



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 23 March 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 23 March 2022**

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

**The Speaker** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## *Bills*

### **COVID-19 AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REGULATORY REFORMS) BILL 2022**

### **HEALTH LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

## *Announcements*

### **CHAMBER COVID-SAFE ARRANGEMENTS**

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members to socially distance as much as possible in the Chamber. When there are more than 40 people in the Chamber, masks are required. I encourage everyone to think about wearing a mask in the Chamber at all times, as some members are doing. All members are required to have a rapid antigen test upon entry to Parliament House, and all members present in the Chamber should have a wristband indicating they have been tested. A member of this House who tested negative to COVID-19 yesterday has tested positive this morning. A ministerial staff member and a member's staff member have also tested positive today.

Cases of COVID are being detected through the sensible testing measures that have been put in place at Parliament House. I know some members are more resistant than others to having these measures in place, but they have been implemented to protect everyone. Members are required to adhere to these minimum COVID-safe standards at Parliament House and should also take self-precautionary measures. I thank members for their cooperation in this respect.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### **STATE REVENUE AND FINES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2022**

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government) (09:50):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I note with great joy that an electronic copy of the bill has been provided to the Clerk. Before I give the second reading speech, I note that I have been in this place for a long time. There are 28 pages of beautiful text here. As the former innovation Minister and current digital Minister, I do not understand why I cannot simply table this speech. Is there a ruling?

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Yes, move a motion.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Can I move a motion that this beautiful speech, which has beautiful prose, just be tabled?

**The SPEAKER:** I have been here even longer than the Minister and, believe it or not, we look forward to it. We hang on every word, but if the Minister wishes to move a motion to that effect then I will have to seek the Clerk's advice as to whether that is in order.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I would move a motion that I can table this 26-page prose.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk has given some unusually political advice in suggesting that the next item listed on the agenda may not be ready if the Minister does that.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Can I make some inquiries?

**The SPEAKER:** I will pause for 30 seconds.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Thank you. Otherwise, I am happy to truncate the speech and table the balance.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, it is in your hands. What course of action have you decided on?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I take the course of action of discussing this matter with you further, Mr Speaker. Procedurally, we have obviously come to a fork in the road here. I just think there needs to be a way available, not just for me but for future options.

**The SPEAKER:** I suggest that the Minister write to me as chair of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee. The committee will consider that matter if the Minister writes to me and places the matter firmly on the agenda. In the meantime, I ask the Minister to come back to his speech.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will in a moment. But with the greatest respect, Mr Speaker, what if I formally ask you? I know the brilliant people at Hansard are making written notes of this. They are typing it for me.

**The SPEAKER:** This is history.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** "Dear Mr Speaker"—will Hansard write this down, please?

**The SPEAKER:** I would like a letter, please, which I can then hand to my fellow members of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee. I instruct the Minister to come back to his speech.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: I think that it would be only fair if the Minister delivered the letter to you digitally.

**The SPEAKER:** There is a requirement under Standing Order 188 that "Immediately following the mover's second reading speech the debate shall be adjourned." Standing Order 188 requires the Minister to now proceed with his speech, but I have indicated that we are happy to seriously consider his suggestion through the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take that up and write that letter, but I adopt the previous invitation that you gave me, Mr Speaker, to simply table the speech.

**The SPEAKER:** I have considered the Minister's request. I repeat that Standing Order 188 (9) indicates that there is indeed reference to a second reading speech. If the Minister wants to move a suspension of the standing and sessional orders, that would be the appropriate course of action. In the absence of that, I require the Minister to deliver a speech. The other option is for the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee to consider an amendment to the standing orders pursuant to the Minister's correspondence. I have given the Minister options, but I ask him now to be very clear because we have entertained the topic enough.

**Business interrupted.**

*Business of the House*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: SECOND READING SPEECH**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the tabling of the Minister's second reading speech for incorporation in *Hansard*.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Document tabled.**

*Bills*

#### **STATE REVENUE AND FINES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2022**

##### **Second Reading Speech**

**Business resumed.**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government)**  
**(09:56):** Pursuant to the suspension of standing and sessional orders, I incorporate the second reading speech in *Hansard*.

Together with the GST revenue this State obtains, the revenue we get directly through State taxes and charges funds our schools, hospitals, roads, public transport and other vital services.

The State's revenue legislation is therefore of critical importance. It needs to be effective and up to date.

The State Revenue and Fines Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2022 amends the provisions of a number of Acts as part of the Government's ongoing program of maintaining the effectiveness and integrity of the revenue statutes.

The reforms in this bill fall into three broad categories:

1. Amendments to **State taxation and grant legislation** to enhance revenue integrity, ensure the equity of exemptions and concessions, address anomalies, respond to court decisions, close tax avoidance loopholes and reduce red tape;
2. Amendments to **State debt legislation** to enhance Revenue NSW's role in delivering an end -to -end payment collection and debt recovery capability for the State; and
3. Amendments to **finances legislation** to improve customer service and strengthen enforcement of overdue fines.

Separately, the bill also contains some amendments to the Liquor Act 2007, which I will outline at the conclusion of this speech.

Starting with the first category of amendments.

**1. Amendments to State taxation and grant legislation**

This bill's State taxation and grant reforms encompass amendments to the Duties Act 1997, Land Tax Act 1956, the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Act 2000 and the Taxation Administration Act 1996.

I will deal firstly with the Duties Act amendments set out at schedule 1 of the bill.

