

**The PRESIDENT:** Yes, but an earlier part of your question also stated that 84,000 people in New South Wales have lost their jobs since February, before COVID started, with 288,000 people in the unemployment queue. Clearly the Minister is being directly relevant in relation to employment and, in accordance with your question, unemployment issues. I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Some people probably do not want to be here and listen to my erudition in respect of the great work—

**The PRESIDENT:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. The Minister is speaking and interjections are coming from Opposition members and Government members at the table and at the back of the Chamber. I thank the members seated to the right in the upper and lower galleries who are the only 10 members not interjecting. I remind members that the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox is on one call to order, the Hon. John Graham is on one call to order, the Hon. Penny Sharpe is on one call to order and the Hon. Walt Secord is on one call to order. The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I remind members that the Government is doing wonderful work in creating jobs in New South Wales. It has created the \$1 billion Working for NSW fund to support direct employment opportunities and retraining, including 1,000 new staff for Service NSW and \$250 million to employ additional cleaners for public infrastructure. It has created the \$3 billion Infrastructure and Jobs Acceleration Fund to be used for smaller shovel-ready projects in every corner of the State, which will inject up to 20,000 extra jobs. Thanks to a \$51 million funding package New South Wales parents will not pay fees for community or mobile preschools for up to six months. The Government has committed up to \$82 million to support 260 council childcare centres that are not eligible for JobKeeper payments and has allocated \$395 million to safeguard council jobs and local services and infrastructure, including the creation—

**The Hon. Mark Buttigieg:** Point of order: I refer to your earlier ruling, Mr President. The Minister has used over two-thirds of his allotted time in addressing the context component of the question. He has not directly answered the specific question about JobKeeper and JobSeeker and what representations the Government has made about the extension of those schemes. I ask that the Minister be drawn back to the question asked.

**The PRESIDENT:** It is important that I repeat some of my previous, fairly extensive rulings. It is not for the Chair to direct how a Minister should answer a question, other than to direct that the Minister should be directly relevant. The Chair cannot compel a Minister to answer a question other than in the way he or she wishes as long as he or she is being directly relevant. It is not for the Chair to direct what part of the question a Minister should answer. When questions are asked in a number of parts—in particular, when a part of the question is a general question—it is open to the Minister to answer that part of the question that the Minister wants to answer. As Chair, I cannot compel a Minister to answer only a specific part of the question. Further, it is not appropriate for a member to suggest that a Minister who is not answering a specific part of a question is not being directly relevant if the Minister is being directly relevant to another part of the question. I do not uphold the point of order.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** The Government has committed \$500 million to move forward with shovel-ready projects, including repairs to public infrastructure and assets. It has launched the Planning System Acceleration Program to speed up planning processes for the construction industry, with 78 projects already approved that will generate a total of over 48,000 jobs. I could go on in outlining the steps taken by the Government to implement job creation programs. The results are being felt.

#### **ABORIGINAL SUICIDES**

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (12:24:13):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. How is the New South Wales Government helping to prevent suicide in Aboriginal communities?

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:24:30):** I thank the Hon. Sam Faraway for his question. In the first week of September I visited the Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation in Airds to launch the New South Wales Building on Resilience in Aboriginal Communities initiative. Under that program the Government is investing \$7.7 million in 12 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across the State to increase access to culturally responsive suicide prevention activities for Aboriginal communities. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for Indigenous Australians living in New South Wales, compared to the seventeenth for non-Indigenous Australians living in New South Wales.

Earlier this year, 12 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations from across remote, regional and metropolitan New South Wales were selected to implement the initiative. The programs will be community-run across eight local health districts, with participation and input from Elders and local communities. A growing body of evidence in Aboriginal communities points to the healing power of culture in mental health

and suicide prevention. This program is all about empowering local communities to come together to tackle that pressing issue. Each program will focus on building identity and connection to community as well as helping people to access specialist mental health support when it is required. Activities can be grassroots community activities or clinical services or a mix of those approaches. A culturally appropriate evaluation will provide important new insights into what works in suicide prevention in Aboriginal communities.

It was fitting that we launched this statewide program at Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation in south-western Sydney. It has a long and distinguished history of providing care to the Aboriginal community. I was pleased to join CEO Mr Darryl Wright, an outstanding gentleman, as well as local Elders Uncle Ivan Wellington, Aunty Margaret Anderson and youth representative Ms Tamara Briggs to learn more about the work they are doing. Ms Briggs' speech was absolutely heartwarming. The recollection of it gives me goosebumps. With funds from the Building on Aboriginal Communities Resilience initiative, Tharawal will develop its Bubilyi program focusing on youth suicide. The program will include new workshops, peer-to-peer mentoring, fact sheets, a service directory and a culturally adapted tool for safety planning. Tharawal will work with hospitals and mainstream mental health organisations to improve access to mental health support for Aboriginal people in crisis.

