



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday 19 May 2022

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 19 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

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

The SPEAKER: I thank those members who joined me and the President this morning, along with Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Stephen Twigg, for another Thought Leadership Breakfast, which was very interesting. For members who did not have the opportunity to hear the insights from Stephen Twigg, he will be joining us for a morning tea in the Speaker's Garden this morning. That will commence at 10.30 a.m., with formal proceedings at 10.45 a.m. I hope some members can join us for that morning tea just outside the Chamber. In addition to being the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Stephen Twigg is also a former Minister in the UK. These days he is non-partisan, and he is here for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Parliamentary Academy, which the New South Wales Parliament is hosting next week.

[Notices of motions given.]

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2021-2022

Debate resumed from 12 May 2022.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (09:47): I know it is five minutes to midnight in commenting on this year's budget, but I am very pleased to contribute to this debate because the items in this year's budget show a continuing commitment by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition to various projects in the south-east and south regions. I will give a bit of a history lesson here, because the first theme I address this morning is the Princes Highway. Most members will know I have been here for a long time—since 2003. Before that the Labor Party was in government, and from 2003 to 2011 it was in government for another eight years. A lot of people are very fond of using the expression, "16 years where nothing happened". But despite the ongoing campaigns of councils and communities right across the South Coast, Kiama and Bega in particular, nothing did happen for 16 years.

Despite the fact that communities were holding rallies—they had a huge campaign called Fix It Now—despite petitions and despite calls to upgrade even the most dangerous sections of the Princes Highway, nothing happened. Despite continuing fatalities and injuries on the Princes Highway, nothing happened. That was very concerning, to say the least, to my colleagues the former member for Bega and the member for Kiama. As soon as we were elected in 2003 the former member for Bega and I started lobbying to do something about the Princes Highway because we could not continue to stand by and watch more accidents and fatalities occur, in particular on a then treacherous section of the highway from Wollongong to the Victorian border.

But it was not until 2011 that the communities of the South Coast got any glimmer of hope. A Liberal-Nationals Coalition was elected under the leadership of Barry O'Farrell. Even before it was elected, a major commitment was given. I remember standing with Barry O'Farrell and Gareth Ward at Mount Pleasant. Mount Pleasant to Toolijooa was the first section of the highway that the Liberal-Nationals Government committed to. It was a highly dangerous section. The ingress and egress from Gerringong was dangerous. We needed to play catch-up on so many sections of the highway like it. That is what we have been doing: playing catch-up since 2011 on the Princes Highway. That first section was delivered and completed without much delay. It was a \$340 million project.

Since 2011 we have seen successive increases in the budget for the Princes Highway. Before that time I remember commenting in this place about the reduction in funding under Labor for the Princes Highway, despite the protests and campaigns. I do not think Labor knew how to fund some of those projects. It did not have the economic wherewithal to address any of them. We were elected and started working on and funding some of those projects to save lives. That was the most important aim we had as a government. The next section was South Nowra to Forest Road, a \$62 million project. It was a great project because it was quite a narrow section of road. Now it is completely upgraded and provides visitors and, obviously, residents alike with a very fine section

of highway. Again, we delivered that section quickly. Meanwhile, Labor in government was reducing the budget for the Princes Highway—if it had a budget at all.

Then we built the Berry bypass. My former colleague the member for Kiama advocated for this when he was elected in 2011, as we all had previously. The road to Berry was winding and dangerous. The Labor Government had talked and talked about it for 16 years. It even had some glossy brochures and an office in Berry where it asked for consultation. But when that was over, not one cent was committed for the Berry bypass. Anybody who has driven that section of the highway—I am sure many people in this House holiday on the South Coast—would know that the Berry bypass is one of the finest feats of engineering ever seen anywhere. It is not only a beautiful part of the world and the country but also a beautiful stretch of highway—if we could describe a section of highway as beautiful. But it really is. Residents and tourists alike marvelled at it when it was completed. It is so good. We are very proud of that section.

Consecutive budgets did not stop funding sections of the Princes Highway, with some currently underway. The Berry to Bomaderry section of the highway, again, is narrow, winding and prone to congestion at holiday times. A \$450 million project to update it is almost complete. It is just a marvel. I know residents—like I do sometimes—can get a bit frustrated because the speed limits have been reduced for obvious safety reasons whilst the road project progresses, but Berry to Bomaderry is a game changer for the Princes Highway and for visitors. I have argued in this place on many occasions that the kind of congestion we see at holiday times is a disincentive for tourists. They probably think, "We are not going to go to the South Coast. It is too hard. It is too busy. We are going to spend five hours in traffic when we should spend two hours in traffic. We want to get to our destination quickly." So Berry to Bomaderry is going to be a game changer.

Another major project is the \$630 million Albion Park Rail bypass. Again, Labor did nothing about this project. It talked and talked about it but never committed one cent of funding. In fact, after we were elected, Labor did not even support the project. As my former colleague the member for Kiama said, it actually opposed the project. The Government found ways to fund those sections of the highway. Labor opposed them. Local Labor members did not even acknowledge that the projects were a success. I recall Opposition members saying, "You have done nothing on the Princes Highway." I have heard them say that. We know they are prone to misleading the House at times. Clearly they have not even left their own homes let alone their own driveways to travel to the South Coast and see what the Government has achieved. It is remarkable.

The Burrill Lake Bridge was of great concern for decades. It was past its use-by date and prone to flooding because it had causeways on either side. It meant that the lake was prone to siltation. There was low-level flooding around the residences at Burrill Lake. It was dreadful. We started that project five years ahead of when we might otherwise have. I give credit to the Hon. Duncan Gay, who advocated for that project. I spoke to him many times about it. The \$58 million Burrill Lake Bridge project was another game changer on the Princes Highway because we did not just replace the bridge; we upgraded the associated intersections as well. The bridge was lifted and the causeways were removed. Guess what? The water is now clean, pure and beautiful. It is a beautiful place to visit, as it always has been despite its problems. Before we were elected Labor ignored it, in spite of our protests and pleas to have something done. The work has now been completed.

I was involved in the Termeil Creek Bridge project as a local councillor and then as a member of this place whilst Labor was in government. It was one of the most treacherous sections of the Princes Highway south of Ulladulla. Again, we completed a \$21 million upgrade of the bridge, which is another game changer for residents and visitors who travel the section of the highway south of Ulladulla. The Jervis Bay Road intersection is, again, a treacherous intersection. Labor tinkered around the edges—I will give it some credit for that. It tried to improve that intersection but it made not one scrap of difference. We put real money into it and have completed the planning now. We are about to start on the Jervis Bay Road intersection, which is the way tourists access the beautiful areas of Jervis Bay, Huskisson and Vincentia. It was causing enormous traffic delays on the Princes Highway. Something serious had to be done, not Labor's tinkering around the edges that managed to achieve nothing. We have worked very closely with the community and there is a \$120 million commitment for the Jervis Bay Road intersection.

I was pleased to see this year's budget continuing with another project. Under our Government, projects are continuing year after year and budget after budget. The next one is the southbound Nowra Bridge, which is a whipple bridge and one of the oldest in the State, with a certain amount of heritage value. It cost the Government and the previous Labor Government a lot of money—more than \$3 million a year—just to maintain. It was accident and crash prone because of its narrowness. People were crashing into the sides of the bridge and crashing into each other. Two lanes were just not fit for purpose anymore. We started to think about and plan for replacing the Nowra Bridge. The \$348 million project—\$148,000 in this budget—will again be an absolute game changer. We have almost finished the last span of the bridge across the Shoalhaven River. To complete the project, much more work is required. All the associated intersections must have major upgrades, including those of Bolong

Road, Illaroo Road and Bridge Road. All those have been funded, and the project is well underway. It will be an absolute marvel when it is complete.

It is good to see that the Morrison Government has committed to a Nowra bypass. It is a project for the future. I have said all along that, once we upgrade Nowra Bridge, we need to think about planning the Nowra bypass. Those who travel south do not necessarily want to come into Nowra. The Morrison Government has committed \$40 million for the planning of the Nowra bypass. Those things take a long time, so it is better to start the planning now rather than waiting a couple of years until the new Nowra bridge and its associated intersections are complete.

We do not stop there. We are continuing to plan for projects further south on the Princes Highway. In this year's budget there is at least \$78 million that I can identify allocated for planning for Jervis Bay Road to Sussex Inlet Road. That work is underway. We are consulting with property owners. Of course, those projects will be undertaken by this Government. If we are not re-elected in March next year and the Labor Party is elected to government, you can bet your bottom dollar that nothing will be done on the highway, as was the case during the 16 years that the Labor Party was in government, because Labor members do not even know the highway exists. I think they have not been out of their driveways to travel south.

Dr Geoff Lee: Harsh but fair.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Harsh but fair. Some of them travel down there for their holidays and enjoy our beautiful part of the world, but they must feel guilty when they travel that section of the highway and know they did nothing for 16 years. We started when we were elected, in 2011. Why do those opposite treat the people of the South Coast with contempt? I do not know. I have no answers for that. I am sure there are good people in the Labor Party, but they treated us with contempt. They ignored the communities and ignored the fatalities. I knew many of those people. It was tragic, and also personal for me at times.

The amounts in the budget do not include the cost of all the major safety upgrades we have completed along the highway since we were elected, such as centre line markings, centre wire rope barriers, the widening of shoulders and improving intersections to those roads that meet the highway in many locations. We have done an enormous amount of work on the highway, and the money in this year's budget will continue that work. We are not stopping, and I hope that the Labor Party does not stop if it is elected. God save us if it is elected. It just cannot happen.

I turn now to the Milton-Ulladulla bypass. I have spoken about the bypass in this place many times. I think that it was gazetted 30 years ago, under a Labor government, with promises to do something about it. But nothing ever happened. Bypass planning policy is very complex, but we are getting on with the planning. The original route gazetted, I think in 1997 when I was on council, has proved to be not fit for purpose. The towns of Burrill Lake and Dolphin Point, further south, have grown enormously. The current plan looks to bring the bypass to north of Burrill Lake, which will just create more congestion. I have met many community groups and attended many community rallies. We had a huge one in Burrill Lake. Andrew Constance also met with the community, and we have now a Federal Government commitment. The commitments total \$940 million for the Milton-Ulladulla bypass.

Sadly, in many ways this project has divided my community. I have also spoken about that in this place. The people of Milton and Ulladulla want to start on the bypass now—they have had enough congestion and traffic through their beautiful towns—whereas people in Burrill Lake want us to pause and look at alternatives for going further to the west. If Andrew Constance is elected, we will continue to advocate for a better route. That effort is underway under the Hon. Sam Farraway, who has worked closely with us as well. This bypass project is the biggest single road project in the history of the South Coast. There you have a history lesson about the Princes Highway. I could speak about this for another two hours, depending on how much time I am allotted. I could talk about it and the difference it has made to people's lives, but I will not because I want to get on to some other projects. I know people will be relieved about that.

Dr Geoff Lee: No, no.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: No? I will now talk about the Shoalhaven hospital. In many respects, the Shoalhaven hospital is one of our older hospitals, which has been upgraded—by us, may I say—over many years. I think the Labor Party tinkered around the edges of doing something with the emergency department. I was on council at the time. The council said, "Well, if you're going to do something, Labor Government, you need to actually build a car park because we have got growing numbers in the Shoalhaven hospital. You need to do what you are legally bound to do, which is to increase the number of car parking spaces." I know what that Labor Government said, because I was present at those meetings. It said, "You get either a hospital or a car park. Which

one do you want?" It just bulldozed its way through, tinkered around the edges and did not build a car park. That is what the Labor Party does—nothing.

Mr Clayton Barr: So you chose the hospital.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: There should not have been a choice. The member for Cessnock is objecting to the fact that I think we should have done both. The community felt that we should have done both. What did we do in government? We built a multistorey car park. What else have we done for the Shoalhaven hospital? We have upgraded Medical Ward A, the emergency department. We built a brilliant subacute mental health facility. We upgraded the paediatric ward. And there is a car park worth \$10 million. What are we doing as a government? Not nothing, like the Labor Government. We are completely redeveloping the Shoalhaven hospital. It is a \$438 million upgrade, with \$12 million in this budget to advance the project. The master planning is just about finished. We must acquire part of the Nowra park, and I have been involved in those discussions with the council and NSW Health. We must also relocate an onsite preschool. It is quite a complicated process, but it is going to be brilliant. [*Extension of time*]

I am sorry that the member for Cessnock objects to hearing about the great things that are happening on the South Coast. One day he might want to retire down there and live by one of the beautiful beaches on the South Coast and enjoy the highway and hospital. One day he might be in that hospital and know what we have done. We have already done the list of things I talked about. We will increase surgical capacity at the Shoalhaven hospital with this redevelopment, have more acute medical and aged-care beds, and more operating theatres and expanded elective surgery. We will have increased capacity in the emergency department and the intensive care unit. We need, and will get, expanded mental health services and expanded subacute care, including rehabilitation and palliative care, expansion of the outpatient and ambulatory care, and enhanced medical imaging and nuclear medicine capacity.

It is fine for Opposition members to come into this place and every single day criticise what this Government has done and is doing. But I think we can all see, if we look at the budget, what has been done just in health and just in road infrastructure and bridges. The other subject I turn my attention to in the very limited time I have remaining is Budawang School. Budawang School is a precious school in my electorate. I have been there many times. It has some of the most precious children and teachers in Ulladulla. They are special kids with special needs. It started with a very few students way back in the day when I was on council, and the numbers grew and grew. It was originally a converted home. It was then expanded with demountables, unfortunately, but they were very constrained on site. Budawang School needs special facilities for special kids. So I am delighted to see that \$13 million has been allocated in this year's budget to relocate Budawang School to a wonderful facility in Milton.

They will have a swimming pool and all the facilities that those kids deserve, and that their teachers and parents deserve. Either this week or next week we will be turning the first sod for that project and getting on with it—no talking or fussing about it. We are getting on with it. Those children will enjoy the beautiful views of Milton. There were many who wanted to convert the site where we are building to home units and houses, and to develop the site, but we fought off the developers, as I have done many times in my electorate, and we are now going to have a beautiful school.

We also have a commitment to build a new school, South Nowra school. Again, I pointed out to the then Minister for Education, the Hon. Rob Stokes, that we needed a new school at South Nowra because of the growth in the area, the growth in the region and the growth of Worrigeer, East Nowra and South Nowra. So we have an ongoing commitment for a new primary school for \$5 million at this stage. We are getting on with that project. I have worked with the Department of Education to find a suitable site. That has been chosen. The community has been waiting for this new school, and it will be delivered.

The beauty of the South Coast and the need to allow people to appreciate some of that beauty cannot be ignored. Some of our walks are the most beautiful in the world, and anybody who knows the area of Murramarang will know what I am talking about. So I was delighted about the allocation of \$2.8 million for the Murramarang South Coast Walk last year. This will allow visitors and residents to enjoy the South Coast and really appreciate it for what it is—the most beautiful place in this State. We have also added to that money for walking and cycling pathways, and for the ongoing need to upgrade our boat ramps and boating facilities. In every budget there have been upgrades to various boat ramps throughout the South Coast—too many to name—but in particular I am happy to talk about the Lake Conjola boat ramp, worth \$253,000. That is because many people would remember that one of the towns most significantly impacted by the bushfires in 2019-20 was Conjola, and Conjola Park in particular. Delivering funds for Conjola will perhaps make life a little bit easier for its residents.

It is still not easy for many residents. Even though many of them may have rebuilt, they still live with those dreadful fears. I live with those dreadful fears because I know so many people in Conjola. We could not even

contact our friends at the time because communications were down. It was beyond belief to understand how the fire tornado came from behind Milton, wiped out the former mayor's beautiful heritage home, went down Little Forest Road, wiped out homes there, came behind Milton and then, in its incredibly fearful state, went straight down Lake Conjola Road and wiped out a village that you would never think would be impacted by a fire—and that was Conjola Park.

When I got to Conjola Park, I cried because the houses of the people I knew and of the people I had spoken to since that time were gone. Of course, initially we could not drive there because the highway was closed and we did not want to get in the way of what people were doing. But when we could drive there, one of the first people to go was Premier Berejiklian. We visited those who were counselling and assisting people in Conjola Park. I thank all of those people who volunteered and worked so hard in the aftermath of that bushfire. The upgrade of a boat ramp might not sound so significant to members on the other side, or people in the House, but it is significant for the people of Lake Conjola to start to lift their town and for them to have funding for the infrastructure that they really want.

Turning to a different subject, through Restart NSW we are going to get upgrades to the Albatross Aviation Technology Park of nearly \$5 million. That is significant because Albatross Aviation Technology Park houses many businesses associated with aviation. In past budgets we have funded the necessary upgrades of infrastructure—electricity, water et cetera. This funding continues that faith in Albatross Aviation Technology Park, something that did not exist when I was on council. Shoalhaven City Council advocated to have the tech park situated where it is now, and it has grown and grown. We are very proud of Albatross Aviation Technology Park, and to see that in the budget was brilliant.

I talked before about the Murramarang South Coast Walk. There is a further \$3 million for the five villages walk. Sorry I stepped around. Once I start to talk about Conjola Park, I get confused. That is a lot of money to upgrade beautiful walks.

Dr Geoff Lee: Great member.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Well, this is a great Government. Indeed, from what I have said for nearly half an hour now, what we have done since 2011 has been remarkable. There are other items in the budget—too many to talk about. But I acknowledge quite a few people who have advocated for upgrades to various things that I have talked about. Going back to the Princes Highway, one is Gareth Ward, my former colleague, who is terribly vocal about these things, as we all know. Despite the challenges he is facing, I am going to give him credit for what he has done. I think we all should. He and I have stood on the side of the highway and advocated for upgrades, and we have been successful. Also, the former member for Bega had his own challenges in the seat of Bega, and in the Eurobodalla area, advocating for upgrades of the highway, because from his electorate at South Durras to the Victorian border are some of the most treacherous sections of the highway. Having driven that section fairly recently—and I do not drive it a lot—I could see the result of the ongoing upgrade works being undertaken on those sections of the Princes Highway.

We are about saving lives—there is no doubt about that. That is our number one priority, as I have said before. But we are also about making sure that visitors and residents travel safely, that they do not complain about the condition of the highway way as they used to, and that they can get from point A to point B despite the enormous number of tourists who visit our region. Now they can get from point A to point B safely, easily and more quickly than ever before. That is what they are remarking on. That is why on Saturday I think we will see Andrew Constance elected as the next member for Gilmore, because they know who has advocated for their area—who has fought the good fight and won. Again, we go back to the dark years of Labor where nothing happened. I am not trying to embellish the truth; it is the truth. I sat here for eight years and watched in Opposition as budget after budget was reduced from the meagre amount it might have been the year before to virtually nothing, because Labor did not have the economic ability to know what to do. Otherwise, they might have done something to save lives. But, clearly, they did not want to save lives. [*Time expired.*]

Bills

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE) BILL 2022

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from 12 May 2022.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (10:18): When there is such a fantastic private members' bill before the House, I can understand why members are all enthusiastic to hear more. My address in regard to this bill was interrupted, understandably, and I will be briefly going over what we discussed previously. To make it clear, the

Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Climate Change Response) Bill has a simple mechanism, and it seeks to achieve something straightforward but something that is, in fact, critical.

The object of the bill is to amend planning laws to (1) better integrate climate change considerations into planning decisions; (2) strengthen strategic land-use planning; (3) require climate impact statements for major projects; and (4) provide guidance for decision-makers on how to assess whether a project will have unacceptable climate impacts. These are all very important issues, which I will spend a few minutes discussing today. I understand that other members have bills they want to speak to today, so I will not take my full allocation of time. But I want to explain very carefully each of the schedules to the bill to demonstrate the mechanism it uses to engage an effective climate change response and to reform our planning laws to make sure that climate change is at the centre of what we do. This is just the planning component piece in the big climate change suite of policies that needs to be implemented.

Schedule 1 [1] amends the objects of the Act to include addressing climate change by ensuring that the development of land is done with the threat of climate change and its impacts in mind. Quite simply, this is a requirement that when planning and assessment is undertaken there is some consideration of climate change. I read to the House from schedule 1 [1] last week, so I will not go through it again. Schedule 1 [2] inserts new definitions relating to climate change into the Act. The new definitions are terms that are commonplace. I will briefly go through some of them:

climate change means a change of climate that—

- (a) is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity, and
- (b) alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and
- (c) is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

climate change guidelines means guidelines published—

- (a) by the Minister under section 1.9, or
- (b) by the Independent Planning and Climate Change Advisory Group.

I will explain what is meant by the Independent Planning and Climate Change Advisory Group shortly. New definitions for "climate change response principles", "direct greenhouse gas emissions" and "green and blue infrastructure" are introduced. People raised the issue of "green and blue infrastructure" during the consultation stage. The new definition provides:

green and blue infrastructure means the following sustainable infrastructure—

- (a) urban tree canopy cover,
- (b) bushland,
- (c) parks,
- (d) waterways,
- (e) other similar infrastructure.

This is critical public infrastructure, but it is nature—our green vegetation areas and our blue waterways. In drafting the bill, we engaged in a lot of discussion about the detail of the new definitions, because it is important that when policymakers and legislators are creating these laws these definitions are absolutely clear and intelligible to the public as well. Schedule 1 [3] sets out, very clearly, the climate change response principles: Those principles are absolutely critical—they set out the philosophical underpinning for the legislation. The climate change response principles are that:

- (a) climate change can and should be mitigated, including by—
 - (i) reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with development, and
 - (ii) meeting relevant State and Commonwealth emissions reduction targets, and
 - (iii) rapidly phasing out fossil fuel production and use in accordance with relevant recommendations of the United Nations, and
- (b) some climate change has either already occurred or cannot be prevented, and this unavoidable climate change must be planned for and adapted to in accordance with relevant laws ...

The principles include facilitating the voluntary retreat from inhabited areas that are subject to increased natural disaster risk because of climate change; building green and blue infrastructure, and improving construction standards to reduce or adapt to extreme heat; creating biodiversity corridors to facilitate the migration of animal species affected by climate change; and providing and protecting local habitats for animal species affected by

climate change, and facilitating the animals' migration to the habitats. The principles also require that planning decisions must facilitate, to the greatest extent practicable, the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

The recent floods in northern New South Wales have highlighted how important these planning and building provisions are. In an article published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* it was reported that one house had avoided any type of flood damage because its architect had recognised that climate change is an issue and that the home was likely to be impacted by extreme weather events, and so built the home to withstand them—in accordance with climate change response principles. The house was not affected by the floods. Obviously, those floods had a devastating impact on the region, but we can plan to mitigate the damage to our communities and to infrastructure if we recognise that climate change should be part of planning principles. The bill, in a sensible and measured way, seeks to do that.

Schedule 1 [4] clarifies that any development which would produce a material increase in greenhouse gas emissions cannot be declared to be an exempt development. This means that current planning instruments would not allow for an exempt development in a situation where the development has a greenhouse gas implication, meaning it would then have to go through a broader planning process. Schedule 1 [5] requires that any exercise of a function under the Act must be consistent with the climate change response principles; that the Minister for Planning must publish planning proposal assessment guidelines and standard conditions of consent; and that an independent advisory body is established to guide the Minister and planning authorities on climate change risks and response—that is, the Minister for Planning needs to take expert advice and, as a result of that advice, develop some assessment guidelines and standard conditions of consent around these matters.

In New South Wales we have gone in the opposite direction: When the new Minister for Planning took over from former planning Minister Stokes, the existing ministerial guidelines were abolished. If houses are to be habitable in the future—cool in summer and warm in winter, through passive means—and if we are to defend our communities and infrastructure from future extreme weather events, proper planning is required. We cannot just give in to the development industry and say, "Let's just produce the cheapest, quickest garbage we can, for the most profit." Climate change must be taken very seriously into account.

Schedule 1 [6] requires that a consent authority must consider the impacts of climate change and act consistently with the climate change response principles in granting consent for a development application. Again, the bill is clear and consistent—the principles provide for guidelines to be developed. The bill is flexible in terms of those guidelines. Clause 1.9 provides that for the purposes of guiding consent authorities in exercising their functions—that is, local councils and planning assessment panels—the Minister must publish within 12 months from the commencement of the section:

- (a) guidelines for the assessment of development applications,
- (b) standard conditions of consent to remedy aspects of proposed development that would be inconsistent with the climate change response principles ...

This gives the government the opportunity to develop the guidelines, rather than prescribing "These are the things you must say". Instead, the bill sets out the overriding principles for climate change response and requires the planning Minister, assisted by an expert panel, to develop guidelines consistent with those principles which would be useful for consent authorities to take into account when assessing development applications and dealing with the effects of climate change. Of course, it is then important to ensure that the consent authority considers the impacts of climate change.

Schedule 1 [7] allows a consent authority to modify a consent at any time in order to impose a standard climate change condition, and clarifies that a modification that would result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions is not of "minimal environmental impact". This section is a bit technical. It ensures that a consent authority may modify a consent under section 4.55, giving flexibility in the system to make appropriate consent modifications around climate change.

Schedule 1 [8] clarifies that a duty to consider an environmental impact includes a duty to consider a climate change impact. There is an existing duty to consider environmental impact. The Greens want that duty to explicitly include climate change impacts. We believe that is particularly important and relevant, especially considering the extreme weather conditions recently experienced in New South Wales. We need to be planning in rural and regional New South Wales, in particular—areas that will experience floods and drought, exacerbated by climate change—to ensure that the impacts of climate change are taken into account and that there is good quality public and private infrastructure in place to be able to deal with those impacts.

This legislation attempts to take steps in that direction. Schedule 1 [9] removes a limitation on appeals against decisions of the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] as consent authority after a public hearing by the commission. We still think there is opportunity for it to be pure rights in a limited sense. Organisations and

the public should have the opportunity to have at least some type of right of appeal about decisions of the IPC. We want to make sure that is implemented and included in the bill.

Schedule 1 [10] to [14] provide for appeals against determinations of applications for development consent by climate advocates, who are persons who are making submissions during the public exhibition of an application for development consent objecting to the grant of consent on the basis that it would be inconsistent with climate change response principles. That gives the opportunity for those people who are seeking to express concern about development to make arguments around climate change. At the moment, the appeal options are very limited. We want to include options about what one is able to make an appeal about. There are two small housekeeping issues. First, we specify that the Governor may make the regulations with respect to standardised assessment processes for determining whether granting consent to proposed developments would be consistent with the climate change response principles.

Secondly, for proposed high-impact development the Governor may also make regulations requiring the submission of a climate change impact statement. Schedule 1 [16] requires the Minister to recommend the Governor make regulations described in schedule 1 [15] on the recommendations of the Independent Planning and Climate Change Advisory Group, and make a regulation requiring that environmental impact assessments are prepared by registered environmental assessment practitioners. The provision also requires the Minister to review the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) within a year to ensure that they are consistent with climate change response principles. BASIX is critical, and upgrading it to make sure it is an instrument that has real impact is particularly critical.

I thank all the people at the Environmental Defenders Office whom I have already mentioned. I also thank my senior electorate officer, Ned Cutcher, who has worked tirelessly helping to prepare the bill. I acknowledge everyone who has offered their advice, including Emma Bacon and the team from Sweltering Cities, The Greens councillors Mila Kasby and Kym Chapple, The Greens former councillor John Fry, The Greens Climate Action Working Group Convenor Dr Dorothy Robinson and the Better Planning Network. The bill is a critical part of the climate change suite of measures that needs to be introduced. Our planning legislation is not fit for purpose when it comes to a range of issues, but particularly not climate change.

Planning laws do not contain a road map for how we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Government has a laudable target—albeit not as strong as we would like—but it is not included, referred to, embodied or expressed in our planning laws. We want to protect nature and the communities that are already at risk from the impacts of climate change. The bill will ensure that communities, planners, developers and decision-makers have the guidance they need to incorporate considerations of climate change into their decisions. It does it in a thoughtful, simple way with a clear mechanism. Ultimately, this will help our State manage climate risks and protect assets, lives, livelihoods and nature. The future of our towns, cities and our planet depends on it. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING LICENCES COMPENSATION) BILL 2022

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mrs Helen Dalton, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:33): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Water Management Amendment (Floodplain Harvesting Licences Compensation) Bill 2022. This vital bill seeks to protect Lower Darling and southern Basin communities, whilst also saving taxpayers billions of dollars. In February the New South Wales Government sneakily handed out 132 floodplain harvesting licences to an exclusive club of mostly wealthy, corporate northern Basin irrigators. The National Party has been giving these licences to their mates for free. But get this—the National Party has changed the law to ensure that these free licences will also have a monetary value for the northern Basin irrigators. This is one of the biggest transfers of wealth from the people of New South Wales to the private sector we have seen in the history of this State. It is the biggest heist since Ronald Biggs and the Great Train Robbery. My bill stops the modern-day Ronald Biggs, the National Party, dead in its tracks. It seeks to reverse the National Party's law change in 2013, which provided for compensation to be paid to water licence holders if the Government cancels a water licence.

Floodplain harvesting licences are worth approximately \$2 billion, according to the New South Wales Irrigators' Council. The Government is gifting these licences to northern Basin irrigators for free. Strangely, the Treasury has not reviewed the issuing of these licences. The New South Wales Government has failed to conduct a regulatory impact assessment. It has thrown New South Wales best practice regulation guidelines out the window. The New South Wales Government is gifting a number of these licences to foreign companies. However, the Foreign Investment Review Board is not going to review these purchases. There is no oversight at all. We know the New South Wales Government has allowed the Chinese Government to own 7,000 megalitres of water in the Gwydir Valley.

How many other foreign governments and foreign corporations is it allowing to plunder our most valuable, natural resource? We do not know because the Government voted against my bill for a water register. It voted three times to keep water ownership secret. Now we have secrecy around floodplain harvesting licences. It goes on. The southern Riverina irrigators are proceeding with legal action against the issuing of floodplain harvesting licences. Should they be successful, the New South Wales Government could be liable for compensation to floodplain licence holders. The taxpayers of New South Wales will foot the bill. The new law I introduce today will stop that. It will ensure that the northern Basin irrigators cannot get financial compensation for these floodplain harvesting licences. But this Government is expert at blocking, stonewalling and delaying bills it does not like.

Debate interrupted.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS ADMINISTRATION BILL 2021

Second Reading Speech

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (10:38): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is with a sense of reality that I introduce the Government Grants Administration Bill 2021 to the House. It is a sense of reality that many members of the public would feel about something they know all too well—that is, from time to time governments and Ministers misuse public funds. This legislation is designed to put a set of laws and precedents in place around the administration of those funds, particularly as they relate to grants, to ensure integrity and honesty in the administration of public financing in New South Wales. The bill starts the process of restoring integrity and honesty to the administration of public grants. The purpose of the bill is clear: to stop New South Wales governments from using taxpayers' money as if it is their own. In her report in February this year, the Auditor-General said of the Stronger Communities Fund that she could not rule out that the lack of documentation of approvals was:

... a purposeful attempt to avoid transparency and accountability over the involvement of the former Premier and Deputy Premier in approving grant allocations.

Politically motivated and opaque decision-making is bad enough. Labor is asking this Parliament to agree to the bill now because it wants reforms to grants allocation in place before the June budget. The Department of Premier and Cabinet's report on the review of grants administration in New South Wales published on 7 May had 19 recommendations, including urgent action to increase the integrity of grants programs in New South Wales, largely in line with the measures set out in the bill. The Government has not responded to those recommendations, but it has a chance to do so by adopting the bill. The report also shows how important the bill is and why the Government must back it. If this House is to restore its reputation and integrity, it must pass the bill.

The bill provides a legislative framework for the administration of government grants schemes. It is defined as "a scheme established to allocate government money to a non-government entity for the purposes of the non-government entity conducting or delivering a State policy objective". It recognises the principles set out in the current C2010-16 *Good Practice Guide to Grants Administration* as the applicable guidelines. Before new guidelines are issued, the Minister must have regard to relevant recommendations from the Auditor-General and the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The bill enables the Auditor-General to conduct audits and report on whether government agencies and, more importantly, Ministers are complying with the legislation. The Auditor-General will be given the power to "follow the dollar" and conduct audits into an entity that receives government grant funding.

I flagged that I understand this provision is of concern to some members, so it may require reworking in order to expedite the major parts of the bill before the June budget. A register of government grants will also be established so that the public can see exactly where their money is being spent and what it is being spent on and on whose behalf. The bill proposes a fundamental change in the way that Ministers deal with grant approvals. The agency administering the grant scheme will provide written advice on how each applicant meets the eligibility criteria and how the recommendations were reached. The Minister will not be able to approve the award of a grant

unless he or she has received the above information from the agency. Further, the bill states that when a Minister departs from an agency recommendation, he or she must provide reasons in writing.

The administration of public grant funding has been a cause for controversy and shame. Soon after assuming office, the Premier acknowledged that and indicated that he would take a different approach, which the Opposition welcomes. The Opposition hopes that the bill allows all political parties to examine the administration of public funds for the taxpayers of New South Wales, who are the ultimate bosses of financial administration. The challenge for the Premier and his Government is that if there is to be a change to help restore the public's faith in the use of taxpayers' money, Government members should vote with the Opposition and support the bill.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (10:43): I thank members opposite for reminding us of a well-prosecuted argument that we heard the other day in respect to a very hollow argument that was put by one of their own.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Keira will assist the Chair by ceasing to interject. The member for Willoughby will be heard in silence.

Mr TIM JAMES: On behalf of the Government, I oppose the Government Grants Administration Bill 2021. It is a classic politically motivated and timed attempt by the Labor Party to score political points. Members on this side of the House provide a far more thorough, considered and effective approach that will serve the interests of the people of our State. The efficient and economical use of public funds for the benefit of the people of New South Wales is of critical importance to the Government, as it is to the people of New South Wales. Any reform to grants administration requires a studied, thorough and considered review. It must have been the subject of deep and wide consultation with interested parties, organisations, individuals, charities and community groups. I do not think that has happened in this case because this Labor bill is designed to score political points.

The Leader of the Opposition purports to speak about reality. The reality is that the Premier announced a review into grants administration on 3 November 2021. The Department of Premier and Cabinet led this review, in partnership with Productivity Commissioner Mr Peter Achterstraat, AM. The final report was published on 7 May this year. Surely that review deserves a level of respect and understanding in terms of how it is to be responded to. The review looked at how to best deliver value for money for New South Wales taxpayers by ensuring that the administration, assessment and assurance of grants programs in this State are in line with best practice.

The objectives of the review were to ensure that all grants programs administered by the New South Wales Government deliver value for public money in achieving their stated purpose or purposes; that they are robust in their planning and design; adopt key principles of transparency, accountability and probity; and deliver a high-quality customer experience. They are rightly the fundamental objectives, but we have not heard much about them from members opposite. The other objective of the review was to produce an updated good practice guide to grants administration. The review was comprehensive and involved extensive stakeholder engagement. Again, therein lies a stark contrast with the attempt by Opposition members.

Dr Hugh McDermott: You are the one in government.

Mr TIM JAMES: Yes. And long may that continue. In addition to feedback from 26 stakeholder groups, the review considered grants administration guidelines from comparable jurisdictions, best practice risk assessment and assurance frameworks and the existing New South Wales policy and legislative context. The review made 19 recommendations, which the Government is currently considering. It is working through them and considering them in legislative terms. It takes time to do that in a thorough, thoughtful and considered fashion. The Premier has confirmed that the New South Wales Government is committed to enhancing grants administration and will respond to the recommendations in the coming weeks. The review recommendations were handed down on 7 May, so let us be reasonable, not like members opposite who are being overtly and flagrantly self-interested and political.

Respectfully, noting the context of the recently published and comprehensive review into grants that has outlined reforms that the Government is considering, the bill before the House is premature. It is not just premature; it is a political exercise. We all accept the desire of members opposite to play politics, but this is a serious matter of public principle, public interest and public good. The people of this State deserve better. The implementation of any reforms to the administration of grants should be informed by the findings of the review. Any attempt to do otherwise would be an incomplete response to considerations arising in this area. The response should be complete and comprehensive. Notably, the bill was drafted and introduced into Parliament in advance of the tabling of recent reports by the Public Accountability Committee and the Auditor-General relating to government grants. So it cannot and does not address any of the key recommendations of those reports. Frankly, that is quite remarkable, given the subject matter. On the other hand, the review did consider recommendations

made by New South Wales parliamentary, integrity and oversight bodies, as properly required by the terms of reference, and was informed by consultation across the public sector.

I turn to some specific concerns about the bill. First, the bill does not pay adequate regard to the complexities of the various types of grant schemes that are administered by the Government and the need for consultation with key stakeholders who administer grant schemes. In the absence of detailed consultation, it is not clear that the reforms in the bill would be workable or productive. Again, that consultation with key stakeholders is important because we are talking about a range of organisations—be they charities, not-for-profits or community groups—at local level and sometimes State level. They deserve to be consulted. Those opposite have failed in that regard by introducing this bill. We should undertake that consultation out of respect and because it is the right thing to do.

We must strike the right balance in the elements of this important piece of legislation. We must do it properly, thoroughly and in a considered fashion. Indeed, it is not even clear that legislation is strictly necessary. It may not be necessary or appropriate to address the issues under consideration. We can see what is going on. Those opposite are all too eager to score the points, grab the headlines and steal the limelight. They are trying to get in first prematurely, ahead of the game. They are playing politics. But this matter is too important to play that silly game. We owe more and we owe better to the people of this State.

I refer to the provisions of the bill that would confer certain reporting powers on the Auditor-General, who, importantly, already has broad powers and discretion. I wonder whether those opposite have engaged with the Auditor-General with respect to the powers they propose to confer on that office. I suspect they have done nothing. It also appears that the proposal in the bill to enable the Auditor-General to conduct follow-the-dollar audits and report on non-government entities that receive grants has not been properly considered. That is a significant and complex issue that must be the subject of thorough deliberation and extensive stakeholder consultation. Once again we have seen little or no evidence of anything of that sort from those opposite. In particular, the Auditor-General and, importantly, other affected non-government entities should be consulted on proposed reforms. [*Extension of time*]

In many ways, that is at the nub of the faults and difficulties of the bill because, in effect, it represents an attack upon community groups at the local level. Like many members, I am working—appropriately, openly and effectively—through grants programs like the Community Building Partnership grants program. Naturally, local community groups want to engage with and be involved in that process. But the risk is that all of a sudden not-for-profits, charities, community groups, sporting clubs, Scouts and Guides—you name it, the multitude of local organisations that rightly seek to participate in grant processes and rightly seek to benefit from grant programs—find themselves the subject of an investigation and the Auditor-General knocking on their door. Surely we do not intend to impose that on organisations.

The Government has worked hard to support and provide relief to individuals, families and communities across the State through a range of vouchers and schemes. The approach in the bill would make that extremely difficult and, in effect, would prohibit it. Surely, that is not in the public interest. People, families and communities do not deserve to have that government support—those very popular, effective and successful vouchers—undermined by this sort of ill-considered, non-consultative bill. Surely our communities, charities and not-for-profits, some of which are very humble organisations, do not have the resources to deal with the Auditor-General. Frankly, we need to get the balance right. To rush in and say, "We are going to conduct follow-the-dollar audits" and to subject those organisations to audits and inquiries and so forth is surely not what those good people in community organisations across this State should have to deal with.

There is a way to get this right and to meet the fundamental principles that I spoke of earlier, without a direct attack on community groups at the local level. In my electorate of Willoughby, I do not think community groups would be at all pleased to see the spectre of that sort of approach. It is over the top and unnecessary. It would be the classic outcome, where those opposite have not done their homework and have not consulted, listened or shown respect to the many affected people, communities and organisations across this State. Grants administration reform should be implemented after contemplation, and thorough and careful deliberation of all recommendations that were made in the review. It was a sound and solid review, and deserves to be dealt with properly and thoroughly.