**Duties Act 1997**

The Duties Act amendments include two important revenue integrity measures.

Duty is chargeable on certain transactions of dutiable property. The broad intention of the Act is that changes in ownership of property—be they changes in legal or beneficial ownership—will, subject to some exceptions and concessions, attract duty.

Currently, however, there is scope to avoid duty by structuring affairs such that, while there is no change in the legal ownership of dutiable property, the beneficial ownership changes.

I will give you one example: a fixed trust holding land in New South Wales that has two beneficiaries, each with an equal interest and one of these beneficiaries disposes of their 50 per cent interest to the other beneficiary. There is no change in the legal ownership of the land, which is held by the trustee, but the remaining beneficiary has now acquired an additional 50 per cent beneficial interest in the land, without any duty being incurred. This is obviously contrary to the intentions of the Act.

This bill will clarify that a change in beneficial ownership of land is a dutiable transaction, aligning our provisions with Victoria. This will help to prevent avoidance of duty.

The second key proposal to improve the integrity of the duty laws concerns the imposition of duty on a declaration of trust.

A recent Supreme Court decision, *Benidorm v Chief Commissioner of State Revenue* [2020], overturned what had long been the accepted interpretation of the relevant provisions.

Prior to this decision, unless there was an applicable duties concession, a declaration of trust was always liable to duty because the Act prescribes a declaration of trust to be a dutiable transaction. However, on this occasion, the court held that the declaration of trust in question was not liable to duty because it did not effect a "transaction".

This decision has introduced considerable uncertainty into the law and leaves open the possibility that duty on a declaration of trust will be challenged on the basis that the declaration falls short of effecting a transaction. It will undoubtedly give rise to disputation.

The amendments in this bill will overcome the issues identified in this decision, ensuring that a declaration of trust continues to be taxed in the same way that it was taxed prior to the decision.

I am delighted that this bill will improve the fairness of several duty exemptions and concessions.

One of these concerns the transfer of property when a de facto relationship ends. When a marriage ends, the Chief Commissioner may exempt a transfer of land or vehicle registration if satisfied that the transfer has been effected by an agreement made for the purposes of dividing matrimonial property. However, there is no equivalent exemption available when property is divided following the breakup of a de facto relationship. To get an exemption from duty, the parties to such a relationship need to have a family law financial agreement or a court order, both of which cost more.

The proposed amendment will enable transfers of land or vehicle registration resulting from a de facto relationship breakdown to be exempt from duty on the same basis as transfers resulting from marriage breakdowns. This will ensure that marriages and de facto relationships are treated equally for the purposes of this duty concession.

Another duties concession allows for family farm transfers to be exempt from duty when the transfer is between family members. This allows older members of a family to retire and a younger generation to take control of the farm.

Currently, the exemption allows the original owner of the property to be a company controlled by the family, but the new owner must be an individual family member. However, these days many family farms have a business structure which uses a partnership, trust or company. It is uncommon for a family farm to be owned in individual names.

The amendment will allow the exemption for family farm transfers to apply where the land is transferred to a company or other entity, so long as that entity is directed by a family member. This will make the exemption fairer and bring it into line with the structures commonly used by farming families.

To maintain the integrity of the exemption, the family member will be required to maintain control of the transferee entity for at least three years after the transfer, consistent with the current requirement that the transferor entity must have been controlled by a family member for a minimum of three years prior to the transaction.

A further concessional duty change relates to the residence requirement for off-the-plan purchases. People who buy a home off the plan can defer payment of transfer duty for up to an additional 12 months after an agreement to purchase is signed. However, there is a requirement that the purchaser, or at least one purchaser, occupy the property as their residence for a minimum of six months within one year of purchase. This is known as the residence requirement.

Compliance with the residence requirement can be difficult for defence force personnel because of the nature of their employment. This difficulty is already acknowledged under other concessions, with exemptions from the residence requirement in the First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme and the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Scheme.

This amendment will exempt defence force personnel from the residence requirement and bring the off-the-plan concession into line with other first home benefit schemes.

The final change to duties concessions concerns the Chief Commissioner's discretion to waive the residence requirement under the First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme and the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Scheme.

Under the former, the discretion may only be exercised within 12 months of purchase. Under the latter, the discretion may be exercised at any time including after expiry of the 12 months.

There is no policy rationale for the discretion under the First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme to be narrower than that in the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Scheme.

The proposed amendment will therefore enable the Chief Commissioner to exercise the discretion to waive the residence requirement under the First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme on the same basis as the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Scheme.

Turning now to insurance duty.

The first of the proposed amendments will remove an inconsistency in the exemption from duty for private health insurance. Currently, the exemption only applies to private health insurance for hospital benefits, medical benefits, or both. A policy which provides only ambulance cover is not considered to be either a hospital benefit or a medical benefit, and thus is not exempt from duty.

There is no sound basis for this exclusion, as ambulance insurance falls within the class of medical-related services that the exemption is intended to cover. The amendment will ensure that ambulance only policies are also exempt from duty.

The exemption from duty for crop and livestock insurance requires clarification to ensure that it operates as intended.

The current definition of livestock insurance includes insurance covering loss due to the death of, or physical damage to, any animal, whether domesticated or wild. The breadth of this definition has led some taxpayers to argue that "pet insurance" is covered and is thereby exempt from duty.

