and wellbeing of youth from across the St George area. I look forward to seeing the re-surfaced pool table being enjoyed by members for many years to come.

100 YEARS OF INSULIN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I acknowledge that last year marked the centenary since the discovery of insulin, a medical breakthrough that has saved millions of lives and remains the central treatment for diabetes. More than 450,000 people in NSW currently live with diabetes. This includes 43,000 people who need insulin to live with an additional 6,000 requiring insulin each and every year to maintain their health and wellbeing. The NSW Government has already addressed diabetes as a state-wide priority, launching multiple programs that raise awareness whilst also addressing the underlying health and medical issues. These programs include the Leading Better Value Care initiative that is improving the overall care, patient experience and outcomes for those living with diabetes. I want to thank Diabetes NSW & ACT and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation for their role in raising this important issue within local communities. There is always more work to be done and I will continue to promote the need for further medical innovations and person centred care programs that will improve the lives of those living with diabetes.

BOB LEE'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I acknowledge and congratulate a local hero, Mr Bob Lee, who recently celebrated his 100th birthday last year. Surrounded by family and friends, Bob celebrated his 100th birthday in style at the Georges River Sailing Club. Speaker, it was a real privilege to attend this celebration and present Bob with a certificate and say a few words in his honour. At 100 years of age, Bob is still a hugely active member of the St George Community, in everything from local rotaries to the Oatley Seniors group and everything in between. Bob's wealth of knowledge and wisdom makes him a most treasured individual in our local community. On this momentous occasion, Bob and his family and friends had the chance to reflect on a lifetime of experiences and achievements. I wish Bob and his extended family all the best for this year, may it be a year of health and happiness.

MR AND MRS CODY'S 65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Kevin and Mrs Maureen Cody of Kirrawee on their 65th Wedding Anniversary which was celebrated on 27th April 2022. 65 years of marriage is a wonderful milestone and I hope they enjoyed their blue sapphire anniversary. I wish them many more years of fun, enjoyment, happiness and good health.

VOLUNTEERS IN PITTWATER

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)—Today I acknowledge the incredible contribution of volunteers in Pittwater. This week is National Volunteer Week – but really, every week in Pittwater is National Volunteer Week. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Pittwater community, with thousands of residents actively involved in groups large and small, national, local and grass roots. And when called – whether fire or flood – they do not hesitate to drop everything to help those in need. Indeed, the diverse range of organisations in Pittwater demonstrates the experience, expertise, and eagerness that volunteers bring in nurturing our civil society. Rural Fire Service, surf life savers, State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue, Meals on Wheels, Lifeline, Rotary, Zonta, Probus, Red Cross, Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, WIRES, Sydney Wildlife Rescue, Women's Resilience Centre, Avalon Youth Hub, OneEighty, Girl Guides, Scouts, Bushcare, Men's Sheds, blood donors, Scripture teachers, school canteens, MWP

Care, Surfrider, clean-up crews, church groups, foodbanks, computer pals, Act of Kindness, Boomerang Bags, sports clubs, orchestras, locals families billeting refugees fleeing warzones like Ukraine. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Volunteers prove that a candle loses nothing of its light when lighting another. Thank you to all of Pittwater's volunteers.

GYMEA JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate GyMEA Junior Rugby League Club on celebrating its 60th anniversary. The club, known as the Gorillas, has been a key part of the Sutherland Shire rugby league community since its founding year in 1962. The GyMEA "Gorillas" have grown to be one of the largest rugby league clubs in the Shire, with more than 600 players and 49 teams. I acknowledge all of the club's volunteers who contribute so much through arranging the gear, grounds, the canteen, barbeques and all of the jobs that get done to make sure the players enjoy the game. I particularly acknowledge the club's hardworking committee led by President Shaun Dooley, Vice Presidents Chris Allen and Jeff Payn, Secretary Mark Hartley, Assistant Secretary Tony Ash and Treasurer Steve Coffey. I wish all of the players an enjoyable and successful season.