In turn, the response to the review must be the subject of proper consultation and consideration. I do not know what the rush is from those opposite, other than seeking to score a point and grab a headline. But let us not go about such reform in a premature, political fashion. Let us get it right and be guided by principles. Let us show the people, communities, charities, not-for-profits and organisations of this State that would be affected by the reform that we want to work with them, listen to them and find the right way to deal with this in a principled, considered and thoughtful fashion to ensure the efficient and economical use of public funds for the benefit of the

people of New South Wales. It is important and cannot be rushed. For all the reasons I have outlined, the Government does not support the bill.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:59): As a member of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Government Grants Administration Bill 2021. I acknowledge the persistent efforts of my parliamentary colleague in the other place the Hon. John Graham in drafting the bill and ensuring its passage through the Legislative Council. I also acknowledge Mr Chris Minns, MP, Leader of the Opposition, for introducing the bill in the Legislative Assembly. The bill will impact on all communities in New South Wales and must be taken seriously by members on all sides of politics. The purpose of the bill is to provide transparent administration of government grant schemes and to allow the audit of entities in relation to government grant schemes.

Time and time again, members of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government have opposed legislation that provides a higher standard of transparency in the awarding of grants. Late last year the Government took pleasure in opposing the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021, introduced by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, which would have enabled members of Parliament to be informed about decisions related to government grants. That bill was shot down and defeated by the same Government that is infested with grant rorts scandals. What does that say about the Government? I hope that those sitting opposite have had a change of heart as more scandals with the Government at the centre have come to light.

I turn now to the contents of the bill. The bill seeks to provide for the administration of government grant schemes, enable the Auditor-General to conduct audits and report on whether government agencies and Ministers are complying with the requirements of the Act, enable the Auditor-General to conduct "follow the dollar" audits and report on any entity that receives government money under a government grants scheme, and establish a New South Wales grants register that is freely available on the internet and accessible by the New South Wales general public. Additionally, the bill requires a review to be conducted within 12 months, including a review of the allocation of government money under government grant schemes to regional and metropolitan areas.

Clause 6 of the bill recognises the C2010-16 *Good Practice Guide to Grants Administration* and any successor to the guide as the applicable guidelines. Before new guidelines are issued, the Minister must have regard to relevant recommendations from the Auditor-General and the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Clause 8 of the bill provides that a government sector agency must ensure that key grant scheme information is placed on the agency's website in addition to a central whole-of-government website called the NSW grants register. That centralised and published register, which will take a form similar to the Federal GrantConnect site, will be freely available and accessible to the New South Wales public. Clause 13 enables the Auditor-General to conduct performance audits of a non-government entity if it receives a government grant.

We need this bill. It addresses many of the significant findings and recommendations of the Public Accountability Committee report entitled *Integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grant programs*, which was released in March 2021. The ICAC's submission to the Public Accountability Committee is particularly revealing and should be noted. Those findings have informed and provided advice for the drafting of the bill. The ICAC has found that the current system lacks an open, public application process with a direct negotiation between the grant recipient and the New South Wales Government. The commission has also found that probity issues can currently arise from a grant scheme. Those prospective issues are highly concerning and should alarm all members of this House. Such issues include grant applicants missing out on funding despite being ranked high above other applicants that were successful, public officials having undisclosed conflicts of interest such as personal relationships with grant applicants, and applicants receiving grants without even submitting an application. In my opinion, those are examples of the Government's internal corruption.

Legislative reform must occur to address the New South Wales Government's repeated failures to deliver fair and transparent government grants. The Liberal-Nationals Government treats taxpayer-funded grants like its own pork-barrelling piggy bank. Labor Opposition members have addressed this Parliament many times about the \$250 million Stronger Communities Fund, which was designed to improve community infrastructure and service. However, 96 per cent of those important grants went to councils in Coalition-held marginal electorates. What a disgrace! In the Schools Renewable Energy Infrastructure Pilot Project, 92 per cent of the projects chosen were in Coalition seats. That is despite schools in Labor-held seats in western Sydney being among the most greatly impacted and most disrupted during the COVID-19 Delta lockdown.

All members of this House are aware that between 2013 and 2021 nearly 75 per cent of the Government's Clubgrants Category 3 fund was awarded to projects in Coalition-held seats. Labor electorates in western Sydney once again received minimal funding despite having high levels of poker machine use, which raised large amounts of cash for that grant program. In the lead-up to the 2019 State election, three-quarters of the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund was awarded to Liberal-held seats. I ask members sitting opposite to explain how they believe that decision to be just and free from corrupted political motives. The truth is the grant decisions I have just

mentioned are fuelled by corrupt political intent, and there is no denying that fact. The Liberal-Nationals Government has attempted to buy votes by pumping money into key electorates. To uphold a democratic and fair society, that cannot continue.

The sad reality is that thousands of deserving community projects have missed out on funding simply because the applicants live in the wrong electorate. Hardworking businesses and groups deserve a fair opportunity to apply for and receive grants, despite their postcode. Labor Opposition members believe New South Wales deserves better. We believe it is time to put public confidence back into the grants processes in New South Wales by committing to an overhaul of how funds are distributed to community projects. To conclude, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government cannot be trusted to administer government grants within the current system. Government members have repeatedly and systematically used the administration of government grants for their own questionable—and at times corrupt—purposes, whether it be to create political advantage in key electorates or to cater to their corporate fat cat mates.

The Perrottet Government is letting down our community, and legislative changes are needed to create transparency, accountability and a higher standard for the awarding of government grants. We need to enable the Auditor-General to conduct "follow the dollar" audits and report on an entity that receives government money under a government grants scheme. It is also crucial that a grants register is created to keep the Government's administration of grants documented, accessible and transparent to the public. The bill introduced by the Opposition is the best solution to create fair legislative reform in the administration of government grants. It should not matter whether a community group or business is located in a Coalition electorate or a Labor or crossbench electorate; all eligible groups in New South Wales should have an equal opportunity to apply for and receive government funding.

It is a disservice to our hardworking community members who have supported our community during fires, floods, droughts and a pandemic to let legislative reform like this be voted down in this Chamber. It is time for members of the New South Wales Coalition Government to choose whether they support their own selfish, corrupt party or our community. The Opposition supports the bill.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:08): I make the following remarks about the Government Grants Administration Bill 2021. The New South Wales Government typically spends around \$4 billion per annum on grants funding for projects, ranging from payments of hundreds of dollars made to individuals or small community organisations to multimillion-dollar funding arrangements with local councils, not-for-profit bodies and other entities. In recent years, grants funding has increased significantly to around \$10 billion a year. Grants are vital to improving the lives of all people in New South Wales. They are a key mechanism for investing in the future of New South Wales. The Government is committed to ensuring that the allocation of public resources through grants is transparent and achieves value for money.

That is why the review of grants administration in New South Wales was announced by the Premier last year. The report on that review was published less than a week ago and was the end product of a thorough and detailed process of consultation, including with those in the sectors responsible for the administration of grants on the ground and alive to the practical challenges and gaps in the grants process that are in need of reform. The Government supports the enhancement of grants administration practices. It is critical that grants are administered fairly, effectively and transparently. However, the bill before the House is not the right vehicle for achieving this type of reform.

The bill was prepared without due consultation with the sector and other stakeholders. This is apparent in particular aspects of the bill. For example, it would enable the Auditor-General to conduct "follow the dollar" audits and report on an entity that receives government money under a government grant scheme. The proposed introduction of "follow the dollar" powers is complex and it is essential that the impact on a range of stakeholders is fully considered and subject to extensive consultation. Such consultation has not occurred. There is a real lack of thought and process in this bill.

I will give the House an example of my own consultation process. The Government has just announced the Community Building Partnership grants program, which opened on Monday and closes on 10 June at five o'clock. I like to take a particular approach when considering every grants applicant. I meet with the applicants on site. I look at the project they are pitching and consider its value—whether it has a true value to the community and whether others can be considered to benefit from it. I take very seriously the distribution of government funds, and in particular the Community Building Partnership program. I have to say that it has been a great success. The amount of improvement to community buildings and local infrastructure goes above and beyond what I have seen in the past 10 years.

Every electorate gets exactly the same amount: \$400,000 of worthy grants to be issued per electorate. That is why it is important for every member to show due diligence with every single application that comes before

them, to familiarise themselves with the process and with the ask, to engage with the stakeholders and to look at the potential impact of the project. I will give the House an example. This is one feature that has stood out for me the most in the past. Sometimes a community group will come to me with a grant application to improve an asset that is on either Crown land or local government land. The community organisation asking for the grant may be well intended but it may not have even sought the approval or support of the stakeholder who owns the property where the asset is to be improved.

You do not know these things unless you actively engage with your community and talk to every stakeholder involved. If an improvement to an asset on council land is proposed, I make sure that I engage with the stakeholders who are applying for the grant. I ask them whether they have talked to their local council to see if it is comfortable with the ask. As a local member, I am facilitating all conversations from all parties that would be impacted and would benefit from the proposal. It is no use providing a grant on an asset that a council may have future plans for. For example, it may want to shift the priority of that asset and not improve it. A local member should have a lot of conversations and consider many issues. That is due diligence. I would have thought every member would extend that type of approach when approving public funding. Why is that not already done?

Under the Community Building Partnership grants program, a local member has the opportunity in the online assessment to make a comment on the viability of a project and declare any conflict of interest. Those opportunities are already in play. Those checks and balances are there. I must applaud the way the grants have been set up and put online. It is easy for organisations to understand the process. They also have an opportunity to make inquiries with the department as to how best to put forward their applications. There are checks and balances in place for Community Building Partnership, which is one of the most successful programs the Government runs.

I note grants that have been available in the Hawkesbury electorate. Guides have improved their kitchens in community halls. I attended the Grose Vale Scout Group evening annual general meeting a couple of weeks ago and we talked about potential improvements that it wants to pitch for under the WestInvest program. A good local member will be very well connected and plugged in with all the grant recipients and stakeholders interested in putting up their hands for a range of grants, not just Community Building Partnership program grants but, for example, WestInvest grants.

The Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association received \$1.66 million under the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund to build a state-of-the-art, beautiful pavilion. That pavilion will be used when there are shows but also as an evacuation centre, so that in times of bushfire, when people need a safe place for their animals and pets, they can bring them to the showground. Guess what? We have also installed showers and other amenities and open spaces so that people who have been moved from their homes because it is too dangerous can stay there overnight. An evacuation centre with those facilities has now been set up for them. They can be near their animals and care for them. That was made possible by an excellent grant. I am pleased to say that the pavilion was in operation at the Hawkesbury Show, which was held only a couple of weeks ago.

That is a great example of communities engaging with their local member and with the State Government to get an excellent outcome. As local members, we have an obligation to scrutinise applications; I would have thought that is obvious practice for every local member. I want to make sure that that is on the record. The fair and effective use of public funds is a vital issue for the Government, but any reform in this area must be informed by best practice and insights from the sector and the broader community and should draw on the outcomes of the review that has just been completed. It should not be implemented simply by the bill before the House. Accordingly, I oppose the bill.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (11:18): In relation to the Stronger Communities Fund grants, the Auditor-General commented:

We cannot rule out that the lack of information about accountabilities in the program guidelines, coupled with a lack of formal documented approval from the former Premier and Deputy Premier, was a purposeful attempt to avoid transparency and accountability over the involvement of the former Premier and Deputy Premier in approving grant allocations.

He further said:

... in breach of the State Records Act, key documents relating to the Stronger Communities Fund round two were destroyed by staff in the former Premier's Office.

The Government Grants Administration Bill 2021, which comes from the other place, is hardly novel and is hardly one without substance. The House should carefully consider the objects of the bill. You would have trouble understanding why any sensible person would be opposed to it. The objects of the bill are:

- (a) to provide for the administration of government grant schemes—

which is relatively uncontroversial—

- (b) to enable the Auditor-General to conduct audits and report on whether government agencies and Ministers comply with the requirements of this Act—

which is hardly controversial—

- (c) to enable the Auditor-General to conduct “follow the dollar” audits and report on an entity that receives government money under a government grant scheme—

I concede that that will be a genuine dispute between the Government and the Opposition and also between the Government and what is likely to emanate from the Public Accounts Committee. The other objects of the bill are:

- (d) to establish a register of government grant schemes (the NSW grants register) that is freely available on the internet for inspection by the public—

which is hardly controversial—

- (e) to require a review of this Act to be conducted within 12 months ...

The bill specifically does not tie the hands of a Minister administering the grant, but the bill quite reasonably requires a Minister to provide an explanation should they deviate from what is recommended. That is consistent with what you would expect from the government of the day. Ministers are not bound to do what public servants tell them, but they must give reasons for their decisions. It is an eminently reasonable response to the problem of what is known as pork-barrelling, which has permeated the provisions of the grants. I accept that the government of the day gets to make the decisions and is elected to make decisions and allocate funds as it deems appropriate, but it must act in a reasonable, fair and accountable way. Clearly, with the administration of grants in this State, this Government has not acted that way. It has pushed it so far. History tells us that long-serving governments do that. It is important that the legislature pulls it back into line.

I do not think it is a secret, though everybody tap-dances around it, that the Government is talking the bill out so that it does not come to a vote. In fact, I accept that. I am quite prepared to give the Government time to examine the bill. I have been saying this week to the Government that we require it to examine the bill so that it can provide a response. I accept that the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Auditor-General have recently completed reviews. I accept that Mr Achterstraat made a variety of recommendations to be considered by the Public Accounts Committee and that the timetable for coming up with a system to administer grants is very tight. So the Opposition, acting reasonably, is prepared to wait and acquiesce to the Government talking out the bill, but only if the House, when the Parliament returns in early June, gets from the Government a reasonable response, not an obstructionist position. We cannot have a budget without any transparency regarding grant programs in the future. The reason for that is what has occurred until now with some of the grants.

Under the Stronger Communities Fund, for which the Auditor-General caught the Government, 96 per cent of \$252 million worth of grants went to councils in Coalition-held or marginal electorates. That pork-barrelling was revealed by Labor and then confirmed by the Auditor-General. The guidelines were changed to allow funds to go to non-amalgamated councils in Liberal seats in the lead-up to the 2019 election. The largest amount was \$90 million, which went to Hornsby Shire Council, which was not amalgamated. Some \$50 million was allocated to rehabilitate a former quarry at Hornsby Park, and \$40 million was for the Westleigh recreation area. Only Coalition MPs were consulted. On 18 May 2018 a dossier given by the Premier's staff to the Premier stated:

We have continued to work on how we allocate this funding to get the cash out the door in the most politically advantageous way.

The then Premier's office then shredded documents and notes about who had approved the spending and why. The then Premier at the time said pork-barrelling "is not something the community likes ... but it's an accusation I will wear." She added:

It's not unique to our government. It's not an illegal practice. Unfortunately, it does happen from time to time by every government.

That might be the case, and the Government has the right to allocate funds at its discretion, but it needs to do it transparently and fairly. It cannot shred documents. It needs an explanation.

I will talk about the Clubgrants Category 3 fund. Between 2013 and 2021, nearly 75 per cent of the New South Wales Government's Clubgrants Category 3 fund has been awarded to projects in Coalition electorates—\$76.6 million of the \$103.4 million in funding. Some 0.4 per cent of club gaming machine profits over \$1 million per annum are paid into the New South Wales Government's category 3 fund, with the money to be used for large-scale projects associated with sport, health or community infrastructure. Unlike categories 1 and 2 recipients, category 3 grant recipients are determined by the New South Wales Government. The most recent round of those grants was advertised on the New South Wales Liberal Party's website, not the local members' websites. The grant guidelines have an emphasis on funding going to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, regional and remote, disadvantaged, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

However, some of the grants awarded have included \$142,675 to the Matcham Valley Pony Club in the Terrigal electorate for the replacement of an equestrian arena, and \$200,000 to the Northern Beaches Council for a public art project at Freshwater in the Manly electorate. Barwon, under its former MP, a Nationals Party member, got about \$5.4 million from 2013 to 2019. But, since the party lost the seat in 2019 to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers party, funding has slowed, with Barwon receiving about \$644,000. The Refresh and Renew Fund grants program was established under the Tourism Product Development Fund and provides grants for regional tourism businesses to upgrade their facilities. The 2020-21 program offered grants of \$10,000. Of these, more than 68 per cent went to businesses in Government-held seats, despite only around half of eligible areas being in Government-held electorates. [*Extension of time*]

One grant in the Nationals-held seat of Myall Lakes was awarded to a cafe owned by one of the directors of Destination North Coast, the area's relevant destination network, whose staff assesses the grant applications. Regardless of the clear conflict of interest in assessing this grant, Destination North Coast staff favourably assessed it ahead of 141 others. Documents showed that Destination North Coast staff was aware of the conflict, but it is unclear what, if anything, was done to resolve the conflict before the grant was awarded. Applications for the 2021-22 round, offering grants of \$30,000, are currently being assessed.

Data from the Office of Sport shows that about three-quarters of grants from the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund were awarded to Liberal-held seats in the lead-up to the 2019 elections. Grants of between \$500,000 and \$5 million were issued to nine Liberal-held electorates including Penrith and Ku-ring-gai—where is the Leader of the House?—which received multiple grants for different facilities. The member for Penrith hand-picked the successful grants from a short list from the Office of Sport, but only two seats held by Labor, Cumberland and Randwick local government areas, and one from The Greens and Labor, the Inner West local government area, picked up grants. The 2018-19 round, before the 2019 election, saw 15 projects funded at a total investment of \$33.4 million. The second round of funding in 2019-20 saw a further \$44 million worth of grants handed out, with Liberal electorates receiving 17 out of 22 grants.

The Regional Cultural Fund involved 405 applications received across three funding rounds, with \$99 million awarded for 147 cultural projects in regional New South Wales. However, 22 per cent of the panel recommendations were not followed by the Minister, and \$9.3 million was awarded to projects not recommended by the panel. The Auditor-General found that the integrity of the approval process for funding allocations was compromised—her words—and that the Government "did not follow the recommendations of the independent assessment panel in multiple cases and reasons for making changes were not documented by the Minister's office or Create NSW." In 2020, under the bushfire recovery fund, the New South Wales Government handed out \$177 million for projects in communities affected by the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires.

The Blue Mountains, a Labor seat, did not receive any money even though the government data found the area suffered an economic loss of \$65 million. Blue Mountains City Council had all 24 proposals for local projects worth \$5.4 million rejected, ranging from fire station upgrades to revitalising town centres. Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill told the upper House inquiry that he was never aware of any project criteria. The Central Coast also missed out and the hit to its economy was found to be \$163 million. The New South Wales Government also did not provide any funds in The Greens held seat of Ballina, although the Byron economy was found to have suffered an economic impact of \$88 million. In contrast, Wagga Wagga City Council, in a State area held by an Independent, Dr Joe McGirr, after the Liberals lost it in a by-election, had an estimated \$16 million impact from fires and received \$40 million in funding. I would imagine that that is the success of Dr McGirr's effective advocacy. I do not suggest that there is anything wrong with that decision.

That is a pretty sorry history. We have reached a stage in this State, like I said at the beginning of this contribution, where long-serving governments think they are dishing out their money but they are dishing out people's money. All this bill seeks to do is ensure transparency. Whoever the Ministers are who allocate funding can allocate it whichever way they want, as long as it is transparent, they give reasons and the results are public. There is nothing wrong with that. That is consistent with every conceivable recommendation. I know governments do not like it. I certainly know this Government does not like it. I think it has indicated to me that it does not support it, but I give the Government fair warning: It has two weeks to come back with a reasonable proposition to ensure transparency before the State budget, otherwise it is likely to find that the bill will become law in New South Wales.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:33): I speak in opposition to the Government Grants Administration Bill 2021. Let me be clear: We should all be committed to ensuring that public funds are being allocated fairly and effectively in order to achieve the best outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Grants should be administered in a way that is transparent, with accountability, fairness and with a focus on our community. Grants are a vital way for money to be directed to the benefit of the community. They cover a vast array of topic areas

and are diverse in their forms and the ways in which they are administered. To say that this space is complex is an understatement.

I do not support, though, pushing through a bill that was drafted before the publication of, and without benefiting from, the insights of the report on the review of grants administration in New South Wales undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in collaboration with the Productivity Commissioner. The bill before the House also predates the recent reports of the Public Accountability Committee and the Auditor-General relating to government grants. Fundamentally, this is the flaw not just in terms of substantive parts of the bill—and the member for Willoughby touched on that in terms of impacts on community groups and the red tape in the grant process. Fundamentally, the flaw is twofold. One is about process. Here is a bill that speaks about process when it comes to grants and yet fails to follow a process that requires review and consultation.

The second flaw—and this is important as well—is around consultation. The review set out by the Productivity Commissioner and the Department of Premier and Cabinet engaged in extensive consultation involving parliamentary integrity and oversight bodies, New South Wales government departments, the Commonwealth Government and peak bodies such as Local Government NSW and Business NSW. It is important to draw upon consultation. It is important to make sure that, when you put a bill before the House, you undertake extensive consultation and make sure that you absorb those insights into your bill.

The way forward is to consider reform in this area with due regard to the recommendations made following the extensive reviews and inquiries that I have just referred to. We know that this entails, at a minimum, four standards: transparency, where decisions are trusted and openly available for public scrutiny; accountability, meaning that we must be able to justify decisions and not back away from responsibility; fairness, meaning that social and economic equity are crucial if we are to have a system of grants funding that carries the confidence of our communities, and this is an embodiment of the right to a fair go; and customer focus—how do we make administration easier, yet still prudentially responsible, for community organisations run by volunteers and for small businesses where mum or dad have to prepare grant applications at the end of a hard day's work?

Red tape is a killer. I have in mind the Tumbarumba community, who are at the moment looking to progress their dreams, their desires, of developing a preschool in the community. They are going through a grant application process. It is a rigorous process. They are appreciative of the support that they are receiving from the Department of Education. This is a rigorous process, independent of the local member. Yet it is being done by a committee of volunteers. These volunteers are busy, with so much going on in their lives, including family and work. We need to make sure that we are not making the red tape a killer.

At present, the Government is engaging with the recommendations of the very recently published report on the review of grants administration undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Productivity Commissioner, which itself had regard to the recommendations of the Public Accountability Committee and the Auditor-General, and will act on those recommendations as swiftly as possible. What is sought to be implemented through the bill is piecemeal change, without the granular detail that is required to reform this complex area properly, without adequate consideration of the various types of grants that are administered and without addressing the full life cycle of a grants process.

The whole State benefits from grants and funding support, from new bridges to much-needed safer roads, from removing asbestos from a scout hall to installing a kitchen in a community facility. The range is vast and the importance of funding support for grassroots projects and significant infrastructure is incalculable. How do you build flexibility into your grants process without simultaneously tipping into time-wasting red tape? For a start, take the time to digest what relevant review has suggested, before rolling out a pre-prepared script. How is the bill not to be seen as being driven by politics ahead of policy? Surely the result, from the community's perspective, is that the bill has managed to be, at the same time, both bad policy and bad politics.

A clear thrust of the review undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in collaboration with the Productivity Commissioner is the identification of process as key. Where need for improvement is identified, it is important that improvement occurs through a rigorous process, with extensive consultation, as has occurred with the review. Again, the bill does not draw on that extensive consultation and the insights developed from that process. The bill is an aberration of process, is it not? Through recommendations 6-10 of the report, the report brings focus to "open and transparent application and assessment processes". Within this set, recommendation eight delves into some tricky areas that test us all. It says:

In limited circumstances eligibility criteria may be waived. The reasons for any departure from the published eligibility criteria must be documented and approved by the decision maker.

This is not easy territory and it is helpfully explored within the report. That recommendation deserves proper consideration. Recommendations 15 to 17 dig into questions of efficient and customer-focused grants processes. Can it be said that obtaining a grant is ever an easy thing, a simple bit of administration? This is something I hear

from my community as their local member. It is pleasing to see the subject raised and I look forward to further reflection and deliberation on this when the Government releases its response to the report. Another important observation from the report is the idea of establishing a "community of practice". That would bring together officials experienced in grants administration to support the development of skills and expertise across government. The community of practice will promote compliance with the guide and improve the professionalism of grants administration. The group should also improve the coordination of many grants with similar objectives or that target the same stakeholders.

The review reminds us that government does not have to always do what it has done before. We recognise that we are learning from past mistakes or inequities, and these learnings can be passed on. This is effectively a culture of leadership for grants administration, and there is much to consider in this. I think all of us here, regardless of which side of the Chamber we inhabit, want to do good through fundings and grants. That is not an easy task to administer, even at the best of times. I have been impressed by the review's recommendations and look forward to reading more, and discussing and debating them. I believe it will be a very worthwhile stimulus to improve on current practices and processes, and will support public confidence in New South Wales Government's grants administration. As the Premier has said, all grants are ultimately funded by public money and so it is critical that they are administered fairly, effectively and transparently. This is not the Government's money or the Opposition's money; it is public money. This is a truth that we must hold to and that we must endeavour to enshrine in both process and in legislation. [*Extension of time*]

The people and businesses of New South Wales look to the Government to handle their money with care. They expect that grants will deliver public value and they expect processes that adhere to the highest standards of integrity. Simply put, the bill is not fit for purpose. This area of critical importance should be reformed according to research and according to views obtained from engagement with stakeholders. A tiny response? Yes. A hasty response? No. A response that involves extensive consultation? Yes. A bill that does not involve that consultation? No. We improve process by following the process through. The bill wears the short-lived but undeniably pungent perfume of haste and belongs back in the bottle. I oppose the bill.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (11:44): I thank the member for Balmain for allowing me to proceed before him. The Government Grants Administration Bill 2021 is a significant bill, emanating from the Opposition. I want to make it very clear—and I think it is fair to say I am also speaking on behalf of the member for Sydney and the member for Wagga Wagga, having had a number of conversations with them about this matter—that we three Independents are absolutely supporting the principle behind the bill. It is imperative that action like this occur. I have had discussions with the author of the bill, the Hon. John Graham, and with the member for Heffron, Ron Hoenig. My concern is that the measures that are in the bill should have come before this House a long time ago. The bill should emanate from the Government.

As the chairman of the New South Wales Public Accounts Committee, I am mindful of the important public administration role that is provided by the Audit Office of New South Wales for the Auditor-General. I believe that the Audit Office should be provided with "follow the dollar" provisions. New South Wales is the only State in Australia that does not have that. But as I have said to the member for Heffron and to the Hon. John Graham, it is a provision that should have been provided to the Auditor-General by the Government. The Public Accounts Committee has discussed that matter again this morning. I note the member for Heathcote is a former member of the Public Accounts Committee and is well aware of the Audit Office's desire for that particular provision. I fully support the principle, but I want to see the Government's response to the review of New South Wales grants administration conducted by Peter Achterstraat—whom I consider to be one of the most honourable and capable people in the field of public governance. I have had discussions with the Premier's office about that. I believe the Government should be given time to bring that response and I expect it will happen very soon.

I have said to the member for Heffron that if that does not occur, and it is not addressed in the next sitting, the Independents will, following further discussion with the Opposition, likely support the bill as is. This issue needs to be addressed. Pork-barrelling—or however the issue is described—is not new. It has been around forever. It is not something that is owned by the Coalition. When the Opposition has been in government, it has been part of the course of business as well. We need to fix it now. This is our opportunity. I support the bill in principle, but my support is on hold until I hear the Government's considered position, following the sitting break.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:48): I appreciate the opportunity to address the Government Grants Administration Bill 2021. I acknowledge the member for Lake Macquarie and his contribution. It is an important contribution. Obviously, there have been a lot of discussions between the Leader of Government Business from the Legislative Assembly and also the Hon. John Graham regarding this bill. The Greens' position on the bill is quite clear: we support the bill. It contains important provisions that need to be implemented. We respect the fact that the Government is going through a process and, all other things being equal, we would like that process to be completed. I second the comment made by the member for Lake Macquarie about Peter Achterstraat. The Greens

have great respect for him and the various positions he has held. We acknowledge his expertise and commitment to open and good governance. We look forward to seeing the recommendations in his report. There should be no politics and no division of the parties when it comes to good government and managing public funds. I give credit to the Government for having a person of his calibre taking up that role on its behalf.

Most importantly, I acknowledge Mr David Shoebridge, who has resigned from the Parliament. Anyone who has followed the bill will know that his work has chased this objective for many years and culminated in several reports being delivered by the Public Accountability Committee, which he chaired. His work in exposing grants, such as the shonky bushfire grants and a range of others, was quite remarkable. It has led in no short part to the progress of the bill today. I also acknowledge my Greens colleagues, Government and Labor members, who recognise that things need to change. We must act with integrity and honourably when issuing grants to ensure that public funds are not wasted for political purposes so that we maintain the respect of the community.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet, in partnership with the Productivity Commissioner, led a review of grants in New South Wales. That review was prompted by the comment of the former Premier when she said to ICAC that the Government "threw money at seats to keep them". Her evidence revealed that basically grants were targeted at winning votes. Every member knows it is not a one-party business. To a large extent, throwing money at an electorate to try to win it is what governments do. They want to impress on electorates their commitment to their communities. But we need to make sure that it is done appropriately.

The Public Accountability Committee also held an inquiry. I note that its report contains significant recommendations relating to integrity, efficacy and value for money in government programs. I draw the attention of members to submission 92 from the Independent Commission Against Corruption to the Inquiry into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of New South Wales Government grant programs. The contribution from the ICAC indicated its measured and thoughtful approach to balancing the role of a government. One role of government is to allocate funds. But when allocating funds, where does the balance lie between it being a meritorious process and just straight pork-barrelling for political benefit?

The bill is simple and does three things. It establishes a single grants register that contains information on each grants scheme, including objectives, how to make an application, eligibility criteria, the value of the grant and who is the decision-maker; it ensures that Ministers give reasons in writing for departing from departmental recommendations; and it gives the "follow the dollar" provisions, which is critically important. Government members have indicated the lack of complexity and coverage in the bill. To a certain extent I agree that it does not cover everything that should happen. It certainly does not implement all of the recommendations from the Public Accountability Committee inquiry, or from the Productivity Commissioner's review. But it is a start.

One thing that private members' bills do is press the Government to act quickly and not delay action. We considered seriously whether to move a suspension motion to try to make voting happen today. I understand the position of the Independents and agree that we should be waiting to see what the Government does, but this matter needs to be acted on before the budget is handed down. We want to be reasonable. We want to make sure that the Government can consider those recommendations, take them to Cabinet and implement some positive outcomes.

One challenge we have is the quantum of money. The Stronger Communities Fund has generated a lot of discussion, but \$252 million was available. My council, the Inner West Council, was a terrible amalgamation of three councils. The amalgamation cost a huge amount of money, was very cumbersome, and has not really worked. There have been a lot of problems and the council has a significant deficit. Almost a quarter of a million people make up that council. It is very big, cumbersome and unwieldy. I was the mayor of one of the constituent councils. Our community looked forward to receiving some of that grant money to help our councils. But we found that there were no assessments and no guidelines. As we know, Hornsby Shire Council was asked to apply for the grant after it was given \$90 million. It is mind-boggling. Even Government backbenchers agree that it can do better.

If money is to be given to a council, that is fair enough, but there has to be an assessment process and criteria for receiving the grant. The money is not given first and then an application submitted afterwards. That was unbelievable. The Government did not deny it and made it clear that that was the process. That can be improved. That was the lightning bolt—that 95 per cent of \$252 million in grants went to Liberal and Coalition electorates. I do not necessarily agree with everything that the Inner West Council does—it has a lot of issues—but it deserved to submit an application and have it assessed. It was not fair that the money was handed out on a political basis.

We are aware of the issues concerning the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, such as \$11.2 million going to the Macleay Valley Recreation Adventure Park in Kempsey. The fund is supposed to help communities recover from bushfires, but the money is being used to build a dam so that people can use it for water-based activities and for landings when they jump out of a plane in a tandem parachute. It was criticised as a waste of

money because it does not help bushfire victims. The money should have gone to help victims of the bushfires. I understand there is also an issue concerning the \$5.5 million that went to the Australian Clay Target Association at Wagga and the role that the former Premier played in that decision. I do not want to go over old territory in great detail. I am simply highlighting that all members want to ensure that we act with integrity when dealing with public money.

As ICAC has indicated, we can act with integrity when granting funds, but we also recognise that it involves governments with political objectives. No-one denies that. Governments will have ideological positions. For example, this Government might invest in one thing but the ACT Government would probably invest in something else. No-one is against that. It is about making sure that we have good processes in place. Politicians can sometimes be close to the ground—we know our communities and the local groups—but there needs to be oversight as well as merit assessments or co-assessments. Those measures are important if we are to have confidence in our processes and have the confidence of the community.

I thank the Hon. John Graham and the member for Heffron, Ron Hoenig, for all the work they have done on this matter; it should be complimented. If nothing else, their work will help accelerate the process in the coming weeks. I acknowledge the member for Sydney, the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Wagga Wagga, who addressed the issue in a thoughtful and considered way. The Greens acknowledge and support their position because the bill needs to be addressed when it comes back to this House in a few weeks. Hopefully, the Government will beat us to it—even though it has taken a very long time—and we will hear about some good recommendations that all members in this House can support. It would be great if we could all come together to support the recommendations, because one day Labor will be in government—or may be.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Gee, you nearly gave me a heart attack.

Mr Tim James: Not for a long time, hopefully.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: Who knows? Anything can happen. We want to do the best for our constituents. The Greens support the bill. While we think it could be improved, we particularly support the intent of driving the Government's agenda so that we get these recommendations. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (11:58): I join with my Liberal-Nationals colleagues in the New South Wales Government to oppose the Labor Opposition Government Grants Administration Bill 2021. I will point out in specific detail my opposition to the bill. I state from the outset that no-one on this side of the House or across Parliament believes that reform should not be undertaken. Can we do better in the way that we apply grants? As I have said repeatedly, there is always room for improvement in various aspects of government. We never get it right, and nobody will ever get it perfectly right. Therefore, the Government takes on board the review that was undertaken by the well-respected Productivity Commissioner, Peter Achterstraat, who has reviewed the grants processes and made many recommendations as to how the processes could be reformed. The Government is certainly going through and strongly considering them at this point in time.

I illustrate the inadequacies of the bill through its limited definition of what is meant by a grant for the purposes of the bill. I compare that with the detail found in the recently published report on the review by Peter Achterstraat into the administration of grants in New South Wales. The Labor bill defines a government grant scheme as "a scheme established to allocate government money to a non-government entity for the purposes of the non-government entity conducting or delivering a State policy objective". It is said to exclude compensation given to a non-government entity and any other scheme, payment or thing prescribed by the regulations. That is a brief description of what a grant scheme should entail. Surely, a fundamental consideration for a grants administration bill is not bedded down with what might be an extensive list of exclusions left to be defined in subordinate legislation.

There is obviously a fundamental lack of detail, which may not be fatal to the enactment of a bill, but it is telling that the Opposition has failed to do thorough research and homework on this bill before the House. In contrast to the bill, the definition of grants set out in the report on the administration of grants is detailed and considered. Had the Opposition spent more time going through it, perhaps it could have presented something more thorough than the brief description that we have in front of us today. I have no doubt that the detail reflects the level of thought given to the issue that was detailed by Peter Achterstraat, the Productivity Commission and those involved in the review and the extensive consultation undertaken in order to pin down issues such as these.

A grant is defined in the report as an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the New South Wales Government, or on behalf of the New South Wales Government, whereby money is paid to a grantee other than the New South Wales Government and is intended to help address one or more of the New South Wales Government's policy outcomes, is intended to assist the grantee achieve its objectives and does not result in the return of goods or services by the grantee of an equivalent value to the New South Wales Government—a

non-reciprocal exchange. I go back to the way that governments distribute funds on behalf of the community and ask the simple question: Why was there an absolute, demonstrable rejection of the former New South Wales Labor Government in March 2011? There is a simple answer. There was an appalling quality of service delivery in roads, public transport, rail lines, hospitals, schools et al. on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

A government will only be rejected if it fails to do the job that it was elected to do. It might come as a surprise to the Opposition, but the Government's main responsibility and its purpose for being here is to ensure quality service delivery and to use taxpayers' money wisely by further investing it into an appropriate level of service delivery in rail, bus services, schools, hospitals et cetera. I look at that through the prism of my own electorate. I represent an area that has experienced rapid housing and population growth over the past 15 to 20 years and has one of the major councils in the north-west growth sector. Largely, my profile was built on the back of raising issues with the failure of the previous Labor Government to provide good quality infrastructure on behalf of a growing area. That is not too much to ask.

As I have consistently said, if you are proposing to put a population the size of Canberra into an area one-tenth of the geographical size, like my electorate and the north-west sector, there must be recognition of a provision of infrastructure. If you are not providing that infrastructure, the government of the day will ultimately be rejected for a government that has a better policy initiative and a better principle of service delivery. That is why the Liberal-Nationals Government came to office in 2011 and, at that time, decimated the representation of the Labor Government to the point that it had 20-odd seats in a 93-seat lower House. It was an absolute decimation of that particular government, for all the reasons that I have stated.

I come back to the perspective of the bill regarding grants funding. Does the Government go through a process? Yes, it does. Does the Government go through appropriate processes and procedures? Yes, it does. Can they be strengthened and reformed? Yes, they can. There is no doubt in my mind that things can always be improved. The Government would be naive and be disrespectful to taxpayers' money if it stated that it cannot do better. Everywhere that government money is being invested and spent, through grant schemes and policy initiatives or objectives, is going into appropriate service delivery. It is not being handed out to people like Eddie Obeid or Joe Tripodi for their own personal services. It is not being handed to criminals or crooks to feather their own nests. It is being invested in areas of need, and there is no doubt that under this Government every electorate across New South Wales has received a massive increase in support for the service delivery that is needed, such as roads, rail, schools and hospitals. It is an undisputable fact that funding for those services has massively increased under this Government.

My electorate of Castle Hill has a population of 250,000 people, and the former Labor Government could not upgrade the main roads, such as Windsor Road and Showground Road, to service the people there. Showground Road is the main road into the massive hub of the north-west that is Castle Hill, and it was a two-lane goat track until the Coalition came into government. I was more than happy to advocate on that because it was a State road and a State responsibility. Thankfully, that road has been upgraded under this Government. The previous government, after being dragged kicking and screaming through a massive campaign for years, finally upgraded Windsor Road. To this day, it is only just meeting the needs of the community because the community is growing so quickly. I seek an extension of time.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

SOCIAL HOUSING

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:09): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that Maryland has many NSW Housing dwellings sitting without tenants for more than 12 months.
- (2) Notes that meanwhile the waiting list for Hunter Housing properties is at an all-time high.
- (3) Calls on the Minister to get on with building new properties while also tenanting existing vacant homes.

We are in the midst of an alarming national housing crisis. Rents are rising, housing prices are skyrocketing and our public housing stock is stretched far beyond its limits. That is why vacant public housing properties in Matfen Close, Maryland, in the Wallsend electorate are causing community concern. Seven dwellings in Matfen Close were slated for redevelopment. From October 2020, tenants were relocated. A year later the tenants of three properties were allowed to return. Two tenants accepted the offer. When the relocations were first announced, the third tenant came to my office and was understandably upset about the major disruption. He refused to go back, and settled in a new place. He did not relish the prospect of going through an upheaval again.

On investigation, my office learnt that an easement over two of the properties made them unsuitable for redevelopment. That removed the third property from the redevelopment area. So the development was scaled back from seven properties to four. A year passed between relocation and return. Each property has at least three bedrooms. So during that year three three-bedroom homes lay empty while the planned redevelopment was shaping up. That redevelopment never happened. The four houses that are unaffected by the easement also lie empty. One of them is a four-bedroom home. Seven large houses, which should have been occupied to ease the pressure on our housing system, remain vacant. During the 2021 COVID crisis, three homes languished vacant.

Adding insult to injury, the four properties not impacted by the easement still have not been redeveloped. Some of the circumstances that have led to the situation are beyond the control or influence of the NSW Land and Housing Corporation. Sometimes deals fall through, funding cannot be secured and planned works cannot occur. That is fair enough. What is not fair is leaving four homes unoccupied since 2020. During the 19 months that those three three-bedroom homes and one four-bedroom home stood empty, rental costs rose, rental vacancies fell, house prices skyrocketed, the number of available properties bottomed out and homelessness increased. All of those factors existed, and yet those homes stood vacant for two years. Even when the houses were slated for redevelopment, they could have been used for emergency accommodation for people fleeing domestic violence or for temporary or transitional accommodation. They could have been used, full stop. But the Government left them empty.