We are all fond of our pets, but it was never intended that pet insurance be covered by the livestock insurance category for duties purposes. The amendment will clarify that the definition of livestock insurance excludes pet insurance.

The final change to insurance duty extends the exemption for the hull of a floating vessel to the entire vessel.

As policies often cover the entire vessel, an apportionment must be made between the exempt hull and the other components of the policy. This is unnecessarily complicated for both administration and compliance. The amendment will remove this complexity.

I now turn to two miscellaneous duties related amendments.

The first of these concerns the Act's reference to "goodwill" in the context of transactions involving goods and other dutiable property.

As transfer duty on goodwill was abolished on 1 July 2016, the reference to goodwill is redundant. The amendment removes the reference to goodwill.

The second amendment modernises the list of stock exchanges recognised for duties purposes.

Currently, a listed company or listed trust is defined as having shares or units quoted on a list of specified stock exchanges, including any exchange of the World Federation of Exchanges. A stock exchange may also be declared by Ministerial order. Only the Australian Pacific Exchange has been recognised through this mechanism.

Today, many stock exchanges are no longer directly members of the World Federation of Exchanges. Rather, it is more common for the parent company or group of the stock exchange to be a member. This means that some stock exchanges are not recognised for duties purposes, which can impact the recovery of landholder duty.

As the creation and membership of stock exchanges is now more fluid than it used to be, there needs to be an efficient mechanism by which to ensure that exchanges are recognised for duties purposes. This is important for protecting the revenue.

The amendment will therefore permit the Chief Commissioner, acting under delegation of the Minister, to add to the list of stock exchanges. This will streamline administration by ensuring that the list of stock exchanges is kept updated.

I now turn to the surcharge purchaser duty and related surcharge land tax amendments, which are set out respectively in schedules 1 and 5 of the bill.

The New South Wales Government has identified precincts for significant economic investment, such as the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis. Commercial and industrial redevelopment is being encouraged to revitalise these areas and create jobs.

I am sure that members would agree that as New South Wales continues to deal with the global pandemic such programs are more important than ever.

Unfortunately, however, these programs are being impeded by costs that were not originally foreseen. The reason for this is that, although the land within the precincts is vacant and has been rezoned for commercial or industrial use, because such land may have a dwelling on it, technically the land is "residential". Land that is residential is liable for the surcharges if acquired by a foreign person.

This means that Australian-based companies with foreign ownership that wish to develop these precincts face additional costs that are not faced by their Australian-owned competitors.

The foreign owner surcharges were not intended to impose additional costs on Australian-based, foreign-owned companies that want to develop land which, for all intents and purposes, is not residential and is clearly intended for commercial or industrial use.

Such costs can dissuade potential investment or affect the nature and scale of investment, which is not in the interests of ensuring effective, value for money development of these precincts.

The proposed amendment gives the Chief Commissioner the power to provide surcharge relief in respect of land used wholly or predominantly for commercial or industrial purposes.

The amendment will operate in a similar way to the existing surcharge relief provisions for Australian-based developers of new homes and build-to-rent properties. As such, the new provision will be subject to similar checks and safeguards to ensure that the land is used for the stated purpose, including powers for the Chief Commissioner to impose conditions, to revoke a surcharge concession at any time, and to reassess a taxpayer for surcharge following revocation.

The next surcharge-related amendment specifically concerns the power of the Chief Commissioner to reassess a surcharge liability after a surcharge concession has been revoked.

Section 9 (3) of the Taxation Administration Act 1996 generally limits reassessment of a tax liability to five years after the initial assessment. While reassessments after the five years can be made where expressly authorised by a taxation law, there is no such authorisation in respect of the surcharges.

This five-year limitation on reassessments is problematic in the context of the various surcharge relief provisions about which I have just been speaking. This is because those provisions often require the taxpayer to fulfil certain obligations within 10 years of acquiring the land or meet other conditions imposed by the Chief Commissioner when surcharge relief is granted. For example, the provisions relating to new home development require the Australian-based developer to sell the new homes within 10 years of the developer acquiring the land.

If, for example, the Chief Commissioner decided to revoke a surcharge concession seven years after the land was acquired by a developer, the Chief Commissioner's ability to issue reassessments would be significantly constrained because of the five-year limitation on making reassessments.

The proposed amendments will expressly permit reassessments to be made more than five years after an initial assessment when a surcharge concession is revoked. This will encourage taxpayers to adhere to their obligations, thereby supporting the integrity of the provisions.

The final surcharge amendment concerns the principal place of residence exemption from surcharge land tax for permanent residents. The exemption applies to permanent residents in respect of residential land that they "use and occupy" as their principal place of residence for a continuous period of 200 days in the land tax year. This is called the "residence requirement".

The meaning of the words "use and occupy" has become subject to dispute in recent years, with some taxpayers arguing that it does not require a close physical connection to the property for the 200 days. In one case, a permanent resident was only in Australia for less than half a year due to work yet maintained that the property was their principal place of residence. This uncertainty poses a revenue risk.

The amendments clarify the exemption so as to require that the permanent resident be physically in Australia for the 200-day period, except in limited circumstances where a brief period of absence may be permitted at the discretion of the Chief Commissioner, such as attending a funeral overseas. The Chief Commissioner will issue guidelines outlining the types of limited circumstances where an absence may be allowed.

These amendments will ensure that the exemption applies as originally intended, whilst allowing the Chief Commissioner to deal with exceptional circumstances as they arise.

Turning now to the First Home Owner Grant amendments at schedule 4.