ELIZABETH PAVETT - CRONULLA SEAGULLS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—In National Volunteer Week, I recognise Elizabeth Pavett for her dedicated work in leadership and volunteer positions at the Cronulla Seagulls Football Club over the last 25 years. Elizabeth has been, among other things, a Cronulla Seagulls team manager since 1997; club assistant treasurer 2006 – 2008; club treasurer since 2009; uniforms officer since 2011; and canteen manager this year. In this time, Elizabeth has volunteered in a variety of positions and worked tirelessly to increase local football participation. Each Saturday and Sunday, Elizabeth can be found at Woolooware Oval from morning until close, making sure all Match sheets are completed and referees are looked after. Elizabeth has admirable enthusiasm and commitment to her work and always goes beyond what is expected of a volunteer at a community club. I commend Elizabeth for the impact her work has had at the Cronulla Seagulls Football Club and for the wider Shire football community.

SOPHIA HAYDEN

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I want to commend Trangie's Sophia Hayden for completing her HSC under particularly challenging circumstances. When Sophia wasn't juggling learning from home and the turmoil of living through a global pandemic, she juggled her HSC studies with THREE jobs. All of that ON TOP of a commute that involved SIX buses to get to and from Dubbo College Senior campus. Despite having virtually no time outside of school hours for her study, Sophia completed her HSC and is now studying international politics and philosophy at the University of Melbourne. She's also been awarded one of the university's Hansen Scholarships, which are given to "talented individuals who may struggle financially to access a top-quality education". Sophia has said she's extremely humbled and grateful, not only for the financial support the scholarship provides, but also the academic and social support. Sophia hasn't quite decided what she wants to do post-university just yet. But Sophie, with your work ethic and determination, I'm sure you'll succeed at whatever you put your mind to!

HAYDEN HAWKER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I want to congratulate an incredibly keen, hard-working young man in my electorate: Hayden Hawker. The 12-year-old recently took out the Level 2 Open all-round title at the State Championships! The all-round competition involves 5 apparatus: the floor, pommel, rings, vault, parallel bars and high bar. Hayden finished 1st on the floor, rings and high bar, 2nd on the parallel bars, 3rd on the pommel and 5th on the vault. He finished with an overall score of 57.098 out of 60 – the only country gymnast in the all-round top 5. It almost didn't happen! Sidelined by a wrist injury, PCYC gymnastics coach Trish Harland actually had to shut down the boys' program in 2021. But in February this year, Hayden approached her saying if he couldn't train with her, he'd stop doing gymnastics altogether. Trish couldn't let that happen, and enlisted an assistant to get Hayden training again. He trains 10 hours a week, with Trish describing him as "a very, very hard-working young man". Congratulations Hayden – and well done to your coaching team and family for their support. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours!

BURN'S FAMILY - DENILIKIN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise the Burn's family of Mayrung for their fundraising efforts at the 2022 World's Greatest Shave. Jo, Phil, Daniel and Mitchel Burn's all took part in the fundraising initiative, shaving their hair to raise funds and awareness for the Leukaemia Foundation. Jo was the first of the family to volunteer, setting a target of \$10,000. When she achieved this goal, Jo volunteered a

member of her family for each additional thousand dollars raised. With a total of \$16,260 being donated, Jo's husband and two sons eagerly participated, and joined Jo in the barber's chair. I would like to thank this family for their efforts in this years "World's Greatest Shave", and congratulate them for raising such a phenomenal sum of money.

JERVIS FAMILY - CONARGO

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to congratulate Beau, Jesse and Brooke Jervis for their incredible achievements at the Australian Whipcrackers and Plaiters Associations' Australian Championship. This Conargo based family have proved themselves to be masters of their craft, making it to the national titles following their success in the NSW state titles. Beau, who started whipcracking at just 3 years old, was recognised as the national champion of his age group. Jesse and Brooke also stood out from the crowd, with Jesse placing 3rd, and Brooke 4th in the under 16s age group. To be recognised on a national level is an outstanding achievement, and one that they should all be proud of. These exceptionally skilled siblings make our community proud, and I can't wait to see their future successes at the upcoming Victorian titles. Once again, congratulations.