It is too late now. I am told that squatters have been occupying the properties. The properties have been damaged and left to rot due to the Government's negligence. What a waste! I have been informed that the four houses are in such a state of disrepair that it is too expensive for the Government to make them habitable. That situation is emblematic of this Government's approach to public housing. It does not build and has not built new stock. It does not take care of the existing stock, and it does not care at all about the tenants who rely on public housing to stay out of homelessness.

The member for Castle Hill made some eloquent comments. He said that the Government's role is to ensure quality of service delivery. He spoke about better initiatives and better respect for taxpayers' money, and he said that the Government is investing in areas of need. The Government must have overlooked Wallsend because certainly it has been negligent in that area. Once again, I call on the Minister to get on with building new properties, and to ensure that existing properties are fit for human habitation and for the purpose of giving vulnerable people a safe and secure place to live. That is the Government's responsibility.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (12:16): I reject many of the assertions made by the member for Wallsend. I know that she is passionate about her constituents. That comes through in everything she does. This Government and the NSW Land and Housing Corporation are also passionate about the rights and needs of our tenants in the social housing estate. I know that because, until recently, I was the housing Minister. I am also proud of the work that we are doing in the Hunter. Only last year, on 3 November, we made a wonderful agreement with Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes to further explore and improve the public housing estate and opportunities in the Hunter. I am proud of the work that the agency is doing.

The member's statement that the Government does not care about those properties and the rights of tenants is a misrepresentation of the facts and of the many challenges we have in looking after tenants while also improving the public housing estate. Members need only consider the half a billion dollars that we spend every year maintaining our social housing estate. Per capita, New South Wales has the highest number of social housing properties in Australia. Victoria has about half the number we have. We have more than Queensland. We have taken up most of the funding from the National Housing Infrastructure Facility to ensure that we revitalise and improve public housing across New South Wales.

Are we saying that everything is perfect? Absolutely not. But we are striving to create local partnerships, to do the work with local communities to ensure that we maximise the social housing estate. We are alive to the fact that there are housing challenges, particularly in the Hunter and coastal New South Wales. But we have proven that, through our relationships and accords with people like Mayor Nuatali Nelmes, we are prepared to do things in a more organic way and work with local communities to provide more housing. We know that safe and secure housing is essential. We are committed to delivering more and better housing in the Newcastle region and across the entire State.

We want to support people in communities to ensure they have access to housing security, diversity and support, irrespective of whether they live in a metropolitan or a regional area and no matter their income or circumstance. We want to make sure people have choices that enable them to afford a home without compromising basic needs like food, clothing and transport. The Government supports people in crisis in Newcastle and across the State with social housing, and often pays for private rental costs to meet the demands of people that are in a vulnerable situation. We have a pipeline of new social housing developments under construction and are forecasting an increase in the number of new dwellings completed this year compared with last year.

As at 30 April 2022 the current forecast is that around 500 new social housing dwellings will be completed in New South Wales, with about 16 per cent of those dwellings located in regional New South Wales. Around 600 new dwellings will be contracted with builders to commence delivery in New South Wales, with about 20 per cent of those being in the regions. The forecast for completions this financial year is an increase from the 408 completed social housing dwellings achieved in the past financial year.

We are doing what we need to do, and there is no doubt there are challenges and a huge pent-up demand. I refer to the Financial Review yesterday. It is a positive, but with that positive comes the challenge of housing pressure. COVID has taught us that we do not have to live in this city; we can live in regional New South Wales. My party and I have been championing that forever, and COVID has shown that there is capacity to live outside of Sydney in regional New South Wales. We have had the highest growth in the regional population ever, since COVID, but we are aware that is putting pressure on supply.

The 20-year vision in our Land and Housing Corporation portfolio strategy ensures that we give the same rights to tenants and that we deal with tenants on a fair and proper basis. It is not as simple as saying, "There's an empty house here; let's move someone in tomorrow." We have to show the properties to those that are on the list, and if they do not want to take that property then we have to show somebody else. We go through that process, and I note the member for Wallsend is nodding in agreement. She is aware of those policies that the Government has continued and that were there previously, which create some timing challenges.

I understand it is frustrating to see an empty home, but we need to follow the processes and policies to ensure that we provide housing in a fair way. Minister Roberts and the Premier are absolutely committed to providing more housing supply and using the housing land that we have to do things more efficiently. I again highlight the relationship we have with the mayor of Newcastle, and I am sure it is reaping rewards. Where we have an old estate that can be enhanced and improved, we will do that as fast as possible.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:22): I thank the member for Wallsend, who raised this very important issue. The only downside to the motion is that every member could probably amend it by inserting their own little area into it. It applies to Blacktown and right across the State.

Ms Jenny Leong: Newtown.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Newtown, exactly. It does not matter if the electorate is in inner city, western Sydney or right across the State. But we do not want to amend the motion, because it would be nice just to get one up. The member for Oxley, a former housing Minister, stated that there were some timing challenges in renting out those houses. If I remember correctly, the member for Wallsend was talking about a particular example of a house being left vacant for 19 months so far. I do not think it is that hard to take a few people through to find another house. The longer a house is left vacant, the more damage and sustained problems it will have. Looking around the Blacktown area, people needing the studios and one-bedroom and four-bedroom houses are on a 10-year waiting list. Those who need two- to three-bedroom houses are on a five- to 10-year waiting list, according to the government website. The member for Wallsend was talking about housing affordability and people living in poverty, and it is a total disgrace that there is not enough support for people looking for homes.

The member for Oxley, and former housing Minister, asked why people do not come to regional New South Wales to live. A few people in the Blacktown area were happy to move to Taree and other areas, but when we tried to contact housing providers, this Government has unfortunately gone ballistic with outsourcing a lot of the social housing. Different agencies, community groups and charities run it and are doing the best that they possibly can, but the downside is that there is not one administration system. If someone wants to move from Blacktown, which is still mostly looked after by Housing NSW, to Taree, which is looked after by an outsourced body, then they go to the bottom of the list. They have to be reassessed, so they cannot be looked after or see where the vacant houses are.

The other problem the member for Wallsend mentioned was the state of the properties, and there are lots of examples. A person moved into a property in February 2021, and by March they noticed that there was mould growing through it. It was not properly maintained previously, and there were leaks in the bathroom et cetera. One month later they reported it to the department, and 12 months after that they came to my office saying that there are now mushrooms growing. They had reported the mould and mildew inside the house, which caused asthma for the kids. The kids had to move out, and they have all sorts of problems. They have been reporting it time after time. How can the department deal with those tenants with respect when it does not even get back to them?

On 1 April—probably the wrong day to do it—we contacted Housing NSW, and by mid-to-late May we still do not have a response to look after them. There is example after example where white ants have attacked houses and people have moved around. One tenant was in a hotel for about a month while they repaired the white

ant damage, and they did not remove the tree that caused the problem. They ended up being moved back in, and the white ants attacked the house again. The Government needs to be held to account. [*Time expired.*]

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (12:26): I thank the member for Wallsend for raising the important topic of social and affordable housing, particularly in our area of regional New South Wales. Ensuring everyone has a safe and stable home is an important problem now facing policymakers. In recent years, as a result of COVID and the changes to the way that we are living, we are seeing major pressure in regional New South Wales. I have spent some time investigating the problem in the Upper Hunter, looking at why we now have a lot of pressure on affordable housing. Large numbers of people are moving from Sydney into our regional towns and, of course, buying up a lot of our rental stock. The money that they are bringing from Sydney is great and is keeping our builders and carpenters busy, but they are taking houses off the market and renovating them and making homes for themselves.

We welcome everyone from Sydney to come to great places like the Upper Hunter, but it is now producing a huge challenge for policymakers, and the motion highlights that challenge. In investigating the Upper Hunter, I have been speaking to the local managers of social and affordable housing. Most people who are looking for social housing, strangely enough, want to get closer to the coast. I am surprised, but they do. They are applying for houses on the coast, and the challenge is finding them places. We now have that pressure back up the valley to the Upper Hunter. Just the other day in Scone, the Upper Hunter Shire Council looked at the pressure on affordable housing and some contributing factors to that. I acknowledge Compass Housing Services, which does a lot of maintenance work in our area, and people like its western operations manager Emma O'Hara, whom I have met with a number of times to help me get across this topic. She really cares about that housing stock and puts in some hard yards. The organisation is a good example of our agencies that are working hard to sort out this problem the best way they can.

There is a significant battle to be fought and the New South Wales Government—through the Land and Housing Corporation [LAHC], the Aboriginal Housing Office [AHO] and the Department of Communities and Justice—is on the front line of the challenge. Those organisations are guided by the *Housing 2041 – NSW Housing Strategy* and are helping to deliver on its 20-year vision. We have the largest social housing infrastructure portfolio in Australia. The LAHC owns approximately 125,000 social housing dwellings worth more than \$51 billion. The AHO owns approximately 6,000 properties valued at \$2.13 billion. Many of those estates and properties are aging. They were built at a different time for a different purpose. That is why we are looking to change and grow the New South Wales social housing portfolio so it can better meet today's needs. That is important as well. We want more people and families to have access to better housing. [*Time expired.*]

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:31): I support the excellent motion moved by the member for Wallsend, who continues to fight very hard for proper housing provision in her electorate. In fact, I have lost count of the number of absolutely desperate people who have contacted my office because they have made dozens of rental applications in my area and have been knocked back for every one of them. One case in particular stands out. A woman who recently retired wanted to downsize as her children are grown and moved out of home. She was living in a four-bedroom home and she wanted something smaller. She recognised that she was a single person living in a big house, and a larger family would probably better utilise that space. She could not find a single available property.

There is an absolute rental crisis in my local area. Public housing is meant to be the backstop against all of this. Instead, far too often I hear from people who have been on the public waiting list for years and who are becoming increasingly desperate to find somewhere to live. Housing's own figures paint a dire picture. As of June last year, there was a five- to 10-year wait for housing in the Lake Macquarie east allocation zone and most people face waits of over ten years in the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle allocation zones. Stable, low-cost housing can be the key to addressing issues like chronic and intergenerational unemployment. It can support people escaping traumatic or abusive family situations and can help people deal with mental health or substance abuse issues. Given that, it is unbelievable that any public housing property is allowed to sit vacant for any length of time, let alone 12 or 19 months. It is even worse that a property is allowed to sit vacant for so long that it becomes uninhabitable.

Housing maintenance is a perennial issue in the Charlestown electorate. As I have said before in this place, most of the work my office does on a day-to-day basis relates to public housing. Older houses, which were never meant to stand for as long as they have, have been allowed to decay in my local area. Patchwork maintenance that does nothing to address underlying problems allows issues to snowball. All the while, the Government barely seems to take notice. Recently one man came into my office, absolutely desperate for help. He has emphysema and he is living in a property absolutely infested with black mould.

He has been presented with two choices: keep trying to navigate the complicated and often unresponsive maintenance process, or move somewhere else and give up his home and his community. The fact that people are

faced with such choices is not good enough. After all, this is the highest taxing State in Australia. How can it be possible that a gentleman with emphysema living in a property infested with black mould has to either continue living there and deal with a complicated process to get maintenance or move somewhere else? Given the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's failure on this score, I am pleased that Federal Labor has committed to a Housing Australia Future Fund. It is so promising and sorely needed.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order concerns relevance. We are not debating the Federal election campaign; we are debating a motion in the New South Wales Parliament. The member for Charlestown was talking about the Federal Labor Party's policy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will hear further from the member for Charlestown.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Federal Labor's housing future fund will deliver 20,000 social housing properties over five years, including 4,000 allocated for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. This New South Wales Government, even with a Federal Labor win on Saturday, cannot sit on its hands. I join the member for Wallsend—[*Time expired.*]

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (12:35): I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion in the House. The New South Wales Government is delivering and is committed to delivering more and better social homes for the people of New South Wales. Since March 2020 the NSW Land and Housing Corporation [LAHC] has allocated \$868 million to bring forward planned property renewals and to deliver new social homes, capital upgrades and enhanced cleaning. Funding the building of new social housing in New South Wales has created and sustained around 2,600 jobs and local businesses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Another 2,000 construction service jobs are expected to be supported through accelerated maintenance and upgrades across the State. Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to review the social housing portfolio to identify opportunities to build more and better housing throughout New South Wales.

In October 2021 the Government announced that an additional \$183 million would be dedicated to fast-track more than 1,400 planned social homes to aid the State's economic recovery. Of this, \$80 million is being delivered through LAHC under two programs. Some \$50 million has been allocated to accelerate and unlock the future delivery of around 2,800 homes, including around 1,000 social homes, in western Sydney, Wagga Wagga and Coffs Harbour through acquisitions and Communities Plus projects in partnership with the private sector and community housing providers. Some \$30 million has been allocated to deliver 80 new small-scale social homes, primarily in western Sydney and regional New South Wales, by mid-2023.

Of the remaining \$103 million, the Department of Communities and Justice received \$60 million and the Aboriginal Housing Office received \$43 million to partner with the community housing sector to deliver more new homes to support Aboriginal families. When planning to build new social housing, the Government has been informed by the needs of people and families on the statewide housing register, which is maintained by the Department of Communities and Justice, and recognises the need to reduce the time people and families wait for housing. We realise that there are around 89 priority applicants and 1,277 general applicants on the waiting list within the Newcastle allocation zone, which includes Maryland. That is why we are committed to accelerating the delivery of more and better quality social housing, including in the Newcastle local government area [LGA], to meet demand.

Between 1 January 2020 and 30 April 2022, we delivered 22 social homes in Adamstown and Shortland, comprising 10 one-bedroom dwellings and 12 two-bedroom dwellings to help address demand. There are also 51 social housing dwellings in the pipeline that are currently under construction or with contracts soon to be awarded in the Newcastle LGA. I can assure members that we are working hard to deliver more social and affordable housing in the Newcastle LGA. Safe and secure housing is essential for people in need, and having more high-quality social homes means more people and families can access and benefit from stable housing.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:39): By leave: I thank the member for Wallsend for raising this critical issue and for alerting us all to yet another issue relating to this Government's dysfunctional public housing system in this State. In May 2020 I asked the then Minister for Water, Property and Housing, the member for Oxley, who was just in the Chamber, some questions that are key to this debate. The first was:

- (1) How many public housing dwellings were sold between 1 January 2020 and 21 May 2020?
- (2) How many new public housing dwellings were completed in the period between 1 January and 21 May 2020?

The third question is directly related to this debate:

- (3) How many public housing dwellings were vacant for more than one month as at April 2020?

The reply to the last question was:

- (3) As at 27 April 2020, 225 re-lettable public housing dwellings had been vacant for more than 30 days.
(a) 72 (of the 225 above) required significant maintenance.

Why, when we have a public housing waiting list of 50,000 applications, are we seeing this vacancy rate? Why were more than 70 of the houses uninhabitable? I am sure those figures are stitched up because we could all name multiple vacant dwellings throughout our electorates that have the same issue. During the same period 103 public housing dwellings were sold and a paltry number of 45 public housing dwellings were completed. We are losing our public housing stock. This issue does not exist only in the electorate of Newtown, which I represent, or the community of Wallsend, which the member who moved this motion represents, or the electorate of the member for Ballina, who is also in the Chamber. It is also an issue in the electorate of the member for Oxley, who was the housing Minister and oversaw this disastrous housing situation.

In Kempsey this year, a 16-year-old young woman who had been homeless on and off for most of her life was offered a home in a refurbished, flood-damaged cabin in a derelict former caravan park. The mid North Coast specialist youth homelessness service, YP Space, found the cabins in Port Macquarie and could afford to purchase them only because they were flood damaged. YP Space sold off most of its property assets to invest in a disused and derelict caravan park in the centre of town so it could provide some form of affordable housing for people aged between 16 and 25 who are experiencing homelessness.

When the former Minister was in the Chamber, she mentioned that there was a process. I can tell members that the process is broken. We have a serious problem because we have hundreds of homeless people sitting on a priority housing waiting list while we have \$51 billion in public housing assets that we have somehow failed to leverage to deliver more public housing to help solve the housing crisis in the State. In the Newtown electorate, as elsewhere throughout New South Wales, NSW Land and Housing Corporation [LAHC] is selling off public housing at a great rate. If it has 100 per cent of public housing on a block, it privatises 70 per cent. It claims to be delivering more housing under the Communities Plus model, but what it delivers is more density, more gifts to its developer mates and no solution to the housing crisis. The surplus it gains from the sales is put into the private market, into the coffers of other interested developers, and we see no solution to the public housing crisis.

Our office has a list of people waiting to be housed or transferred. I am sure every member's office in this Chamber has a list. People need more habitable homes. They need safe and secure places to live. No words can describe the level of frustration and trauma that people have experienced in this Dickensian situation of public housing in this State. Family & Community Services and LAHC are outsourcing all their care and responsibility to 1800 telephone lines that people wait on for hours. We have a punitive and petty system that demonstrates that when it comes to being a landlord in the State of New South Wales, this Liberal-Nationals Government is the worst.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:43): In reply: I thank the member for Oxley, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Blacktown, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Charlestown and the member for Newtown. As an MP for 14 years, I can say that public housing availability is the number one issue in my electorate and I am sure it is in all members' electorates. I hark back to the member for Newtown, who spoke very eloquently. One point she made, which rang true to me, is that there is a waiting list with 50,000 applications for public housing. At the same time, the Government is selling off public housing. It does not make sense and is not fair.

There is a housing crisis all over New South Wales. Even though Government members have not mentioned it, they too would have public housing tenants on that waiting list. The wait in Wallsend is 10 years. Sadly, yet again, the Government did not specifically address the concerns I raised. The member for Wollondilly spoke about it for 10 seconds but did not mention specific solutions. I thank the member for Blacktown because he talked about the maintenance concerns. When people report serious issues of maintenance, such as mould and broken buildings, they often get no action. That needs to be addressed.

I agree with the member for Upper Hunter. I am happy when people move from Sydney out to the regions. That is wonderful. But if they are going to do that, we need to build public housing stock for people in Muswellbrook and Singleton, and all the wonderful towns in the upper Hunter that the member represents. It is a wonderful region. The member for Charlestown talked about the vulnerability of people needing public housing. They are people who flee domestic violence, are on low incomes, come from unfortunate families, have disabilities or are elderly. This Government is not looking after those people and that is really sad.

We have a public housing crisis. I have a 10-year waiting list in Wallsend. I have excellent staff who know who to call to try to fix the problem, if it can be fixed. My staff cannot help my constituents because we have

people who are on this waiting list with 50,000 applications. Yet we have a number of dwellings in Maryland that have remained vacant for nearly two years. The Government is doing something wrong and it needs to start fixing it—now. I am sure it is the number one crisis in all Government members' electorates. I hope that they are honest enough and courageous enough to admit that this crisis is also in their electorates. Let us start dealing with it and get back to what the member for Castle Hill said—that is, the role of the Government is to ensure that there is quality of service delivery for everyone. Let us make sure that the Government is ensuring the quality of service delivery for our most vulnerable by building public housing. I urge the Government to support this sensible motion that affects us all.

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

Motion agreed to.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I inform the House that two media representatives have been authorised to either photograph or film the debate of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 from the Speaker's gallery on a pool basis.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warmly welcome those in the public gallery who are joining us for the final stages of debate on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill.

Bills

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL 2021

Returned

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

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 19 May 2022

No. 1 **Mitchell No. 1 [c2022-065A]**

Page 9, clause 22(d), line 34. Omit "(5)(b)". Insert instead "(5)".

No. 2 **Mitchell No. 2 [c2022-065A]**

Page 10, clause 23(2)(i), line 11. Omit "(5)(b)". Insert instead "(5)".

No. 3 **Searle No. 1 [c2022-105B]**

Page 69, clause 170(1). Insert after line 17—

- (aa) socio-demographic matters for applicants for voluntary assisted dying, including in relation to age, gender, local government area of residence and, if available, cultural background and level of education,

No. 4 **Searle No. 2 [c2022-105B]**

Page 69, clause 170(1). Insert after line 22—

- (ca) persons assessed as eligible for voluntary assisted dying in a first assessment,
- (cb) persons assessed as ineligible for voluntary assisted dying in a first assessment,
- (cc) persons assessed as eligible for voluntary assisted dying in a consulting assessment,
- (cd) persons assessed as ineligible for voluntary assisted dying in a consulting assessment,
- (ce) instances of persons being assessed as ineligible for voluntary assisted dying because the persons were acting because of pressure or duress,
- (cf) the number of voluntary assisted dying substance authorities granted,
- (cg) the number of voluntary assisted dying substance authorities refused,
- (ch) the number of times a voluntary assisted dying substance has been dispensed,

- (ci) the number of confirmed deaths from the self-administration of a voluntary assisted dying substance,
- (cj) the number of confirmed deaths from practitioner administration of a voluntary assisted dying substance,
- (ck) the number of instances of an unused voluntary assisted dying substance being given to an authorised disposer for disposal because the patient died before taking the substance,
- (cl) the number of instances of remaining voluntary assisted dying substance being given to an authorised disposer for disposal because it was left over after the patient died.

No. 5 **Searle No. 3 [c2022-105B]**

Page 70, clause 173(2). Insert after line 14—

- (ea) statistical information the Board is required to record and keep under section 170(1)(aa) and (ca)—(cl), and

No. 6 **Mitchell No. 1 [c2022-087A]**

Page 75. Insert after line 40—

184A Annual report to include information about palliative care spending

- (1) The Health Secretary must ensure that the annual report prepared under the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985* for the Ministry of Health for a financial year (a reporting year) includes the following information—
 - (a) the total amount spent by the Ministry on palliative care during the financial year preceding the reporting year,
 - (b) the aggregated amounts spent by the Ministry on palliative care during the 5 financial years preceding the reporting year,
 - (c) the total of the following for the reporting year—
 - (i) the number of persons to whom palliative care was provided during an admission to a public hospital,
 - (ii) the number of persons to whom palliative care was provided by the public health system other than during an admission to a public hospital.
- (2) The information included in the annual report under subsection (1) must be provided—
 - (a) for the State generally, and
 - (b) for each local health district.
- (3) In this section—

financial year has the same meaning as in the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985*.

local health district has the same meaning as in the *Health Services Act 1997*, section 8.

public health system has the same meaning as in the *Health Services Act 1997*, section 6.

public hospital has the same meaning as in the *Health Services Act 1997*, section 15.

No. 7 **Donnelly No. 2 [c2022-096]**

Page 76, clause 185(2)(b), line 11. Insert "and high quality care and treatment, including palliative care and treatment," before "as a person".

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:48): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

At the outset of this final stage of this long debate, on behalf of the advocates for reform, I thank the Hon. Adam Searle, who joins us in the Chamber, for returning the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 in good shape to the Legislative Assembly. It passed in the Legislative Council with some minor but important amendments, which will ensure that the reporting by the voluntary assisted dying board is consistent with the reporting of the Victorian voluntary assisting dying board, and also that there is increased oversight to palliative care funding and access in New South Wales. They are important amendments that we can all agree to.

I thank all those who have advocated long and hard for this reform. Many of them join us in the Chamber, fortunately. We have the amazing Penny Hackett, Shayne Higson and other board members from Dying with Dignity. I honour the amazing grassroots campaign effort of Dying with Dignity over so many years. We have the team from Go Gentle: Andrew Denton, Kiki Paul, Steve Offner and Frankie Bennett. I thank them for the expert advocacy they have brought to this reform, to make such a difference. I also acknowledge the many supportive organisations that have helped to get us to where we are today: the Nurses and Midwives' Association; the Council on the Ageing; the Older Women's Network; the Health Services Union, with a special shout-out to

Adam Hall; Cancer Voices; the Australian Paramedics Association; Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Assisted Dying; and Doctors for Assisting Dying Choice.

I also thank the co-sponsors of the bill for their leadership in getting the legislation through this Parliament. No bill in Australian parliamentary history has had more co-sponsors than this bill. I particularly acknowledge that we have brought together a coalition of people to support this reform who are Independents; Greens; Nationals; Shooters, Fishers and Farmers; and members of One Nation, the Liberal Party, the Labor Party and the Animal Justice Party. The entire diversity of this Parliament was reflected in support for the bill.

As members in this place know, we cannot achieve difficult reforms without our amazing staff. I pay tribute to all of the staff of members in the electorate offices who have had to handle the high volume of correspondence that has been generated as a result of the bill. In particular, I highlight the efforts of the amazing and indefatigable Tammie Nardone, who is in the Chamber, and the amazing Jason Gordon from Greg Piper's office. Both have worked tirelessly to help the passage of this legislation. I thank the opponents of the reform for the strong focus that they have put on palliative care and the need to increase funding for and access to palliative care in New South Wales—again, something that we can all agree on. I thank the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for allowing a conscience vote on the bill, which has brought people from both sides of the Parliament together to have a robust and, at times, difficult conversation.

I make three final points, and then let's get this done. Today New South Wales passes a threshold of honesty and compassion—honesty that not all people die well and compassion that people in New South Wales with an advanced terminal illness should have the same end-of-life choices as people in every other State. As we look to Saturday and the Federal election, we now need to focus on people in the Territories getting the same rights. It is incumbent on members of our Federal Parliament to ensure that those in the Territories are afforded the same rights. I also make the point, ahead of Saturday, that it is clear that Independent members of parliaments can deliver difficult reforms, but we can only do so by working with the parties in a collaborative and constructive way, as we have done with this reform. I seek the support of the House to adopt the Legislative Council's amendments and bring voluntary assisting dying into law in New South Wales.

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

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That concludes the consideration in detail. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 has now passed both Houses.

Motions

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE VOUCHERS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:56): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the Government's support for families through the provision of \$500 Before and After School Care [BASC] vouchers.
- (2) Notes that the \$155 million program will assist families by contributing to the parent gap fee component of their session fees.
- (3) Acknowledges that this program provides much-needed assistance to families and will also benefit providers.

I commend the New South Wales Government for its before and after school care [BASC] voucher initiative, which has already been a great success. More than 190,000 vouchers have already been welcomed and downloaded by families since the program's launch in February 2022. This exciting initiative provides \$500 vouchers to parents of children aged between four and 13 years who attend a primary school in New South Wales. Pleasingly, parents fitting that eligibility criteria can receive a voucher for each of their children, which will go a long way towards covering those out-of-pocket costs for families. It is understood one of those vouchers will provide a child with about 60 free before- and after-school care sessions.

We know that by supporting parents we are also supporting providers. Many before- and after-school care providers experienced a downturn in enrolments over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic as more parents worked from home and homeschooled their children. By making before- and after-school care more affordable and accessible, the New South Wales Government is demonstrating its commitment to supporting parents and children across the State and helping working families cut costs where they can. The vouchers can be used to cover the cost of the parent gap fee for vacation care sessions. Parents are eligible to apply for one voucher for each of their children until 30 September this year. I encourage all families to act now. Families also have the flexibility of using the vouchers with an eligible before- and after-school care provider until 31 December 2022. However, voucher credit can be used for services up to 20 June 2023.

Our State Government is offering more than 70 rebates and vouchers to help families save, as part of the New South Wales Government's Savings Finder. The program has saved families about \$5.8 billion since its launch in 2017. With families' work and educational habits thrown into chaos in the past two years as the world adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to provide support to parents and children as we continue to transition back to normality. The New South Wales Government recognises that need, and I commend it on its efforts to make the transition as smooth as possible.

I particularly note the value of the before and after school care voucher program regarding women's presence in the workforce. We saw that COVID-19 had a disproportionate impact on women, and cushioning the financial blow of before- and after-school care is a sure-fire way of making sure that women do not continue to be disadvantaged. With women more likely to remain at home full-time or work fewer days a week to care for children, the before- and after-school care vouchers will directly impact women's roles in the workforce. We need to ensure that, as New South Wales moves out of the COVID-19 pandemic, women do not get left behind. Reducing the cost of out-of-school-hours care means mothers will have the opportunity to return to work and to continue investing in their careers. Furthermore, by reducing the out-of-pocket costs of child care, both parents will be afforded the freedom to choose when to go back to work, knowing their children will have access to safe and reliable care.

Making out-of-school-hours care readily available is not only of benefit to working parents, but a big plus for children, opening up a range of social and educational activities to them. Easing the financial burden of child care also means the additional days or hours worked by a household's secondary earner—who is more often than not a woman—are not dictated by whether or not they can afford to send their child to before- or after-school care. Parents have been through the ringer in the past couple of years, having to juggle working remotely, family life and homeschooling. Some parents have had to forego paid work so that they can supervise children in remote learning. So it is pleasing to note that the New South Wales Government has not turned a blind eye to those stressors. Raising a family, even without a one-in-100-year event, has its challenges. But with the added pressure of a worldwide pandemic, I again commend the New South Wales Government for its investment in family life and wellbeing through this voucher program.

Families experienced unprecedented challenges during the pandemic. The Government's tailored and targeted funding response is a vote of confidence for parents returning to the workforce and children returning to full-time in-class learning. The significant impact of the pandemic on the out-of-school-hours industry has not gone unnoticed by the New South Wales Government. The program provides much-needed stimulus to the industry. The initiative has been embraced by before- and after-school care providers, with 846 providers signing up to accept the voucher. To ensure all eligible before- and after-school care providers have an opportunity to benefit from the voucher program, registration is open until 20 September 2022. I encourage all out-of-school-hours care providers to register for the voucher program. They should feel confident in the success of the initiative.

Payments to before- and after-school care providers will be automatically processed by Service NSW within 14 business days of the voucher redemption process. A family's childcare subsidy entitlements will not be reduced by redeeming the \$500 voucher. The voucher will cover the family's gap fee until the \$500 is expended. Therefore, the voucher scheme does not undercut the benefit of the Child Care Subsidy and is an all-round advantage to families. The New South Wales Government is also open to working with providers in the case of a service transfer to ensure that parents do not lose the value of the BASC voucher initiative.

The \$155 million BASC voucher program is part of the New South Wales Government's \$235 million commitment to expanding access to before- and after-school care services for families across the State. The BASC voucher program saw great success almost immediately, with more than 80 vouchers downloaded in the first six weeks after its launch. As well as helping parents, the BASC voucher program will provide a much-needed boost to out-of-school-hours care services. This is yet another example of the New South Wales Government taking charge of a challenging situation and helping to ease the burdens faced by both families and businesses.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:03): As the member for Hawkesbury has said, accessible and affordable before- and after-school care is essential for local families. In my electorate of Port Stephens, and across the State, hundreds of thousands of working parents rely on these vital services in order to fully participate in the workforce so they and their families can get ahead. The motion has been written and moved by the Government to congratulate itself, which should be kept in mind. NSW Labor will not oppose the motion because we support additional assistance for local working parents and we support this particular program. But I find it strange that the Government would choose to put forward this motion on before- and after-school care when it has spectacularly failed to deliver its own policy commitment from the 2019 election in this sector.

Only three years ago, the Government promised to open up every public primary school for before- and after-school care by 2021. Did Government members not know that the Government had said that going into the

last election? I did not hear any mention of it in the motion or in Government members' contributions to debate today. According to the Government's election announcement, before- and after-school care would be made available to all parents with children in public primary schools by 2021. Yet it is 2022 and parents are still struggling to get their children into before- and after-school care. The Government promised that public primary schools in Sydney, Newcastle, the Illawarra and on the Central Coast, as well as major regional centres, would be required to open their playgrounds, halls or classrooms for before- and after-school care and school holiday care from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

But somehow the Government has forgotten to mention that part of its policy in the motion. Three years ago it was one of the Government's centrepiece election commitments, but now it does not even rate a mention. Why? That is obvious: 2021 has come and gone and the Government has not delivered what it promised. In fact, it is getting harder and harder to get a place in before- and after-school care. Local parents are turning down work or reducing their hours because the Government has failed to deliver on its promise. The reality is these vouchers can only be used if you are lucky enough to secure a place, otherwise you are on your own.

The Government should be focused on making more places available to hardworking parents instead of moving self-congratulatory motions in the Legislative Assembly. We are dealing with a motion by the Government that entirely ignores its own promises, its own policy and its spectacular failure to deliver. Working parents must be rightly shaking their heads and wondering what on earth is going on in this Parliament. With the cost of living soaring, I am hearing from local families how hard it is to afford child care and out-of-hours care for their children. At the early voting centre in Raymond Terrace last week, young couples told me that the cost of child care and early education was an enormous issue for them. It was the biggest issue that they were thinking about when going into the polling booths.

A young mother I spoke to is considering leaving work because it is costing her more in childcare fees than she earns going to work. It is little wonder it is a struggle because, courtesy of the Morrison Government, Australia now ranks second in the world for most expensive child care. In 2018 the Morrison Government announced its childcare package with much fanfare, after an inquiry into the childcare system by the Productivity Commission. It introduced the Child Care Subsidy as a way of funding child care, which parents rely on for out-of-hours care. It promised that the new scheme would be simpler and result in cheaper child care for all. What happened? Instead of delivering on that promise, the Morrison Government's big reform was a big dud. In this sector, there has been a spectacular fail from the Morrison Government and a spectacular fail from the Perrottet Government to deliver out-of-hours care places, which is impacting families today. We should be discussing that on the floor of Parliament today, not a self-congratulatory motion—

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order: I seek clarification on whether the member for Port Stephens is speaking to the motion before the House. She keeps speaking about early childhood education, which is an entirely different age group to before- and after-school care, and she is talking about the Morrison Government. I am not sure if the member realises that the Morrison Government is not within this building. Mr Temporary Speaker, I ask that you check whether or not the member is being relevant to the motion. I suggest that she be brought back to the motion before the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Port Stephens may continue.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: What I am saying is entirely relevant to the motion before the House, which is about out-of-hours care. How do families pay for out-of-hours care? They pay for it out of their own pockets. They pay for it through the Child Care Subsidy, which is also part of the scheme that has been a spectacular failure in this sector for the families of New South Wales.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order: I seek from the Clerks the number of the standing order. Could they advise me what the point of order is? We are talking about before and after school care vouchers that the New South Wales Government has issued. We are not talking about the Morrison Government and preschoolers who need support. The member is not talking to the motion. Could I have some advice from the Clerk on the standing order number for the point of order?

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: You don't get that benefit.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: You can't ask for the standing order number because you don't know it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): There is no point of order. The member for Port Stephens will continue.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: That point of order is entirely irrelevant and the interjections are designed to prevent what I am saying—that is, the Minister walked into this venture not realising that her own policy had

spectacularly failed in delivering out-of-hours care places, as promised, to hardworking families across New South Wales. The Minister also spectacularly failed to mention the Morrison Government's failure to deliver a simple and accessible childcare and out-of-hours school care scheme for hardworking families across New South Wales.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:10): I support the motion moved by the member for Hawkesbury. It is great that the member for Port Stephens focused on early childhood education. Unlike members opposite, I am probably one of the only people in this Chamber who utilises early childhood education every day of the week for my family. I have an intimate understanding of the childcare system, its schemes and all the Federal Government policies pertaining to the Child Care Subsidy and access to early childhood education. But that is not the point of the motion. It is not even the level of government that we are representing in this House. As the member for Port Stephens said time and again, her complaints are with a different government, in a different jurisdiction, in a different Territory, in a different city, in a different building and a different Parliament. If she had spoken about the substantive motion before her, we would have welcomed that because we want to talk about children and families, the cost of living and the challenges for families across New South Wales.

What we welcome from members opposite is support for before- and after-school care and reforms to the system to increase capacity and the number of spaces. That is what we are doing, so we can take the pressure off parents and reduce the costs for families. That will produce a huge cost-of-living benefit for families across New South Wales. I do not think many people in this place would have a more intimate understanding of the day-to-day impacts of raising a small family than I would. I acknowledge the member for Coffs Harbour, who is in the House, has young children as well. Unfortunately, to be frank, there are not enough people in this place with young families and there are not enough women in this place with families, so I think we are uniquely qualified to contribute to this motion today.

Significant work has been done on the before and after school voucher program. This Government initiative was to make sure that we supported families in the most effective way. In recent years not only have we significantly increased the number of spaces in before- and after-school care but also we have driven down the wait lists that previously existed that hampered the economic opportunity for women to return to the workforce. We have made a lasting difference to people's lives in doing that. The voucher scheme mentioned in the member for Hawkesbury's motion has considerably contributed to reducing the cost of living for families. The vouchers will help parents across New South Wales recover out-of-pocket costs.

The \$155 million voucher program is part of the total \$235 million before- and after-school care program that has a range of funding benefits for our children and families across the State, including funds for facilities and equipment; small, remote and regional schools that are tailored to their needs; specialist teams to support principals to administer services; and for a new website and mobile app. The Department of Education understands that in particular areas of rural and remote New South Wales, as the member opposite was referring to, there has to be an approach that is not one size fits all. The department is working to identify and prioritise the needs of those families.

This Government is working with schools, services and communities in our cities, and regional and remote New South Wales, to ensure that no child or family—no matter where they live—is left behind or disadvantaged. It has worked with the PCYC to ensure that it is delivering outcomes. The vouchers, available through the Service NSW app, are driving down costs for families. It is just one of several successful programs that this Government has introduced for families. Other vouchers include Parents NSW, First Lap, Stay NSW, and Dine & Discover. There is only one side of the House that focuses on the cost of living for families and that is the Government side. The Liberal-Nationals are making a difference for families.

Debate interrupted.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR LAKEMBA

MEMBER FOR SUMMER HILL

MEMBER FOR WOLLONDILLY

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Lakemba, the member for Summer Hill and the member for Wollondilly all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope they have some wonderful celebrations planned.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: As I acknowledged earlier, we are privileged to have Mr Stephen Twigg in the Speaker's gallery today. Stephen is the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA]. He is accompanied by Mr Jack Hardcastle, who is the Programmes Manager of the association. I welcome them both. Mr Twigg was with us for breakfast, morning tea and lunch at different events, so he is well fed. He is going to have to work for his supper because there is a program commencing next Monday as part of the CPA Parliamentary Academy's Advanced Parliamentary Development Residency Programme, which is being hosted by the New South Wales Parliament in conjunction with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

There will be about 40 international visitors participating in that program. If you see them around the Parliament, make them feel welcome. I also extend a warm welcome to the guests of the member for Wagga Wagga: Margaret Fielding, Anthony Waizer, Gail Waizer, Willow Waizer, Arwen Waizer and Vikki Fielding. I also welcome to the public gallery the guests of the member for East Hills. They are school captains and vice-captains from Condell Park Christian School and Condell Park High School: Elizaveta, Louisa, Jad, Roseanne, Cindy and Erastus.

*Announcements***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that a media representative has been authorised to take still photographs from the Speaker's gallery during question time on a pool basis. A photographer from the Department of Parliamentary Services has also been authorised to take photographs from the Speaker's gallery to capture the events of question time and the new debate timing system in action. The photographs will be used for a range of communication channels, including *Parli-Projects*, *Speakermail* and the *LA News*.

*Question Time***TAXATION**

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:19): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier confirm that the Australian Bureau of Statistics' taxation revenue report released on 26 April 2022 shows that the people of New South Wales pay more State and local taxes per person, at \$4,759, than in any other State or Territory in the country?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:20): I begin with an indulgence. What is going on with the internet in this place? We have given record budgets, but the internet is not working. I cannot get messages. My text messages cannot find their way into the media because I cannot even send them. But I come back to the question. It is interesting that the Opposition and I are on the same page. Last night I was working and got a bit distracted, so I found myself on the United States tax rates page. I went back to 1981. It was a great year, with a great president. In 1981 President Ronald Reagan cut the capital gains tax from 28 per cent—

Ms Jo Haylen: Were you born then?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It was the year before I was born. He cut the capital gains tax from 28 per cent to 20 per cent. At the time, that tax was bringing \$12 billion in revenue into the United States. Five years later, at a 20 per cent tax rate, the revenue being brought into the United States under that tax increased from \$12 billion to \$52 billion. As we know, as conservatives and as the Liberal-Nationals, when you cut the tax rate, you build consumer confidence and business confidence. You increase the economy and revenue comes in, which is a good thing. Here is the next part of the lesson—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Then what happened? In 1987 Congress decided to increase the tax rate back to 28 per cent. What happened to revenue straight away? It fell from \$52 billion to \$33 billion.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is not a lecture on Reaganomics; it is a lecture on Dominomics. We want to know why the Government is taxing the hell out of the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being sufficiently relevant to the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The point is, as the Government has been saying all week, when you cut tax, as the Government has, like increasing payroll tax—for example, under Labor there was a threshold of \$700,000, which the Government increased to \$1.2 million. What happened? Unemployment dropped, confidence increased in businesses and confidence increased in consumers. Guess what else happened? Revenue increased as well. That is how economics works, and that is why the Liberal-Nationals way is the better way. Under Labor, you will have higher taxes, less revenue and, off the back of that, worse customer services, less nurses, less teachers and less police officers.