#### **First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Act 2000**

To be eligible for the First Home Owner Grant, the total value of the transaction must not exceed the eligibility caps specified in the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Act 2000. For a first home builder, the cap is \$750,000.

Whether the total value of a transaction falls below the eligibility cap is determined as at the commencement date of the contract and by reference to the consideration payable for the building work.

Because the value of the transaction is anchored to the commencement date of the contract, there is a weakness by which it is possible for parties to a contract to enter into post-contract variations that take the total value of the transaction above the cap and yet still claim the grant because the value of the building work as at the date of contract is below the cap.

It is also unclear whether in such situations grants paid in advance can then be required to be repaid. There is a provision requiring that a grant recipient, who has been paid in anticipation of meeting the eligibility cap, notify the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue and repay the grant if they become aware that they will exceed the cap. However, this provision only applies to owner-builders.

The amendments will ensure that the provisions cannot be circumvented through post-contract variations, and that if the total value of a contract exceeds the eligibility cap the grant can be required to be repaid.

This amendment is consistent with the first home owner grant legislation in Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland.

I now turn to the amendments to the Taxation Administration Act 1996 at schedule 8 to the bill.

#### **Taxation Administration Act 1996**

Collectively, these reforms represent one of the most significant enhancements to the integrity of the New South Wales taxation system in its history and make New South Wales a leader in promoting tax compliance.

These amendments consist of three core elements:

1. New general provisions relating to tax avoidance schemes;
2. Penalties to deter the promotion of tax avoidance schemes; and
3. New penalty tax provisions.

Starting with the first of these.

Historically anti-avoidance provisions at the State level have been focused on duties transactions. Though not used often, the general anti-avoidance provisions of the Duties Act 1997 are nonetheless an important tool available to the State to both deter and tackle schemes aimed at reducing or avoiding liability for duty.

However, with the exception of the Payroll Tax Act 2007 which deals with a specific kind of avoidance practice in the payroll tax sphere, none of the other taxation laws of New South Wales enjoy the protection of such provisions.

There is no compelling reason why New South Wales should not have general anti-avoidance provisions which apply to all taxes administered by the Chief Commissioner. The economic environment in which we live is constantly evolving, with new business structures and practices emerging globally. Our tax system needs to be able to deal with such challenges to protect the revenue base. It needs to be fit for purpose.

This bill therefore proposes the insertion of general anti-avoidance provisions into the New South Wales Taxation Administration Act 1996. This means that the provisions will apply to all New South Wales taxes that fall within the reach of that Act, including duties, land tax, mineral royalties, payroll tax, gaming machine taxes and various levies.

These provisions are based on those currently contained within the Duties Act 1997 but have some modifications to enhance their effectiveness.

I want to stress that it is not the intention of the Government to start chasing large numbers of taxpayers for avoidance. The chief value of such provisions lies in their deterrent effect—in sending a clear signal to taxpayers that they may be used where tax avoidance is detected. The aim of these reforms is to ensure that if tax avoidance is detected we are in a solid position to deal with it.

I now move on to the second core element of these taxation administration integrity measures—promoter penalties.

In New South Wales, the law in relation to tax avoidance focuses exclusively on the taxpayer. However, this overlooks the role that other parties can play in designing and promoting tax avoidance schemes to taxpayers.

In 2006, the Federal Government introduced promoter penalty laws to deter the promotion of tax avoidance schemes, and this bill introduces such laws modelled on the Federal provisions.

Under these new provisions, the sanctions available to deal with promotion of tax avoidance schemes consist of the following:

- Civil penalties imposed by the Supreme Court of up to 10,090 penalty units for individuals and 50,450 penalty units for corporations.
- Injunctions imposed by the Supreme Court to stop promoter behaviour.
- Enforceable voluntary undertakings under which the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue may accept an undertaking by a promoter to implement remedial action and publish such undertakings if considered appropriate.

Anecdotal evidence from the ATO suggests that the promoter penalty laws have been successful, particularly the use of enforceable undertakings as a way of deterring or correcting avoidance behaviour without the need to seek substantial penalties from the courts.

Like the Federal laws, the New South Wales provisions have safeguards to protect those who are not wilfully promoting tax avoidance schemes, including:

- tax advisers when they provide independent and objective advice,
- where there is a reasonable mistake of fact, or
- where the prohibited conduct occurred as a result of something beyond the entity's control.

The third key element of these tax administration integrity reforms concerns the penalty tax provisions of the Taxation Administration Act 1996.

Penalty tax is applied when a tax default occurs. Penalty tax is calculated as a percentage of the tax default and is based on a taxpayer's behaviour. The base penalty tax of 25 per cent applies if a taxpayer fails to take reasonable care. This may be increased up to 75 per cent of the liability for intentional disregard of the law.

These rates apply irrespective of the type of taxpayer, whether they be an individual, small business or a large corporation.

The amendments reform the penalty tax system to operate similarly to the ATO's penalty tax regime which is more tailored to the type of taxpayer. This involves:

- Increasing the base penalty rate to 50 per cent for large multinational entities, such as entities whose global income is \$1 billion or more.

- Empowering the Chief Commissioner to provide penalty relief for genuinely inadvertent errors made by individuals or small businesses in accordance with guidelines published by the Chief Commissioner.

These reforms will make the penalty tax system fairer whilst also more effective at deterring non-compliance by large enterprises who have more resources and acumen available to them in managing their tax affairs.