A SPIDER'S TALE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School teacher Jesse James Muir who has become a best-selling children's book author. When Jesse, who teaches Year 2 at Blessed Sacrament, was unable to find a suitable book about kindness and compassion, he decided to write one himself. The result was A Spider's Tale which has earned the 30-year-old a writing deal with English publishers Austin Macauley and has received the most important reviews of all from his students. The story tells the tale of a young spider named Tom who is lonely and in need of a friend. Setting off on an adventure, he tries to befriend a family living on a farm and quickly learns that humans and animals don't always share the same quality of kindness or a desire for companionship. The Blessed Sacrament With work on his second book now underway, teaching will still remain his priority. Congratulations Jesse, we hope that your next book is as successful as A Spider's Tale and that the students enjoy at Blessed Sacrament enjoy reading another story written by their teacher.

FRIEDLANDER PLACE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—My local community always welcomes the news of increased open space and so the announcement of Friedlander Place opening in St Leonards Square was sure to be welcomed by all. I recently joined with councillors from Lane Cove Council to officially open this beautiful pocket park for the community to enjoy. This upgraded space features play and fitness equipment, a ping pong table, and seating to create a welcoming space for residents, visitors, and workers. What is most impressive is the custom climbing tower that has been designed to mimic the native leaf-curling spider. Friedlander Place has been named after a former Mayor of Lane Cove Council, Syd Friedlander who served on multiple council, community, and sporting committees, the Cumberland County Council, and the Local Government Association and was honoured by Lane Cove Council in 1985 with the naming of Friedlander Place. I acknowledge his daughter Judith, and sons Alan and Phillip who represented the Friedlander family at the opening. Syd received a Medal of the Order of Australia for nearly 30 years' service to local government and passed away in 2008. An advocate for the green belt around Sydney, his vision remains just as crucial.

ALAN TONER ECOWALKS TOURS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—My local community is blessed to live in a beautiful part of Sydney, right on the shores of Sydney Harbour that is filled with incredible native flora and fauna as well as rich historical relics within Sydney Harbour National Park. Today I would like to recognise Alan Toner and EcoWalks Tours. Alan is an accredited NSW Parks Eco Pass tour guide who specialises in providing informative commentary on the various natural and historical elements of Sydney Harbour National Park. Many in my local community will know Alan who is also the President of the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch and a former geography teacher at Mosman High School. Alan has a professional background in adventure tourism on Sydney Harbour as a commercial boat driver and scuba instructor. He also has an extensive knowledge of the local ecology, Borogegal People, history of Mosman as well Sydney's military history. I would encourage anyone who is thinking about going for a walk in nature or just wants to simply learn more about Sydney's history to join Alan on an EcoWalk Tour of Sydney Harbour National Park.

OCEANE CAMPBELL

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Oceane Campbell, who is Newcastle's 2022 Local Woman of the Year. Oceane is a midwife, trauma survivor, and a mental health and LGBTIQ+ advocate who worked on the frontline of the pandemic supporting women through childbirth. Through her health care role she was a driver of an initiative in the Hunter New England LHD to improve maternity care for LGBTIQ+ people, educating and training other health on how to ensure safe access for members of that community. In 2017

Oceane was recognised by the University of Newcastle for her role in developing a virtual reality application which teaches midwifery students how to resuscitate a newborn. Oceane is also a strong advocate for removing stigma around mental health, last year publishing a double memoir with her mother that confronts the intergenerational trauma that placed a chasm in their relationship, as well as Oceane's sexual assault and suicide attempt. Oceane's courage and compassion is inspiring, and she is making a huge difference to the wellbeing of others.

VILMA HUNTER

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Vilma Hunter loves volunteering so much that she will do anything, anywhere, at any time. For over 35 years she gave time each week to local hospitals, working in gift shops, organising fundraisers, preparing meals, washing clothes, delivering newspapers and operating the trolley service. While it sounds like those duties would have kept Vilma very busy, she still found time to assist at Surfest, the Royal Easter Show, New Year's Eve celebrations, the 2000 Olympics and Paralympics, the Mission to Seafarers, for the Red Shield Appeal and Daffodil Day. As well as being a donor to organisations including the Stroke Foundation and the Starlight Children's Foundation, Vilma is a fantastic fundraiser – one of her great achievements was selling \$20,000 of tickets for the Art Union in their 1993 raffle. On top of all of that, Vilma has also donated over 40 litres of blood which no doubt will have been put to very good use. Thank you for all your contributions, Vilma. They are very appreciated.