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:23): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberal-Nationals Government is creating a brighter future for the families and small businesses of New South Wales?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23): I will. I will also continue my last answer to the Leader of the Opposition because the principles are the same. What did we see today? The unemployment rate in New South Wales at 3½ per cent. It is the lowest on record in the history of our State. Why? Because by reducing taxes we are driving record business confidence, as the Treasurer knows, and record consumer confidence.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The public is getting out again and spending money. Businesses are investing and more people are in work. That is the Liberals' and The Nationals' way. The figures are incredibly pleasing. Employment in New South Wales is up 93,200 people on pre-COVID levels and 51,600 on the pre-Delta peak level. So we are in a better position now than before the pandemic. Why? Because in this State we cut taxes, and drive consumer and business confidence. That confidence is reverberating around every corner of our State. The other interesting figure is the underemployment rate, which is 5½ per cent in New South Wales. That is the lowest of any State in the country. Seasonally adjusted figures for this month alone show full-time jobs have increased by 19,300. Part-time jobs have decreased, but the overall increase in jobs is 6,600.

Every day Labor talks about the cost of living and concerns about rising inflation. The best thing a Government can do to help with the cost of living is provide the environment for people to have a job, go to work and provide for their families. That is exactly what the Liberals and The Nationals are doing. That is good news for the people of our State. It is the reason there are such miserable faces on the other side of the House, like the member for Liverpool's. He is a great Reagan fan. He is a true believer on that side of the House. He knows too well because he has been around for a while. He was there in Reagan's day. He knows all too well the economic prosperity that low-taxing policies created. We are seeing exactly the same in New South Wales: lower taxes, higher business and consumer confidence and, off the back of that, the lowest unemployment rate in the State's recorded history.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:26): My question is directed to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier said:

Almost every year the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal comes out with an increase in public transport fares, and we do not do it ...

Yet this year fares went up by 1.5 per cent; last year the peak window was extended to capture more people at that higher rate; and the year before last fares went up by 1.9 per cent. Given that, is it not really the case that almost every year the Government increases public transport fares?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:27): Mr Speaker—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: What was it? A rise of 1.9 per cent seems pretty good to me. I will take that. That is actually success. New South Wales leads the country in public transport ticket price subsidies. The article that the member for Summer Hill was quoted in implied some secret plan that Labor has to complain against the subsidies that we have in New South Wales.

Ms Jo Haylen: It is your Government's document, Dom.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Yes, it is! I know you have been in Opposition the entire time. What happens is the Government looks at the policies and the members of the public service say, "Wow, this

Liberal-Nationals Government is subsidising public transport to the hilt. Maybe it shouldn't subsidise so much." They say to the transport Minister, "Hey, Minister, do you know that we're subsidising public transport more than anyone else in the country?" The Minister sits there and says, "Yes, I do." They say, "Why do you do that?" and he says, "Because I care about the people of New South Wales." That is what the Liberals and The Nationals do. We are proud of the fact that we subsidise public transport.

Ms Jo Haylen: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Rather than being mansplained to about the way government policy is developed, I want to know whether the Premier has misled the House? Yesterday he said, "We do not do it, " but he does.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The Premier has directly answered the question. I call the member for Oxley to order for the second time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Summer Hill is not the Jo I used to know. That passionate leftie is all gone now that she is supporting police powers and locking up protesters, even though she used to be one. On this side of the House we will continue to focus on putting downward pressure on prices. That is what we have done. When the public servants say, "Do you know that we could get some more revenue?" we say "We don't need it," because we are a low-taxing Government that grows the economy. It is so embarrassing. I feel like I am giving a lecture to children.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is why under Labor we were above the national unemployment rate 90 per cent of the time, but during the entire term of the Liberal-Nationals Government we have been under the average national unemployment rate. Our policies work; their policies lead to misery.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (14:30): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what is being done to help regional residents travel through New South Wales?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:30): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. He is a member who understands the importance and value of having good roads in his electorate. He is getting the Muswellbrook bypass delivered. The Singleton bypass is being delivered, and we have already delivered the Scone bypass. That is over \$1 billion worth of roads—just on those three bypasses—in the electorate of the member for Upper Hunter. On this side of the House we know that travel in the regions is not as easy as it is in the city. It is easy for those opposite to catch a bus, train or taxi to get from point A to point B. But in regional and rural New South Wales, the options are not that easy. It can be more challenging to get around in those communities. That is why the New South Wales Liberals are spending billions of dollars on infrastructure across this State. We are building and providing better services for our communities and we are helping our residents with the cost of living.

Members know how much I love the regional seniors travel card. I know it has been a huge success. In the Chamber and the corridors of Parliament, the members of this place ask me, "How is the regional seniors travel card?" Every day the Premier rings me for an update as well. I will not hold members in suspense any longer. I can tell them that on Monday we handed out the 1,000,000th regional seniors travel card since 2020. In three years we have delivered over one million cards to regional seniors across this State. What do they win? They win a \$250 preloaded Visa card! That is \$250 that they can use towards fuel, taxis or pre-booked NSW TrainLink coach and train services.

All the time seniors tell me how much of a difference the card has made. They say, "I can now go and see my grandkids," and "It makes it more affordable for me to go to the shops," and "Now I am able to keep those medical appointments." Remember, this is a card that Labor did not want. Labor did not want to match the card at the last election. Now the member for Newcastle, the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Campbelltown are all saying, "What a great card! We want to see this card expanded into our communities." The problem is it is not a card for them; it is for regional communities. While Labor tries to work out where regional New South Wales is, on this side of the House we will continue to deliver for our communities. What about Sunday's Great Western Highway announcement! We announced that Australia's longest road tunnel—an 11-kilometre road tunnel—will be built here. [*Extension of time*]

What a win it was for the people of the Blue Mountains and the Central West to actually see that project being announced, which will create around 3,900 jobs during construction. I have been waiting to hear from the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads on this matter, but I have heard nothing. In fact, I had to look

this morning to see if there is a shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. I went zooming down the list, and there it was: It is the member for Maitland, and I have heard nothing from her about this road. In fact, the member for Maitland has not asked a question in this place since 13 May 2021—372 days ago.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Don't tell me it is him again!

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. What is the point of order?

Mr Ron Hoenig: It is under Standing Order 129. Whether the member for Maitland has asked him a question is not even generally relevant to the question he was asked.

The SPEAKER: It was the first slight digression and it is in order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The road is an incredible investment and an important project for this State. The member for Maitland has disappeared, like the Country Labor Party has disappeared. Before the member for Macquarie Fields asks me, the answer is no, you will not have the regional seniors travel card. But on this side of the House—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The Deputy Premier has now gone beyond a slight digression. Mr Speaker, I ask that you bring him back to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will return to the leave of the question.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Members on this side of the House will continue to invest \$110 billion in infrastructure across this State. The investments that have been made under the Liberal Party and The Nationals in government are making a difference to the lives of people each and every day, and we will not stop.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:36): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that last year the Minister for Transport raised Opal fares by 1.5 per cent, "in line with inflation", and given inflation is currently 4.4 per cent and is forecast to reach over 6 per cent, are those the kinds of price rises the Premier will impose on New South Wales commuters in July?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:37): Thank goodness it is Thursday and we are out of here after this. Who would like a fact? Here is the fact. Public transport fares under Labor increased by what?

Mr David Elliott: Twenty per cent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Twenty? It was more over the period of the Labor Government.

Mr David Elliott: Twenty-five per cent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No, more.

Mr David Elliott: Forty per cent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: More.

Mr David Elliott: Fifty per cent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: More.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Sixty per cent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Sixty per cent—the Minister for Planning has got it. Under Labor, public transport fares increased by 60 per cent. Now let us compare and contrast. Over the Liberal Party and The Nationals' term in government, public transport fares have reduced in real terms by 12 per cent. Even the Leader of the Opposition is shocked; he will be fact-checking. They are studying it on the computer. Is it true? Yes, it is. They are facts. Why? Once again, it is because the Liberal Party and The Nationals are managing the economy and can put downward pressure on prices. In opposition, Labor members talk a big game.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: But we know what happens straightaway. We are creating the environment for jobs right across the State. The member for Londonderry is taking matters into her own hands. Lady Macbeth from Londonderry is taking matters into her own hands to get her own job from the member for Mount Druit. There she was before question time—"Out, damned spot!", she says. "Will these hands ne'er be

clean?" They will not be, Prue, because thou cannot undo what thou hath done. I say to the member for Mount Druitt: We will look after you. We are concerned, because she hath the taste of blood.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: How about a poor fool that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Who was better?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Anyway, they are undisputed facts: Public transport fares went up by 60 per cent under Labor; they went down by 12 per cent under the Liberal Party and The Nationals.

JOBS GROWTH

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (14:40): My question is addressed to the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is creating the jobs of the future?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:40): I thank the member for Monaro for her wonderful question, on a day when the unemployment rate in New South Wales is down to 3.5 per cent. What an outstanding day for our State, taking into consideration that today there are over 93,000 more people with a job in our State than before the COVID pandemic. That is an extraordinary endorsement of the economic management credentials of those people and is the very definition of a brighter future for people across this State.

The Government is adding to that as well, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. A really great example of that is the Modern Manufacturing Initiative at South Jerrabomberra, in the electorate of Monaro, where we are creating a new satellite manufacturing hub. It is between South Jerrabomberra, a regional location, and Botany. It is a partnership between Electro Optic Systems, Gilmour Space Technologies and Nova Systems to make sure that we have the smart technology jobs base, both in regional New South Wales and here in Sydney, that will lead to \$71 million in investment in new technologies.

Another wonderful new initiative involves another business in the space sector here in New South Wales, Space Machines Company [SMC], partnering up with SpaceX to make sure that technology developed here in New South Wales can be used internationally and in space to launch satellite technology. The company, SMC, was only able to do that because it participated in the New South Wales Government's Going Global program, where it was able to create that relationship with SpaceX. That is exactly the type of thing we need to keep doing to make sure the new technologies that will shape the jobs of the future, both in regional New South Wales and here in Sydney, continue to take shape.

That is what happens when the Government manages the economy in a strong way—it is able to lower taxes, lower the cost of running a business, lower the cost of public transport and invest in businesses that continue to create jobs of the future. The Government has also launched a new discussion paper around the future of industry policy in this State—something that New South Wales has not done in over 20 years. The changing nature of the economy means that Government members have to keep updating our policy settings, and we have engaged and consulted with the industry.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: That industry paper has been welcomed by the Australian Industry Group. Helen Waldron, the head of AIG in New South Wales, said:

The consultative approach by the NSW Government to the development of industry policy is very welcome and highly regarded. The Government is showing an openness to ideas from across the community into this area of policy. It is a policy area that is of growing importance as we look for new sources of economic activity and employment growth as our economy changes.

[Extension of time]

Jennifer Westacott, the head of the Business Council of Australia [BCA], said:

The NSW Government's efforts to coordinate industry strategies across the economy is the right way to build momentum and get new industries off the ground.

She went on to say:

This will go a long way to giving the people of NSW confidence that they can come back stronger from the pandemic, with more jobs, more opportunities and a brighter future.

The BCA and the AIG get it. Those wonderful businesses in Sydney and across regional New South Wales are getting support from the New South Wales Government. That is the exact opposite to what we have heard from

those on the other side of the Chamber. We consistently hear this message about revenue: If you lower the cost of doing business by having lower tax rates, businesses do better. Those opposite do not understand that. When businesses make more profit, they pay more tax. That allows us to invest in better-quality services, like increasing the subsidy for public transport. That is why that side of the House increased the cost of public transport by 60 per cent and why we were able to lower the cost of public transport by 12 per cent. Those on the other side of the Chamber never understood those basic principles of economic management. That is why they ran our economy into the ground.

Under the Government, some 93,000 more people have a job today despite the State being faced with the most significant economic challenge it has seen in 100 years. Those people are able to pay the way for their families, put food on the table and strengthen their local communities. Economic management matters because it impacts on people's lives. Everyone on this side of the Chamber gets it; everyone on that side of the Chamber is still taking lectures from the Premier.

ISOLATED PATIENTS TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (14:45): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Noting the importance of cancer patients accessing clinical trials to get the latest treatments, will the Government commit to ongoing funding to allow patients to use the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme to help them access these potentially life-saving treatments?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (14:46): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. I know that he is not only a physician in his local area but also very committed to supporting the new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, which I think is worth \$461 million. Certainly the Liberal-Nationals Government is extremely supportive of trying to ensure that all residents across rural and regional New South Wales get the support they need to have the health services they require. In relation to the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme, we have also been working very hard to try to make it more equitable, to assist the residents of rural and regional New South Wales. Since we came into government, its budget has more than doubled. It has gone from just over \$12 million to about \$27 million.

Last year 26,000 people sought and obtained assistance through the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme. That involved almost 60,000 claims, but obviously people have multiple claims from time to time. The member for Wagga Wagga will also recollect that not that long ago in the New South Wales Parliament a parliamentary inquiry looked at issues to do with the subsidy scheme. In late 2018 the Government implemented a number of the recommendations that were made. That was the start of an implementation process. We removed the co-payment arrangements and subsidised the cost of booking fees when there was travel by public transport, including air travel. There was also an attempt to reduce red tape, although that is always a problem in government.

One of the issues that had been put to me and to the Government generally was that there was no need for doctors to approve applications for financial assistance towards the cost of an escort for an individual who needs assistance. At the moment the Government is certainly looking at other options, particularly around clinical trials. Clinical trials are very important. We want to make the non-commercial trials more accessible and we are looking at how we might do that. I think the member's suggestion on that front is obviously admirable, but we have already been looking at those issues. Hopefully, we might be able to further enhance the scheme to ensure that residents in rural and regional areas can get subsidies specifically for those clinical trials. I encourage the member to watch this space because we are working on it presently.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:49): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on this year's flu season and what individuals should do to mitigate the impact of flu upon them their families and the wider community?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (14:49): I thank the member for Holsworthy. She has been very involved in a lot of health issues, making sure that, particularly in south-western Sydney, the Government puts front and centre getting health services up to world-class standards. We already have an amazing hospital there. It involved half a billion dollars of new development, which was completed in about 2012 or 2013. Just a few weeks ago she and I were at the hospital to turn the first sod for a \$790 million development of a new section. I know the medical staff are very excited about it. I do not want to be the bearer of bad news.

Mr Michael Daley: It is too late for that!

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I agree. I thank the member for Maroubra for his interjection. I do not want to be the bearer of bad news but there is bad news, which is that we still have COVID. There is still a pandemic going on. Members may not have noticed it, but there is. The message is: Be cautious and wear masks if you are anywhere near other people whom you think you should be trying to separate yourself from; do not come to work and stay home if you are sick; and, of course, hand hygiene is still important. It actually worked really well. Not a lot of good came out of COVID, but there was a bit, and one good thing was there has been no flu in the past couple of years. But now the flu has found a good target in New South Wales, and indeed in Australia, and is circulating quite widely off the back of changes to COVID restrictions.

The NSW Health respiratory surveillance report for the week ending 14 May, which was published today, indicates that hospital and laboratory surveillance continues to show a sharp increase in influenza activity in the community, and much earlier in the year than has been observed in previous winter influenza seasons. Of the 30,801 tests conducted for influenza, the proportion of positive results has increased to 12.4 per cent from 9 per cent just a week ago. It is shooting up at a great rate. We need to be very aware that our emergency department presentations for influenza-like illnesses are escalating quickly. We had 129 admissions this week. The previous week there were just 60. Influenza A is the dominant circulating strain. Influenza A (H1N1) is mostly circulating in children, so people should be cautious with their children. Influenza A (H3N2) is affecting adults. *[Extension of time]*

The short answer is that everyone six months and older is recommended to get a flu shot as soon as possible as that is the best way to mitigate against the effects of the flu season. It is free for those considered to be at higher risk of severe illness—that is, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from six months of age, children from six months to under five years of age, people with serious health conditions, pregnant women, and people over 65. I do not know anybody like that. I say to everyone: Go and get your flu shot as soon as possible. You can get it from your pharmacist or GP. There are a whole lot of places to get it, but you need to go and get your flu shot as soon as possible. Some members will know that just yesterday the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia offered free influenza vaccinations to MPs in the Parliament building. Those members who did not get their shot need to get it. Those members who got it should make sure they tell their local residents to get their flu shots as soon as possible.

Finally, some people think flu is not serious; flu killed hundreds of people 2½ to three years ago and more than 1,000 the year before that just in New South Wales. We need to take flu very seriously. It is quite a serious illness. It can kill and debilitate. The time for getting vaccinated is now. People should not put it off. It is not one of those jobs that you put off for a week or two, because next week you could be in an emergency department [ED] taking up space. We are flat chat in the EDs at the moment. Health staff are already absolutely exhausted from 2½ years of COVID and caring for us. If people do not care about themselves, they should care about the health staff because those staff do not want to see them in their hospitals. The EDs and the ambulances are already flat out. Go and have a flu shot.

TAXATION

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (14:54): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier continues to say that the Government has cut taxes in New South Wales, why then does the Australian Bureau of Statistics' taxation revenue report clearly state that State and local taxes paid per person in New South Wales went up over 9 per cent financial year 2020 to financial year 2021, when gross State product per capita grew only 1 per cent?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:54): We thought you were one of the smart ones.

Mr Jason Li: Point of order: Personal disparagement towards a member is inappropriate.

The SPEAKER: Is the member for Strathfield asking the Premier to withdraw? I think the member is asking the Premier to withdraw the comment. It is the Premier's decision whether he chooses to do so.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was giving him a compliment. I was told that he was one of the smart ones.

The SPEAKER: The member for Strathfield will direct his comments through the Chair if he wishes to persist with his point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No-one gets offended in this place. It is a rule. If you want to be offended, go to the upper House.

The SPEAKER: I cannot direct the Premier to withdraw the comment.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There are moments in this place when it dawns upon you that they are just not ready. They just have not got it. As the jobs Minister just said—we have gone through this for the entire

question time—if the economy is going well, if businesses are doing well and selling products and making money, what do they do? They pay tax. What happens if you are not doing well, people are not coming into the store and you are not making money? You do not pay tax and you probably sack your staff. The unemployment rate increases and then confidence decreases. What does Labor do? It increases taxes, and then revenue falls. That is the Labor way. I will give you an example about Labor—it was a stat that I just received. Women's unemployment in New South Wales when we came to office, in March 2011, was 5.8 per cent. Today, it is 3.3 per cent. More people are working, we have lower tax rates in this State and greater business confidence, consumer confidence is at record highs—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —and people across the State, after getting through the pandemic, two difficult years, are full of hope. They are full of confidence in the future. What does Labor want to do? It wants to run scare campaigns and talk our State down. Good news for the people of New South Wales is bad news for Labor. They know it. That is why the Liberals and The Nationals will continue to provide opportunity and prosperity for the people of our State.

COST OF LIVING

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:57): My question is addressed to the Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on what steps the Liberals and The Nationals are taking to ease cost-of-living pressures and encourage water efficiency?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (14:58): I thank the member for Camden for his great question. He is a member who understands the cost-of-living pressures in his electorate and across New South Wales. He continually knocks on our doors and says, "What can we do to think outside the square to ease those cost-of-living pressures like energy costs, like water costs?" One thing that we have done is help ease the cost-of-living pressures by introducing water and energy efficiency measures.

One of the successful programs was to replace water- and energy-guzzling washing machines with modern, state-of-the-art, new ones. Successful applicants could choose between four different-sized machines. They would then pay between \$150 and \$250 for a brand new machine, which included delivery, installation, removal and recycling of the old appliance. That represented a significant saving of up to \$800 on a new machine. Those machines were rolled out to 43 council areas, and will save up to 25,000 litres of water a year and reduce power bills by \$245 a year per person. The uptake on that simple but effective program has been incredible. Jamie Thaiday is one of the 3,000 recipients. She has nine children. Imagine the cost of doing all that washing. Imagine how much she is going to save by that new machine.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: This program will help to reduce her electricity bill and significantly reduce her water usage, as well, with the new machine.

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

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Really? That is interesting. The savings made by this particular resident, one of the 3,000, have been quite incredible. Coupled with tax cuts and coupled with revenue raising, we end up with a better economy. We end up with simple economics. That is what it is all about. I know that that is what drives our economy, quite unlike those opposite. Think about what those opposite did under their watch: a sorry legacy of cost-of-living measures, upping the public transport bills, which skyrocketed by 60 per cent.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Under Labor, electricity costs were up by 158 per cent. When it comes to taxes, these guys put it up.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: We reduce taxes. The Liberals and The Nationals are the only parties that can be relied upon to support and cut the cost-of-living measures.

TAXATION

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:01): My question is directed to the Premier. Last year the people of New South Wales paid \$4,795 per person in State and local taxes, a figure that went up by 9.4 per cent in the last year. Will the Premier inform the House how much more that figure will go up next year?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:01): I am done. Have I explained it? When people do well, when the State goes well and the economy grows, revenue comes in. Change the questions. Do you know what? Revenue will continue to increase as the economy grows and confidence grows and people do well. What do you not understand? You are not ready. There is the member for Keira. Remember your effort at the Parliamentary Budget Office? I am going to message Albo this afternoon, who is running away from his costings and feeling pretty bad, and remind him about your performance in the Parliamentary Budget Office. Remember your effort?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You are talking about taxes?

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You run a record of cutting all our tax breaks. Member for Keira, it was you. Do you remember? It was you. Remember stamp duty, payroll tax, the tax on the farmer—

Ms Liesl Tesch: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier seems to have lost sight of the question. How much more will that increase of 9.4 per cent from this year go up next year?

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being generally relevant, but he will return to the leave of the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Here is a question. How much tax do you pay if you do not have a job?

Mr David Elliott: None.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: None. That is what happens under Labor: high unemployment rates. The economy goes backwards and tax goes up because they have to find a way to get revenue in. That is why, under Labor, we had a high unemployment rate and we did not have any infrastructure investment across our State. They had to close schools and close hospitals. New South Wales was the worst performing economy in the country.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Premier is being relevant, if that is the member's point of order.

Ms Liesl Tesch: The question is about increases for next year.

The SPEAKER: It is not capable of a precise answer. The Premier has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: My expectation is that if the economy continues to go well, which it is likely to do under the Liberal-Nationals, then revenue will increase. That is a positive thing. If Labor wins the Federal election on the weekend, I am not sure what damage that will do to the economy, but I still believe that New South Wales will be able to withstand that, as we have stood on our feet over the past 11 years. Under the Liberal-Nationals Government we know we have lower tax rates, a stronger economy and better opportunities for people across New South Wales.

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

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY AND BIOSECURITY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government continues to combat biosecurity threats to our agriculture industry?

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:05): I thank the member for the question. My word, I will. Yesterday, as people were thronging out of the Chamber after question time, I tabled the *State of Biosecurity Report 2018-2021*. Right now, it is worth noting by this House that it is more important than ever to be on the front foot if there is a possible biosecurity outbreak. One thing we have definitely seen with COVID-19 is just how quickly life can change with a virus or disease. Any type of serious biosecurity incident will impact our export trade, lock down our supply chains and impact our food production. It is no exaggeration to say that we are vulnerable right now to a major exotic disease.

A CSIRO report from 2020 predicted a 42 per cent probability of a significant major disease outbreak in Australia within the next five years. Unfortunately, that risk has increased with a recent outbreak of lumpy skin disease in Indonesia. Hot on the heels of the lumpy skin disease outbreak is the disturbing spread of foot-and-mouth disease, again in our backyard in Indonesia. So what are the costs? It is estimated that lumpy skin disease would cost our economy \$6 million a day during an initial outbreak, while foot-and-mouth disease could cost around \$7.1 billion, even if it was controlled in three months, and \$16 billion if it lasted a year. With lumpy skin disease and foot-and-mouth disease detected and spreading just to our north, we have now essentially lost our geographical barrier, and the risk of either or both entering Australia has increased dramatically.

The *State of Biosecurity Report* that I tabled yesterday is a snapshot of the work we have done to keep our State safe from biosecurity threats. The report shows that we have saved around \$360 million through investing in programs to reduce the impacts of established pests, diseases and weeds. Since 2018 there has been a 15 per cent increase in public reporting of biosecurity concerns and a 20 per cent increase in farmers adopting biosecurity management plans. To keep up with the rising threats, we are going to have to step up, and that is what we are doing now. That is why I have set up an industry-led group to focus on what we need to do right now to prevent and prepare for a major biosecurity incursion. That group includes Animal Health Australia, our Chief Veterinary Officer, biosecurity experts and supply chain stakeholders including peak industry bodies, transport operators and livestock agents.

New South Wales can lead the country with mRNA vaccine development through our incredible researchers at the Department of Primary Industries. I will be leading the call for our country to ramp up the development of this important technology to keep our livestock industry safe. Biosecurity is now my absolute top priority and, as threats continue to increase, this Government will certainly respond. We will be deploying new technologies and resources to keep unwanted pests and diseases out, and to keep our farming communities safe. Biosecurity is everyone's business. The Liberal-Nationals Government will keep working hard to protect our agriculture industry.

TAXATION

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:08): My question is directed to the Premier. To interrogate some of the Premier's answers from earlier today, over the last year the economy has grown per capita at 1.4 per cent, yet the tax take is a massive 9.4 per cent over the same period. How can the Premier explain why the tax increases are outpacing the growth of the economy?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:09): This is the most frustrating question time I have ever sat through in 11 years. They are so uneducated. It is embarrassing. The Member for Lakemba is a school teacher. He is not asking a question because he knows. They have asked him to ask one and he has said, "No way. I am not asking him a question." Whereas the new guy is quite smart. We were just talking about taxes. The Minister for Health reminds me that when Labor were in office, it introduced the vendor duty tax—that 2.25 per cent tax on the sale of investment properties. They got us on the purchase through stamp duty and they got us on the sale with vendor tax. They got us walking in and they got us walking out. Under Labor, 11 new taxes were introduced.

Mr Paul Scully: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

Mr Paul Scully: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was quite simple. It was about this Government, about the Perrottet Government, about tax taken last year and about economic growth last year. If the Premier is too embarrassed about being the highest taxing State in the country, he should answer the question.

The SPEAKER: I am happy to rule on the point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You have to be kidding. We cut taxes.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. That is not how to take a point of order. I place the member for Wollongong on three calls to order. The Premier was asked a specific question. He may refer back to his earlier answers, but I ask him to answer the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The payroll tax threshold was \$700,000 under Labor. We increased it to \$1.2 million. Small businesses in New South Wales are paying less tax under the Liberal-Nationals.

Mr Brad Hazzard: You said that before.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I know. I have been saying it all question time. Labor introduced 11 taxes. It increased tax 21 times. We have been cutting taxes. Labor opposed the tax cuts at the last election. It wanted to

put taxes on farmers in the middle of a drought. Small businesses are paying less tax now than ever before. We indexed the thresholds for stamp duty so people would pay less stamp duty. Labor opposed that too. As a result, the economy has grown in New South Wales. We have come through the pandemic in an incredibly strong position, investing record amounts to keep people safe. In addition, we have cut taxes, we have kept businesses open and today we have the lowest unemployment rate in recorded history.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Our State is doing well. Taxes are lower and the people of New South Wales are winning.

COURT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:12): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will he update the House on how the Government is supporting citizens and businesses to access justice by investing in court infrastructure?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (15:12): I can see the Opposition trembling with excitement over the riveting details of this important investment, but it is an important investment. We announced in our 2021 budget \$150 million to turbocharge court infrastructure, both the hardware and a digital transformation of our justice system. That is driving economic recovery, driving productivity, improving access to justice and, importantly, creating jobs. On jobs, what a great set of announcements today. What a beautiful set of numbers, and what a beautiful set of Commonwealth numbers. Can anyone in the Opposition tell us what the unemployment rate was nationally today? They are all sitting there stony-faced. I think they have Albania. Write down "3.9 per cent" and hand it on a cheat sheet to Mr Albanese so that he does not forget. In New South Wales we have the lowest unemployment rate since records began in the mid-1970s—3.5 per cent. Part of driving that incredible job growth is our investment in court infrastructure in New South Wales. Those jobs have been created in Albury, and I thank the member for Albury for his question.

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: He did the deed and turned the sod to start the \$6.4 million upgrade of Albury courthouse earlier this month, which will result in a new courtroom, new magistrate's chambers, a new jury assembly room, two audiovisual link [AVL] suites and a remote witness room. That is on top of the half a million dollar upgrade undertaken in 2020 as part of the Government's package to appoint seven extra District Court judges. There are AVL upgrades happening in courthouses across the State. It is important that people have access to that modern technology. In particular, it is important that domestic violence complainants and vulnerable witnesses have access to safe AVL rooms. In the four years to 2020, the Government put AVL technology in 122 rooms. Over the past several months, more have been installed, and in the next four months there will be 22 more locations in New South Wales with AVL upgrades and new AVL capability—an investment totalling \$4.7 million. That includes new AVL technology at, among other places, Sutherland, Cobar and Tumut, and AVL upgrades at Wilcannia, Wentworth, Queens Square and Deniliquin.

Since November the Government has installed or upgraded safe rooms at 43 locations across New South Wales, including at Mudgee, Parramatta, Burwood, Penrith and Bankstown. Works are currently underway at Mudgee and Bathurst. The Government has doubled the speed of the network bandwidth at locations such as Burwood, Cooma, Moss Vale, Muswellbrook, Parkes, Penrith, Queanbeyan and Tamworth. [*Extension of time*]

There are 20 courts in New South Wales where the network bandwidth has been doubled. The Government is doubling or more than doubling the bandwidth at another 16 courts over the next few months, including Casino, Deniliquin, Orange, Walgett, Wentworth, Wilcannia and Woy Woy. Video conference platforms have also been improved. Back in 2020, the average number of concurrent conferences that could be held in a day was seven and the maximum concurrent videoconference participant capacity was 420. Today, there can be 119 videoconferences happening at once, instead of seven, and 2,000 participants rather than 420. There is also the ability now to livestream court proceedings on YouTube. Last year, one case attracted 50,000 live online viewers.

A wi-fi pilot is being undertaken so that the judiciary, department employees and other court users can connect better when working in our courts and tribunals. The pilot is taking place in four locations, including Parramatta and Burwood. This year it will be expanded to a further 12 locations, including Waverley, Campbelltown, Sutherland, Penrith, Liverpool, Bankstown, Wollongong, Gosford, Lismore and Coffs Harbour. This is all about making sure that our State's courts can operate in the twenty-first century; that vulnerable witnesses, including domestic violence complainants, have appropriately safe places to go in courts; that we are creating jobs, improving productivity and driving efficiency in justice; and, most importantly, that there is access to justice for all our citizens in the twenty-first century.

POLITICAL LOBBYING

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:17): My question is directed to the Premier. It has now been 11 months since the ICAC released a damning report on lobbying in New South Wales. When will the Government finally respond to this report and commit to fixing lobbying in New South Wales by adopting the ICAC's recommendations?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:17): Who would have thought we would see the day when The Greens know more about economics than Labor? That day has finally arrived.

Mr Jamie Parker: I have an economics degree.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Well, can you teach them, Jamie? Teach them. I thank the member for his question, and note his genuine and longstanding interest in integrity matters.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In February 2019 the ICAC commenced Operation Eclipse, on its own initiative, to investigate the regulation of lobbying, access and influence in New South Wales. Operation Eclipse followed a 2010 investigation into lobbying called Operation Halifax. The member for Balmain will remember that all of the 17 recommendations in the ICAC's report on Operation Halifax have been implemented by the Government in full, in part or by alternative means. In particular, the Government introduced the lobbying Act, and reforms in 2014 established the Electoral Commission as the independent regulator of lobbyists. The purpose of the new inquiry, Operation Eclipse, was to examine factors that could either allow, encourage or cause corrupt conduct, or detract from the integrity and good repute of public administration. It was not an investigation into any specific person or any specific allegation of corrupt conduct.

On 22 June 2021 the ICAC published the Eclipse report, making nine key findings and 29 recommendations for reform to the regulatory framework for lobbying. The report does not make any findings of wrongdoing. The recommendations made by the ICAC fall into four broad categories: proposed reform of the regulatory framework for lobbying in New South Wales, including changes to the lobbying Act and the lobbyists code of conduct, and the creation of a new dedicated New South Wales lobbying commissioner; proposed changes relating to the publication of diaries and release of overseas travel information; recommendations primarily directed at the New South Wales Parliament concerning training and an extension of the existing prohibition on paid advocacy in the members' code of conduct; and establishment of a lobbying reform panel to examine and formulate proposed legislative reforms over a 12-month period.

As members know, these are not trivial matters. There are a number of matters included in the report that must be dealt with in a thorough and sensitive manner. As the ICAC itself recognises, most lobbyists are reputable people doing an important job. But members would be aware of the concerns that I have previously expressed about the potentially damaging role of lobbyists in political organisations, whether they are third-party lobbyists, trade union lobbyists or environmental lobbyists who are sitting on key administrative bodies of political parties. I regret that the Government response has taken some time to be developed. But I can confirm to the member for Balmain that the response is nearing finalisation and will be tabled next month.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:20): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is securing jobs for the people of New South Wales through its investment in transport infrastructure projects?

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Wollongong that if he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber for 24 hours. I remind the member for Maroubra, the member for Canterbury, the member for Wollongong and the member for Keira that they are each on three calls to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans) (15:22): Mr Speaker—

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I thank the member for Willoughby for his question, and I note his strong interest and advocacy for transport across his community and the entire State. He knows very well that the New South Wales Coalition Government is fair dinkum about delivering world-class infrastructure—the type of infrastructure that those opposite have promised but never delivered. I am a very proud westie, but not one of those wannabe

westies like those sitting opposite, who seem to be popping up all over the place. The member for Castle Hill is very happy at the moment because the Labor candidate for Parramatta has promised a brand new aged-care facility in his electorate, 26 kilometres away from Parramatta—very good work from the New South Wales Labor Party, promising projects in other people's electorates.

I was pleased to return to western Sydney with my Federal counterpart last month to announce \$538 million for service and civil works across the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport project, contracted to three outstanding mid-tier western Sydney-based civil contractors: Burton Contractors, who are well-known to those involved in construction; JK Williams; and Mulgoa Quarries. These are fantastic employers, fantastic engineering firms, well-recognised in the civil and engineering fraternity. More than 20 per cent of the workforce for the project are westies—just like me and the member for Castle Hill. The project will source a minimum of 50 per cent Australian steel to shape the Western Parkland City. There is also Sydenham railway station, which is part of a \$301 million upgrade.

To finish the week on a high, I will go through the list. In the past three weeks we have opened the East Hills railway station, providing 386 jobs; Banksia railway station, providing 9,324 jobs; Hurlstone Park railway station, providing 320 jobs; and Warwick Farm commuter car park, providing 530 jobs. Some 95 per cent of the track work across the Sydney Metro City and Southwest has been laid, engaging 50,000 workers by the time it opens. We are in a jobs festival in New South Wales. It is a bounty of employment—something that can only be provided by the Coalition Government.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

Reports

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: On behalf of the Chair: I table report No. 2/57 of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety entitled *Mobile speed camera enforcement programs in NSW*, dated May 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Reports

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES: As Chair: I table report No. 2/57 of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics entitled *Options available to the House regarding the withholding of remuneration and other entitlements of a Member suspended from the service of the House*, dated May 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: APOLOGY TO STOLEN GENERATIONS TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to alter the routine of business following the prayer and acknowledgement of country on Tuesday 7 June 2022 to provide for:

- (1) Stolen Generations survivors to address the House from the floor of the Chamber.
- (2) The moving of a motion without notice by the Premier regarding the twenty-fifth anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations.
- (3) The following speaking times for members addressing the motion:
 - (a) Premier: 10 minutes;
 - (b) Leader of the Opposition: 10 minutes; and
 - (c) other members: five minutes each.
- (4) The motion to be interrupted at 1.15 p.m. and set down as Government business order of the day for a later hour, with the Speaker to then leave the Chair until 2.15 p.m.

- (5) The giving of general business notices of motions (general notices) for a period of 15 minutes following the routine of business after question time.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 105, general business order of the day (for bills) No. 1 has lapsed. I order that a message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the lapsing of general business order of the day (for bills) No. 1.

Community Recognition Statements

WINTER SOLSTICE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:28): As many members would know, winter solstice is the day of the year that has the least daylight hours. It usually occurs in mid-June. For those who reside in the Albury border region it has another meaning: breaking the silence on suicide. This year marks 10 years for parents Stuart and Annette Baker since they lost their 15-year-old daughter in 2011. The winter solstice represents the day Stuart and Annette refused to be silent, despite their grief, after they had been dealing with the stigma surrounding suicide. This is a special evening that brings together family, friends, survivors of suicide and the community as a whole in the heart of Albury at QEII Square. Presentations are held with incredible speakers and entertainers, and candles are lit for those who are no longer with us. In this way a moment of support can be provided to the parents, friends and carers who are left behind navigating the complex system and attitudes that prevail. In this and many other ways we must continue to advocate for improved mental health services and listen to survivors tell their stories.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:29): Knowing this week is National Volunteer Week and next week is National Palliative Care Week, I recognise the fantastic work of Maitland volunteers supporting our palliative care patients and their families. The theme of National Palliative Care Week this year is "Palliative Care: It's Your Right". It seeks to raise awareness about the rights of all Australians to access high-quality palliative care when and where they need it. It also strives to broaden the community's perceptions, understanding and appreciation of palliative care, demonstrating its role of supporting the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of thousands of people. It is an important message in my electorate. Established in 1986, Friends of Palliative Care in Maitland raises funds to support individuals, their families and carers in the Maitland, Dungog, Singleton, Cessnock and surrounding areas. I also acknowledge the many volunteers with Volunteers for Palliative Care, which has been operating for 25 years, providing care, respite, transport and other hands-on support for patients in Maitland and surrounding areas.

TRIBUTE TO RON GRAY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:30): The banana industry has lost one of its finest with the passing of Ron Gray, aged 84. Ron was a third-generation banana grower from Woolgoolga; in fact, his family were pioneers in the banana and timber industries. Ron began growing bananas full-time in the early 1950s after leaving school, and only retired in recent years. In that time he rose to local, State and national representation of the banana industry. Ron served as local district president as well as chairman of the Australian Banana Growers Council. Ron was also a successful commercial banana grower. He was ahead of his time when it came to irrigation, nutrition and instilling soil testing in his growing practices. He was always generous with his time and continued representing local growers into his retirement. Ron's funeral at Northern Beaches Anglican Church, Woolgoolga, was well attended by a wide cross-section of our community. I extend my condolences to Ron's family and his many friends across the Coffs Coast and beyond.

GOOD360 REDISTRIBUTION CENTRE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:31): On Monday 16 May 2022 I was pleased to visit the Good360 redistribution centre in Smithfield with my Labor parliamentary colleagues Chris Minns, Jihad Dib and Guy Zangari. Good360 donates goods from retail stores to charities. That results in spare goods going to the most vulnerable in our community. Its local store donation program has resulted in over 300 million items being donated from 183 Big W stores to over 300 charities Australia-wide. Good360 has made a significant contribution to communities affected by the recent floods. It has also provided local jobs to our western Sydney community at its redistribution centre. I acknowledge the leadership team at Good360 who welcomed us, including Alison Covington, Matt Barnett, Cheryl Johns, Tom Sawkins, Ebony Cameron and Susan Wallis. I thank Good360 for a very insightful tour of its facilities at the redistribution centre. Our community greatly appreciates its contribution.