And I now want to detail three other important tax administration reforms, two of which concern disclosure of taxpayer information.

A tax officer is generally prohibited from disclosing any information about a taxpayer unless the disclosure falls within a specified exception. These exceptions permit disclosure where the taxpayer consents, disclosure is authorised or required by law, or disclosure is to certain persons or organisations.

A number of the entities to whom information may be provided have an investigative or law enforcement role, such as the Commissioner of Police and the Australian Crime Commission. This recognises that there is a clear public interest in such bodies being able to access taxpayer information to assist in performing their functions.

Over time, the list of entities to whom taxpayer information may be provided has been added to but is out of date.

Currently, several New South Wales and Federal government agencies are not listed in the exceptions despite having clear investigative, law enforcement or complaint handling roles. For example, SafeWork NSW, NSW Fair Trading, Liquor and Gaming NSW, Transport for NSW and the NSW Environment Protection Authority all perform critical investigation and enforcement functions. Likewise, Safe Work Australia, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre and Australian Border Force are not listed.

The bill therefore incorporates a general power to disclose information to a New South Wales or Federal government agency for the purpose of investigation, complaint handling or law enforcement. This avoids the need for having to amend the legislation whenever there is a need to disclose such information that could not have been anticipated, such as the creation of a new investigative or law enforcement body.

The disclosure would be limited to information that is necessary for an investigative, complaint handling or law enforcement purpose.

The amendments will support law enforcement and investigative activities and ensure that there is no undue delay in providing information for such purposes. They are also consistent with New South Wales privacy law, which provides an exemption from the limits on disclosure of personal information where the disclosure is for law enforcement purposes.

A further amendment will enable Revenue NSW to provide tax clearance checks to other New South Wales government agencies that are seeking confirmation that a potential supplier has no tax debts or compliance issues before entering into a contract with them.

Currently, Revenue NSW cannot provide this assurance unless the supplier consents or declares that they do not have any unpaid tax liabilities. This is a reputational risk to the New South Wales Government if agencies award contracts to suppliers that are later revealed to have been avoiding their State tax obligations.

This amendment will enable agencies to obtain assurance from Revenue NSW about a supplier's tax compliance, while also providing a greater incentive for suppliers to be tax compliant if they wish to be able to do business with the New South Wales Government. This will also cover a supplier's related entities, including entities under the practical, if not legal, control of the supplier.

Disclosure to agencies will only be at the request of the agency. The amendment will also broadly align with the practices of the Federal Government, which currently requires businesses and subcontractors tendering for Commonwealth contracts over \$4 million to obtain a clear tax record from the ATO.

The final tax administration amendment is in keeping with this Government's drive to provide better customer service through digital technologies.

Currently, the methods by which Revenue NSW may give a document to a taxpayer include personal service, post, document exchange, and an email address specified by the taxpayer.

As members would know, customers of both public and private services are increasingly accessing documents, invoices and so on through secure website links or portals. The amendments therefore expand the methods of electronic service under a tax law to include notification advising how a customer can access documents via a link or portal.

These amendments are in line with amendments made to the Fines Act 1996 in 2020.

That brings to conclusion the amendments relating to tax.

I now turn to the second category of amendments in this bill—those relating to State debt recovery at schedule 7.

#### **State Debt Recovery Act 2018**

The State Debt Recovery Act 2018 provides the means by which public authorities—New South Wales government bodies and local councils—can refer civil debts to Revenue NSW.

This allows those bodies to focus on their core responsibilities, rely upon the expertise of the State's specialist debt collection agency, and generally avoid having to go to court in order to recover outstanding debts.

At present, it is unclear whether the Act authorises a public authority to refer amounts that have been paid under an administrative, non-legislative scheme (such as a grant program) and which subsequently become repayable because the recipient has not complied with a condition of the payment or grant.

The amendment makes clear that a referable debt includes such amounts, and so will help ensure the integrity of programs under which monetary assistance is provided to people.

Some public authorities want Revenue NSW not just to collect outstanding debts but also to issue the initial invoice to the customer on behalf of the agency—effectively to provide an end-to-end debt management service.

Although the Act authorises Revenue NSW to perform functions of a public authority under a debt recovery agreement, there is no express provision for Revenue NSW to issue an initial invoice on behalf of a public authority even though the authority agrees to it.

The bill amends the Act to make clear that a public authority may authorise Revenue NSW to issue an initial invoice. This is a sensible amendment to ensure that Revenue NSW can provide an end-to-end debt management service where an agency considers this to be in their interests.

The Act currently enables the Chief Commissioner to access certain information about a debtor held by various bodies including the Police Force, New South Wales Government agencies and the debtor's past or current employer.

At present, obtaining such information must be for the purpose of taking debt recovery action against the debtor, that is, once the debt has escalated to the point of Revenue NSW having to resort to enforcement action such as seizing a person's property.

Members of this House would be aware that over the past few years Revenue NSW has increased its efforts to engage with customers early to minimise the extent to which enforcement action needs to be taken. Revenue NSW offers many options to help people resolve their debts, including extending the due date for payment and allowing people to enter into payment plans.

This is in everyone's interest—ultimately it means less cost and distress for customers.

There is therefore a need for Revenue NSW to be able, where necessary, to obtain information about a debtor before a debt gets to the stage where enforcement action needs to be taken.

The bill amends the Act to permit Revenue NSW to seek information from the specified entities for the purpose of exercising functions under the Act, not just enforcement action.