JANELLE VEALE – ROSENEATH AGED CARE CENTRE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Janelle Veale, Facility Services Manager at the Roseneath Aged Care Centre for her outstanding contribution, initiative, and dedication to delivering aged care services. Ms Veale has worked in the aged care sector for nearly two decades, bringing a capacity for leadership and empathy that has promoted excellence in staff morale and service centred focus on residents. Janelle recently was awarded the 2021 NSW/ACT LASA (Leading Age Services Australia) Excellence in Aged Care Services for modelling best practice, integrity, quality care and behaviour. Janelle's staff will include the sense of joy and laughter she brings to Roseneath, and her residents will add the time she spends with them. I congratulate Janelle on the recognition she has earned with the 2021 NSW/ACT LASA Excellence in Aged Care Services Award. I commend Janelle for her commitment to working in aged care and her genuine devotion to Australians in regional areas.

ATTRACT CONNECT STAY – GLEN INNES INC

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise office bearers for the Glen Innes Attract Connect Stay program, Ms Catherine Donald, Ms Sheryn Nourse, Mr Shageer Mohammed and Ms Kate Dance for taking the responsibility to trial the pilot project. This initiative arose from a local community meeting held in 2021 at which healthcare workforce shortages was identified as the issue of highest concern. Attract Connect Stay works through the enthusiasm, knowledge and practical skills of residents, community groups and local organisations to identify and attract out of area healthcare professionals to relocate and then to support them and their families to encourage them to stay. The Glen Innes team will be supported by advisor Cath Cosgrave and her team from the rural health workforce as well as partner organisations NSW Rural Doctors Network, NSW Regional Health Partners and New England Institute Healthcare Research, UNE and various rural health services. I congratulate the Glen Innes community on being selected to trial this important initiative. I commend Catherine, Sheryn, Shageer, and Kate for their involvement in developing a work plan to take the project forward.

MAL PETERS – ADVOCATE'S HONORARY DOCTORATE AWARD

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Mal Peters OAM for his career of service to rural and regional Australia earning him the honorary award of Doctor at the recent University of Southern Queensland summer graduation ceremony. Since the purchase of a large cattle and sheep property in the early 1990s Mal was incensed by the wool scheme which set him on a path of rural and regional advocacy. Mal joined the NSW Farmers Association where he served as Vice-President and President, a founding Board member of the Australian Farm Institute Board and Chair of Regional Development Australia Northern Inland, Director of the National Farmers Federation, Australian Agricultural Health and Safety, served on the CB Alexander Foundation and the Primary Industry Training Board, including his tenure as Councillor and Mayor of Inverell Shire Council. I congratulate Mal on his achievements over the years and what he has been able to communicate through the work of the Regional Australia Institute, backing it up with science rather than emotional debates. I commend Mal for receiving such a prestigious and very deserving award and his dedication and service to rural and regional Australia.

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY – BIRDON & SUNNY'S SKIPS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I acknowledge two incredible businesses that consistently deliver outstanding services for our community through innovation and sustainability who were deservedly recognised at the 2021 Coastline Credit Union Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards. Jamie Bruce, Chief Executive Officer for Birdon was presented with the Excellence in Innovation and the Excellence in Work Health and Safety Awards at the gala event on Friday night. This accolade reflects the expertise of a highly skilled team which strives to provide a safe workplace environment through a strong commitment to WH&S policy and procedures. Innovation is the driving force behind Birdon's success through a comprehensive Integrated Management System which supports all aspects of shipbuilding and repairs, engineering and project management, dredging and shipping, disposals and marine construction. Accepting the Excellence in Sustainability award was proud owner Kyle "Sunny" Whittaker of Sunny's Skips in Port Macquarie for his exceptional work in recycling all different types of waste material for his clients. Sunny and his team separate all garbage collections by hand to ensure every piece of waste that can be recycled is recycled limiting what goes into landline. Congratulations to our leaders in Innovation and Sustainability.