NSW YOUTH PARLIAMENT REPRESENTATIVE DAINA KERR

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (15:32): I recognise Mulwaree High School student Daina Kerr. Miss Kerr was chosen to represent Goulburn for The Ys in the NSW Youth Parliament program in 2021. This wonderful initiative provides for one student from each State electorate to participate in workshops and community engagement as well as debating and presenting bills to the Legislative Assembly. Miss Kerr was very clear that her focus was on education in regional and rural areas. Whilst her group did not get to present a bill before the Legislative Assembly, I understand the experience was a great learning opportunity, demonstrating how actions can create a "ripple effect in society". Miss Kerr had participated in an online activist program with The Y and says that she is now keen to be involved in activism in the future. Miss Kerr would like to become a caseworker and return to a rural region to utilise her knowledge and skills. I congratulate Daina on her selection and acknowledge her positive and enthusiastic disposition.

HERMIDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:33): For the next three years the seven students from Hermidale Public School are growing an 85-hectare wheat crop in the back paddock behind the school, which is part of a three-year cropping immersion project. Students will increase their knowledge of farming, working the land in a sustainable manner and developing an understanding of environmental implications facing the agricultural sector. Through the funds raised from the cropping project the students will participate in amazing learning experiences each year. The 2022 educational, cultural and social immersion project will take students to the Northern Territory from 19 June to 1 July 2022. The seven students will explore Darwin, visit Jabiru State School, immerse themselves in the natural beauty of Kakadu and Litchfield national parks and be inspired by the art, culture and history of Australia's Top End. The 2023 project proposed destination is Melbourne and in 2024 the proposed destinations are Tasmania or The Great Barrier Reef. I congratulate the team at Hermidale Public School and the community on providing this opportunity for the children. Real-life learning experiences such as these are important development steps in supporting a positive future.

GRENFELL PRESCHOOL & LONG DAY CARE CENTRE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (15:34): It is a pleasure to highlight Grenfell Preschool & Long Day Care Centre, which is one of several fantastic preschools in my electorate. It has provided early childhood services to Grenfell and, through the Weddin Mobile Preschool Service, to surrounding villages for several decades. Over this time the centre has experienced considerable growth, with about 150 children currently in attendance, from infants through to preschoolers. With a tremendous team of staff and a great support network, it is fantastic to keep up to date with the various initiatives at the centre. In addition to the centre's amazing work supporting our littlest learners, it recently congratulated Laraine Bland on 20 years of service. I congratulate Laraine. The centre is also promoting various upcoming events and local charities, including fundraising in support of Can Assist Grenfell. I thank all staff, with the support of the management committee, for their efforts on a daily basis in support of Weddin shire's little ones and for taking an ever-growing role as a stalwart of the Grenfell community. I look forward to seeing them again soon.

PHUOC HUE BUDDHIST MONASTERY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:35): On Sunday 15 May I had the great pleasure of attending the Phuoc Hue Buddhist Monastery in Wetherill Park to celebrate the birth of the Lord Shakyamuni Buddha on his 2646th year. Vesak celebrations are well attended each year, with people coming from far and wide to join their friends, family and community to partake in the various ceremonies and celebrations for the birth of the Lord Buddha. I thank the Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, OAM, and the executive committee of the Phuoc Hue temple for their kind invitation to join them for this celebration.

MISS GALAXY AUSTRALIA LISA CRAIG

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:36): I congratulate Mount Annan resident Lisa Craig, who was recently crowned Miss Galaxy Australia and has qualified to compete for the International Miss Galaxy crown in the final tournaments to be held in Texas in the United States in June. To be crowned Miss Galaxy Australia, which is one of four titles under the Galaxy banner, Lisa had to apply to be interviewed, make local appearances, volunteer, fundraise, dance, model swimwear and evening wear, and be involved in photoshoots. Lisa has volunteered with Lifeline and at the Miracle Babies Foundation. She was also involved in a number of appearances and fundraisers, including a social media giveaway raising money for Make-A-Wish Australia and more. I congratulate Lisa once again, and I wish her all the best as she prepares to compete for the International Miss Galaxy crown.

STORYTELLER DOTTIE WILSON

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:37): Today I acknowledge the achievements of Deniliquin superstar Dottie Wilson. In December Dottie won the prestigious ABC Heywire storytelling competition for her brilliant piece on breaking the stigma of being a foster child. Dottie is an inspiration to all young people who are trying to fulfil their dreams in the face of adversity. At just three weeks old, she was placed in foster care with a loving family. But she copped fierce bullying at school, which led to her having anxiety attacks. Despite excellent grades, she felt she had to leave school in year 9. She worked hard on herself for the next 12 months, went to TAFE and did a year 12 equivalency so quickly that she graduated two years early. Dottie is now going to university to study law. As she is a strong, experienced advocate, I will be seeking out her views on TAFE, foster care and youth issues to see what improvements we need to make. I thank Dottie for educating me and inspiring our future generations.

NORTHWEST REGIONAL CAREERS EXPO

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (15:38): I thank the organisers of the Northwest Regional Careers Expo, who gave their time this week to invest in the future of our students. The final years of schooling can be a challenging time for students. They are faced with decisions that may have very real impacts on the rest of their lives. They are also faced with the prospect of entering the workforce or deciding on a tertiary education path, which is why the Northwest Regional Careers Expo is so important. Students had the opportunity to learn about hundreds of university and TAFE courses, traineeships, apprenticeships and opportunities offered by some of our region's major employers. Thousands of students from across the north-west made their way through the expo, learning from those who walked a similar path before them. I know that many students left with a greater idea of where they wanted to go in life. I thank the Rotary Club of Tamworth First Light for sponsoring the event, and I say a special thank you to the club president, Marina Hearne, who coordinated the event. I thank all volunteers involved in this very special event.

GROW URBAN SHADE TREES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:39): I give a big shout-out to Grow Urban Shade Trees, or GUST, for planting its 700th tree on the peninsula. Made up of a growing number of volunteer local residents, GUST has been making the peninsula a cooler and more pleasant environment since 2015. Locals know that the peninsula can be a hot and dry place in summer, and GUST is changing that one tree at a time. I thank the community volunteers for all the planting, advocacy and education they provide on the importance of having trees on our streets. Given the peninsula is an urban heat island and global temperatures are rising, it would be wonderful if the Central Coast Council could work more collaboratively with this vital community group to improve the future health and wellbeing of peninsula residents. To everyone at GUST I say keep up the great work of making the peninsula a better and more beautiful place to live.

VETERANS CENTRE AUSTRALIA DIRECTOR DAVID ROSSITER RETIREMENT

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:40): I express and put on record my sincere thanks to Mr David Rossiter. David was a member of the Veterans Centre Australia board of directors from 2017 until 2022 and has been deputy chair since 2019. He recently announced his retirement from those positions. On behalf of the Veterans Centre Australia—the board, the clients and the broader community—I express my deep gratitude to David for his tireless efforts and service. He has gone above and beyond in his service and commitment to the veterans community through his participation as deputy chair of the board of the Veterans Centre Australia. Our community is better thanks to the service of people like David Rossiter. David, thank you.

ABRUZZESI ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:41): The Abruzzesi Association of New South Wales hosted the annual Renewal Day at Smithfield RSL on Sunday 15 May 2022. After a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the association was back with its first event of the year. The Renewal Festa is an opportunity for members to come together after the new year period to celebrate and plan for the year ahead. At the event, the upcoming 2022 festivities were announced for the members, including the annual picnic day, the harbour cruise and the world Abruzzo day, which acknowledges the contributions of migrants from the Abruzzo region of Italy. Every year the association channels its fundraising efforts towards a worthy cause. This year all funds raised will be donated to dementia research. I express my sincere gratitude to the association president, Mr Luigi Bucciarelli, and the Abruzzesi Association of New South Wales committee for its work promoting Abruzzesi culture and tradition, as well as fundraising locally for worthy causes.

MIA BALES ANZAC DAY ADDRESS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:42): I recognise Mia Bales of Camden Haven High School, who addressed the Laurieton Anzac Day service by sharing a moving tribute to her great-great-grandfather, who served in the 5th Field Ambulance during the Great War. Mia shared Private Geoffrey Bell Hughes' harrowing personal account of his deployment. Private Hughes kept daily records of the atrocities of war. In July 1916 he wrote:

Up all night dressing wounds. It is awful shelling something terrific. How one can live through this I do not know. Without any exaggeration there is not one yard of ground untouched by shell. No wonder men are demoralised by this perfect hell.

Sadly, Private Geoffrey Bell Hughes died in 1929 after succumbing to the long-term effects of gas exposure in the trenches. Mia aptly described the after-effects of war by sharing the intergenerational impact that his death has had on her family, having died when her grand nan was just three years old. I congratulate Mia on her exceptional address. I am confident that all in attendance left with a better understanding of the effects of war and the importance of remembering the sacrifices our Anzacs made. Lest we forget.

RANDWICK NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:43): I was so happy to join everyone at Randwick Netball Association to launch its netball season. I thank everyone who made the launch the amazing community event that it was. It warms my heart to see so many people, especially women and girls, hit the court and find happiness, a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment, better physical and mental health outcomes, friendship and so much more. As someone who has always been serious about sport, I know its benefits never leave you. Netball is the most popular sport for Australian women to participate in, so it was a joy to be able to celebrate the season launch with so many locals who love the game. I thank everyone at the association for making it possible. Without all the volunteers, coaches, referees, parents and friends, the netball season would not be possible. Good luck to all of the teams involved this season.

MADDISON CROFT

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:43): I congratulate second-year university student and Dubbo local Maddison Croft on being awarded the Bill Hall Bursary under the Gallipoli Scholarship Fund program. Maddi is studying teaching at the University of Newcastle. It is the second year that she has been successful in being part of the program. To qualify for the bursary, Maddi had to be a direct descendent of someone who has served in war; be affected by circumstances that impact on her ability to study; and have a grade average of distinction or above. Maddi ticks all the boxes: Her grandfather, Private Rodney Kevin Croft, fought in World War II; she has achieved distinctions and high distinctions in her studies; and her sister, Molly Croft, was diagnosed with bone cancer. As a result of Molly's cancer, Maddi finds it hard to commit to a job. She says, "I do work in disability support, but this bursary means I don't have to do as much of that, and it takes the pressure off. It means I can see Moll when she needs me." That is fantastic. I am proud to recognise Maddi's achievements. I know that she will make a wonderful teacher and will be an asset to the profession and the entire region.

EURELLA COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:44): I acknowledge the work of disability employer Eurella Community Services, which recently opened new premises in Auburn. A registered NDIS provider, Eurella was established in 1953 by Burwood parents to provide employment. It has recently moved to a new packaging and assembly site in Auburn, which is home to many staff who are an important part of the supply chain. During COVID lockdowns, they did vital work in packing testing kits for NSW Health. We have often recognised the frontline work of health staff during COVID, but I acknowledge the hard work of the workers of Eurella in keeping us safe. I was delighted to help open the new facilities alongside the many workers and families who support the organisation. At the centre of Eurella are hardworking staff who enjoy a fantastic relationship with their co-workers and who are valued highly by their client companies for the important work that they do. Staff member Max, who is a big *Star Wars* fan and has a skill for numbers, helped cut the ribbon. Another staff member Andrew, a musician and actor, performed *You Raise Me Up* for those in attendance. I thank CEO Patricia Abraham and the team at Eurella.

JOHN TODD

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:45): I recognise the 30 fantastic years of service to the Western Sydney Business Centre given by Penrith's John Todd. John is a doyen of supporters of small business across the Penrith community. He is highly respected and well regarded. I would go so far as to say that potentially he has supported the creation of more jobs in the Penrith community than almost any other individual.

Recently it was fantastic that we were able to recognise his 30 years of service at a surprise gathering organised by John's son, Michael. It was well supported by many people across the Penrith business community. It would be remiss of me not to recognise the fantastic work of the Western Sydney Business Centre board, which has been a strong supporter of John's fantastic work over the full length of the journey. John Todd is an absolute champion in our community who has done amazing work. I am pleased to take this opportunity to recognise John's 30 years of service to business in the Penrith community.

ZHI SOON

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:46): I recognise Zhi Soon, who is Labor's candidate for the Federal electorate of Banks. Zhi represents the best of Australia. He is a hard worker, a high achiever, a contributor and a great bloke. When Zhi was three, he and his family migrated from Malaysia. He grew up in Revesby, attending Revesby Public School and Picnic Point Primary School. He then went to Hurlstone Agricultural High School, where he was school captain. He studied at the Australian National University, where his passion for education and public service grew. In 2008 his contributions to the field were recognised when he was awarded Australian Capital Territory Young Australian of the Year. Zhi has served as an Australian diplomat in Afghanistan. He spent over a decade working on education policy, and he is a board member of the NSW Board of Studies. I could go on. He is dedicated to education and public service, and has made a number of fantastic commitments to local primary schools. On Saturday, vote for Zhi Soon for Banks in an Albanese Labor Government.

BAILEYANA COURT DAWN SERVICE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:48): I thank everyone involved in the dawn service held at 2 Baileyana Court in Wattle Grove. In particular, I thank residents Kelli Hill and Stephan Cheers. Anzac Day is a significant day for all Australians. It is particularly important to the Holsworthy community, given our strong connection to the Holsworthy Barracks. It was heartwarming to see so many locals come out in the rain to show their respect. A huge thanks to the residents of Baileyana Court for effectively closing off their street for the service, for helping the homeowners to set up a fantastic display of army personnel uniforms from years gone past, and for putting on a sausage sizzle. The display was open all day and gained a lot of attention. Many people who were driving past stopped to look at it. People could also buy a poppy or make a donation to support our veterans. I commend the residents of Baileyana Court, especially those at number 2, for hosting such a special community dawn service on Anzac Day. I look forward to attending the service next year.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:49): I acknowledge this momentous day in the New South Wales Parliament when the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 passed both Houses. I thank all those in the community who have campaigned tirelessly in support of this important reform: Dying with Dignity NSW; Go Gentle Australia; and, in particular, Andrew Denton for his critical, concise and compassionate advocacy. I pay tribute to the late Annie Gabrielides of the Blue Mountains, to her life and to her fight for this important reform. Annie did not live to see this day, nor did she have the option of choosing how she died, but her energy and efforts played a part. I put on record the heartfelt thanks of my community to local Blue Mountains campaigner Richard Mills; my colleague co-sponsors, particularly the Hon. Adam Searle for his work in the upper House; Shayne Higson; Penny Hackett; and the indefatigable Alex Greenwich, MP.

YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:50): On Wednesday 27 April the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies hosted its annual Yom HaShoah commemoration at Moriah College, which was attended in person and online by almost 2,000 people, to honour the lives lost in the Holocaust. Local resident Holocaust survivor Olga Horak shared her story of resilience and loss. Olga led the candle lighting. She was joined by Joseph Symon, Ana de Leon, Gaby de Leon, Jack Meister and Sam Young. Egon Sonnenschein shared his story about the support he received from a Bosnian family during the war. I commend the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies for bringing the community together, including President Lesli Berger, CEO Darren Bark and chair of the Shoah Remembrance Committee, Dane Stern. I also acknowledge local Jewish youth organisation Youth HEAR, which is led by Julia Sussman, Harry Rosen, Joel Grunstein, Jesse Lenn and Jared Engelman. Youth HEAR held its own special commemoration. It is inspiring to see their passion in promoting tolerance and understanding. Let us never forget.

BELMONT 16FT SAILING CLUB

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:51): I congratulate the Belmont 16ft Sailing Club on celebrating its 100th anniversary on 13 May. The club is well known as one of Lake Macquarie's key food and entertainment venues, but it was established primarily to promote 16-foot skiff sailing. Initially the club had 50 members and eight skiff teams. Now it is one of the biggest clubs in the region, providing junior sailing classes and the

Sailability program for people living with disability. The club donates funds to support local schools, community and sporting groups. Recently the club donated \$20,000 to the Pink Ladies at Belmont Hospital. Undoubtedly the Belmont 16ft Sailing Club has made many positive contributions to the Lake Macquarie region over the past 100 years. I congratulate the club on marking this milestone and thank it for the great work it does for the local community.

NARRABEEN LAKES SAILING CLUB

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (15:52): I congratulate and recognise the wonderful volunteers and members of Narrabeen Lakes Sailing Club. Since 1904 the club has provided a range of services to our community, including learn-to-sail programs and sailing racing. Anyone who is on the sparkling waters of Narrabeen Lagoon during the sailing season will see the sails of the Narrabeen Lakes Sailing Club aloft the lagoon. It was a wonderful privilege to attend the club's recent presentation evening and witness all of those people, particularly the young people, who have succeeded in learning so much more about the wonderful sport of sailing. Tragically, the clubhouse burned to the ground recently. It will be my privilege to support the club in its rebuilding efforts. In particular, I congratulate and thank Commodore Aymeric Cabuil and the wonderful Pamela Johnston for their amazing efforts in supporting the club.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STUART SMITH, APM

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:53): I offer the congratulations of my community and my personal congratulations to Assistant Commissioner Stuart Smith, APM, on his appointment as Assistant Commissioner, South West Metropolitan Region. In September 1986 Assistant Commissioner Smith joined the NSW Police Force and was stationed at Wyong. In 1991 he was appointed detective and worked at Wyong, Drug Enforcement Agency Taskforce (North Newcastle) and Campsie Detectives. Assistant Commissioner Smith served as a detective sergeant in the role of investigations manager at Campsie Local Area Command and as a detective inspector at Burwood Local Area Command. As a superintendent he has served as Commander, Orana Local Area Command; South West Metropolitan Region Operations Manager; and Commander, Operations Traffic and Highway Patrol Command. More recently, Assistant Commissioner Smith served as a detective superintendent and Director of Crime Operations at State Crime Command. Since February 2019 he served as acting deputy commissioner. I thank Assistant Commissioner Smith for his outstanding service and dedication to our community. I congratulate him on his appointment and look forward to working with him to keep our community safe.

MILLER STREET MURAL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:54): Many in my local community would have seen the brilliant, magenta-hued painting of McGrath breast care nurse Joylene Fletcher and her 26-year-old patient Emily Quinlan, which was unveiled recently on Miller Street in North Sydney. Painted by artist Sarah McCloskey, the touching mural was revealed on International Nurses Day to honour the 185 breast care nurses who are currently caring for Australian families who have been impacted by breast cancer. The mural also recognises the 20,000 Australians who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. The McGrath Foundation's mission is to ensure that no-one goes through breast cancer without the care of a breast care nurse. Through the work of the foundation, 90 per cent of women in Australia live within 75 kilometres of a McGrath breast care nurse. I also acknowledge the many nurses who live and work in my local community, particularly all the nurses who were on the front lines in our fight against COVID for the past two years. I encourage people to go out and see the mural, which is on the wall of the Library Cafe at 240 Miller Street. I congratulate Sarah McCloskey on her special artwork as well as all the local McGrath breast care nurses, particularly at the Mater Hospital.

TWO CREEKS HONEY AND HONEY BEES OF DAVIDSON

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (15:55): Bees, both native and introduced, form a vital connection between the plant and animal kingdoms of our world. Bees produce the honey we all enjoy, which is the by-product of their industry in pollinating many plant species. The leafy North Shore, which forms a significant part of my electorate of Davidson, largely owes its existence to birds, insects and bees. I acknowledge the bees of the Davidson electorate for their work, which is done in conjunction with their co-workers at local East Lindfield honey producers Two Creeks Honey. Together, Two Creeks Honey and the bees have combined to receive a Supreme Champion award at the recent Royal Easter Show. I commend both Two Creeks Honey and the honey bees of Davidson for their award-winning co-production.

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF SEAFOOD

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:56): On behalf of the Parliamentary Friends of Seafood, I acknowledge the Chair of the NSW Seafood Industry Council, Bryan Skepper, and all the members of his

constituent organisations for the work they do in furthering the interests of professional fishing men and women in New South Wales. I particularly acknowledge the Sydney Fish Market for supporting a Parliamentary Friends of Seafood event at Parliament today, and in particular Lauren and Steph, who coordinated the event and provided the produce that was prepared by parliamentary staff. I thank them for their work; it was a fantastic event. It is important for members to engage with the industry, and I thank the Minister and the shadow Minister, the Hon. Mick Veitch, for attending today. I thank them for their kind words and pledge our continued support for the fishing men and women of New South Wales.

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF SEAFOOD

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:57): I thank the member for The Entrance and his co-chair, the member for Tweed, for another fantastic Parliamentary Friends of Seafood event today, recognising our commercial fishers right around the State of New South Wales. I pay tribute to the Sydney Fish Market, which is expanding, and to the commercial fishers. I applaud those who do the work so we can enjoy all of the great treats that the seafood industry brings us.

ST CLARE'S COLLEGE PRINCIPAL KERRIE MCDIARMID

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:58): I congratulate St Clare's College principal Kerrie McDiarmid for being named one of Australia's Most Influential Educators of 2022. *The Educator* has recognised and awarded the top 50 educators in the country, who have had the strongest impact in creating a reformative teaching and learning culture in the past 18 months. Mrs McDiarmid was noted for leading innovation in education. The honour of being recognised as a top 50 educator is a nomination-based process, which only goes to show how respected and celebrated Kerrie is by our local community. From maths pathways that allow students to self-pace their work, to providing elective STEM courses that allow students to build and code their own robots, to entrepreneurship programs and bespoke courses, Mrs McDiarmid is truly innovating future-focused education. I again congratulate Mrs Kerrie McDiarmid on all her hard work, dedication, passion and care. We are so lucky to have such a phenomenal educator and innovator in our community, educating our children.

Private Members' Statements

SWANSEA ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:59): This week is National Volunteers Week, which is an annual celebration that recognises the great work volunteers are doing across the nation. Each year there is a theme for the event, with this year's theme being "Better Together". It is a fitting theme given that volunteering brings people together, especially during times of crisis. We saw that during March, when parts of New South Wales and Queensland were battered by severe weather systems that resulted in devastating flooding and coastal erosion. Towns such as Lismore were washed away. Many residents lost their homes, and some even lost their loved ones. However, there was a glimmer of hope for the impacted communities as State Emergency Service volunteers, along with those from several other organisations, put their own safety at risk to assist and gave up their time to help people recover.

Some of the State's surf lifesaving clubs also assisted impacted communities during that time of need. I particularly note those from the electorate of Swansea, which included the Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Inflatable rescue boat crew members Mal Ingram and Zac Gay travelled to Singleton, Muswellbrook and Maitland to undertake rescue work. It appears that is a family tradition, because Zac's great-grandfather Ron Ekert was a member of the Caves Beach surfboat crews that helped out during the 1955 Maitland flood. Interestingly, his boat did not have a motor on it; he was in a rowboat. I commend both of those men for their assistance, and I am very pleased that the member for Maitland is in the Chamber to hear that.

In addition to the flood recovery efforts, surf lifesaving club volunteers also play an important role in ensuring that beachgoers are safe. During the 2020-21 season, there were 74,937 volunteer surf lifesavers statewide. They completed 663,078 patrol hours and performed 3,067 rescues. Their dedication and commitment to the local community keep people safe. Many Hunter and Central Coast residents constantly give up their time to support their local communities. That includes Marilyn Cousins, Peta Lawrence and Kevin Ableson from Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie, who were all recently awarded national medals for their volunteering efforts over the years.

Community groups have also played an incredibly important role in supporting the people of the Hunter and the Central Coast during the COVID-19 pandemic. Belmont Neighbourhood Centre, Swansea Community Cottage and The Epicentre in San Remo have all worked hard to ensure the health and welfare of the people of Swansea during the health crisis. Those not-for-profit organisations constantly made sure that all their programs were provided throughout the community. I understand that The Epicentre also facilitated COVID-19 vaccination appointments in an effort to protect the local community against the coronavirus. Those efforts to continue to

support people throughout such a difficult period demonstrate the organisations' commitment and dedication to ensuring the welfare of our local community.

Gateway Church and Belmont Lions Club have also helped out during difficult times. Both of those groups are known for their dedication to the local community through the support and services they provide. With several people within the local area struggling to make ends meet because of the rising cost of living, Gateway Church and Belmont Lions Club partnered to establish and run a mobile shower and laundry service. Gateway Church has also been distributing non-perishable food items to not-for-profit organisations across Lake Macquarie and Newcastle to assist those in need. Last September I had the pleasure of visiting when they received 20 pallets of non-perishable food items for delivery. The assistance supplied by Gateway Church has played a critical role in helping residents to get back on their feet.

I thank those groups for their efforts in continually helping the local community, as well as all the organisations and volunteers that assist the people who live in the electorate of Swansea. All members who come to this House live in truly lovely communities. The amount of volunteering that we all see throughout our communities is quite remarkable, and I often say that people get more out of volunteering than they put in. I commend all the volunteers across New South Wales and thank them so much for all of their efforts, particularly those who live in the electorate of Swansea.

DUNLEA CENTRE STUDENT AND HEATHCOTE PARLIAMENTARY AWARD RECIPIENT NOAH

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:03): It was a pleasure visiting Dunlea Centre recently to recognise Heathcote Parliamentary Award 2021 recipient Noah. Noah's teachers are incredibly proud of his transformational change whilst attending Dunlea Centre, awarding him with this well-deserved recognition. In 2021 Noah maintained a 96 per cent attendance record, highlighting his dedication to his education. His personal confidence has grown immensely, and he displayed strong leadership as captain, leading various tour groups and family talks at Dunlea Centre and presenting at the Salesian Captains' Conference 2021. He is also supportive of his fellow peers and sets an example to them. Further, Noah has been accepted into Wollongong university's pathway to uni program. He is striving to become the first in his family to attain a tertiary-level education. Noah's application and assessment results have put him on track to achieve his university goals and to enrol in a teaching degree. He will be welcomed as a member of the education fraternity, with his keen interest in science and maths.

Noah is a lovely young man with a bright future. I commend him for his outstanding achievements and wish him all the best in his future endeavours. Dunlea Centre students recently assisted with making scones for the Sutherland Shire Relay for Life event held on Saturday 30 April 2022. It was great to be in the kitchen with the students to see them put their culinary skills to the test. I thank them for lending a hand to a worthy cause. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Dunlea Centre and the work it has undertaken to support vulnerable young people and their families in our community. Its program's success is highlighted through the incredible outcomes and achievements of the students involved with it. Dunlea Centre is making a real difference in the lives of young people. I commend the centre for its efforts.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS COMMUNITY SURVEY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:06): With the Federal election almost upon us, and it being a month out from the New South Wales budget and just under a year until our State goes to the polls, I thought last weekend was an opportune time to sit down and take a good look at the thousands of responses that I have received from across the community to my recent Northern Tablelands Community Survey. Unlike some people in this place and some senior public servants in New South Wales, I am a strong believer that people have two ears and one mouth, and therefore we should listen twice as much as we speak. In my experience, these surveys—which I send out on a regular basis—have always provided me, as a State MP, with an honest, warts-and-all insight into the community's sentiment on economic and social issues of the day, and its view on the state of services and on the conduct of all its elected representatives.

In February the surveys were delivered to every household across the Northern Tablelands and a digital copy was also launched on my website. To date, I have received over 3,000 contributions. I must say that respondents have been very thoughtful and constructive in their feedback, as they always are. It will surprise no-one in this House—least of all me, as the local member—that the number one priority identified by the community was the poor state of our public health system. In fact, 90 per cent of respondents named health as their top priority from a list that included a number of State Government priorities across our region. Residents are crying out for more GPs, specialists, nurses and services, not just physical infrastructure upgrades of their public health facilities.

As someone who travels thousands of kilometres each year on our region's road network, I concur with those who said that improving our local roads is an immediate necessity, especially following the flooding events across our region. The Fixing Local Roads Program has been instrumental in helping our local councils move through the backlog of road projects in their areas, but more needs to be done. Homelessness and affordable housing are also issues that resonated with respondents, some of whom shared their tragic experiences of navigating the currently exorbitant rental market in rural and regional New South Wales. One respondent commented on a veteran's widow and adult son, who were homeless after unsuccessfully applying for rentals for more than a year. Far too often, respondents said that single mothers and the elderly were disadvantaged when it came to accessing affordable public housing. Without a doubt, more work is needed to increase public housing stock in all of our communities, but particularly in Glen Innes, Armidale and Moree.

Other areas that were noted included additional measures to address the rising cost of living and the continuation of COVID-19 support for our local businesses. It is clear, however, that the burden for all of these measures does not fall just on the shoulders of the State Government. Telecommunications, which is solely under the control of the Commonwealth, remains absolutely substandard. This is particularly true for smaller localities like Bukkulla, Ashford and Deepwater. In fact, at Deepwater the mobile phone service and internet are so intermittent and substandard that the librarian there has reverted to doing everything the old style. They handwrite all the resources and they sign borrowed books in and out using pen and paper because they cannot rely on the computer systems at all.

I call on whichever party that forms government in the Forty-Seventh Parliament of Australia to put regional health and communications at the very top of its priorities. It is also important to note the responses that show the areas that are doing well. For example, despite some negative media coverage regarding the crime rate in certain communities in recent times, very few responses were critical of the work or efforts of our policemen and policewomen. Indeed, a number of respondents were very complimentary of the services and support of their local police. There were also many positive comments about the quality of our local sporting facilities, parks, gardens, footpaths and other community facilities.

They again show that programs like the Stronger Country Communities Fund—championed by all regional MPs and something we can be proud of—are having an effect. The upcoming State budget is a golden opportunity for this Government to show bravery, to be bold and to tackle head-on many of the issues that my constituents have identified, which, if left unaddressed, will not only stifle the livability of the Northern Tablelands but affect the viability and sustainability of regional New South Wales. I thank all of my constituents who have responded and those who continue to do so. I indicate to them that I will redouble my efforts to work on their priorities while ever I am in this place.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID SANDS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (16:11): One week ago this House and Parliament righted a wrong that had gone on for too long in recognising one of Australia's greatest athletes. In 1940 the Sands brothers from Kempsey on the mid North Coast of New South Wales emerged in the world of professional boxing, the toughest of all sports. Members will recall that boxing at that time was the pre-eminent, most-loved and most-watched sport, which was of most interest to many Australians, particularly those in the bush. The brothers were born in Kempsey in the electorate of Oxley. Clem, Percy, George, Dave, Alfie and Russell became known worldwide as the "Fighting Sands". Their acclaimed legacy was being one of Australia's greatest sporting families.

Of the Sands boys, Dave was the most gifted. His boxing career began in 1941 and ended when he was killed at 26 years of age in a truck accident at Dungog on 11 August 1952. Dave was one of three Australians to have held three national titles simultaneously and, although a natural middleweight, he held the middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight championships at the same time from 1950 until his death. In his 110 fights, Dave won one State championship, three Australian championships and one Australasian championship. He also won the British Empire middleweight championship in 1949, beating Englishman Dick Turpin in the first round and rising to the rank of world number one. I might note, with the primary industries Minister in the Chamber, that he started his career as a log feller. He cut the timber for the railway tracks for the North Coast of New South Wales. That is where his fighting strength came from.

However, because of racial prejudice at the time, Dave Sands was not given the official honorary title belt nor the public acclaim he so rightly deserved. The historical oversight—or rather injustice—of that time was why members of the Sands family, representatives of the boxing community, sports Minister the Hon. Stuart Ayres and I gathered in this esteemed building last week to participate in a replica belt presentation. This was a monumental moment for the Kempsey community and the Sands family, especially his nephew Phil Dotti, who brought his story to me some time ago. Dave Sands won the British Empire title in 1949 but did not receive a replica belt, as many champions at the time did.

The word was that when he was in London the United States mafia, which had fairly strong control over boxing, did not want him to fight Sugar Ray Robinson because they knew what result might eventuate. The Parliament's event provided credibility to, and acknowledgement of, his feats. I proudly inform the House that I felt privileged to be with the Sands family and members of the community and boxing fraternity to give recognition to Kempsey's finest and to honour the legacy and memory of Dave Sands' remarkable life. The Americans called him "the boxer with the educated left hand". He received his due when he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1998 at a ceremony held in Los Angeles. Dave Sands' record stands at 97 wins, 62 by knockout, only 10 losses and two no-contests, from 110 fights.

I thank all of them, including Phil Dotti, and also mention his grandchildren, particularly Chad Ritchie, who works for Aboriginal Affairs NSW. Chad spoke of the great love of him and his grandmother—Dave's wife, Bessie, who lived at Burnt Bridge in Kempsey—for each other and for the broader family. He also noted how generous and community-minded Bessie and Dave were, giving money, time and energy to looking after those all around them. It was a beautiful tribute.

I wish I had invited the member for Castle Hill, Ray Williams, to the event. It turns out that Ray's father was also a very renowned middleweight fighter in Australia, and Ray's father was due to fight Dave Sands only weeks after the tragic accident at Dungog, when his life was taken. It is a small world. It is an incredible world. I also acknowledge that Dave's brother Clem was able to hold the New South Wales welterweight title from 1947 to 1951, and Alfie held the middleweight title from 1952 to 1954. I will leave on a girl's extraordinary story. Dave married Bessie in Newcastle. They had their ceremony, and then Dave ducked out for a little while, went to the Newcastle City Hall, won the fight and then went back to the reception. Who would have thought? He did not drink or smoke. He was healthy. He was fabulous. I am so pleased because we have righted a wrong. I thank all those involved.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE PARAMEDICS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:16): I speak today about the lack of staffing throughout the NSW Ambulance service but particularly at the station at Rutherford, in my electorate. For some time, paramedics across this State have said that they are under enormous pressure and that the health system has been under-resourced and completely overstretched. I am so concerned about the state of their health. We have seen paramedics at their absolute end. This has been drawn to my attention by numerous paramedics but also by members of the public who have been waiting at times for hours for ambulances to come because there are not enough staff members there. This is part of the health crisis in Maitland. I call it a crisis reluctantly because it is a serious word, but we have a massive problem there. We do not have enough staffed beds in our emergency department, so our ambulances are ramping, which is creating all sorts of problems for our community.

Mr Alister Henskens: You got a new hospital.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Ku-ring-gai. I urge him to clearly understand that providing a health service is not about a building. We have a beautiful public building, which I am very grateful for. Maitland is a city in which only 17 per cent of people have private health insurance, so it should never have been on the table that it was going to be a—

Mr Alister Henskens: You did not get a new hospital under Labor for 16 years.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am so disgusted at the interjections from those opposite. This is the highest-taxing government in New South Wales. We went through this in question time. There was a 9 per cent increase in taxes in the last year—

Mr Kevin Conolly: Point of order—

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: There is no point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Riverstone is entitled to take a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Kevin Conolly: There have been many rulings from previous Speakers that private members' statements should concern themselves primarily with a member's electorate and not public policy.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: To the point of order: Madam Deputy Speaker, can I speak to my private member's statement, which is about my electorate? That is what I have spoken about. Only 17 per cent of people have private health insurance. They are dealing with massive cost-of-living issues. We have the highest-taxing government in New South Wales. It impacts directly on my community. We have had a nearly 10 per cent increase in those taxes in one year, while the economy went up by 1 per cent. Public sector employees have had their wages capped, and we had ambulance people—

Mr Kevin Conolly: Point of order—

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I am talking about my electorate. You have no right to do this.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Kevin Conolly: I understood that the member for Maitland wanted to speak to the point of order, but that is not what she did.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Maitland then said that she just wanted to finish her private member's statement. I understand that that is what she is doing; she is not speaking to the point of order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I am absolutely gobsmacked by this. We have a health crisis in Maitland. We do not have enough staff on our wards and in our emergency departments. Our paramedics are waiting when they could be transporting people to the hospital. Our paramedics are on the edge. I will read what one has told me:

... there are not enough paramedics, it's that simple. Covid isn't helping but when there wasn't enough to start with Covid makes it worse.

Because of the lack of resources when you do come in for a shift the workload is ridiculous, it's dangerous, it's burning paramedics out at a fast rate which decreases our numbers even further, which in turn puts more pressure on the ones we do have.

So we are struggling to fill shifts and people are refusing to do overtime because of the workload and fatigue and stresses involved with it.

The record for me is 5 ambulances down on one shift. The hunter is supposed to have 17 ambulances on a night shift, so that night we only had 12. A mate told me the other night we were down 7 ambulances for the hunter which means they started with 10 not 17.

What is driving some of this run on the emergency departments is that we do not have enough GPs in our electorate because this lot over there, Madam Speaker, and federally decided to take away bulk-billing for our area by declaring it metro. That is what they did—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: It is related to my electorate. You can gag me all you like, but it is disgraceful.

Mr Alister Henskens: The member for Maitland is pointing across the Chamber, saying "this lot". Under the standing orders, she ought to be directing her comments through the Chair, not prevaricating and pointing across the Chamber.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: If the member for Ku-ring-gai had been listening, he would have heard me say "this lot, Madam Speaker". I was directing my comments through you. The problem with those opposite is that they do not care. They do not want to hear about the lack of bulk-billing in my electorate, which is driving up emergency department presentations, because they do not care—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: There is no point of order. This is just wasting time. You are a disgrace.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has the member for Maitland concluded her private member's statement?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: No, I have not.

Mr Alister Henskens: Private members' statements are supposed to be about members' electorates. Bulk-billing is a Federal Government responsibility. It has nothing to do with this Parliament or the powers of the New South Wales Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Maitland did refer to her electorate. It does not specify in the standing orders what she has must actually say about her electorate.

Ms Lynda Voltz: To the point of order: I was hoping to speak to the point of order that was raised by the member for Ku-ring-gai.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Auburn may do so, but the time of the member for Maitland has expired.

Ms Lynda Voltz: On behalf of this side of the Chamber, I make the point that, time and again, the Opposition has shown Government members the courtesy, during private members' statements, of allowing them to talk about their electorates without interruption. Some members opposite have adopted the practice of taking frivolous points of order during private members' statements. Courtesy has been shown in the past. If Government members want to play games in this Chamber during private members' statements—which are a unique

opportunity for members to put forward points on behalf of their electorates—we will stop showing them the courtesy that we have always extended.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have heard the member's point of order.

Mr Kevin Conolly: To the point of order: I take offence at being told that I am playing a game or being frivolous. All I said earlier was that many Speakers—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have heard enough. Thank you.

QUAKERS HILL MASJID EID CELEBRATION

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:23): On Monday 2 May I had the pleasure of joining the community at Quakers Hill Masjid for the celebration of Eid. This is a very special occasion for the Muslim community and it was very well attended. That is a key fact about this particular community. They occupy a small former church, and they have rapidly outgrown it. Even though they are only a young community as a masjid—they were established in 2009—the number of members in their congregation has rapidly dwarfed the available space, and every inch was occupied for this celebration. Most of the men were at the car park, women were in a separate building and the small church building was full, so there was not a square inch left for this wonderful occasion. Fortunately, it was a beautiful fine day, which was appropriate for the occasion; therefore, there was no interruption to the prayers and celebrations.

However, the site constraints are typical for various ethnic religious community groups who come to try to find a new home base in rapidly growing areas in north-western Sydney. Land is expensive. Newly arrived community groups often do not have a great deal of capital behind them. It is hard work and a difficult challenge to raise funds to provide a place of worship, a community centre, a gathering space, a club or whatever it might be. The community at Quakers Hill mosque certainly do face that challenge at the moment. Over the years between 2009 and now, they have certainly spent quite a number of dollars on enhancing the facility they had, providing additional space where they can, and they will no doubt continue to do that. They have asked the local council for help to manage their circumstances and I trust it will cooperate. I imagine the community will continue its hard work and thrifty saving so they can expand their premises further.

Since the mosque was opened in 2009, it has become a focal point for the local Muslim community. Koran classes for children are run regularly at this masjid and the program has become very popular amongst the local community. Islamic lectures on Friday evenings are also a regular program. Since its establishment the masjid has successfully hosted all the Eid prayers, organised Taraweeh with Khatm-e-Quran and Iftaar programs during the months of Ramadhan. I apologise if I have not said some of that correctly. There is a clothing bin for donations and various other charitable activities take place from the mosque.