In addition, the bill authorises credit reporting bodies to disclose the contact details of a debtor's employer, such as address, email address and phone number of the employer. Currently, a credit reporting body may only disclose the name of the employer. This change will further assist Revenue NSW to locate and engage early with debtors to resolve their fines.

These amendments are consistent with amendments that this bill also proposes to the Fines Act 1996.

The final amendment to the State Debt Recovery Act 2018 is in the same vein as the amendment to the Taxation Administration Act 1996 concerning service of documents which I have just spoken about.

This amendment allows documents to be served through a notification advising how the customer can access such documents through a secure website link or portal.

I now come to the final set of amendments in this bill. These consist of amendments to the Fines Act 1996 and Fines Regulation 2020 at schedules 2 and 3.

#### **Fines Act 1996 / Fines Regulation 2020**

The first amendment I want to outline is part of the same theme which underpins a number of the amendments in this bill, of facilitating engagement between Revenue NSW and its customers so that fines, debts or taxes can be dealt with without the need for enforcement action.

This amendment repeals a provision of the Act which, to be frank, has been outdated for some time and causes distress to some members of the community.

The provision in question empowers the Commissioner of Fines Administration to warrant the imprisonment of a fine defaulter who has breached a community service order. Under a community service order, a fine defaulter may be required to perform community service work as a way of paying off the fine.

Community service orders have largely been replaced by the Work and Development Order scheme, which enables fine defaulters to voluntarily undertake work and development activities to pay off their fine.

Revenue NSW has not issued a community service order since 2011 and the power to warrant imprisonment has never been exercised.

Despite this, the potential for the Commissioner to imprison a person has been found to create a sense of distrust particularly in First Nations communities. This can be a roadblock to productive engagement between fine defaulters and Revenue NSW on resolving fines.

There is no value in the retention of the Commissioner's power to imprison a fine defaulter and its existence is actually deleterious to the effective administration of the Act. For this reason, we propose the repeal of this power.

The second amendment concerns the Work and Development Order scheme and is designed to improve its accessibility.

At present, where a work and development order involves medical or mental health treatment, the person supervising such treatment must be a health practitioner, defined as a registered medical practitioner, a registered psychologist or a nurse.

Mental health treatment is often provided by social workers, but such workers cannot provide such treatment as a work and development order sponsor because they do not fall within the definition of "health practitioner".

The bill permits social workers to be sponsors subject to having the required qualifications. These qualifications will be detailed in the work and development order guidelines. In addition, as with any sponsor, a social worker will need to be approved by the Department of Communities and Justice, requiring them to submit the required documentation relating to training, qualifications, insurance and so on.

The second group of amendments to the Fines Act strengthen Revenue NSW's capacity to enforce fines in certain respects.

As I said in connection with the amendments to the State Debt Recovery Act 2018, Revenue NSW now invests a lot of effort in engaging with customers early so that debts do not spiral out of control. This approach also applies to fines debts.

Nonetheless, enforcement action is sometimes necessary, particularly for persons who deliberately and consistently avoid paying their fines.



Interstate driver licences and interstate registered vehicles can currently be used to avoid paying fines. Let me illustrate.

- A fine defaulter with a New South Wales driver licence can have enforcement action taken against their licence for any unpaid fine, not just traffic-related offences. However, for fine defaulters with an interstate driver licence, enforcement action can only be taken where the fine defaulter has two or more unpaid traffic-related fines. This is inconsistent with the treatment of persons with New South Wales driver licences and is vulnerable to abuse by persons who commit offences and do not want to have to pay their fines.
- The second deficiency is that, unlike vehicles registered in New South Wales, Revenue NSW is not able to direct Transport for NSW to withdraw any permission for a vehicle that has been registered in another jurisdiction to be driven in New South Wales. This creates a loophole whereby a fine defaulter may deliberately register a vehicle in another jurisdiction to avoid enforcement.

The bill amends the Act to address these weaknesses.

As I have mentioned, Revenue NSW may direct Transport for NSW to take enforcement action against a fine defaulter in respect of a motor vehicle.

As Transport for NSW also administers maritime licences, there is reasonable argument to extend this power to a fine defaulter's maritime licence including their boat driving licence, personal watercraft driving licence or vessel registration. The bill makes this extension.

The last of the amendments in this particular group simply addresses an inconsistency between the Road Transport Act 2013 and the Fines Act in relation to statutory declarations sought in connection with driver nominated offences.

While failure to provide such a declaration is a penalty notice offence under the Road Transport Act 2013, it is not so under the Fines Act. This is an oversight which the bill corrects.

The second group of amendments is designed to facilitate information sharing to improve the administration of the Act.

The Act already empowers Revenue NSW to access certain information held by other bodies including government agencies, employers of fine defaulters and credit reporting agencies. This bill expands the types of information that may be sought in three ways.

Firstly, to enable Revenue NSW to obtain information about a bank account to inform decisions around enforcement action. One of the actions which Revenue NSW may take when a person repeatedly fails to respond to notifications to pay a fine is to issue a garnishee order to a bank.

However, at the time of issuing the order Revenue NSW will not know whether the person banks with the institution or the amount of funds in any account held. This process can be "hit and miss".

The bill therefore amends the Act to permit Revenue NSW to request a bank to verify whether a person banks with that institution and, if so, the amount held in the account. This will enable Revenue NSW to better target the use of garnishee orders.