We will continue to work closely with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council and experts in suicide prevention in Aboriginal communities to support the implementation of this initiative to June 2022. The investment is part of the Towards Zero Suicides strategy; a New South Wales Premier's priority that will invest \$87 million over three years in new suicide prevention initiatives. I commend the mental health branch whose staff have worked tirelessly with Aboriginal communities to ensure the strategy is driven and delivered by them.

### COVID-19 AND WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (12:27:42):** My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. Recognising that women have experienced a disproportionate loss of participation in the workforce during the COVID-19 crisis and with research suggesting that the pandemic's disproportionate economic toll on women could create a larger gender wage gap during and immediately after the downturn, what is the Government doing to invest in jobs-intensive, women-dominated industries like health care, aged care and education as a vehicle for post-COVID recovery?

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:28:18):** I thank Ms Abigail Boyd for her question. The New South Wales Government recognises the impacts of COVID-19 on women. As the member mentioned, there is no doubt that women have been more affected by job losses than men. That is a result of women's over-representation in casual work and in industries like childcare and hospitality, which have been greatly affected by the challenges of COVID-19; the challenges of maintaining an increased load of unpaid work through caring responsibilities, which have been spoken about in numerous forums during the pandemic, and domestic duties; and increased stress and anxiety levels. The New South Wales Government has put in place a number of measures throughout the pandemic, including a \$2.3 billion stimulus package of supports and \$1 billion to support direct employment opportunities and retention of employees through the Working for NSW fund.

The most important thing we can do for everyone at the moment, including women, is make sure that they keep their jobs. We need to make sure that happens. We need that not only for our economic opportunity, resilience and resurgence but also for our physical and mental health. That is why the Government has invested in this package and why it has worked so hard. I understand that today we had five new positive COVID cases, which is a phenomenal result. That is due to the fact that this Government has worked so well, not just internally but with everyone who provides services. The fact that we are at the point where we only have five cases today means that we can start rejigging and opening up and making sure that women, who have borne the brunt of a lot of workplace unemployment in their professions, are able to get their jobs back. We absolutely need that for them.

We have also ensured women's employment by ensuring that businesses can continue to operate. Additional support was provided to frontline health workers in the stimulus package, the majority of whom are female. Some \$60 million has been allocated to provide hospital and ambulance staff the option of staying in out-of-home accommodation during the pandemic. We have also invested \$21 million to respond to sexual, domestic and family violence services. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Attorney General on the good work he has done in this space and the enormous respect he receives from the sector. In April 2020 the New South Wales Government committed \$51 million so that 700 community preschools and 38 mobile services it funds could waive fees for parents. That is so important because it directly benefits women. Many members in this place have spoken about childcare— [*Time expired.*]

2121. However, when we have spoken with the Department of Primary Industries it has said that it will take several years before any regulation, changes or amendments to the legislation will come into play. This is not an issue that can wait. New South Wales has the lowest penalties for an act of animal cruelty anywhere in the country. I note that the Minister talked about aggravated cruelty offences but these are very high bar, difficult to reach penalties. In New South Wales the maximum fine for an act of animal cruelty is just \$5,500. To put that in perspective, it is nearly \$40,000 in Victoria and \$50,000 in Western Australia.

The Minister also said that these people are being held to account. I refer to a couple of the recent fines issued in New South Wales: A person who beat a puppy and put the footage up on the internet received a \$600 fine, a man who beat a mother ringtail possum to death received no fine, and a man who beat and kicked his dog and filmed it to send to his ex-girlfriend as revenge received no fine. Do we honestly think that these people are being held to account when we have penalties as low as \$5,500? It gives a low benchmark for judges and it sends the message that animal cruelty is a low-level crime when it is not.

All authorities want the penalties increased. They have been calling them inadequate and out of step with community expectations. It has already been two years since the Government's consultation took place. The statistics that the Minister read out, which strongly support an increase in penalties, were from over two years ago and there are still no reforms. We are now hearing there may not be further reforms for several years and we need action on this now.

### SYDNEY OLYMPICS AND POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

**The Hon. LOU AMATO (13:09:09):** I take note of answers provided by the Hon. Don Harwin. The Powerhouse Museum has the largest collection of Sydney Olympics objects in Australia, featuring more than 600 objects. If anyone has not been to the museum to see the collection they should go, and they should encourage their family and friends to go as well. The Powerhouse digitisation project is capturing these objects as part of the museum's work to digitise more than 330,000 items from its incredible collection, enhancing its accessibility for local, national and international audiences. Many people wish they could come here, but unfortunately, for one reason or another, they do not have the ability to do so, so this is a fantastic project.

The collection features the torch used by Cathy Freeman to ignite the Olympic cauldron at the opening ceremony, and the prawn bike—I remember that—used in the closing ceremony on the Paul Hogan float. Eleven regional collection digitisation projects funded under the Regional Cultural Fund are already underway or complete. The task of digitising New South Wales regional collections, with an average of 10,000 items per collection, is truly immense.