Quakers Hill Masjid is a project of the Al-barakah Welfare Trust Australia, and one of its major roles is to promote and encourage knowledge and understanding of Islam, and to build positive relationships with people of all faiths. I have been made very welcome on my visits over the years to Quakers Hill mosque. They are very open to trying to engage with the broader community, and I think that is a very positive attitude for them to take. Al-barakah Welfare Trust is managed by a board of trustees and governed by the deed of trust. The current board includes chairman Fateh Rafi, secretary Mohammad Azom Rony, treasurer Syed Ahsan Sajib and directors Javed Ejaz, Faruk Ahmed Shohan, Tariqur Bhuiyan and Ashfaqu Haq Rana. I congratulate all of those people on the efficient functioning of the masjid, and I acknowledge religious leaders Sheik Yousseff Hassan, a good friend, and Imam Hafiz Shamsul A Khan.

One of the activities at the masjid that I first came across some years ago was the Arabic school for children. At times it has been run from the TAFE premises and sometimes in the mosque itself. They certainly take great pains to make sure that the children of their community have access to their mother tongue—the tongue of worship—which enables them to understand the heritage that their community brings and shares with Australia. I encourage them to keep doing that so that the children of that community grow up with the best of both worlds—knowing Australian culture as well as their Islamic and Arabic heritage. I acknowledge that my Federal counterpart Ed Husic was also in attendance on the day to celebrate this important occasion with that local community group. I like to celebrate special occasions with many groups around my region. I wish the Quakers Hill Masjid all the best into the future.

KU-RING-GAI SPORTING CLUBS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (16:28): Sporting clubs and organisations in Ku-ring-gai are incredibly important and that is reflected by the broader national participation in community-based sports. In 2020 to 2021 more than 88 per cent of Australians over the age of 15 participated in sport, including 70.8 per cent of children

in organised after-school activities, of which 67.3 per cent were related to sports. Throughout my lifetime, as with many people in this place, I have been involved in sporting organisations as a player, coach, manager and administrator, and I am indebted to have the great privilege of being able to chair the parliamentary friends of both basketball and cricket, and continue my interest in sport.

Many sporting clubs service the people of Ku-ring-gai, and recently I had the privilege to attend a mixture of opening ceremonies and presentation days of various sport clubs in and around my electorate. They included the Old Barker Rugby Club, Ku-ring-gai Cubs, Ku-ring-gai Stealers Baseball and Softball Club, the Killara Croquet Club and the St Ives Junior Cricket Club, who are just some of the many different sporting clubs in my electorate.

It was wonderful to see some of the sporting infrastructure projects in my electorate being advanced. On 26 March I joined Karen Penrose, the President of the Old Barker Rugby Club, for the official launch of the renovated clubhouse at Turramurra Memorial Park. That project was supported by a New South Wales Government sporting grant totalling \$863,000, and it was great to see the way in which the facilities at that oval were made more accessible to female athletes, which has been one of the deficiencies with our local sporting infrastructure. It is great to see the way in which the physical infrastructure is able to drive greater participation by women athletes. On the same day I was able to attend the Killara Croquet Club to see the completed club shelter, which was supported with a 2020 New South Wales Government grant. I congratulated President Douglas Greening and Vice President Ron Buist and acknowledged the late Hugh Bennett, who was a member of the club, who passed away last year shortly after achieving his 100th birthday.

The next day I joined President Adrian Steer of Ku-ring-gai Stealers Baseball and Softball Club at the Golden Jubilee Field in Turramurra for the opening of the batting cages, a project which Adrian has been incredibly passionate about. The club was able to secure a Community Building Partnership grant of about \$29,000 to see those batting cages finally completed and available to the club. Later that afternoon I was able to go to the St Ives Junior Cricket Club presentation day for the under-16 and under-17 players at Hassell Park. It is great to see the enthusiasm of those young men and women athletes attaining well-earned recognition for participating in that sport. It was also great to speak to President Antony Horan, the rest of his committee, the players, the parents and the staff of that club.

That was a great weekend of engagement with our sporting clubs. We have had a lot of weather. Our sporting clubs have done it hard in terms of COVID and the way that it has put so much more pressure on the volunteers at the clubs. It was terrific to get out and see everyone. I know that the cricket season has been greatly interrupted by poor weather this summer, but it is great to see the friendships and community. That is what our sporting clubs are all about—developing men, women, boys and girls, and their socialisation skills, and their capacity to work together and get on with each other. That is not just good for their physical health but also important for mental health and developing social skills. Earlier this week we were able to turn the sod on the new indoor cricket facility at Mark Taylor Oval in Waitara. Jeremy Hook, the President of the Northern Suburbs Cricket Club, was there and the Mayor and councillors of Hornsby council. That is a \$9 million project supported by the State Government. The Mark Taylor Oval is going to be one of the best ovals in Sydney. It has had a poor surface for a long time, and I think that is a great thing that the Government has supported.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (16:33): The seat of Auburn has one of the largest Palestinian communities in Australia. Of the 13,000 Australians who have Palestinian ancestry, nearly 3,000 of those were born on Palestinian lands with 42 per cent identifying as Christian and 40 per cent identifying as Muslim. The majority of Palestinians that now call Australia home live in New South Wales. On 15 May many of my local residents marked the Nakba, the great tragedy when 700,000 Palestinians were forced in 1948 not only from their homes but from their lands. The date of 15 May is a significant day of commemoration and mourning for the Palestinian people. Since further Palestinian lands were occupied following the 1967 war, nearly three million Palestinians now live on lands occupied by the Israeli military. Currently 130 illegal settlements on the West Bank, as defined both by the International Court of Justice and the United Nations resolutions, are now occupied by 500,000 Israeli settlers.

I visited the refugee camps in Lebanon, where I met families who left their homes in 1948 believing that it was a temporary measure and that they would be home in a couple of weeks—75 years later, they are still waiting to return home, now with large families living in cramped and unsafe conditions. This year's Nakba was also tinged with great sadness following the death of well-known Palestinian reporter Shireen Abu Akleh, who died from a gunshot wound, and also the wounding of another journalist, Ali al-Samoudi, who was shot in the back at the scene. Palestinian officials and witnesses, including journalists who were with Shireen, say she was killed by army fire. The Israeli defence force, after initially saying Palestinian gunmen might have been responsible, later backtracked and now state she may also have been hit by errant Israeli fire. Many journalists

around the world are increasingly at risk and coming under attack and it is important that the fight for media freedom and the safety of journalists in all corners of the world is maintained.

Last year alone another 46 journalists were killed worldwide. Following the death of Shireen Abu Akleh, people worldwide saw the distressing scenes outside the Saint Joseph Hospital as her coffin was being carried to a nearby Catholic Church in Jerusalem's Old City. The Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, criticised the Israeli authorities for violating human rights and disrespecting the Catholic Church with the "disproportionate use of force" against the Palestinian mourners. The Latin patriarch was joined in his statement by the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, and the general director of Saint Joseph Hospital, Jamil Koussa.

Those events, happening on the eve of Nakba, alongside recent attacks on the Al-Aqsa mosque are a source of grief for Australian Palestinians. In this Chamber we condemn all acts of violence, but as my colleague the member for Watson, Tony Burke, recently noted, let us not forget that the violence directly stems from the settlement activity, evictions and hardships Palestinians are enduring alongside attacks on Palestinian holy places. The international community looks to a solution to the conflict. I hope, on behalf of my electorate, that the future election of a Federal Labor Government will contribute to the global communities' support for a solution with Australian recognition of the state of Palestine alongside a two-state solution.

CONCORD HOSPITAL UPGRADE

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (16:37): It is with great pleasure that I report to the House that Concord Hospital's state-of-the-art, 214-bed clinical services building is now open. To say that this will transform patient care for my community is an understatement. What a long journey it has been to get to this point. I am so proud that the new eight-storey clinical services building will offer modern facilities as well as new and expanded services. That building will enable health care to be accessed locally, negating the need for my constituents to travel to other hospitals such as Royal Prince Alfred to access basic care such as cancer treatment.

On Friday 25 March 2022 I toured the new building with the Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, and the Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Transport, the Hon. David Elliott. I make particular mention of Brad Hazzard because without him the upgrade would not have been possible. When I was first elected in 2011, Concord Hospital was the most pressing issue for my community. The Drummoyne electorate was held by Labor for 49 continuous years prior to my election.

Quite frankly, the Labor Party was comfortable because the seat was not considered marginal or in contention. For decades, Concord Hospital was left to run down and never received any major funding for upgrades. When I was first elected, I met with the hospital executives and staff who were desperate for new facilities and were doing their best in substandard working conditions. We fought for Concord Hospital, together with the community, and managed to secure the \$150 million commitment for an upgrade. We thought it was wonderful. It was only after some time that we realised that there were a few bumps in the road on our quest for a hospital upgrade.

It was with great disappointment that we discovered that the funding was to be drawn out to the never-never, with Concord Hospital to receive only \$1 million in planning money four years after the announcement, and \$150 million was to be given some time after that. It was disheartening. So, at great personal cost, I called out this poor decision-making. In 2019 Brad Hazzard came along on a rainy Sunday morning. With Minister Hazzard was Premier Gladys Berejiklian, and Treasurer and now Premier, Dominic Perrottet. It was announced that Concord Hospital would receive \$341 million in funding for stage one of the upgrade. There were tears of joy from all of us. As the saying goes: even the heavens opened up. We knew on that day that this would be a special project, and I am honoured to have been there every step of the way.

The investment in Concord Hospital delivers an extra 111 beds, most of them in single rooms, with day beds for carers. It also provides a new home for the nation's first dedicated National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare. The new comprehensive cancer centre provides additional services for cancer patients, and aged-care patients will benefit from new outpatient clinics, rehabilitation gyms and psychogeriatric medicine. The building is named after veteran and former RSL NSW president Godfrey "Rusty" Priest. The Rusty Priest building will stand proud for future generations and is a fitting acknowledgment of the hospital's proud history serving returned service men and women.

I am immensely proud of this project. I thank and acknowledge the New South Wales Government for delivering this important piece of infrastructure for my community, and sincerely thank Brad Hazzard for his vision. I thank the staff at the hospital for their passion in ensuring that the hospital was upgraded, with particular mention to Dr Teresa Anderson, Ilona Cunningham, Judith Trotman, Tim Sinclair and Dr John Cullen. I am

delighted that our wonderful doctors and healthcare staff now get to work in the state-of-the-art facility. I thank them for their passion every day in caring for my community.

COST OF LIVING AND ROAD TOLLS

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:41): I bring to the attention of the House that many of my constituents have expressed deep concern about the ever-increasing cost-of-living pressures that they face and their worries about the large and increasing debt levels of New South Wales under the mismanagement of this Government. The people of Rockdale are decent, hardworking people. They serve the community in many different ways as teachers, nurses, shop assistants, hospitality workers, local professionals, small business operators, and in many other roles. They do that while looking after their families and offering their spare time to our local sports teams, charity organisations and schools. They are the backbone of our community.

Unfortunately, my constituents are suffering. The ever-increasing cost of living in New South Wales is hammering them and their families as they battle increasing tolls and taxes under this Government. They are also worried about how much debt they and their children are going to have to pay off in the future, thanks to this Government's reckless spending and mismanagement. The people of Rockdale constantly speak to me about this Government's numbers, which show that the State's net debt will be nearly \$58 billion by next month and is on track to hit nearly \$78 billion by June next year. Those are staggering figures for our State.

It would be bad enough trying to manage this type of debt in more stable times. Today, with interest rate increases hammering people with mortgages, while inflation eats away at their wages, it is the worst possible time to be loading up our State with a greater cost of debt. State taxes are taking bigger and bigger chunks out of their lives as inflation rises, and so are the shadow taxes that this Government has imposed on our community, especially the hideous toll charges it has given to the private owners of our road network for the next 38 years. Under the bill, signed by the Government, tolls have been going up more than the rate of inflation—nearly double the rate of inflation in recent times—and the best case for the future is that they fall back to just inflationary increases at CPI until 2060. I have small business owners crying about the increases in weekly total costs for their operations. I have truck operators, tradespeople, families who go to work and drop their kids off at school, all telling me that their toll bills are sometimes more than their fuel bills. That is quite high, considering the cost of fuel today.

My constituents are stressed and frightened. Some tell me they do not know how they will pay their mortgage when interest rates are going up, and when tolls, fees and charges are going up, but their wages are only going down. On current trends, the average family in Sydney will cop a \$6,000 real wage cut in the near future, and they know it. But they do not know what the Government will do to help them. When they then think about the debt that the State has run up—debt that they and their children will be responsible for paying off—their fears turn to despair. My community is asking, "Why are we the highest-taxed State in Australia and why is our economy performing so poorly?" New South Wales came seventh out of all the States and Territories in the country in the CommSec *State of the States* report last month. Only poor old Northern Territory came lower than New South Wales.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My constituents are concerned about this state of affairs.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order.

Ms Robyn Preston: I am yet to hear the member for Rockdale refer to a local issue or a local personality.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms Robyn Preston: It is a broad cross-section.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hawkesbury will not argue with me.

Ms Robyn Preston: Private members' statements should relate to a member's electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have been listening carefully to the member for Rockdale. He has referred to his constituents many times.

Ms Robyn Preston: Nothing in particular; it is a very broad brush.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I need to express the pain—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will resume his seat. There is no point of order. I will listen further but I am comfortable that the member is referring to constituents in his electorate.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Most of my constituents in Rockdale do not have an MBA like the member for Willoughby, who so charmingly informed the House of that fact on Tuesday. But they know when their cost of living is going up and their wages are going down. They know when they are being taxed more than their friends and relatives in all the other States, and they know what it means when the State's debt is climbing to unsustainable levels. They want this P-plate Premier and his Government to clean up its act, stop the blowouts and start acting like responsible adults. The State needs a mature approach to the management of the economy and I do not think Dommy and Matty are up to the job.

HAWKESBURY SHOW

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:46): I note the enormous success of the 2022 Hawkesbury Show, a local show that ran over the second weekend of May. Almost 60,000 people passed through the gates of the Hawkesbury Showground over the course of the weekend. I spent the weekend at the show, where I spoke to locals and discussed the issues that mattered to them and our community. That is what my private member's statement is all about. I saw many familiar faces at the showground and had the pleasure of meeting many new people as they passed by my stand. Surrounded by dogwood dogs, fairy floss, pig races, local produce and dozens of other exhibitions, I saw the smiling faces and heard the squeals and laughter of children enjoying the rollercoaster and thrilling rides. It was the perfect pick-me-up after the harrowing few months that Hawkesbury locals have had responding to and recovering from devastating floods.

Many families are still reeling from the catastrophic February-March 2022 flood event. It was a nice opportunity for them to stop and enjoy one of our region's most exciting events, not to mention one of the largest shows in New South Wales—second only to the Royal Easter Show. Families were able to use their Discover vouchers to purchase tickets for the show, and I again commend the New South Wales Government for that initiative. The \$25 vouchers have been hugely successful and enable individuals or families who may not normally be able to spare money for entertainment or leisure activities such as the Hawkesbury Show to participate in the fun. The vouchers encourage people to get out and about and channel their well-deserved dollars into local businesses and the New South Wales economy.

The Hawkesbury Show is a wonderful opportunity for local businesses to showcase their wares and also a chance for Hawkesbury organisations to raise awareness for their missions. My stall was set up next to WISE Employment, a not-for-profit organisation located in Windsor, which helps people with disabilities find meaningful work. Popular stalls for the children were the Girl Guides and Scouts, both of whom have a strong presence in Hawkesbury. RuffTRACK also attracted much attention at the show. The RuffTRACK Farm is a charity based near Riverstone just outside Hawkesbury that works with young people in Hawkesbury, providing them with skills and mentoring to keep them on the right track. I sat with Farmer Dave, the founder of RuffTRACK, as we watched the parade on Saturday and even met one of the talented dogs, Jimmy, who is an important part of the organisation.

Three days were barely enough to take in all the Hawkesbury Show had to offer. There is so much to learn from people at the Hawkesbury Show. Although I am a regular at the show, I am always impressed by the talent and effort of the people who turn up year after year to put on the show and make it one of the most exciting days in Hawkesbury's events calendar. Such a range of skills were on display and every stallholder was very keen to chat and explain the contents of their stall to all who passed by. I had a quick lesson in knot tying when I dropped by the Scouts tent and met Bill, a volunteer who has been a Scout for 75 years. People come from all over the region to enter their animals, produce or creative works in the Hawkesbury Show. There are dozens of competitions and a range of categories. This includes craft competitions such as knitting, doll and toy making, bobbin lace and tatting, or competitions for horticulture, agriculture, cooking, fruit and vegetables, photography and even Lego creations.

I thank those who came out over the weekend to make sure everyone was kept safe. This included police from the Hawkesbury Local Area Command, St John Ambulance officers and RFS volunteers. Organisers deserve huge applause for another stellar Hawkesbury Show. Recognition must go to Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association President Lynette Hudson and past president Ross Matheson, deputy president Phillip Close, treasurer Ken Ridge, vice-presidents Brian Caterson and Colin Mitchell, and secretary Andrea Roth. I am already looking forward to next year's event, which I am sure will be even bigger and better.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:50): I address the House on the circumstances of Arthur Noul and his longstanding efforts to obtain a driver licence to allow him to drive a three-wheel motorcycle, also sometimes referred to technically as a modified motorcycle. He is a constituent of mine. His circumstances suggest to me both that Transport for NSW is ill-equipped to deal with this situation and that the current regulatory framework needs to be reformed. Mr Noul is a paraplegic who uses a wheelchair. He has for two years been trying to obtain

a motorcycle licence from Transport for NSW for a three-wheel motorcycle. He advises me that he is not the only person in this position seeking such a licence.

He originally went to what he describes as the RTA. It had little idea what to do so referred him to a group called Stay Upright, which seems to be a motorcycle training organisation. That organisation said it does not have anything to do with three-wheel motorcycles and he was referred back to the regulatory authority. That resulted in no progress and more delay. Feeling understandably aggrieved, Mr Noul resolved to continue with the issue. It was not that he had been refused a licence, it was that no-one seemed to know what to do. Accordingly, he went to the Human Rights Commission [HRC]. The HRC contacted him and said it thought he had cause for complaint and would negotiate for him. Several months later it rang him and referred him to someone called Cheryl at Transport for NSW.

I indicate that I know Cheryl's family name, as I do the names of all the Transport for NSW officers I will mention in this presentation. I do not regard this as a problem with individual officers, but as a systemic problem and I do not need to identify them any further than that. Several months later Cheryl referred Mr Noul to someone called David, with an assurance that he would fix it. David in turn referred Mr Noul to Barry, with the assurance that he would solve it. Mr Noul was then told that he would need a report from an occupational therapist, a statement from an engineer concerning the bike and a registration number for the bike. Mr Noul spent \$1,300 on the occupational therapist, \$1,000 for the engineer's report, and \$23,000 ordering a bike so he can get a registration number. There were several phone calls with Barry and Barry's boss with promises of imminent resolution.

However, after several more months, nothing eventuated. In February Mr Noul then approached the Minister's office. While he has received an acknowledgment and there has been some phone contact, any resolution still seems far away. My written representations to the Minister's office have not been acknowledged, let alone substantially replied to. There is a further complication here. The New South Wales regime requires the first licence in such a case to be restricted to a smaller 600cc bike. The bike has to be modified at a cost of \$8,000 to \$9,000. After 12 months the licence can be extended to a 1,400cc bike, but that of course will also have to be modified, once again at a cost of \$8,000 to \$9,000. Mr Noul has asked for permission to go straight to the larger bike, thus avoiding the first lot of modifications with the related cost. David orally agreed that Mr Noul should be exempted from that, but that has not happened yet either. Indeed, there has been no final response to any request.

There are some obvious issues here. One is the delay and the shuffling between Transport for NSW officers. It seems unacceptable that so much time has elapsed with so little positive result. Two years is too long to have got such a short distance down this path. As I indicated earlier, Mr Noul is not the only person in this position. It is not just his individual case; there are others as well. As I understand it, other jurisdictions deal with these issues much more expeditiously. There is also the issue of a broader change. Mr Noul has been told that he must seek an exemption from current rules to obtain a licence. It seems to me to be a much more proper process to simply have to apply for a licence in this situation, rather than having a complex process of exemptions. That would be a far more appropriate way of dealing with it and I understand that is what happens in other jurisdictions. I ask the Minister to review this matter to see whether it can finally be resolved.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW FIREFIGHTER PAUL BAILEY

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:54): I thank local legend Paul Bailey from Revesby Heights for his 38 years of service to Fire and Rescue NSW. Paul commenced his service as a probationary firefighter on 25 May 1984. After completing his training he was stationed across Sydney at Marrickville, Bankstown and Liverpool. Paul has an extensive service record, including operational safety coordinator at the State operations unit, inspector at the fire investigations unit, duty commander at Zone Office Metropolitan South 3, manager of safety at the health and safety directorate as superintendent, manager of HAZMAT in the specialised operations directorate, manager of RESCUE at the specialised operations directorate, zone commander at Zone Office Metropolitan South 2, commander of specialised operations as a chief superintendent, second assistant commissioner of regional operations at the NSW SES, area commander of Zone Office Metropolitan West and he completed his career at Fire and Rescue NSW as a chief superintendent. He is clearly no slouch.

Paul has also been a level three incident commander, fellow of the Institute of Fire Engineers and international classifier and Australian representative of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. During his career, Paul was called to the Thredbo landslide disaster in 1997, the Waterfall train crash in 2003 and Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu in 2015. In August 2002 he was recognised by the Royal Humane Society for his incredible bravery. The citation was for courageous action in rescuing 69-year-old Olga Le Vano from her top-storey unit following a petrol tanker crash into a unit block in Frederick Street in Rockdale. Paul was a firefighter at Fire and Rescue NSW Station 008 Liverpool and attended to a unit fire in January 1996 where, unfortunately, eight people died at Speed Street in Liverpool. It was suspected that one of the victims deliberately lit the fire. Along with his fellow firefighters, Paul entered and extinguished the fire.

Paul's colleagues also recalled the Hale Street goods store fire in Botany in 2006 that he responded to. This fire completely destroyed the premises and damaged a number of adjoining buildings. Paul was the lead fire and research investigator. Upon leaving Fire and Rescue NSW, Paul's wife, Marina, said:

So very proud of my husband Paul Bailey today as he marks the official end to his 38 year career as a firefighter for Fire and Rescue NSW. You have achieved so much, acted always with honesty and integrity and the kids and I could not be prouder of you.

I met Paul when he applied to become a Justice of the Peace. He has undertaken to continue his contribution to my local community in this capacity. Paul has now commenced another role within the New South Wales Government, which has already been quite challenging and will continue to be so. With his unwavering commitment, Paul will continue to provide great service to the people of New South Wales. I once again thank Paul for his incredible selflessness in his various roles in Fire and Rescue NSW, and I wish him all the very best for his future.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:57): The State Government is currently spending almost \$1 billion on further expanding the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle. In anyone's language, spending that sort of money on better health facilities is a good thing, but it has again raised the question of why we continue to centralise the Hunter's health services in an area so beset with access problems and so far away from the region's major growth centres. The John Hunter Hospital is already among the State's busiest hospitals and is located on a constrained site that is not easily accessed. In fact, it requires the Government to spend hundreds of millions of dollars more on new road entries and bypasses just to make it functional.

That hospital is supposed to cater for people in my electorate but, for the 20,000 people in the south-western postcodes of the Morisset area, a trip to the John Hunter Hospital can be 60 kilometres away, which is a three-hour bus ride. Morisset is now recognised as one of the fastest-growing areas not just in the Hunter but in the State, yet it is without easy access to health services. There is currently more than \$1.2 billion worth of private investment going into a number of major projects in the Morisset area, including new residential subdivisions, which will swell the area's population by a further 6,000 in a few short years.

I began campaigning for a hospital at Morisset long before I was elected to Parliament 15 years ago. Over that period, more than a dozen reports flagged the growing population of that district and the future health needs of people living there, yet here we are. The population is booming but access to decent health care is an hour's drive away. Proper health care is not a luxury but a right, which the people of Morisset pay for in taxes. Access to timely and localised health care should be an option for them. When are we going to start putting money into health services in areas where people actually live and that can be properly accessed?

The city of Lake Macquarie is now home to about 210,000 residents and is among the biggest local government areas in the State. The Government's own planning policy suggests that the population will expand by about 60,000 over the next decade, and places like Morisset, Wyee and Cooranbong will see the large bulk of that expansion. The time for a hospital and health precinct at Morisset has arrived, just like the dozens of reports and State planning documents over the past two decades have predicted it would. Neither I nor the Southlake community advocate for an acute care hospital at Morisset. The model that we have consistently proposed would provide services such as outpatient care, chemotherapy, dialysis, X-ray, pathology, midwifery, mental health services, dental services, drug and alcohol counselling, physiotherapy, dieticians and social workers. It would take a significant amount of strain off the John Hunter and Wyong hospitals.

Morisset is also located on the main northern rail line, which no other hospital in the Hunter region is, so the access issues we struggle with at the John Hunter Hospital, Belmont and Wyong do not exist at Morisset. I have always thought it would be novel to put a hospital near the M1 and near rail access. Further, the Government and NSW Health currently owns extensive landholdings in the area. Five months ago the State Government announced a \$500 million investment in regional and rural health. Again, that is great news, but consider that more than \$111 million was allocated to a redevelopment of Cessnock Hospital, which is also operated by Hunter New England Local Health District. According to the comments of the member for Cessnock quoted in the *Newcastle Herald*, he had no idea that the money was coming, nor was he aware where it would be spent.

In fact, not even the health district bosses could tell anyone where the \$111.5 million was going to be spent, with a Health Infrastructure NSW spokesperson telling the *Newcastle Herald* there would be a "review of clinical services needs at Cessnock, and planning will be carried out by the local health district to inform the development". I am not going to deny the people of Cessnock access to decent health services, but how on earth can the Government be throwing that amount of money into a hospital redevelopment plan that no-one seems to know about when an area such as Morisset has nothing to begin with? I wholeheartedly recognise the additional funding that the State Government has directed to the health sector over the past decade, but it has to start directing it to areas where populations are rapidly growing. We cannot go on building empires on existing sites that people in

growing areas having difficulty accessing. It is time for the New South Wales Government to make a commitment to the equitable provision of health services to people living in the Morisset area.

BLUE MOUNTAINS FOOD SERVICES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:02): National Volunteer Week is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering and is held from 16 May to 22 May. The theme for National Volunteer Week 2022 is "Better Together". As we are all aware, volunteering brings people together in our electorates, builds communities and creates a better society for everyone. National Volunteer Week is our chance to celebrate and recognise the vital work of volunteers and to say thank you. I pay tribute to the Blue Mountains Food Services, which is a not-for-profit organisation in my electorate that provides a range of programs and services to residents of the Blue Mountains. Those services include aged-care work, disability services, volunteering opportunities, a social enterprise cafe and more. Blue Mountains Food Services is a proud member of NSW Meals on Wheels and is a registered NDIS provider, with over 20 years of experience in the community in the disability and hospitality sectors. Its services focus on meeting the nutritional needs of its clients whilst addressing the issue of social isolation by engaging clients in social activity and inclusion.

On Monday 16 May I attended a thankyou lunch at the Grand View Hotel at Wentworth Falls. It was a wonderful gathering of a fantastic group of people, some of whom I spoke to prior to the lunch and awards presentation. This week Doreen Kinsella celebrates 40 years of volunteering. Doreen was sitting next to Sharon Joyce who, after a long and fantastic teaching career, has retired. Sharon had just finished her first volunteering shift. I acknowledge the fabulous and very funny Nicole Wilding-Forbes and the board of Blue Mountains Food Services, which organised the excellent lunch and awards. I promised that I would record each of their names in *Hansard*. They were most impressed by that.

The 2022 Blue Mountains Food Services volunteer celebration awards went to Stewart Williams, Maureen Neville, Michael Leman, John Stoodley, Doreen Stoodley, Sherilyn Page, John Finnerty, Jenny Perkins, Jacquie Hughes, Cathy Kelly, Dermot Cullinane, Maureen Neville, Jeff Mason, Jacquie Cole, Helen Boyle, Brian Luke, Cathy Kelly and Fee Lee. At the end of a long parliamentary sitting fortnight, I thank those people who do real work on the ground to make a real difference in people's lives. I thank Blue Mountains Food Services for supporting our community. It is the glue that holds many people together.

NSW RAIL MUSEUM

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:06): We are beginning to see the fruits of the New South Wales Government's investment in Transport Heritage NSW, which is the custodian of the State's heritage transport collection and operator of the NSW Rail Museum in Thirlmere in the wonderful electorate of Wollondilly. Recently my colleague in the other place Lou Amato and I were excited to welcome the impressively massive Beyer-Garratt 6029—the largest operating steam locomotive in the country. Prior to COVID, Transport Heritage NSW was achieving record levels of engagement and demand for its heritage train experiences. The acquisition by the New South Wales Government will help Transport Heritage NSW return to pre-pandemic engagement levels. The majestic steam locomotive will travel the tracks right around the State. It will be in Bathurst over the June long weekend.

The 1950s steam locomotive and many others, including the 2705, 3001, 3265, 3526, 3642, 6029 and the wonderful 3801—the Newcastle Flyer—are housed and cared for by Transport Heritage NSW at the NSW Rail Museum in Thirlmere in my electorate of Wollondilly. In 2021 the 3801 travelled over 16,000 kilometres around New South Wales, engaging thousands of people in Greater Sydney and regional New South Wales. The engines can be seen at the Thirlmere Festival of Steam on the weekend of 25 and 26 June. I encourage all members to save the date and visit Thirlmere with their families and friends for a beautiful experience. We are getting on with the job by delivering on the New South Wales Government's \$14.6 million commitment to upgrade the Picton to Mittagong loop line, which has had no trains running on it for 47 years. My vision for the loop line, which runs parallel to the current train line along the old Melbourne line, provides visitors to the NSW Rail Museum with a reason to keep coming back.

The 18.7-kilometre Buxton to Colo Vale trip will provide the opportunity for people to get off at Balmoral village, Hill Top and Colo Vale to enjoy markets and local produce, which our local businesses will provide. The last remaining piece of track is stage two—the funding for which I do not have yet but am pushing for—which will extend from Colo Vale through Braemar to Mittagong. It will open up the whole loop for tourists visiting Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale and allow them to enjoy extended day trips to Mittagong from Thirlmere. The tourism opportunities are unlimited for the benefit and enjoyment of communities right across the State. I thank and acknowledge the Australian Rail Track Corporation for restoring the vital connection that the heritage trains use at Picton, which was damaged in the recent rains. In a time of rapid technological expansion, steam trains take

us back to the past and aid our rest and relaxation. They are for everyone. They are for families, and for young and old boys alike. The member for Tweed would love to jump on a steam train.

Ms Trish Doyle: And women!

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: I know the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Newtown would love to jump on one as well. Travelling by steam train provides historical education for young and old eager minds and enables families to enjoy the nature and scenery of the beautiful Southern Highlands and Wollondilly shire. The member for Blue Mountains said it could be viewed from Wentworth Falls. Every region must have something to define its character and to call its own. The Thirlmere Festival of Steam is just that. After the experience of bushfire, drought, COVID, flood and a cyclone in Thirlmere, our community deserves a break and a little enjoyment. The NSW Rail Museum provides a day-trip destination for tourists and will put a smile on faces of hundreds of kids. It is something that New South Wales can be proud of. Over the Easter break, 6,000 visitors came to the museum and jumped on some steam trains. Over the two *Thomas The Tank Engine* weekends, we had 11,400.

The investment in the loop line is making our area bigger than Ben Hur. The steam train attraction that runs from Buxton to Colo Vale will transform the area, which experienced those terrible fires in December 2019. People are still suffering from that event. This will provide a pick-up for everyone.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:11): I praise the member for Wollondilly for his strong support for the transport heritage museum in Thirlmere, where a lot of the old steam engines are displayed. The member for Wollondilly reminds me of the story *The Little Engine That Could*—"I think I can, I think I can, I know I can." He does well. Many moons ago my grandfather drove steam engines in Dubbo so I have a fascination with them. I commend the member for Wollondilly for all his efforts.

NEWTOWN ELECTORATE TRAIN STATION ACCESSIBILITY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:11): I also speak about trains and an issue of great concern in the Newtown electorate, which is public transport and train station accessibility. The ability to access our train network should be a basic right for every individual. It is a disgrace that in 2022 some stations in our electorate and throughout New South Wales remain inaccessible. People with disabilities, parents with prams, the elderly and anyone with mobility issues should not have to struggle to access public transport—facilities that are paid for by the public for the public good. It is outrageous that station accessibility is still an issue today. In 2002, 20 years ago, the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport were issued under division 2A of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Those standards had goals that were well within the means of successive governments to achieve.

We are almost halfway through 2022, which is the year by which we are supposed to have 100 per cent compliance with the standards. But our train stations are nowhere near meeting the accessibility standards. That is a disgrace, the blame for which lies squarely on the shoulders of successive State governments that have failed to invest in our public transport system. It seems that we can pay billions of dollars to pollute motorways but are still unable to commit to upgrades to our train stations to make them 100 per cent accessible. Currently, in the Newtown electorate we have eight train stations: Newtown, Redfern, Stanmore, Erskineville, St Peters, Macdonaldtown, Petersham and Lewisham. Ensuring the accessibility of every one of those stations is a high priority for The Greens. For many years we have worked collaboratively with our community on that priority.

When I was first elected, in 2015, only one station was accessible in the electorate of Newtown, and that was Newtown station. Successive governments had ignored our community's public transport access needs, and seven years later I am pleased to report that we have seen a massive improvement. The completed upgrade of Petersham station means that it is now fully accessible, and upgrades to install lifts for the outdoor platforms are underway in Redfern, Erskineville and St Peters. Plans for lift upgrades have also been released for Stanmore. That is a significant improvement—from seven completely inaccessible stations to only two that will remain inaccessible.

Accessibility at Petersham station came about thanks to a strong community campaign. Hundreds signed petitions, and together we got stories into local papers and kept the pressure on the transport Minister every day in Parliament. Many local residents have expressed so much gratitude and appreciation, including Chris, who wrote:

As someone with a disability living in Petersham, the upgrading of Petersham station will open up my world and allow me to access the community more easily.

The same goes for the numerous parents and elderly residents who have contacted us about the steep steps at Stanmore and Erskineville that they have had to navigate. After much advocacy and community campaigning, it is so great to see that there has been a change. Similarly, years of campaigning by local community and stakeholder

groups in Redfern including Lift Redfern, REDWatch and Reconnect Redfern has resulted in works being underway to finally make Redfern station accessible from platforms 1 to 10, with new lifts and a new concourse.

While those works are very welcome, sadly—in classic Liberal-Nationals Government style—the failure to consult adequately and listen to the community has meant that some local residents are very concerned about the design that is being delivered. Redfern will be almost accessible, because platforms 11 and 12—which are underground—have been forgotten. Apparently the escalators are acceptable to meet accessibility standards, which anyone in a wheelchair would agree is not an adequate solution.

I give a massive shout-out to the Friends of Erskineville, who have worked hard to see Erskineville station upgraded. We have finally seen the plans for a second station entrance with lifts connecting the new footbridge at Bridge Street with station platforms, as well as a new lift from the existing concourse onto platform 1. After much action from local residents, we are also seeing upgrades to St Peters station. Stanmore station finally has plans in place, with planning approval granted after years of community support and calls for an upgrade—and after years of seeing students carrying bikes up and down the stairs in Stanmore.

As I have outlined, there has finally been some action. I have been so pleased to work with our community to ensure that there has been a massive increase in the accessibility of our stations. However, we are committed and determined to work with the residents near Macdonaldtown and Lewisham to ensure that those communities have their calls for accessible stations heard.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:16): I feel obligated to make a one-minute reply to the member for Newtown. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, we appreciate her thanks for what we have done in upgrading those stations. As we continue to do so, more stations will be accessible. I thank the member for Newtown for her praise for the New South Wales Government for fixing the stations.

M5 EAST TOLL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (17:17): Everywhere I go in my electorate residents tell me how angry they are about the Government's toll regime and especially the M5 East, which is causing a massive increase in traffic and trucks in local suburbs—especially Bexley, Kingsgrove, Kogarah and Hurstville. The M5 East was once free, but the Government has placed a toll in both directions. It is expected to go up by a minimum of 4 per cent each year for the next 20 years.

Sydney has become the most tolled city on the face of the earth. Residents are paying over \$2.3 billion in tolls each year, which hits the hip pockets of residents who are already feeling the impact of the rising cost of living. Instead of reducing surface traffic, however, there has been a 79 per cent increase in traffic on local roads, causing a massive increase in noise and pollution for fed-up residents. Imagine a government of any persuasion spending \$4 billion of capital and increasing surface traffic on residential streets as a direct result.

That will only get worse if the distance-based tolling system that the Premier outlined early last week comes into effect. Our community has every right to be angry about that. The Government's new toll on a 20-year-old road, the M5 East, is forcing truck drivers to use local roads in my community. Families have had their lives turned upside down by thousands of B-double trucks hurtling through local roads 24 hours a day because they are now trying to avoid paying what are exorbitant tolls by any measure.

At a recent angry protest in Bexley, it was made abundantly clear to anyone who would listen that they have had enough. People avoiding the tolls are jamming Bexley's local roads and making life "a living hell" for the residents and business owners. Bexley Chamber of Commerce president Jeff Tulloch described the situation as atrocious:

This situation needs to be urgently reviewed. When the original M5 East tunnel opened it was like a breath of fresh air; traffic volumes returned to more tolerable levels and right hand turns onto our main streets were easy. Since the opening of the M8, motorists dodging tolls have returned our main streets of Stoney Creek Road and Forest Road to pre-2001 conditions.

Jeff does not blame the motorists. He adds:

This Government has made the cost of the tolls out of reach for average mums and dads. The tolls discourage people from using the M8 and M5—and at the same time clogging up suburban roads with drivers trying to find an alternative route.

In fact, recent data shows that there are 6,000 fewer cars and trucks using the M5 East and the M8 compared with seven years ago. At \$7.23 for cars and \$27.80 for trucks, one way, the toll is causing thousands of them to flood onto local streets. The New South Wales Government promised a review of those traffic levels 12 months after the opening of the M8 tunnel on 5 July 2020. While the Government pocketed billions from the sale of WestConnex, which impacts millions of trucks and cars in Sydney's south over an average financial year, it spent less than \$200,000 on a traffic study to assess the damage that has been done to the residents of southern Sydney. The report has yet to see the light of day.

We need answers to the problems of rat-running trucks on local streets in Bexley, Beverly Hills and Kingsgrove. We need answers to the safety issues caused by the massive increase in local traffic in and around Hurstville, Bexley, Kingsgrove and Beverley Hills. Because of the inaction from the Government, the upper House has launched its inquiry into the impacts on the people of Sydney. It has heard firsthand the pain inflicted as a result of tolls. The Government has created a toll road monopoly that is hitting the hip pocket of residents and destroying the local environment. Even Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Chair Rod Sims has warned of the road operators' monopoly, saying it will force taxpayers and motorists to pay the price.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (17:21): It gives me great pleasure today, on the fourth day of National Volunteer Week, to acknowledge volunteers in the NSW State Emergency Service. After the hardship experienced in recent times, it has been wonderful to show some genuine gratitude to SES members this week. A highlight for me and for the SES more broadly is Wear Orange Wednesday, or WOW Day as it is affectionately known—and wow, what a day it was.

Yesterday morning I had the great pleasure of hosting a WOW Day morning tea in Parliament House. That gave me the opportunity to express my personal thanks to volunteers from Sydney-based units including City of Sydney, Marrickville, Waverley-Woollahra, Randwick, Ku-ring-gai, Willoughby-Lane Cove, Manly, Warringah-Pittwater and the Warren Shire. Volunteers from those Sydney-based units have so selflessly given up their time and energy over the past few months to help their country cousins respond to flood events, particularly the unprecedented flooding in the Northern Rivers region.