BUSINESS AWARDS OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE & OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate employment and business leaders across our community who were recognised at the 2021 Coastline Credit Union Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards. A Gala Dinner following a period of cancellations and delays celebrated the communities' business leaders who mould and shape our region. Congratulations to Anthony D' Angelo from Eastern Air Services who was presented with the Outstanding Employee award for his work in the aviation sector. Anthony has shown real leadership and dedication in his role, always meticulously undertaking his responsibilities at Eastern Air Services. Taking out the Outstanding Young Business Leader Award was Guy Terkelsen from Hastings Physio and Health. Guy has a wealth of knowledge representing Port Macquarie in State and Country competitive sports. His love and passion for supporting people with sport-related injuries has earned him this amazing accolade. David Ross from Direction Accounting and Business Coaching was named the Outstanding Business Leader recognising his tireless efforts leading a team of Chartered Accountants applying his years of experience and a track record of mentoring the next generation. Congratulations!

2021 COASTLINE CREDIT UNION GREATER PORT MACQUARIE BUSINESS AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I acknowledge the 2021 Coastline Credit Union Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards recipients celebrated for their leadership, professionalism, innovation and community spirit after a challenging period following the March 2021 floods and the ongoing impacts of COVID. The Gala Dinner recognised outstanding achievements and milestones by our small business owners and organisations that contribute significantly to employment and the local economy. I congratulate all of the Award recipients and commend them for their contribution: Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges, Leicht's Tyre & Auto, The Posify Group, Liberty Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Services, TV Magic Mid North Coast, Arthouse Industries, Berry Financial Services, The Other Chef Fine Foods, VANITY Medi Spa, Panthers Port Macquarie, SMP Fabrication Pty Ltd, Coast Eco Cleaning, Dare 2 Care, Integer IT Pty Ltd, Port Property Professionals, Round & Round Coffee, Mid Coast Uniform Solutions, Harvey Norman Computers, Billabong Zoo Koala & Wildlife Park, Chop 'n Chill, Jo Hollis - All Disability Plan Management and Rampage Marine and Fabrication. I extend my thanks to each and every one of you and your staff for your efforts that strengthen our region for the benefit of all.

TANYA PEARSON ACADEMY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I commend the Tanya Pearson Academy in St Leonards in my electorate for its wonderful and enduring contribution to dance education. The Academy was founded in 1972 by the late Tanya Pearson OAM, who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for her significant contribution to the Arts in Australia. I had the special privilege of attending the Academy's upon its 50th anniversary recently with my wife and daughter, who is a little ballerina herself. I witnessed first-hand the Academy's motto "Believe - Achieve - Succeed" through a wonderful technical and creative performance from students. It is clear they seek and pursue excellence in dance. Guided by the expert hands of Creative Director Xanthe Geeves, Executive Director Gregor Thieler and Artistic Director Lucinda Dunn OAM and Slava Managing Director Tutukin, the team nurture a culture of inclusion, distinction and excellence in its students. I wish the academy, its staff and students well in all their endeavours.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—On 24 April, I had the honour and privilege of participating in the Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection, Chatswood. 107 years ago, nearly one and a half million innocent lives were tragically and violently lost, and with them the two thousand year old Armenian civilisation was irrevocably shattered. Recognition of the Armenian Genocide has taken a long time for acknowledgement in Australia as an horrific moment in history. The Armenian community continues sadly to not be delivered the justice it sorely needs. I'm proud to stand in solidarity with the Armenian community, and - with my esteemed colleagues in the NSW Parliament - I will continue to advocate for the proper acknowledgement of the crimes committed against the Armenian people. I honour their memories and pledge to never give up on the cause for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

NRL -TED LARKIN ORATION DINNER 2022

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I had the pleasure of attending the Ted Larkin Oration Dinner, hosted by RSL President Ray James and NRL CEO Andrew Abdo, to honour Edward 'Teddy' Larkin and all those in the League who served in the Australian Defence Force. Teddy's legacy is woven into Willoughby's history and that of our nation. From humble beginnings, he debuted for the Wallabies in 1903. He then took on the administration of the then-struggling NSW Rugby League and with deft steering changed its fortunes. Ted Larkin came to public office as the Member for Willoughby in 1913, but his political career was halted abruptly as the outbreak of World War I saw Ted Larkin on the beach of Anzac Cove. Mortally wounded, he bravely refused medical care, saying "There's plenty worse than me out there." Ted Larkin gave selflessly to his community through his work, on the sporting and on the battle field and I commend the NRL for this special annual event in his name.