### ABORIGINAL SUICIDES

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (13:10:37):** I take note of answers given today. I focus on an answer given by the Hon. Bronnie Taylor concerning suicide and a program that is targeting and working with Aboriginal communities. I can say that enough cannot be done in this area. The issues that impact on Aboriginal communities are immense. There are serious problems with the child protection system, where 40 per cent of the kids in out-of-home care are Aboriginal, even though only 5 per cent of them make up the population; and the incarceration of Aboriginal people is disproportionate to anywhere else. I urge the Government to do more in this area. I understand that it is not an easy thing to deal with, and all of us have been touched by suicide in some way.

I particularly pay respect to a young man who was a friend of mine—way too young—who tried to live, in the words of his friends, a life looking for connection. He was taken as a baby and was placed into a series of foster homes. He escaped to the streets of Perth aged 12. He fought for 30 years to have his white foster parents convicted for sexual abuse of him and other boys. He self-medicated with drugs and ended up in jail. He survived that and moved to Sydney for a fresh start. He was a Noongar man living on Gadigal land. Chad was someone who weaned himself off heroin, crystal meth and alcohol. He cared deeply for his dog, Jazzy. Chad was my friend. He was a political nerd and became a political activist against all the odds. He was always a mad South Sydney Rabbitohs fan. He was a dog lover and he was a kind and humble man. Two days ago he took his life. We have to do more.

### JOBKEEPER

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (13:12:34):** I take note of the answer given by senior Minister Tudehope, the Minister for Finance and Small Business. I am quite concerned about the hubris that he brought to his presentation in that while these job figures today are welcome, unemployment is a lagging indicator. The survey cycles through a sample of the changes on a monthly basis and can be somewhat unreliable. The figures are welcome and I hope they are 100 per cent accurate, but it may well be that we look back and think that it was an unusual piece of data. We do know that in the national accounts, regarded as more reliable, there was an 8.6 per cent collapse in State aggregate demand in the June quarter.

I cannot read it all but it ends as follows:

A place where everyone feels safe.

Where we are all able to participate.

Where we can unleash our creativity and celebrate self-expression.

Where we also value our functional amenities – late-night pharmacies, all-hour gyms and accessible public transport.

Sadly, I have been cut off. [*Time expired.*]

### **ABORIGINAL SUICIDES**

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (13:31:07):** I take note of the answers given by Minister Taylor. I also acknowledge the Hon. Penny Sharpe's contribution about Chad; I acknowledge that it was a personal thing to share. Hopefully we are getting some achievements in that space from some of the policy that the Minister outlined. [*Time expired.*]

### **TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (13:31:34):** I contribute to the take-note debate. I am so pleased to be a part of the team that is responding to the COVID pandemic and is providing a way forward. I was pleased to note the comments of Minister Tudehope about the night-time economy and the contribution of the Hon. John Graham and the Hon. Mark Latham, who were participants in the inquiry. Now that so many things are being done by the Government and it is getting on with the job and delivering, the poor Hon. John Graham may need a new shadow Ministry because there is probably not going to be the need for a shadow night-time economy Minister. Nonetheless I acknowledge his great work in that area, and the Government's great work in ensuring that we act on the recommendations and make it easier for businesses to provide outdoor dining and trade late into the night. We see the \$16 billion economy as a way forward out of this pandemic. It assists our providers of night-time services, hospitality and music to find their way forward.

I disagree with the Opposition Whip's characterisation of hubris from the Minister for Finance and Small Business, who is doing a magnificent job together with the team. I did not take a point of order because I did not want to take up the time of the Opposition Whip, but the Government is absolutely concentrating on economic growth, which is what the Minister talked about in every answer today. Every Minister talked about what they are doing. Perhaps the reason we are all a bit tetchy is that we are tired from working bloody hard to get our way out of the pandemic. We are concentrating on jobs, the economy, infrastructure, schools, hospitals, roads, rail, metro and saving koalas all at the same time. Today *The Australian* talked about the jobs miracle and it is true: A total of 111,000 jobs have been added, despite the drag from Victoria and Queensland. Queensland has a \$100 billion debt. We have a \$100 billion infrastructure pipeline in this State that we are working on and delivering every single day.

The Government has a planning acceleration program and it is implementing what it has promised to implement. It is focused on keeping people in jobs and businesses in business because it has the credentials to do that. Government members actually deliver the numbers they talk about. Since March we have announced \$16 billion in stimulus and tax relief. As the finance Minister outlined, there are \$159 million for a skilling-for-recovery program and \$3 billion in the jobs and infrastructure fund, accelerating our planning systems and injecting \$25 billion and 50,000 jobs. That is not hubris; with respect, it is facts. We are delivering all of these things every day in every way possible. I stand by the Government's commitment. [*Time expired.*]

**The PRESIDENT:** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Deferred Answers*

### **CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

In reply to **the Hon. PENNY SHARPE** (27 August 2020).

In reply to **the Hon. GREG DONNELLY** (27 August 2020).

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning)**—The Minister provided the following response:

The Department of Education has withdrawn the individual's approval to teach in New South Wales public schools.

### **YOUNG COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES CENTRE**

In reply to **the Hon. MICK VEITCH** (27 August 2020).