It would be remiss of me to not mention the slow-moving flood event impacting parts of western New South Wales late last year and early this year, which has meant operational activity has remained at a high tempo for months on end. I express my appreciation on behalf of Commissioner York, the regional and rural communities, and myself to the Sydney-based SES units that have contributed personnel and resources to the flood and storm operations across regional and rural parts of our State.

To cap off the WOW Day celebrations yesterday, the sails of the Sydney Opera House were lit up orange from 6.30 p.m. until midnight. It was a small but symbolic way to shine a light on the SES volunteers who have worked nonstop during the devastating flooding. We have more than 10,000 SES members in New South Wales, and it was a very special moment for each and every one of them. I thank our Premier; the Minister for the Arts in the other place, Ben Franklin; and Commissioner York for joining me along with dozens of our SES personnel and volunteers for the switching-on moment at 6.30 p.m. last night. I am so pleased we could take a moment to recognise the contributions of SES volunteers on one of the world's most iconic landmarks. To see it illuminated orange was a great moment of recognition for those who so thoroughly deserve it.

To conclude, I acknowledge that SES units are the lifeblood of communities, particularly across the Northern Rivers region. I travel regularly to that region to oversee the flood recovery effort to make sure that we are doing everything we can as a government to help communities get back on their feet as quickly as possible. As part of those trips, I have enjoyed meeting members of SES units in Lismore, Ballina, Woodburn and Grafton. Their dedication is truly inspiring. They do not volunteer for recognition or money, or to obtain special status; they do it because they want to give back to their community and help fellow local residents when they are most in need of support. As an SES volunteer at the Junee unit, I take this opportunity to thank them for their dedication to their communities. They have done, and continue to do, me and the people of New South Wales very proud indeed.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:25): I thank the member for Cootamundra, particularly in her role as emergency services Minister. My electorate was one of those areas deeply affected by the floods in February and March this year. The Minister's leadership, understanding and resilience is second to none. It was a very trying time for everyone, particularly the SES volunteers. I am appreciative of the way she, her department, the SES and its volunteers handled the floods. She supports the volunteers and understands that they are helping when people have lost everything. What she did was just extraordinary. I am very pleased that she is our emergency services Minister.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the member for Tweed. I think all members concur with his comments.

FEDERAL LABOR POLICIES

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:26): Like all members in this place and others across the nation, people in my electorate will be going to the polls this Saturday. A number of people have already cast their votes. It is obvious which party I will be supporting and encouraging people to vote for. But the Federal election got me

thinking about the impact local issues have had on my community over the past three years. Life has not become easier under this Government. We have gone through COVID. During the Delta strain, everyone was looking to shift blame, but the impact of not having vaccines on our communities was absolutely phenomenal. When places were locked down, it affected my community and the surrounding areas disproportionately.

It was simple to say, "You can work from home", but people in my community did not have the opportunity to work from home. They are frontline and essential service workers who could not work on a laptop in their homes and, if they could, there were not enough to go around. We saw that with education. Today we can read the data that showed the impact of COVID on educational outcomes, particularly for communities from low socio-economic backgrounds such as mine. We do not forget the important things that had a disproportionate impact. My community has a range of issues and I think about how it would benefit from a Labor Government. More affordable child care would make a big difference. That is a centrepiece of Labor's policies. Medicare is also incredibly important to everybody across Australia.

Whether cost of living is a State or Federal issue, people are doing it tough across the board. What are the cost-of-living measures being proposed in the Federal election? It was made clear to me a couple of weeks ago when there was an attempt at a "gotcha" moment. The Federal Leader of the Opposition said that he supported a 5.1 per cent increase for people on the lowest salaries. It was quickly pointed out that we cannot afford 5.1 per cent. If we cannot afford \$1 an hour more for people who earn the lowest wages, then we have some serious problems in this country. We need to make sure that we increase salaries. I say that all politics is local because people on low salaries and basic incomes represent a great proportion of those in my electorate. Every single day they walk through my electorate office door, asking for help and support.

The current Liberal-Nationals Federal Government has done nothing that I can see that helps people who need it. Some people do exceptionally well, but I am also conscious of the people who need a hand up to get on that ladder of aspiration so they can make a difference to their lives. Everyone knows my background is education. I am in the Chamber with the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Gosford. We are all proud public school teachers. The Labor Party's commitment to public education is undoubted. We know it will make an investment in education. Let us not forget that our party started the Gonski review and introduced needs-based funding, which has made an enormous difference to communities like mine. This election is not about pitting one group against another; it is about ensuring that everybody gets to work in the best way they possibly can.

My portfolio area is responsible for climate change. Labor does not get into arguments about climate action. A Federal Labor government might be an opportunity for us to end the climate wars and simply say we need to act. The Coalition still has not quite worked out its position. It does not know where it stands. Some of its members say climate change does not exist; others say that we need to make a move. We are seeing that with the rise of the teal independents because they want to address climate change. If people want action on climate change, they should vote for a Labor Federal government.

We talk about support for emerging communities. It is pretty clear that Labor delivers on every measure that is important to local communities like mine. Jason Clare and Tony Burke are my local members, but in and around the electorate of Lakemba there is Linda Burney—that is representation—Sally Sitou and Zhi Soon. They are incredible candidates. I mention them because representation matters. They will bring a different element to the Federal Parliament. They will serve as role models. But they also reflect on what I often say: If you can see it, you can be it. Having people from all walks of life in our parliaments makes an enormous difference. So I will say this again to everybody: If you want a good government, you need to change the government for a better country. [*Time expired.*]

COST OF LIVING

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:31): Across New South Wales the Government is supporting families. It is addressing cost-of-living pressures and ensuring that people are able to spend more quality time with one another across all factors of daily life. It is supporting families in education and health. We are constantly monitoring cost-of-living pressures for individuals and families. We are acutely aware of the impact the pandemic has had on labour supply, the supply chain and cost of living. We know that global and geopolitical challenges are increasing the cost of fuel and increasing inflation. International pressures are having an impact locally in Australia. China's no-COVID policy continues to affect a whole range of industries and parts of the community.

Members of my electorate also feel the impact of cost-of-living challenges, particularly families, which have the expense of sending their kids to child care, early childhood education or school. There is also the cost of sport, which includes training. There is the cost and teaching and learning, and even things like tuition to support kids who were particularly impacted by the pandemic. The Government is doing a couple of things to improve cost-of-living challenges for families, including the \$500 initiative of before- and after-school care vouchers,

which will provide on average 60 free sessions per child in 2022. This \$155 million program will help alleviate some of the financial pressures on families and assist in boosting their budgets.

Many young working families in my electorate are happy to see the increase in places for before- and after-school care, which is creating a significant reduction in waitlists and the voucher program is reducing costs. The \$250 Parents NSW vouchers can also be used at similar venues as the Dine & Discover vouchers. They have been a hit amongst businesses in my community. I have also enjoyed using my vouchers at some of our local venues. Getting feedback about the voucher program was an effective way for us to engage and encourage our local small businesses. We received feedback about the effectiveness of the programs throughout the rollout of the earlier voucher schemes and we could take that feedback on board in the design and rollout of the further schemes. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Mosman Chamber of Commerce and its president, Tamara Keniry. They were tireless in ensuring that businesses in our local community had the support they needed during the past two years. They kicked off the very successful Think Mosman First program, which has encouraged the community and businesses to come together and support one another.

We are supporting families through the popular \$100 Active Kids vouchers and \$100 Creative Kids vouchers, which help ease families' budgets and help kids with learning new skills. We have many sporting, music and art organisations in my local community aimed at supporting our kids. Many local families have benefited from the use of those vouchers. We have also provided the \$100 First Lap vouchers for children aged three to six years, which are aimed at assisting with the cost of swimming lessons. I recognise the member for Holsworthy's work in driving that. Like me, she has very young children, with one in primary school and one in child care, and is working to ensure that all children learn to swim. We know how crucial that is for their safety, particularly for families who have pools or live near the beach or harbour, as in my area, for instance, or close to creeks or rivers.

I used the First Lap voucher to enrol my three-year-old in the swimming program at Wenona in my area, and she has started those Thursday morning classes. I had not thought to initiate that until I had the voucher. It has already changed my behaviour, and I imagine it is changing many other people's as well. When it comes to supporting families, nothing could help more than investing in our schools to make sure that our local kids get the best start in life. Three major upgrades are progressing in my area. At Mosman High School huge demolitions have already occurred and reconstruction work will begin soon. At North Sydney Demonstration School some of the work to demolish some of the old buildings for a major upgrade is underway.

Neutral Bay Public School has had funding approved to progress with a major upgrade. Those upgrades will include new classrooms, state-of-the-art facilities, increased play space and updated amenities for students and staff. We are also providing record investment in health through a range of different initiatives, including funding the upgrade of the Tresillian Family Care Centre in Wollstonecraft. Our strong economy means more and better jobs for families and households, but this Government will always focus on easing cost-of-living pressures.

NEW SOUTH WALES PUBLIC SECTOR DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:36): I speak today about disability employment and inclusion. As a Labor member, I believe that work is so important to our identity. Being employed not only says to someone that their time is worth something, it says that their contribution is valued by society. For people with disability, work provides a symbol of inclusion in a world that is often determined to sideline us. Last year the royal commission into disability slammed corporate giants such as Woolworths for having abysmal records on disability employment. It found that, amongst the over 200,000 employees at Woolworths, only 0.85 per cent identified as having a disability, which is well below the 18 per cent to 20 per cent of Australians who identify as having a disability.

I recently met with Woolworths' general manager of inclusion to hear firsthand how Woolworths would begin to address this. I am glad to say that, from my perspective, there seems to be a genuine commitment to tackle the issue head-on. In March I had the privilege of opening a mini Woolworths supermarket in Gosford, which is an innovative partnership between Woolworths, Fujitsu and Omnia Inclusive Employment Solutions, a disability employment provider in my electorate. The mini Woolworths sported shelves stocked with items for sale and checkout terminals with the same technology used by the Woolworths staff in other stores. The little shop has big ambitions to train people with disabilities in the skills needed to go directly onto the shop floor. It is a tangible training ground for retail experience.

I intend to watch that project closely, and I call on other corporations with large workforces to commit to bolder action on disability employment. Woolworths is trying something new where other policies have failed in the past. I had the delight of bumping into one of the Woolworths employees out in the community not long afterwards, and she said that the Woolworths initiative may be the best thing that has happened since she has been employed by them. She was packing shelves beside someone with an intellectual disability. Unfortunately, the

Perrottet Government is not as willing as Woolworths to put the effort in to employ more people with disabilities. Results are very patchy and half-hearted within the New South Wales Government.

In 2019 Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced that the New South Wales Government would make disability employment a Premier's Priority, pledging to more than double the number of employees in the New South Wales public sector who identify as having a disability. She said, "We want 10,000 more staff with disability working in the New South Wales Government by 2025. That's 5.6 per cent of our total workforce. It is going to take all of us working together to achieve this." It is a shame that members of the Perrottet Government do not seem to have the same commitment to that as the former Premier. Currently 2.5 per cent of people in the New South Wales public sector identify as living with disability, compared to the 18 per cent to 20 per cent of the general population.

More than three years on, the Government is still exactly where it started, not a single percentage point higher. In supplementary hearings for budget estimates, my Labor colleagues and I asked a large number of questions about the level of disability employment across New South Wales Government departments and agencies. The answers we received were disappointing. At least 18 government agencies stated that they do not have a single person who identifies as disabled employed as a senior manager or executive. Among that group were Destination NSW, Investment NSW, Sydney Living Museums, Aboriginal Affairs NSW, the NSW Institute of Sport, Australian Museum, Venues NSW, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Art Gallery of NSW, the State Archives and Records Authority of New South Wales, the Advocate for Children and Young People NSW, the State Library of New South Wales, Legal Aid Commission and Essential Water.

A troubling number of agencies have also lost people with disabilities since the Premier's Priority began, such as Destination NSW, which has gone from a meagre 1.5 per cent in 2019 to zero now; Venues NSW, which slid from 3.4 per cent in 2021 to 1.8 per cent today; and the Office of Sport, which has fallen from 3.9 per cent in 2020 to 2.7 per cent in 2021. Gallingly for a former Paralympian like me, the NSW Institute of Sport can cite only one person who identifies as living with disability, despite its annual report spruiking the achievements and images of our amazing Paralympics champions. When almost 20 per cent of Australians identify as having a disability, that is simply not good enough.

According to the Public Service Commission's report on the state of the public sector, the Government is likely to fall short of its own goal of 5.6 per cent by 2025. That is self-defeatist, and I urge the Government to put in the hard yards to make the commitment a reality. Putting that challenge in the too-hard basket, where people with disabilities have been placed for years, is not okay. It is time for Mr Perrottet to take these priorities seriously, including the built environment of this Parliament. We still have a lot of work to make sure that people with disabilities are included in Parliament and are happy to identify as living with disability. I acknowledge the work of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, whose building, I note, does not have access for people with disabilities—people who need his advice and care—to even enter his workplace to meet with him.

Community Recognition Notices

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW STATION 500 TINGIRA HEIGHTS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—On Saturday 14 May, Fire and Rescue NSW Station 500 Tingira Heights opened their doors to the general public for their annual Open Day! Open Day is always special, a chance for members of the community to come in and learn more about the role of firefighters and fire safety, but this Open Day was particularly important for two members of the 500 Station team. Acting Superintendent Troy Kempnitch visited 500 Station to award medal's clasps and certificates, and two Tingira Heights fireys received their 20 year of service commendations. Congratulations to firefighter Luke Wiseman for his twenty years of dedicated service with 454 Wallsend Station and 500 Tingira Heights Station. 500 Station's captain, Captain Neil Pryor, also received his 20 year clasp. Neil is a fantastic captain who has led his team with the courage and dedication which is the hallmark of our fire and rescue service. I am sure their mates at 500 Station are looking forward to having both of them around for a long time yet! Congratulations to Luke and Neil, and thank you for your service.

JUSTINE RUSSELL, ROTARY URBAN INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—It was my pleasure to attend a reception at Sydney's beautiful Government House for the launch of the 2022 Rotary Australia Inspirational Women's Awards, which recognise service to the community across all sectors. Unfortunately, the 2021 ceremony was cancelled due to COVID, so the 29 April event honoured last year's winners as well. Amongst those honoured was Charlestown's own Justine Russell, who was recognised as an Urban Inspirational Woman of the Year for her amazing work with PCYC NSW. Justine joined PCYC in 2012 and utilised her extensive experience in program design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation to deliver evidence-based programs which meet the individual needs of young people and their

communities. Justine heads up the PCYC Youth Resilience and Social Impact team, which works with young people to build youth agency and increase the tools and strategies available to help young people navigate life's challenges. Justine has dedicated so much time, effort and energy to helping vulnerable young people turn their lives around with mentoring, education and support, going above and beyond to ensure they have a safe place to play sport, create art and socialise. Congratulations Justine!

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW STATION 255 CHARLESTOWN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—On Saturday 14 May, Fire and Rescue NSW Station 255 Charlestown held their Open Day for the general public—including the local MP! I went along to 225 Station's Open Day joining in with the crowds who came along to take learn more about the role of firefighters and fire safety. It was an opportunity to learn more about safety and keeping all of our families safe this winter. I can confirm that you never outgrow the delight you feel standing next to a bright red fire engine. Open Day was particularly important for one member of the 255 Station team. Acting Superintendent Troy Kempnitch visited 255 Station to award retained firefighter Mark Hackenberg with his fifteen years of service clasp. Mark is also a paramedic, which is proof of his commitment and dedication to helping people in the darkest moments of their lives. All of our fires show extraordinary bravery, day-in and day-out, and I'd like to thank the team at Station 255 Charlestown for being so welcoming to myself and the Charlestown community. Thank you all for your service.

BELMONT CHRISTIAN COLLEGE 2022 SCHOOL LEADERS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Rebecca Wigney, Cooper Ashbourne, Archie Wilkinson and Taylah Cowling, who have been elected as the school captains and vice captains of Belmont Christian College for 2022. I also acknowledge Owen Irvine, Jacqueline Wilson, Heber Masseur, Hugh Brindley, Sophie Rogers, Alleluya Hamisi and Noah Edwards, who have been named as the 2022 Belmont Christian College prefects. Each of these students work exceptionally hard and have been highly involved in their school community throughout their studies. They always strive to do their best and have demonstrated their ability to lead by acting as role models for their peers. Being elected as the school leaders and prefects of Belmont Christian College for 2022 is a testament to each of these students, as they have faced a number of hurdles during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have no doubt that they will carry out their new leadership roles with great pride. I congratulate these students on their achievement and wish them all the best for the year ahead.

KEN AND JOYCE CROUCHMAN

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Ken and Joyce Crouchman of Nords Wharf who recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Ken and Joyce first met as teenagers at a local dance in Essex back in 1948. From then on the pair developed a strong connection and relationship and married in 1952 at a church in Cherry Tree. Shortly after the couple were married, Ken went on to work as an aerial photographer with the RAF for a year and Joyce gave birth to their first child Leslie. The family then relocated to Sydney when Ken was scouted by Ita Buttrose to work for the Australian Women's Weekly. Ken and Joyce have spent the past 35 years calling Nords Wharf home. The couple marked their 70th wedding anniversary on 3 May and have spent the past month celebrating with special dinners, an afternoon tea and a trip to Nelson Bay. Reaching 70 years of marriage demonstrates Ken and Joyce's love and commitment to one another. I congratulate them on reaching this milestone.

DICK CAINE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I extend my warm congratulations to Dick Caine who was recently inducted into the Australian Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame. Dick is best known in my electorate for running the swim school at the Kogarah War Memorial Pool. Spanning a career of more than 50 years, Dick operated a highly successful and respected swim school at the pool located at Carss Park. Together with his team, Dick had the privilege of coaching many of Australia's best: gold medallist swimmers Michelle Ford, marathon swimmer Suzie Maroney; and even boxer Anthony Mundine. A surprise ceremony presentation was held in Cronulla and included past students Darren Turner, David O'Brien, Janelle Elford, Richard Ford, Stuart Dutton and Ross Payne. David remarked that the ceremony was not just a way to get everyone together, but to honour Dick who has given so much of his life to coach athletes from all disciplines. I again congratulate Dick Caine for his terrific and longstanding contributions to the sporting community here in St. George, and wish him all the best.

NEW ST GEORGE CONSTABLES

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate St George Police Area Command's newest recruits. St George Area Command recently welcomed eight new probationary constables after they attested at a formal ceremony at the Goulburn Police Academy. Class 352 includes 142 men and 60 women from all ages, backgrounds and regions across the state and country. Their promotion is the culmination

of many years of effort and dedication, including eight months of training at the Police Academy. I would also like to acknowledge Rowan Cramsie; the St George Local Area Commander on the wonderful job they are doing in keeping our community safe. Particularly, over the last few years with the pandemic our police officers deserve our deepest respect and thanks for their tireless efforts. I know the new St George constables will serve my community with distinction. I wish them all the best in their new roles.

VAISAKHI- SIKH FESTIVAL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge the Australian Sikh Community as they came together to celebrate Vaisakhi on the 14th of April. Vaisakhi is one of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar marking the beginning of the harvest time in the Punjab region. It is a time to give thanks for the past and to look to the coming year with optimism. It is a time that combines tradition and prosperity. Vaisakhi is an important festival for the people of the Punjab region and also an event of great significance to one of the world's great faiths, Sikhism. Sikhs throughout the world celebrate the founding of the Khalsa and the creation of key articles of faith by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. I acknowledge the contribution the Sikh community has made to New South Wales over many decades, including the heroic and selfless efforts of many Sikhs during our recent flood crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of New South Wales Labor, I offer my best wishes to the Australian Sikh Community for the coming year and thank them for everything they have given to Australia.

NEIL MOULANG 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—It is with great pleasure that today I acknowledge Mr Neil Moulang as he celebrates his 100th birthday this Saturday 21st May 2022. I trust Neil will celebrate this momentous occasion accompanied by his closest family and friends. I take this opportunity to again extend my sincere congratulations to Neil and wish him good health and happiness for the future.

ST FLORIAN'S DAY AWARDS – SENIOR FIREFIGHTER MATTHEW DIEGUTIS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Senior Firefighter Matthew Diegutis of Engadine Fire Station was acknowledged at an award ceremony coinciding with St Florian's Day on Wednesday 4 May 2022. St Florian's Day recognises the bravery and sacrifice of our firefighters with protecting our community. Senior Firefighter Diegutis was honoured with the Fire and Rescue NSW [FRNSW] Commendation for Courageous Actions and Meritorious Service. He was part of just 64 volunteers, staff and teams from the NSW RFS and FRNSW to be recognised with awards and commendations. On 19th of May 2021, Senior Firefighter Diegutis responded to a house fire in Fairy Meadow and went above and beyond to conduct a successful search and rescue in hazardous conditions. Senior Firefighter Diegutis is a worthy recipient of this commendation, displaying courage, skill, commitment and strength above the call of duty. I take this opportunity to commend Senior Firefighter Diegutis, he is extremely deserving of this recognition and I thank him for his exemplary service to the community.

GRAND MUFTI'S 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 Grand Mufti Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed for hosting me and many others, including Race Commissioner, Chin Tan, at his iftar on 9 April. I deeply value the relationship I have with the Grand Mufti and the leadership he provides. It is an honour to be part of his community and I thank him for the invitation. 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.

HUMAN APPEAL FUNDRAISING 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 Human Appeal for hosting me at their fundraising iftar on 16 April. Human Appeal International has had many successes over the years. It is an honour to be part of their community and support them whether for local projects like support for families during COVID or for international things close to my heart, such as support of Afghan orphans. I thank CEO, Bashar Al-Jamal for his tireless work. 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.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT 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 ESI Global for hosting me at their international student iftar on 16 April. ESI Global Education and Migration aims to connect with international students and provide support services in all aspects of their journey of studying in Australia. I thank Mohammad Kader for the invitation and for providing an opportunity for students far from home, to break their fast with others. 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.

AL FAISAL COLLEGE LIVERPOOL IFTAR DINNER

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise Al Faisal College Liverpool which held an Iftar dinner on Friday 29 April at Jasmin1 Restaurant in Liverpool. I would like to thank Mr Shafiq R. Abdullah Khan, Managing Director of Al Faisal College for his invitation to attend this event. Al Faisal College Liverpool was established in 2015 and has grown rapidly, both in terms of school infrastructure and school population. They are currently a K-12 school with their first cohort of HSC students. Apart from the mandatory subject requirements by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) students also have the opportunity to learn the Arabic language and Islamic culture. The current Liverpool campus is a far cry from the two classrooms operating out of demountable rooms that were there when the school first opened on this site on 27 April 2015. The school is now part of the vibrant multiculturalism of south west Sydney. The Iftar dinner, during the Holy month of Ramadan is also a practical example of what it means to live in multicultural and multifaith south west Sydney.

LAWSON GRIFFIN

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Lawson Griffin is a proud young Awabakal man who has a remarkable and meaningful connection to his culture and to country. Lawson educates and engages with other students at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School at Tarro through his roles as cultural mentor and being in the leadership team, as well as being an authentic Aboriginal voice in the weekly Aboriginal Perspectives classes. The school's native bush food garden and Culture Yarns program provides valuable opportunities for the entire school to learn about and connect with Aboriginal culture and hear from local cultural figures. The garden is home to a statue of the Awabakal people's totem, the eagle. Principal, Cheryl Henderson, and Aboriginal Education Teacher, Belinda Huntriss, boast that Lawson is an extraordinary young man, how his culture is so important to him, that he shares his knowledge in such a powerful way and that he is a really good yidaki player. Well done Lawson, your passion and enthusiasm for your culture is incredible.

JOHN GREIG

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—After 33 years of service in the Royal Australian Air Force as a pilot and flight instructor, Friday 20 May marks Squadron Leader John Greig's last day in the Australian Defence Force before retirement. John was born and raised in Scone and joined the RAAF in 1989. He first studied in the Air Force Academy in Canberra, from which he graduated as an officer. John served at numerous air bases, holding positions in RAAF Base Pearce in Western Australia, Fairbairn in Canberra, RAAF Base East Sale in Victoria, and most recently the local RAAF base in Williamstown. John earned considerable field experience during his time deployed overseas. He was twice deployed to Afghanistan, where he continued his service to the country. John is married, and I'm sure his wife and four kids are looking forward to spending more time with him in his retirement! I would like to congratulate John on his career and his exemplary service to Australia. Thirty-three years of service is an achievement to be proud of. I thank him for his service and I wish him a happy retirement.

CLAIRE WILLIAMS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Newcastle Theatre Company is run by volunteers and has been an integral part of the local community since 1957. The Theatre has over 200 members and stages eight productions a year. In 2019, the NTC were in crisis. Facing a bill in excess of \$100,000 for fire safety compliance, the NTC were at risk of closure. Not one to go down without a fight, President Claire Williams vowed to save the Theatre. Within a matter of months, Claire had secured a grant through the My Community Project of \$190,000 which was a lifeline for the Theatre. Not only did the grant cover the compliance issue but also allowed the Theatre to upgrade access and make significant improvements. Then in 2020 and 2021 COVID struck and the Theatre was forced to close for an extended period. The Theatre reopened with new shows and a spectacular new building. After a rough

few years, Claire has decided to hang up her President's cap for a while and explore other opportunities. I am sure Claire will be missed by all at the NTC, but never forgotten for all the blood, sweat and tears put in to saving the Theatre. Well done Claire.

ROTARY AWARD RECIPIENT SHAREE WITNEY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our lives in various ways – for many it has been a challenging time whilst for others an opportunity to assist their community in a time of need. Merriwa Rotary Club has recently thanked Sharee Witney for her efforts to ensure the Merriwa and Cassilis communities had its COVID-19 vaccinations. As a registered practice nurse in a local medical practice, Sharee was acutely aware of the public health danger that the pandemic presented and the urgent response that it required. Presenting the award recognising Sharee's efforts, Merriwa Rotary noted her unswerving commitment to the task. It included organising vaccination clinics particularly when Merriwa had no GP available, ordering vaccines and equipment and processing vaccination paperwork. But Sharee did not stop there - she assisted the Merriwa Pharmacy vaccination team and volunteered to assist the Royal Flying Doctor Service when it conducted mass vaccination clinics in Merriwa late last year. Sharee, on behalf of the Upper Hunter Electorate, I want to acknowledge your professionalism and commitment in the midst of an emergency to protect your community. I also thank Merriwa Rotary for its ongoing efforts to recognise community service.

OLIVIA THRIFT - ROYAL EASTER SHOW PONY CLUB CHAMPION

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—I congratulate Olivia Thrift of Scone on her success at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in April 2022. Olivia was awarded the George D Scales Memorial Perpetual Trophy for the Champion Pony Club Rider aged under-18. Riding Coolidowns Rebel Yell, Olivia won the 13 years and under 15 years Pony Club Rider Class then contested the champion round against the winners of the three other under-18s classes. The Scone Grammar School student's preparation for the Sydney Royal was disrupted in the countdown to this year's event when her horse was injured. It then became a Thrift family effort to keep the Royal Easter Show appearance alive with sister, Georgia, stepping-up and lending her horse Coolidowns Rebel Yell to Olivia. School representative duties are next on the agenda for Olivia when she competes for Scone Grammar in June at the North West Equestrian Expo at Coonabarabran. Olivia, may I wish you all the best with your goal of contesting the Showhorse Council of Australasia's Grand National. May your Sydney Royal Pony Club success be the stepping stone to greater equestrian achievements.

RISING STARS 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 Rising Stars category. Jack Williams was the winner in the arts and culture category with finalists Lucy Parle and Makayla Reilly. Community Service award winner was Dana Patterson. Excellence in Education was awarded to Charli Grant and finalists Callan Baker and Charlotte Taylor. Sports person of the Year was Makayla Reilly with Nicole Duncan and Jay Kilpatrick recognised as finalists. I would like to thank Central Coast Council for launching these awards to recognise the fantastic youths across the Central Coast in a diverse range of categories.

TERRIGAL SLSC RESCUE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to acknowledge volunteers from Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club; Paul, Nigel, Peter, Ric, Glenn, Chayse, Jill, Toni, Deb and Adam who last month contributed to a rescue saving multiple lives. Due to rough conditions Terrigal Beach was closed but the 10 members had stayed on patrol on standby. When a group of people were observed on the beach, the volunteers decided to walk down and inform a group of the danger in that area with bad rips developing. However, by this stage four members of the group were already in difficulty. When Peter got to the first patient he was in and out of consciousness and a critical condition. The volunteers provided emergency first aid and were able to call for Paramedics who arrived and provided emergency care to the patients, with one patient transported to a helicopter which had landed at the Haven. I would like to congratulate the members from Terrigal SLSC for their quick action in such a scary situation which avoided dire consequences and for their ongoing contribution to the Central Coast.

ANGLICARE OP SHOP OPENING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to attend the official opening of Anglicare's Op Shop in Bankstown City Plaza on 13 April 2022. The store will provide quality recycled clothing, footwear and accessories. It will also provide a Financial Wellbeing Hub, where financial counsellors can provide locals with immediate practical assistance and longer term solutions for their financial future. The shop also features an in-store community pantry, where shoppers can purchase a bag of pantry staples and essential items for \$12. Thank you to Anglicare Sydney's CEO Simon Miller and the Executive Team at Anglicare for bringing such

a terrific store and service to our community in Bankstown. Congratulations to the wonderful team of staff and volunteers that have helped to launch the new store.

ICMG YOUTH SYDNEY 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 Islamic Community Milli Gorus [ICMG] Youth Sydney 8th Annual Iftar Dinner on Saturday 16th April at Guildford Mosque. This year's 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 ICMG Youth Sydney on a successful Iftar Dinner. In particular I would like to thank the President of ICMG Youth Sydney, Mr Mehmet Sula, and the rest of the Executive for organising a wonderful event. I hope everyone observing Ramadan across my community had a happy and blessed month.

BATHING THE BUDDHA FESTIVAL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I take this opportunity to recognise the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society's Ceremony of the Celebration of Buddha's Birthday, also known as the Bathing the Buddha Festival, on Saturday 30 April at Freedom Plaza in Cabramatta. The event was co-organised by Prajna Monastery Sydney. The occasion celebrates the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism. It is a highly significant day for the Buddhist community and one that is celebrated throughout the world. The Bathing the Buddha ceremony symbolises the cleansing of our bodies and our thoughts to remove evil thoughts and purify our minds. I would like to thank James Chan OAM, Chairman of the ACBS, President of the ACBS, Vincent Kong OAM, President of Prajna Monastery, Leong Tho; and the entirety of the ACBS executive for their exceptional work in organising this event. I would also like to extend my thanks to the ACBS for their continual efforts to provide cultural opportunities for Chinese Buddhists in Australia.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BRETT MCFADDEN

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to offer our community's and my personal congratulations to Superintendent Brett McFadden APM for his appointment as Assistant Commissioner, Traffic & Highway Patrol Command on Thursday 31st March 2022. Assistant Commissioner McFadden joined the NSW Police Force in 1988 and commenced general duties at Castle Hill Police Station. Assistant Commissioner McFadden has served as Detective Inspector at the Professional Standards Command, Crime Manager at Hawkesbury Local Area Command, as well as Commander at Holroyd, Penrith, Nepean and Fairfield City Police Area Commands. Assistant Commissioner McFadden has been actively involved in the leadership of an extensive range of challenging incidents and events. Most recently, he worked in partnership with cultural and community leaders to provide critical leadership of the Fairfield community through the COVID-19 pandemic. He is an active member of the Task Force Pioneer cadre for the response to terrorist incidents and has been extensively engaged in the development of police leaders through a range of training and mentoring programs. Thank you to Assistant Commissioner McFadden for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. Congratulations again on your appointment.

SMITHFIELD RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Thursday 25 April 2022, I had the honour to attend the Anzac Day 2022 Dawn Service hosted by Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch. It was wonderful to see thousands of locals attending the service to remember and pay their respects to our men and women who served, and continue to serve, our nation in times of war. It was also great to catch up with many friends, veterans and patrons of the Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch, that I have not been able to see over the last 2 years, due to cancelled Anzac Day ceremonies. It is so important for the community of Smithfield to have a chance to attend a Dawn Service at the Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch. I greatly appreciate the efforts of the RSL in providing the community with this opportunity to once again commemorate those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, for the very freedom which we hold dear to our hearts on Anzac Day. Thank you to the Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch for hosting this moving Dawn Service. At the going down of the sun, we will remember them. Lest we forget.

AUSTRALIAN JORDANIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION RAMADAN IFTAR

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 18 April 2022 I was delighted to attend the Australian Jordanian Community Association's iftar dinner at Eric Tweedale Stadium in my electorate. The Association was formed by a group of Jordanian Australians who are passionate about Jordanian affairs in their home; Australia and looking to promote Jordan as country of peace and stability, 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 and so many friends and attendees at this special occasion. His Excellency Dr Ali Kraishan, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Australia and New Zealand also attended. My thanks go especially to Mohamed Alqadi for the kind invitation.

ISLAMIC CHARITY PROJECTS ASSOCIATION [ICPA] 28TH ANNUAL RAMADAN IFTAR

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 8 April 2022 I was delighted to attend the Islamic Charity Projects Association's 28th Annual Ramadan iftar dinner at Salamah College's school hall in Chester Hill. ICPA is a non profit organisation which teaches Islamic knowledge, builds schools, supports young people through various youth organisations such as: MYOT Muslim Youth of Truth; 5th Bankstown Scout group; Spears Sports Club; Chester Hill Youth Centre; ICPA chanting band; ICPA kids chanting club and As-Salam book store. 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). It was a great honour to join with my parliamentary colleagues, Ambassadors, Consuls-General from numerous nations, around 330 participants and so many friends and attendees at this special occasion. My thanks go especially to Darulfatwa – the Islamic High Council of Australia and ICPA for the kind invitation.

NATALIE HOWE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Today I want to recognise the great work of Natalie Howe who has been admired across the country as a result of her amazing and award winning photography. Natalie Howe of Howe Studios is set to build a new studio in my electorate in Mulgoa Rise. Natalie was named the Australian Newborn Photographer of the Year in 2016 and hopes to have her purpose built studio complete by the end of the year. Natalie took an interest in photography since the age of 16, she has come a long way. In 2004 she started her own business before going full time in 2009 and has now been a professional photographer for 18 years. Natalie has said that being in Glenmore Park she has been using all the wondrous natural beauty that my electorate has to offer as locations to take photographs. Congratulations Natalie on your amazing spirit, drive and passion for photography.

ETHAN MACKIE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I am so pleased when I am able to speak in this chamber about the amazing talents and achievements of my community. Ethan Mackie is a constituent from Glenmore Park who is an extremely fit individual that has competed in triathlons and athletics. Ethan first competed in a triathlon in 2017 and since then joined the Hills Tri Club and raced locally, often finishing in the top 3 placegetters for his age group. Last season, Ethan place 3rd for the 12yr category in the Triathlon NSW Club Championships. This season at the Western Sydney Academy of Sport, Ethan competed in the Billigence series. Working hard, Ethan has improved and placed 3rd Youth Male at Billigence Macarthur and 1st Overall Male at the 2022 'Your Local Club' Academy Games in Wagga Wagga. I want to congratulate Ethan on his enormous achievements. You should be extremely proud of yourself and the effort you put in.

EMU PLAINS/GLENMORE PARK LIONS JUNIOR AFL CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Today I want to recognise the great Emu Plains/Glenmore Park Junior AFL Club who are ready to take on the 2022 season. This year will see about 150 players take to the fields for the local club consisting of players in the AusKick program and Under 9's through to the Under 17's. Despite the pandemic, it hasn't dampened the club or the players' spirits with players eager to take to the field and play the sport they love. The club is looking forward to a full season ahead without disruption. It is great to see local clubs like the Emu Plains/Glenmore Park Lions Junior AFL Club take on 2022 with great spirit despite the past 2 years and the impacts of COVID. Go Lions!

ROTARY CLUB OF WAGGA WAGGA

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I wish to congratulate the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga on its hugely successful 2022 Book Fair. More than \$70,000 was raised at the weekend, making the 2022 fair the most successful in the event's 11-year history. The club will put this money back into the community throughout the year by supporting community projects and organisations. Preparing for the book fair is a year-long activity for the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga. I commend event coordinator Graham Russell and his team of volunteers, along with the many people who have made the event a success. Members of Apex and students from Year 12 at Koorling High School were among those who helped out. Local business Ron Crouch Transport helped to get

the books to and from the fair, while Bruce Haydon of Riverina Model Cars serves as a drop-off point. With more than 40,000 books and other items on offer, this is no easy task. It is also great to see the community coming out in support of the Book Fair every year, with so many people choosing to donate items back so they can be sold again. Congratulations on a great event.

RORY PHILLIPS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Rory Phillips is only 15, but he is already making his mark on the music scene. He has been playing the guitar since the age of about five and began writing his own songs while still in primary school. Three years ago, when he was just 12 years old, the Tumut teenager co-wrote *The Truth*, a song influenced by 2018's growing environmental movement led by young activist Greta Thunberg. Earlier this year, Rory and his mother heard about the United Nations Climate Summit Environmental Music Prize and felt that the song would be a good fit for the competition and entered. The \$20,000 prize, established as a means of amplifying the voices of environmentally conscious artists, attracted more than 200 entries, from which just 24 finalists were chosen. Rory was one of those finalists, along with big-name artists such as Paul Kelly, Lime Cordiale, Briggs & Tim Minchin, Eskimo Joe and Holy Holy. He should be proud of what he has achieved. I wish Rory the best of luck in the competition and congratulate him on making it into the finals. I am also very keen to see what this talented young musician does next.

RAY JAMES

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—For years there was not a veteran throughout Campbelltown who did not know who Ray James was. Now, it's unlikely there would be one throughout the entire state who doesn't know him. I have had the fortune of knowing Ray for many, many years. He has been a fierce advocate for veterans and their rights while his wife Pauline, has been an equally passionate advocate for the loved ones of veterans. Not too long ago Ray was appointed as the RSL NSW president. His appointment, in my opinion, was not only much deserved but also well overdue. A Vietnam veteran and a member of the Australian Navy and Navy Reserves for almost half a century, Ray has an intricate knowledge of the needs of veterans. While it was pleasing to see Anzac Day services return to normal this year – it was even more special to see Ray lead those commemorations. Whether it was at the services in Sydney or the pre-game ceremony before the annual NRL Anzac Day fixture, Ray spoke with passion and poise. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Ray and his various contributions. Well done and thanks again, mate.

TRENT PEOPLES

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The number of elite rugby league players to come off the St Gregory's College Campbelltown production line is nothing short of astounding. Trent Barrett, James Tedesco, Jason Taylor, Mick Potter, Tim Sheens, Jack Gibson, Ryan Hoffman... the list goes on and on. Recently another college alumni made their NRL debut. Making Trent Peoples' first NRL game better was the fact that he donned the mighty cardinal red and myrtle green jersey of Souths Sydney Rabbitohs. I have been a passionate Rabbitohs fan for more years than I can remember. During that time I have seen many great players wear that jersey with pride. After watching Trent's debut, there is no reason he can't also be one of those great players. Aside from attending St Greg's, Trent was also born in the great city of Campbelltown. I know there are many people in Campbelltown who will be watching Trent's journey in the NRL with a keen eye over the coming years. Whilst his side didn't get the result on his debut, it was still a momentous occasion in what will likely be a decorated career for Trent. Once again, congratulations on your debut, Trent.

UNSW BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES CENTRE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—It was a great honour to attend the recent celebration of partnership at the University of NSW's rural medical school building in Wagga Wagga. I am also delighted that development approval has been granted for a multi-million dollar Biomedical Sciences Centre, to be built on the Wagga Wagga site. It is a great credit to all those who have been involved for over nearly a quarter of a century. At a time when we need more GPs in regional, rural and remote NSW, the establishment of this state-of-the-art facility will help to ensure more medical students are trained in rural Australia. As UNSW Professor Tara Mackenzie, Associate Dean, Rural Health has said, the new Biomedical Sciences Centre will provide clinical skills training to medical students. It will allow students to stay close to family and friends in Wagga Wagga and remove the financial barrier of needing to relocate to Sydney to obtain a medical degree. In years ahead, this is expected to have a significant impact on medical service provision in the regions beyond Wagga Wagga. Supporting trained doctors to provide health care in the regions is extremely important.