The second improvement authorises credit reporting bodies to disclose the contact details of a fine recipient's employer, such as address, email address and phone number of the employer. This mirrors an amendment to the State Debt Recovery Act 2018 which I have spoken about.

And the third change concerns the information which Revenue NSW can request from government agencies. The types of information that can currently be obtained are a person's criminal record, address, property, date of birth or driver licence.

The amendment will enable Revenue NSW to also request information about a person's electronic contact details including email and phone number. Again, as with other amendments contained in this bill, this amendment will support earlier resolution of fines.

#### **Liquor Act 2007**

And finally, I turn to the proposed amendments to the Liquor Act 2007 in schedule 6.

These amendments correct a drafting error in the Customer Service Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. This bill was intended to delay the repeal of part 12 of the Liquor Act 2007 from 11 December 2021 to 11 December 2022.

To ensure the provisions under part 12 did not repeal, both the prescribed period defined in section 165 and the repeal clause in section 167 required amendment. Due to a drafting oversight the prescribed period in section 165 of the Liquor Act was not amended in the Customer Service Legislation Amendment Bill. This resulted in section 166 of the Act unintentionally lapsing.

Section 166 of the Liquor Act grants councils powers to quickly and easily approve the use of roads and certain other spaces for outdoor dining, foyer space or performance space. These powers have been integral in facilitating outdoor events aimed at revitalising high streets, promoting economic recovery and encouraging compliance with public health advice.

The proposed amendments will reinstate these powers, by amending section 165 of the Liquor Act so that the prescribed period for council powers under section 166 will now end on 11 December 2023 and changing the repeal date under section 167 to 11 December 2023.

Rather than extending part 12 until 11 December 2022 as the Customer Service Legislation Bill originally proposed, the current amendments mean that part 12 of the Act will now repeal on 11 December 2023.

This additional time will provide certainty to councils that they can rely on these powers to run outdoor street parties, festivals and outdoor dining events in the next summer period and enable them to plan ahead.

The additional time will also support the permanent transfer of the provisions in part 12 of the Liquor Act to the Roads Act 1993, which is the primary legislation governing roads-related approvals. The transfer of the provisions to the Roads Act was foreshadowed during the introduction of the Customer Service Legislation Bill.

Finally, the amendments insert a validation provision to ensure that any approvals granted under section 166 of the Liquor Act after its expiry on 11 December 2021 are not considered invalid. Councils should be reassured that they are protected for any decisions and approvals they made during this period in good faith. I reiterate the importance of these amendments in supporting New South Wales' economic recovery efforts, and for the businesses and residents who benefit from enlivened local streets.

I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **HOME BUILDING AMENDMENT (MEDICAL GAS LICENSING) BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Eleni Petinos, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)**  
**(09:59):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Home Building Amendment (Medical Gas Licensing) Bill 2022. The bill proposes to extend the transitional arrangements of the medical gas licensing scheme under the Home Building Act 1989 from 1 May 2022 to 30 September 2022 to prevent critical shortages of eligible personnel being able to undertake certain medical gas work. In 2020 the New South Wales Government took action to deliver key reforms for medical gas work in medical facilities in the State following two tragic incidents at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. These reforms were made so that kind of heartbreak is never endured by another family.

Medical facilities such as public and private hospitals, day surgery practices and dental practices are places where the safety of patients is vital, including in the administration of medical gases. There are approximately 214 private hospitals, 202 public hospitals, 105 day hospitals and IVF clinics, 7,247 dentists and 722 medical centres in New South Wales. These facilities all fit within the ambit of this legislation. Despite the significant number of medical facilities, as of 18 March 2022, there are only 143 people licensed to do medical gas work across the State. The bill does not stray from the robust and effective regulatory system introduced by the Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Act 2020 but is intended to give industry and government practitioners more time to secure a licence to do certain work.

Training in this space has been impacted by COVID-19, with units of competency delivered face to face, and the lockdowns that have impacted many parts of the community over the past year have also impacted the medical gas licensing scheme. Licensed practitioners will complete the mandatory additional units of competency prescribed in the Home Building Act. The New South Wales Government is and remains committed to continual action to ensure safe and compliant medical gases are supplied. While the bill proposes to extend the transitional arrangements for licensing, the amendments do not change the requirement that all medical gas work must comply with the relevant Australian standards and provide a safe and reliable product to the people of New South Wales. This requirement will continue to be subject to oversight by NSW Health and NSW Fair Trading.

We are seeking urgent consideration of these amendments to ensure that premature introduction of the new licensing requirement does not compromise service delivery in the New South Wales health system. Without this amendment there will be immediate impacts on service delivery in the health system, including the likely closure of operating theatres and intensive care beds and reduced services in private healthcare settings. These impacts will be particularly acute in rural and regional areas. The medical gas licensing framework is part of the Government's comprehensive work to ensure safety in the regulation of medical gases in this State. We are working tirelessly to make it as effective as possible, but sometimes taking extra time is necessary to ensure that we get it right.