WHITNEY ROUSHAM

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Local Glenmore Park resident Whitney Rousham will take to the skies to compete in his second Outback Air Race. Taking place in August, the competition aims to raise much needed funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. For Whitney, flying is in his blood. His father Thomas was a member of the Royal Australian Air Force, flying missions in WW2 including in the Battle of Britain, Malta, Italy and North Africa. Whitney took up flying to seek thrill and adventure considering that it might be safer than a motorcycle or driving fast cars. I want to wish Whitney the very best in the upcoming competition and thank him for participating to help the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

LILLIE RICKARD

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Aurora Education Foundation is a non-profit Indigenous organisation and in partnership with Australian National University and the Paul Ramsay, Aurora Education Foundation has launched its new initiative, RISE, working to improve student outcomes among Indigenous students in their education journey. Lillie Rickard, a Year 11 student from Caroline Chisolm has been involved in Aurora's programs since Year 8. Lillie has said that being a part of the initiative has made her more aware of culture because she wasn't taught it by family because her family didn't even know that they were of Aboriginal heritage until Lillie was in Year 6. Since being a part of the initiative Lillie has said that it has boosted her motivation levels to improve her own learning outcomes. I would like to recognise Lillie and the hard work she is putting into her education. Education is fundamental to a person's success and I welcome the RISE initiative to help even more students like Lillie.

ICPA IFTAR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—The Islamic holy month of Ramadan has just concluded. It is a time in which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. It is a month of spiritual reflection, empathy with the less fortunate and togetherness, as families, friends and the community gather to break their fast, known as iftar. I had the pleasure of attending several iftars that celebrated our unity as a community as well as our shared humanity. In particular I would like to acknowledge the Islamic Charity Projects Association [ICPA] for hosting me at their iftar on 8 April. The food was amazing, the sweets divine and the company even better. The ICPA is a long established community body, which endeavours to establish good acts to bring communities together. I thank Mohamad Mehio, President of the ICPA for the invitation and for another excellent community event. Regardless of a person's religious background, the coming together of people, rekindling old friendships and making new ones whilst breaking bread, is something that we can all appreciate. We are better as a society when we are together and when we respect and value our differences. Eid Mubarak.

ANZAC DAY 2022

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—As we do every year, on the 25th of April our entire nation came together to commemorate the sacrifice and accomplishments of our armed services throughout their history.

Obviously, this has been a commemoration that has been harder to observe over the last two years, with marches and dawn services being yet another victim of this Global Pandemic. However, in 2022, I was finally able to return to the ANZAC Day services within my Electorate of Castle Hill, and it was my great honour to be able to pay respect to all our servicemen and women, from the 2nd Boer war all the way through to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. These services included the Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch ANZAC Day Service, and the Kenthurst Service, the latter organized as always, by the great Kenthurst Rotary and Paul Rapp. ANZAC Day is an opportunity to recognise both those who died in conflict, as well as those who returned home with the plethora of psychological issues that war entails. I'd like to once again thank all our servicemen and women throughout our great history for their sacrifice and dedication to Australia. Lest We Forget.

WCC GOES PINK

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—The Wellington Correctional Centre turned pink recently, with staff and inmates joining forces to raise money for the McGrath Foundation! Over the past 6 months inmates have held a range of fundraising events, raising \$8000! Staff added another \$2000 from their Pink Day fundraiser alone! As if that wasn't impressive enough, Speaker, they wrapped up their fundraising efforts with a 1000km marathon! That's right – 1000km! The challenge was held over Easter with participants running 212 laps of the centre's sports field either on their own or part of a relay team. That's an average of less than 5km per participant but some – like Senior Assistant Superintendent Amy Hobbel – ran MORE THAN A MARATHON! All up the team at the Wellington Correctional Centre raised more than \$18,000 for the McGrath Foundation! That's an outstanding effort – well done everyone! I know that money will make a phenomenal difference for patients and their families during a difficult time.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:32 until
Thursday 19 May 2022 at 9:30.**