HUSKISSON MOTHER'S DAY CLASSIC

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—What an outstanding beautiful day it was for the Huskisson Mother's Day Classic and was also one for the record books. The charity fun run welcomed 280 participants which

was more than ever before. Over the mother's day weekend classic charity run they had just about raised \$10,000 which was raised before runners even hit the starting line, with a final tally yet to be counted what an outstanding outcome already. This event has taken place in Huskisson for its sixth year and the national Mother's Day Classic has marked its 25th Anniversary. The Mother's Day Classic held at Huskisson is one of 70 events held across Australia, raising funds for breast cancer. I was so pleased to hear so many people and families take part in this very special event held in our beautiful community helping support those mothers, daughters loved ones and family members through this amazing cause.

ROUSE HILL FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I recently had the opportunity to attend the opening of the new Rouse Hill Family Medical Practice, within my electorate of Castle Hill. The practice has operated within the area for over 30 years, and is owned by the very capable Dr Mark Charteris. I was delighted to be joined at the opening by the former Mayor of the Hills Shire Dr Michelle Byrne. The facility is a wonderful improvement and I'm sure it will serve the community for many years to come.

METROPOLITAN ORCHESTRA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I attended The Metropolitan Orchestra's concert evening at the Seymour Centre Saturday 14th May, 2022. After several cancellations due to the pandemic The Metropolitan Orchestra played the iconic Antarctica Suite for Guitar and Orchestra which was written by Mr Nigel Westlake. It was a proud moment for the Zangari family as my brother Maestro Giuseppe Zangari was the featured solo guitarist. The piece was conducted by the incomparable Conductor Ms Sarah-Grace Williams. The concert also featured Beethoven's Egmont Overture and Brahms Symphony No 2. I congratulate The Metropolitan Orchestra for a wonderful evening of classical music.

FAIRFIELD LIVERPOOL CRICKET ASSOCIATION T20 JUNIOR WINTER TOURNAMENT

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I acknowledge the efforts of Mr Peter Moore, President of the Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association and his team for organising a winter tournament for young cricketers who missed out on numerous matches due to the inclement summer weather wash-outs. This is a first for the association and has proven very popular with approximately 100 young cricketers taking part in the four-week tournament. I commend Mr Sharjeel Siddiqui, who organised the tournament; Mr Salim Khatri; Mr Syed Jafar and Mr Khashif Khan for their contributions to the tournament. As patron of the Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association, I thank everyone involved in the running of the tournament and commend them for giving their young cricketers the opportunity to maintain their skills as well as be able to play matches.

FAIRFIELD LINKS TO EARLY LEARNING

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I commend Uniting for the introduction of Fairfield Links to Early Learning, a local program which supports families who are experiencing difficulties accessing education and care. Fairfield Links to Early Learning [FL2EL] is an early intervention program which links families to education – including families from CALD communities - and is targeted at families with children aged three to six years old who don't currently attend pre-school. FL2EL representatives visit parents in their homes and assist with the enrolment process so that these children can have the same opportunities as others to learn and make friends in the year or two before they attend formal schooling. I commend Uniting for this initiative and thank them for servicing the Fairfield community in this manner.

WILLIAM BAKER – ASHFORD RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Mr William "Bill" Baker as a 70 year volunteer with the Ashford Rural Fire Service. This is a remarkable history and I recently presented Bill with the NSW Government Community Service Award for his service protecting the community. Bill joined the RFS in 1952 and served as Deputy Captain of Ashford for 52 years and as President between 1999 and 2007. Bill would have overseen everything from devastating fires to heart-breaking accidents. His experience and wealth of local knowledge has been invaluable to his fellow brigade members with special importance to new volunteers. Although Bill is no longer an active member, he is highly respected among the Ashford RFS and is more than welcome if he chooses to lend a hand when there is work to be done. They just like having him around. I congratulate Bill on receiving his well-earned NSW Government Community Service Award. I commend Bill for his commitment to the Ashford community and being on the ready for 70 years to ensure its safety.

DAVID FULLER & JENNY NIELSEN

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Warialda's newcomers David Fuller and Jenny Nielsen who have recently taken over the Sunflower Motel. Originally from Sydney and the Hunter Valley region, David and Jenny took the leap to move to Regional NSW and haven't looked back. With no previous

background in hotel management, David and Jenny spent some time in Quirindi where Jenny's sister manages the Sunflower Motel and decided they couldn't pass up an opportunity to give it a go for themselves. The Motel features 12 rooms with meals available to guests, not to mention their 5 alpacas which seem to be a real hit with the kids. Since David and Jenny's arrival in December, the Motel has seen 75 per cent occupancy with the aim to encourage guests to stay longer and explore the Warialda area. They plan to do this by giving the Motel an update which will include refurbishing the rooms, update the reception area, new signage and install a large outdoor barbeque area. I want to congratulate David and Jenny for making the move, investing in the region by trusting in all that rural life has to offer.

KATE NEWSOME - JB FAIRFAX AWARD

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Kate Newsome, awarded the 14th JB Fairfax Award for Rural and Regional Journalism and Communications for her demonstrated active interest in rural and regional affairs and in pursuing a career in journalism/communications upon graduation from University. Kate filled the criteria to bring balance and factual accounts of the many things that affect our lives through being raised on a sheep and cattle property near Glen Innes and her involvement in the rural community contrasting with her experience in Sydney while attending the University of Sydney. She realised that journalism could bring greater understanding between city and rural denizens, sharing stories of hardship and resilience, inequity and achievement. I congratulate Kate on winning this prestigious award and scholarship which will go towards supporting her studies as well as providing internships at The Land and the ABC. I commend Ms Newsome for her determination to use journalism and communications to speak for the vulnerable, to make known the truth, and to bring Australians together with a better understanding of the nation.

SHELLEY HUTCHINSON

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I want to recognise the achievements of Dubbo's Shelley Hutchinson. A local Netball Umpire, Shelley has been selected in the NSW Talent ID Pathway Program. Shelley was identified by Netball NSW Umpiring Coaches and Mentors who assessed her performances at many regional and state carnivals. The only one out of six across the state to come from west of the Blue Mountains, it is a tremendous achievement for a regional umpire. A local Accountant, the netball tragic never saw herself playing for Australia's Diamonds but her love for the sport is such that she wants to be involved in as much as she can and what better way than as an Umpire. Shelley's aim is to achieve her National A Badge. She is the first Umpire from Dubbo to be selected in the Pathways Program and sets a high standard for others to follow. Netball across NSW is lucky to have someone with Shelley's passion however I feel that it is the upcoming Umpires of the regions, in particular Dubbo, that are going to benefit most from her experience. Congratulations Shelley on a tremendous achievement.

NARROMINE PLUMBERS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—From Glen McGrath to Melinda Gainsford-Taylor, Narromine has produced more its share of champions. Now there's two more. Duane Donnelly and Anthony Everett work on the water utilities team at Narromine Shire Council, and recently claimed first place in the 2022 NSW Water Industry Operators Association Water Mains Tapping Timed Race. The two plumbers set a record, inserting a water connection into a live water main in four minutes and 23 seconds. In doing so they beat contenders from other councils across NSW, and claimed their cash prize of \$1000. But instead of keeping their hard-earned winnings, the duo donated the money to a cause close to their hearts: the Narromine Cancer Support Group. Congratulations Duane and Anthony, and great work giving back to your community! Best of luck defending your title in 2023!

OLD DUBBO GAOL

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—On 13 May the best of heritage was celebrated at the 2022 National Trust Heritage Awards held at Sydney's Doltone House. The Awards are the signature event of the Australian Heritage Festival in NSW, co-ordinated by the National Trust and supported by the NSW Government through Heritage NSW. I am extremely proud to say that the Old Dubbo Gaol Upgrade – Stage 1, nominated by Dubbo Regional Council won the Education and Interpretation category. The upgrades include new interactive media displays, and an upgrade to the exhibition space to showcase the extensive collection of historical artefacts. Jointly funded by the NSW Government and Dubbo Regional Council to create a more modern experience for visitors, the upgrade is included in a \$1.39 million redevelopment. Congratulations to the team from Dubbo Regional Council including Jamie Angus - Manager Regional Experiences, Julie Webster – Old Dubbo Gaol Operations Coordinator and all the team for their vision and dedication to this project. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable guidance and advice provided by the late, Mick Wilson. Accolades like this help to confirm that the Dubbo electorate boasts some of the best tourist attractions in NSW.

HUME HOUSING O'HEARN PARK MURAL PROJECT – TENAMBIT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—It was great to be involved in an artistic community collaboration recently at O'Hearn Park in Tenambit, an important public space for our local community which has been in a derelict state for some time. Maitland City Council started in recent years to improve the playground facilities, but something was missing, so in a collaboration between the local community and Hume Housing, UP&UP were engaged to complete some murals in the park. Recently I joined the Mayor of Maitland Cllr Philip Penfold, Tony Townsend from Port Stephens Hunter Police District, Tara Dever, Liz McEntyre and Tracy Bevan from Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council at a mural painting day. Seventy local residents were given the opportunity to make their own contribution towards the project – which set out to reduce anti-social behaviour, and I thank the local residents who allowed their fences to be painted as part of the project. Today, O'Hearn Park is a kaleidoscope of colour, highlighting the vibrancy of this resilient community. A big congratulations goes to the Tenambit community for their hard work and enthusiasm and all of the project partners, for making it possible.

TREVOR ROBINSON – RETIREMENT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE MUTUAL BANK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Thanks to Trevor Robinson, for his long commitment to the Mutual Bank who is retiring from the board, after seven years at the helm as Chairman of the Board. A Director of the Mutual since 2010, Trevor has served as a member of all of the board's committees including Audit, Risk, Insurance, Industrial Relations, Remuneration and Nominations. The 10th Chairman of the Board, in partnership with the Mutual's CEO Mr Geoff Secombe, Trevor has overseen a period of substantial growth, with the bank now boasting \$1 billion in assets and a magnificent new head office at East Maitland. In addition to these tangible achievements, Mr Robinson has presided over the internal securitisation program, trading and legal name changes, and a strategic plan putting members first. It is important to note the global and national events which have impacted on the banking industry since just before and during Trevor's period as Chairman of the Board. From the Global Financial Crisis to the Bushfires, floods and COVID, the bank has been putting members first to ensure stability and growth for them and our broader community. Congratulations Trevor and thank you for your contribution!

STEVE MEYN – NEW CHAIR OF THE MUTUAL BANK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Maitland born and bred resident Steve Meyn, who was recently appointed chair of The Mutual Bank following Trevor Robinson's retirement. Steve is just the 11th person to be elected to that position in a financial organisation, which now boasts \$1 billion in assets. Steve, who became a director in 2019, has more than 33 years' experience as an accountant and business advisor and is currently the chair of PKF Australia. Steve's career has seen him gain extensive experience in accounting, with a specific focus on – and passion – for IT consulting. He's also developed and implemented strategies that improve a business' performance, boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of data and reporting process, and managing the implementation of new systems. As a member of the Mutual Bank, and one of its many customers, I'm sure Mr Meyn will lead The Mutual Bank into its next exciting chapter as a vital and integral part of the Hunter economic landscape.

MR RICKY AND MRS TRACEY HARD

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I wish to congratulate Mr Ricky and Mrs Tracey Hard for their fundraising efforts over the past 3 years in support of the Country Hope Trust. After 5,000kms and 11 days on the road, Ricky and Tracey have returned home from their third year as part of the rally in support of Country Hope, a local charity providing support services to families of country children diagnosed with cancer and other life threatening illnesses. This year alone I understand Ricky and Tracey raised over \$81,000 for the cause, taking their total over the past three years to \$160,000, with the 2022 Rally raising \$558,733 overall. This is a tremendous effort in support of Country Hope as the organisation works to expand their facilities and open extra offices up in Albury and Dubbo. Understandably, after such an effort they have decided to focus on some personal goals but no doubt Ricky and Tracey will continue to support their community in other ways. In the meantime I thought their efforts to date in support of this worthwhile charity to be well worth a mention.

GRACE KEMP - WALLAROOS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to congratulate Grace Kemp following her call-up to be part of the Wallaroos squad for the 2022 Women's Rugby World Cup campaign. Grace first took up rugby at the age of sixteen when the Harden Red Devils established a women's side. Since then Grace has played with her local Canberra club, the Canberra Royals before then moving into the Super W competition with the Brumbies. Grace has dedicated herself across both the Brumbies Super W program and the Wallaroos program which has further enhanced her skillset,

strength and conditioning. The Wallaroos will play five test matches this year, having recently played Fiji and Japan with Grace featuring in the latter and putting in a commendable performance. Remaining Rugby World Cup matches will see the Wallaroos clash with New Zealand, Scotland and Wales in October this year. I would like to wish Grace and the Wallaroos all the best for the World Cup.

BASKETBALL HONOURS FOR BELLAH LONGFORD

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I wish to congratulate Narrandera Basketball Association's Miss Bellah Longford on her selection to take part in the National Indigenous Basketball Tournament. The Tournament was held at the Gold Coast recently and was run by Indigenous Basketball Australia, a not-for-profit entity established to deliver programs at a grassroots level for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. At just 13 years of age, Bellah has done herself, her family, her community and her culture incredibly proud and is certainly one to watch as she grows with the game. It is a pleasure to take this opportunity to highlight Bellah's success in basketball and I wish her all the very best in her future endeavours both on and off the court.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)—I recognise Ms Michelle Anderson, the 2022 NSW Local Women of the Year award winner for my electorate of Rockdale. Michelle is a dedicated advocate for children and women's sport within my community. She actively encourages healthy lifestyle choices and community involvement through her role as founder and President of the St. George Junior DragonTag (Oztag) association. Michelle founded St. George Junior DragonTag in 2001 and has worked tirelessly in the development of the game in the St George community ever since. Her 21 years of dedication have seen the association grow to 1600 junior players across 140 teams. In addition, Michelle takes an active role in the senior competition. Michelle also notably worked to increase female participation in sport in the Rockdale electorate by starting a girls' rugby league team at Arncliffe Scots RLC, the first in 100 years of the club's operation. She developed the team from 2018 to 2020, establishing and embedding it within the club. Michelle has significantly contributed to the Rockdale community, particularly in these areas of youth and women's sport, and she is a highly deserving recipient of the award. I congratulate and thank her on behalf of our community.

BEEN THERE DONE THAT, LET'S CHAT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—Been There Done That, Let's Chat, founded by Russell Hagan, is an online service based in Grays Point that offers a safe place for discussions around men's mental health. The website <https://www.beentheredonethatletschat.com> provides a forum for men to vent their problems and get responses and comments in real time from other members who may have had the same problems. It hosts weekly webinars and monthly interviews of Australian identities. The interviewees chat about the problems they have in their lives and how they overcome them or plan to do so. Been There Done That, Let's Chat describes its goal as providing "the first step to helping men, which is getting them to talk and share their problems. Once we have done this and they are comfortable with that we can then move onto the next step." In April 2022, it ran a successful Stairs to Stop Suicide campaign, with participants climbing 2160 storeys in 24 hours at Chifley Tower, Sydney, raising over \$12,000 for mental health and suicide prevention initiatives.

MICHAELA DAVIES – WATER POLO AUSTRALIA CLUB COACH OF THE YEAR

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate ACU Cronulla Sharks Water Polo's Michaela Davies on being awarded the 2022 Club Coach of the Year by Water Polo Australia. Michaela shares Coach of the Year with former Cronulla Shark member, Rachel Collier. This award recognises their skill, professionalism, vision, and passion as Head Coaches for the Sydney Stingers Water Polo Club. Over the past four years, Michaela has driven the Stingers to be fierce national and international competitors. Michaela has also helped created new pathways to develop individuals, teams, and future coaches. I commend Michaela for her positive impact on the ACU Cronulla Sharks, the Sydney Stingers and the broader water polo community.

MARCO CORBO

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Congratulations to Rossmore resident Marco Corbo who picked up a Gold Medal in the International Shooting Sport Federation Junior World Cup last week. The tournament marked Marco's international debut after last year being named in the Australian Junior World Championships. After the first five stages of the ultimate face-off, Marco was tied with Brazilian Hussein Daruich and Lance Thompson of the USA. All three were on a perfect 5/5. However, Marco stretched ahead by a single hit at the 10-target point, maintaining a perfect 10/10. In the end, Marco couldn't be caught, and his excellent shooting of 32/35 secured him the Gold Medal for Australia. Congratulations once again Marco on this incredible achievement.

IRON SPOKES BREWING

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Thank you to Ben and Natasha from Iron Spokes Brewing for hosting 'Frothies for the Flooded' to assist in raising money for the flood affected locals in Camden last month. As we are all aware, Camden suffered back-to-back flooding resulting in home evacuations, temporary closures, community facilities impacted and more. As always, our community and many volunteers came together to help with the clean-up. Local business is and always has been the backbone of our economy here and Camden and across the state. Small business such as Iron Spokes Brewing are key examples of what makes our community what it is today. Once again, I thank Iron Spokes Brewing for their continued support.

GHOSTS CRICKET PRESENTATION

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Last week I had the delightful privilege to attend the Campbelltown-Camden District Cricket Club Ghosts Cricket Presentation along with Mayor of Campbelltown George Greiss, new 1st Grade Coach Jason Krejza, Ghost U19 Australian representative Will Salzmann and NSW Sydney Thunder Star Tanveer Sangha. The evening was emceed by Former Test Cricketer and Commentator Kerry O'Keeffe. I thank Sam Lene for providing the music for the event and Special Guest Brett Williams for his attendance. I also thank Wests League for the delightful courses and for their cooperation in hosting the event. Once again, I send my congratulations to all the award winners on the night.

CHATSWOOD ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to commend the Chatswood RSL and the Chatswood RSL sub-branch for once again organising the Anzac Day march and dawn service in the centre of Chatswood. Following a march, the dawn service took place in the Garden of Remembrance at 5:15AM. The service was a moving and memorable tribute to our servicemen and women who laid down their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today. Featuring a Catafalque Party, the Ode of Remembrance and the playing of The Last Post, the service attracted locals of all backgrounds who gathered in their hundreds to pay their respects. I was particularly proud of the role our youth played at the service, with the leaders of Mercy Catholic College delivering a touching Commemoration Address. As the Member for Willoughby, I was honoured to lay a wreath at the Cross of Sacrifice. The service was followed by a morning tea at Chatswood RSL Club. I thank sub-branch President Barney Flanagan, Club President Garry Owen, and the CEO of Chatswood RSL, Tony Snowsill, for their roles behind this wonderful, local commemoration of those who have served.

THE HOMENETMEN SCOUTS - 2ND WILLOUGHBY SCOUTS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I recognise the Homenetmen Scouts based in Naremburn in my electorate of Willoughby as a wonderful association for the youth of the community. The Homenetmen Scouts instils and encourages strong principles of physical, social, intellectual and emotional development. These ideals are excellent for setting the foundations for young people to become responsible and constructive citizens in our society. I was delighted recently to attend an evening hosted by the Homenetmen Scouts at the Naremburn Scout Hall, where I was introduced to the core values of the Homenetmen Scouts – a healthy mind, in a healthy body. The Homenetmen chapter of Scouts is patriotically Australian with an Armenian heritage, and honours the traditions of both nationalities through its multicultural endeavours. I am encouraged that our young people are having fun outdoors, making great friends and participating in enriching activities with a spirit of adventure. I commend the Homenetmen Scouts for providing a fulfilling and community building environment for our young people.

WILLOUGHBY PARK ANZAC DAY SERVICE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to commend the Willoughby Legion Ex-Service Club for organising the Anzac Day morning service in Willoughby Park. Attracting a large turnout of locals, the service featured a Catafalque Party from the Royal NSW Regiment together with the Willoughby City Band conducted by Dominic Longhurst. Together with many local dignitaries, I was honoured to lay a wreath in memory of the fallen. I was particularly moved by the participation of local school children who laid flowers at the makeshift memorial. The singing of the Australian National Anthem marked the conclusion of the service, followed by a reception at the Willoughby Park Bowling Club. I would like to thank the President of the Club, Roger Womersley for hosting the reception and refreshments after the service. I would particularly like to commend Colonel David Ross for his service to the Willoughby Legion Ex-Service Club and for serving as Master of Ceremonies at the Willoughby Park commemoration. Each year, the Club does our Willoughby community a wonderful service in keeping the spirit of Anzac alive.

NSW TEACHERS' STRIKE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the NSW public school teachers who participated in the strike organised by the NSW Teachers Federation on Wednesday, 4 May. I would like to particularly acknowledge Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt Parents and Citizens Association who passed a resolution in support of the strikes, and all the teachers from the Balmain Electorate who participated in this strike to demand wages and conditions commensurate with the crucial and demanding work teachers undertake. We are grateful to teachers for all that they do educating the next generation and for taking a stand on this important issue to remind the government that teachers deserve more than thanks.

BALMAIN LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR DR HANNAH MIDDLETON

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the 2022 Balmain Local Woman of the Year, Dr Hannah Middleton. This award recognises Hannah's decades-long commitment to activism, peace, justice and the environment. Hannah embodies all the very best principles of our progressive caring community. She has worked tirelessly for over a decade to defend public housing and recognise that people who live in public housing deserve dignity, respect and security. I want to extend my gratitude to Hannah for her action and her lifelong commitment to these values.

JANNALI EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Jannali East Public School. Jannali East Public School is a tight knit community where students and teachers work together to inspire excellence and achieve personal best. Led by outstanding Principal Katherine Horner, the student leaders have been busy assisting with school events including organising their Anzac Day commemorative service along with representing the school at the Anzac Day Dawn Service in Sutherland. The leadership team also attended The Meeting of Two Cultures event where they participated in a variety of cultural workshops including dancing, weaving, shell work and singing. The 2022 leadership team truly embody the values of Jannali East Public School. I congratulate School Captains Noah Kirkby and Ruby Kelly, Prefects Kayley McDonald, Austin Mah Chut, Elise Carter and Xavier Kettler as well as Daniel Nelson, Daniel Wang, Rohan Crossie and Georgie Toomey. 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 Jannali East Public School on their appointment and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

SUTHERLAND SHARKS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I acknowledge the Sutherland Sharks Football Club's ("Sharks") new executive committee. Established in 1932, the Sharks have a proud history that is traced back to the founding of Sutherland United SFC. Over the past 80 years, the Sharks have been highly successful winning the prestigious NSW Tiger Cup, Leader Challenge Cup and many premierships. As the representative football club in the Sutherland Shire, the Sharks attract over 18,000 locally based football players each season and work hard to ensure each player's skills are finessed both on and off the field. Behind this Club is a strong team of leaders who are passionate about football. I commend the Sharks executive committee including President Rob Sauer, Vice President George Hurley, Treasurer Bruce Lawrence, Club Secretary Craig Simmons, Committee Members John Hills, Amir Ajanovic and Steve Kelly and Operations Manager Andrew Smith. I commend the Sutherland Sharks Football Club and extend my best wishes for the season ahead.

BONNET BAY BASEBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—I acknowledge the Bonnet Bay Baseball Club who are the successful recipients of \$51,000 from the NSW Government's Infrastructure Grants Program. Bonnet Bay Sports Club is of course the legal name for the Bonnet Bay Baseball Club, also known as the Beavers. Established in the early 1980's, the Beavers aim to provide the best and safest facilities for all users as well as outstanding service to enable players to achieve their goals. Through this grant, the Beavers will install a wheelchair accessible entrance ramp and platform stair lift that will improve usability for people with a disability, as well as ensure that more community users are able to participate in the Club. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hardworking committee for their dedication and commitment. I recognise President Tom Evans, Treasurer Dave Richards, Senior Vice President Peter Noakes, Senior Secretary Brian Saville, Junior Vice President Brian Schwartz, Junior Secretary Chris Lane, Softball Registrar Paula Noakes, Marketing & Media Nathan Heather, Canteen Manager Gay Evans and Grounds Keeper Mary Ross. I recognise everyone at Bonnet Bay Baseball Club for nurturing a love of baseball in our local community.

MEG STEVENSON CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF VOLUNTEERING

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—This week is National Volunteers Week which celebrates the selfless contributions from people around the country. Today I would like to acknowledge 96-year-old Mosman grandmother Meg Stevenson who has volunteered for over 30 years at the Sydney Powerhouse Museum. Meg's extensive knowledge of architecture, history, and fine art has positioned her as a Tour Leader at the Ultimo hub, providing regular talks to a range of audiences, including visitors, children, peer-volunteers and staff. Meg was a physiotherapist for 40 years before she retired and at 96 can still touch her toes. By volunteering each week, she is constantly meeting new people and learning new things. Volunteers like Meg are entrusted with taking items off-site to organisations like Probus, as promotion for the Museum, they also visit retirement villages and nursing homes with shorter presentations that encourage audience participation. I congratulate Meg on her many years of service at the Powerhouse Museum, it is an incredible achievement to reach the age of 96 and still be able to volunteer one day a week for the community. Meg is a fine example of who we celebrate each and every National Volunteers Week.

GUIDE DOGS OPENS IN ST LEONARDS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I recently had the pleasure of joining Guide Dogs NSW in opening their flagship office space in the lower North Shore community in St Leonards. Guide Dogs Australia have been the leading provider of Guide Dogs in Australia since 1957. A Guide Dog can create profound change for people with low vision and blindness, by offering a perfect blend of independence and companionship. Guide dogs offer independence through the safety and travel techniques they learn through their world class Guide Dog training programs. I was joined by Her Excellency the Governor of NSW, the Hon. Margaret Beazley and the Federal Member for North Sydney Trent Zimmerman MP, as well as volunteers, local stakeholders, and members of the community who rely on guide dogs. A special thank you to Sarah, Tori, Brittney, Chiara, Leane, Dale, Ian, Jen, Ingird, and of course all the guide dogs and puppies for such a wonderful event.

PAUL MERRICK BARTON SMITH

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police)—Paul left school at the age of 15 and started ticket writing two months later at Yeo & Mansell Department Store. During his long career as a ticket & sign writer, Paul has left his work on awnings, shop fronts and banners across Bathurst and he has added thousands of names to honour boards at local schools. For 10 years Paul taught students the art of ticket & sign writing at TAFE. Paul's talent was seen for many years at the Mount Panorama Circuit, where he painted walls and bridges around the circuit by hand. In 1989, Paul was asked to design a layout "Mount Panorama" under Skyline. Paul and a team of helpers took a weekend to layout the 200 metre wide sign, in readiness for it to be painted on the Monday. Thirty-two years later, the sign has been seen by millions of motor racing enthusiasts across Australia and around the world as motor sport events are televised from the Mount Panorama Circuit. Paul has also produced a cartoon in the Saturday Western Advocate every weekend for more than 50 years. The cartoons by Smithy capture local events and caricatures of well-known Bathurst residents.

GLORIA ISABEL PACKHAM

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police)—Gloria is an inspiration teacher who dedicated her working life to educating children in Bathurst. After marrying and having two children, Gloria became a single parent in 1966. Despite this challenge she was determined to provide a life of opportunity for her children. In 1972 she won a teaching scholarship to attend Mitchell College of Advanced Education and while completing her degree she worked as a remedial reading teacher at Assumption Primary School on a voluntary basis. After graduating in late 1974 Gloria started teaching at St Stanislaus College as an English teacher. During her time at Stannies Gloria taught English, History, Religion, Italian, Music and General Studies. As well as many other roles as form master, tutor, cricket and rugby coach she was the long-term tennis master. Her most enjoyed role was teaching students with learning difficulties. She spent more than 35 years at Stannies and taught thousands of young men. After retirement Gloria has given up her time volunteer teaching those from non-English speaking background reading and writing. She is a role model remembered by ex-students as a person of great compassion and empathy and has promoted education as a means to achieve life's ambitions.

MAX JACKSON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Max Jackson is a name to remember. Last month Max took out the Toyota Star Maker competition at the Tamworth Country Music Festival, named the winner over nine other grand finalists, after bowling over judges with her songs *Life of the Party* and *Runnin'*. By taking out the award Max follows in the footsteps of some of Australian country music's biggest names, including Keith Urban,

Lee Kernaghan and Beccy Cole. Congratulations on this fantastic achievement. No doubt this is only the start of big things.

KEVIN COFFEY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Newcastle has lost a champion. From advocacy for the business community to initiatives to drive public pride of place, Kevin Coffey was at the forefront. From his beloved Darby Street home Kevin was the brains trust behind place activation projects such as The Headphone Project, the Goldberg's laneway and the street's community garden, but his passion for community was far broader than that Cooks Hill road. He loved the creative industries and shared his knowledge at the University of Newcastle and at TAFE, he advocated to improve public assets such as the ocean baths, and was the first to speak up when it came to seeking better outcomes for the city. Kevin always made sure his actions matched his talk, giving his time as a board member to the Newcastle Now business improvement association, then starting the Newcastle Partnerships movement. On a personal note, I will also miss seeing Kevin and having a chat during his early morning swim at Bar Beach. Newcastle is a brighter place for having Kevin, and his legacy will live on.

CRONULLA POLAR BEARS SWIMMING CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—On 1 May I attended the season opening for the Cronulla Polar Bears Swimming Club, with the traditional Bate Bay Cup re-routed this year to Cronulla Beach and back. The club, which is in its 69th year, has swum and competed in the Cronulla ocean rock pool on Sundays since 1953. To members, the Polar Bears is more than just a swimming club and keeping fit in the winter. Its camaraderie has made the club like an extension of family. This sense of community has seen the Cronulla Polar Bears look beyond themselves with support for organisations such as the Bears of Hope (which supports families who have experienced the loss of their baby), Kookaburra Kids (which supports young people impacted by family mental illness), and the Rainbow Club (a network of social swimming clubs for children with disability). After a winter swimming program reduced to eight weeks last year due to COVID restrictions, it is great to see the club back in action. I extend my best wishes to President Scott Simmons and all the Cronulla Polar Bears for an uninterrupted season in 2022.

GREYD'N DAVIS - SAVERNAKE

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to acknowledge and thank the work of Greyd'n Davis, a local to the small town of Savernake and a volunteer firefighter for his local RFS branch. Greyd'n first became an RFS member over 40 years ago in 1982, and becoming involved in Berrigan RFS over 22 years ago. During this time, Greyd'n has held numerous positions, moving quickly to the rank of Brigade Captain, and then to his current position as Zone Captain, with Greyd'n now overseeing 14 brigades and over 900 volunteer firefighters. Despite his extensive role in the RFS, Greyd'n still works fulltime as a farmer, and continues to sacrifice his free time to ensure the safety of his community. I would like to thank Greyd'n, and all volunteer firefighters for the sacrifices they make and putting themselves on the frontline to protect our communities.

PETER JOICE - DENILIQVIN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to acknowledge and thank Peter Joice for his long serving career as a Police Officer in the town of Deniliquin. Peter moved from Armidale to Deniliquin over 30 years ago, and since then has been serving the rural Deniliquin community, becoming the longest serving Police Officer in Deniliquin's history. Throughout his career, Peter has worked in numerous fields, including general duties, the anti-theft squad, detective work and more. With Peter now retiring from the Police Force as a Senior Constable, his impact on the community is undeniable. I would like to thank Peter for his years of service, and wish him the best of luck in his retirement.

ROSS SMITH MEMORIAL BENCH UNVEILING

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to acknowledge Counterpoint Community Services for hosting the unveiling of the Ross Smith commemorative bench at the Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre on 13 May 2022. It was an honour to join this event and to share my memories of Ross and hear many speak of his contribution to the Waterloo community. Ross was remembered as a powerful advocate for public housing tenants, ensuring elected representatives remained engaged with and accountable on public housing matters. He was a loyal and generous friend to many and was wholly committed to serving community life and connection. The memorial bench commemorates Ross' life and his significant contributions to the community, and will continue to facilitate the spirited debates and personal connections for which he was locally famous. The event was thoughtfully MC'd by Reverend Andrew Collis of the South Sydney Uniting Church, and speakers included representatives and friends from the many organisations with which Ross was involved, including Ron Hoenig MP, Jose Perez, Geoff Turnbull, Katherine Johnston and Graeme de Villiers.

2022 NEWTOWN LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—I draw the attention of this house to the achievements of the Newtown Electorate Local Woman of the Year for 2022, Rosanna Barbero. Rosanna has made a significant contribution to the community as CEO of the Addison Road Community Organisation. Since taking on this role, she has established the Food Justice Program, the Addi Road and Camperdown Food Pantries and the Addi Road Food Relief Hub. Last year, these initiatives provided some 65,000 food hampers for around 280,000 people throughout Greater Sydney. For many, Rosanna and Addi Rd were the only reason they had access to food during COVID lockdowns at all. Rosanna and Addi Rd also run so many other amazing community initiatives including support for Afghan girls, the Public Schools Arts Festival, the Urban Habitats program, Addi Rd Community Garden and the powerful #RacismNOTWelcome program, which was launched in partnership with the Inner West Council in 2020 and now has the support of 537 councils across Australia. We thank Rosanna for all her amazing work and for her commitment to making our inner west community a better place to live for everyone.

DR DAVID HOWE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise Dr David Howe, of Orange. Dr Howe has gone above and beyond his professional capacity as a local family doctor in caring for people in the community. For the past thirty years Dr Howe has been a volunteer with the not-for-profit organisation Camp Quality, for children battling with cancer. It takes a very special and unique person to devote their time and emotional energy to the care of terminally-ill children. It requires considerable strength and compassion in equal measure. As a popular local general practitioner who is in high demand, he is a very busy man with few spare hours. To selflessly devote what little spare time he has to the care of children who are very sick, is commendable. Dr Howe doesn't do what he does for accolades or recognition, he does what he does out of the genuine goodness of his heart, and for that I applaud him, and I recognise his tremendous contribution to the precious children whose shortened lives are made brighter because of the smiles he brought to their faces.

KELLY RIMMER

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise Kelly Rimmer, of Mullion Creek. Kelly Rimmer is an esteemed best-selling author who is quietly creating best-selling fictional works of art from her tranquil country home in the Central West of NSW. Kelly is an author of historical and contemporary fiction, including books titled *The Warsaw Orphan*, *The Things We Cannot Say*, *The Secret Daughter* and *The German Wife*. To date, Kelly has sold 1.75 million copies of her novels, which also been translated into dozens of foreign languages to entertain readers throughout the English and non-English speaking world. In addition to being an Australian top ten bestseller, Kelly's literary works have garnered international critical acclaim appearing on bestseller lists, including the *New York Times*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* in the United States of America, and the *Globe and Mail*, and *Toronto Star* in Canada. Kelly's novels have also topped Kobo, Amazon and Apple books charts. I congratulate Kelly on her professional achievements and the international recognition she has received for her written works. I look forward to seeing her work progress and wish her continued inspiration and good fortune for future written productions and professional writing career. Well done.

ASTRID FAIRHURST - NSW YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I congratulate St Joseph's Regional College Year 12 student Astrid Fairhurst from Port Macquarie on her nomination for the NSW Youth Advisory Council. Described as a role model at her school, Astrid was a perfect candidate to represent our youth on a wide range of issues and policies affecting younger people in regional areas. Astrid's dedication and commitment towards her studies and her leadership amongst the student body would have been an invaluable resource in advising the Minister on matters involving planning, development, integration and implementation of Government policies and programs concerning young people. The Youth Advisory Council is made up of 12 members from diverse backgrounds, locations and life experiences to improve the safety, welfare and well-being of all children and young people in NSW. Young people aged between 12 and 24 years can apply for a position. Whilst she was unsuccessful on this occasion, I congratulate Astrid on her application for the Youth Advisory Council.

KEVIN & HEATHER UNICOMB

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge a remarkable duo from Harrington who selflessly volunteered in the flood evacuation centres at Maclean, Lismore, Ballina and Murwillumbah following the devastating February/March floods that ripped through much of the Northern Rivers. Described as beautiful people with a heart of gold, Kevin and Heather Unicomb wasted no time to offer their support to the flood victims on the North Coast after witnessing the sheer magnitude of destruction caused by the rain bomb that peaked at 14.4 metres on 28th February. Kevin and Heather retired to Harrington in January 2021 after serving 39 years with the Salvation Army. During this time they served eight years in Papua New Guinea providing welfare and

spiritual guidance to a nation largely affected by poverty and underdevelopment. Initially restricted by travel, Kevin and Heather offered their assistance to the evacuation centre in Maclean, providing catering services to approximately 40 people. After three days a RFS helicopter transported them to Lismore where they feed on upwards of 350 people at the SCU evacuation centre while spending many a night sleeping on the church floor. An outstanding couple in our community who are deserving of our thanks and gratitude.

NSWCCC SWIMMING & DIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate the students from Mackillop College Port Macquarie who were selected to compete at the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges Swimming and Diving Championships held on 6 April 2022 at Sydney Olympic Park. Taking to the pool in Sydney against a line-up of experienced swimmers in NSW were Mackillop's awesome foursome: Bronte McAllister, Riley Judd, Maeve Kinchington and Charlotte Fitzpatrick who proudly represented their school and achieved placings at the Swimming and Diving Championships. Mackillop College commended the team for competing at such a high level acknowledging their many hours of dedication and commitment to training schedules. I congratulate Riley Judd for achieving Gold in the 15 Boys Springboard. Also scoring the top honours at the championships was Bronte McAllister, awarded Gold in the 17-19 Girls Springboard. Placing 5th in the 50 metre Freestyle 12 Year Girls was Charlotte Fitzpatrick while Maeve Kinchington completed the 50 metre Breaststroke in 7th position. Both girls performed well on the day and should be proud of their achievements. Professional athletes in the making, I congratulate the Mackillop team on their impressive performance in the pool.

CRAIG KIELY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I recognise Craig Kiely the former CEO of Football St George for his exceptional service to local soccer players throughout my community. Craig has been a great friend to me in his time as CEO and he has helped to develop one of the best functioning soccer associations in our state. Football St George is an important local institution which has been instrumental in growing the number of budding soccer players in the St George region, providing a structured, efficient and welcoming environment for players and their families. Speaker, soccer players like my son are well served by Football St George's strong foundations of which Craig as CEO has been a key part in building. He has provided leadership and strength throughout his time as CEO especially in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. I want to congratulate Craig on his time as CEO of Football St George and also wish him well as he moves onto his new position, working on the 2023 Australia and New Zealand FIFA Women's World Cup.

DANDELION SUPPORT NETWORK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I recognise the outstanding work of the Dandelion Support Network in Caringbah, who are making a difference to families in need whilst also reducing their environmental footprint. The aim of the Dandelion Support Network is to provide infants and children with the essential nursery items that they need by repurposing products that are no longer required by local families. The organisation works across local hospitals, community organisations and support agencies to provide these items and their services have been particularly valued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, I had the opportunity to visit Cathy Nisbet, Gabby Humphries and the team at their office in Caringbah, to see the amazing work that they are doing across 37 different local government areas. Compassion, acceptance, support, sustainability and collaboration are the core values of the organisation and they are enshrined across everything that they do. I again want to thank Cathy, Gabby and the entire team for all of their incredible work and I look forward to working closely with the Dandelion Support Network into the future.

CEREBRAL PALSY ALLIANCE PENSURST

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I am pleased to congratulate the Cerebral Palsy Alliance in Penshurst on receiving an important funding investment from the NSW Government. The Cerebral Palsy Alliance in Penshurst has received \$22,000 for an equipment upgrade that has helped them to purchase additional equipment. In particular, this funding has allowed the organisation to purchase a unique piece of equipment known as a 'magic carpet', a sensory, visual and movement aid for individuals with cerebral palsy. Through encouraging movement and sensory understanding via fun and engaging means, clients love visiting the centre and it is a fantastic way to promote their physical wellbeing. It was an honour to head over to the centre to see how this equipment works alongside Catherine Bell and Shannon Taylor. Clients were absolutely loving the magic carpet and it was inspiring to see how their cognitive and physical capabilities had improved over time. A huge thanks to Catherine, Shannon and the entire team at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance in Penshurst for their incredible work in our local community.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:43 until
Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 12:00.**