I acknowledge the Minister for Health and his department for their work on the bill. The collaboration and cooperation between the Ministry of Health and NSW Fair Trading is why this legislation has been brought to this place today. As with many of the bills that come before this place, cooperation and communication are key in ensuring the best outcomes are reached for the people of New South Wales. With that in mind, I acknowledge the collaborative engagement I have had with the Opposition to move quickly on this issue and note the support that it is providing for this legislation, along with that of my colleagues on the crossbench. I trust that we can all continue to work together to ensure that the scheme provides strong customer-focused service delivery for the people of our State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**MOTOR SPORTS BILL 2022**  
**MAJOR EVENTS AMENDMENT BILL 2022**  
**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 22 February 2022.**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (10:04):** Mr Speaker, I do not lead in debate for the Opposition on the Motor Sports Bill 2022 and the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! To clarify, the unlimited speaking time will be preserved for the member who leads for the Opposition in this debate.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** My contribution will focus on the cognate Major Events Amendment Bill 2022. These amendments are in the spirit of the original intent of the bill that was passed by Labor in 2009 and seek to enhance the opportunities to attract major events to New South Wales. The Opposition will not oppose the bill or offer any amendments to it. Major events can be a major economic and social driver for New South Wales and we have seen that through a range of very large events that have run since this legislation originally passed in 2009. In fact, it has only been used on seven occasions since that time, which included major events such as the FIFA Fan Fest 2010, the AFC Asian Cup 2015, the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015, the World Polo Championship 2017, ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2018, Invictus Games 2018 and the Women's T20 World Cup 2020.

Those major events for New South Wales have brought lots of economic benefits, and this legislation will seek to ensure that New South Wales remains number one in attracting large international events to our State, which bring visitors, create jobs and have a positive economic impact for local suppliers. We also know that those major events have the added benefit that tourists may revisit Australia. They come to the event, they see our great State and then they plan to return. So those repeat visits are important as well. Major events also have the capacity to leave behind substantial legacies. They can be in the form of physical assets, such as stadia, lasting recognition of destination branding in key tourism markets, or better community understanding of a sport or cultural activity. They are also a big driver of domestic travel and increased overnight stays to attend events. There is strong competition amongst Australian States to attract events and in this regard New South Wales has to ensure it is competitive in the marketplace and has effective strategies in place to attract events.

In consulting with industry on the bill, we received comments from members of the Australian Festivals Association. Whilst the bill does not directly affect them, they can see some positive parts of the bill that could be applied to them and have asked that that may be a future consideration. They are talking about large local events such as Splendour in the Grass or the Byron Bay Bluesfest, because red tape can make large local festivals more difficult. They sent me a recent example of where that had a big effect. The case study they are using, which occurred only last weekend, is the Airfields concert featuring Flight Facilities. The Airfields concert was scheduled for Saturday 19 March at Victoria Park. With less than a week's notice, the City of Sydney council cancelled the Victoria Park location booking, as it deemed that the park was too waterlogged to proceed. After an extensive search for alternative sites, it was clear The Showring at the Entertainment Quarter was the only option. The process of relocating the event was then stuck at multiple points. In planning, the development application needed to be increased to thousands more people at short notice.

The police wanted to deem the event as being subject to the Music Festivals Act, which would have made it impossible to get approval in time. The Act was not intended for events like the Airfields concert. Police had objections to the concert going ahead on the basis of the number of people on site, the ingress and egress of traffic and transport, and the fact that it was a last-minute change. Licensing police wanted to know that police were supportive before moving ahead with the licensing requirements. The liquor licence was a crucial part of the festival, but it was also the last to be approved as it needed police support. The event originally had a special event licence for Victoria Park, but it was not a simple process to transfer the venue.

It also had the additional hurdles of the usual issues that come with planning a 12,000-plus person event, communicating the change with the audience and managing with skeleton staff due to COVID. Eventually, planning fell into place, police came on board and the liquor licence was approved. The Australian Festival Association felt that if its members were included in this legislation, or maybe if they had standalone legislation with similar objectives, a lot of these things could have been packaged and, if the event was required to move, it could have been moved. While this particular legislation does not impact directly on them at this stage because it is mainly for large international events, it certainly would have benefits for large domestic events, which also bring international tourists to New South Wales. The Minister may want to look at that down the track. It would be supported by our local industry, which has been reeling from COVID and is looking to get back on its feet as quickly as possible.

The Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 will update the current Act by refining the definition of the locations of major events to which the Act's provisions may apply, to accommodate events that are held in more than one venue or area. Even with big events that are held over multiple venues, like a Commonwealth or Olympic Games or the FIFA Women's World Cup, which is coming here in 2023, it makes sense to package the regulations to treat all of the venues as one. The bill seeks to streamline the process for activating provisions contained in part 4 of the Act through the making of regulations. It will ensure that the Act interacts appropriately with planning and environmental legislation and that major events, developments and activities, where necessary, can be carried out with the approval of the Minister for Planning, enabling the regulations to provide that compensation is not payable by the event promoter in respect of major event-related matters.

The bill prohibits the delegation of the responsible authority's key regulatory functions, providing more certainty to event stakeholders, and consolidates some definitions to ensure consistency and simplicity. It makes minor amendments to keep pace with social and technological change, such as requiring certain public notices to be published online rather than in a newspaper and including drones and other unmanned aerial vehicles for certain aerial advertising matters. This is important because large events are usually packaged with exclusive sponsorship. This will stop things like ambush marketing, where people fly signs over a site to advertise a competitor. These are sensible changes. As I said, they build on the original bill that was passed in 2009. The Opposition asks the Minister whether, down the track, major domestic events may be considered to be included in the provisions of this bill or whether a standalone bill is required to make sure that those large domestic events can be run in a seamless fashion to ensure that we get the best for local promoters and the New South Wales economy and keep our State number one for events and tourism.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (10:13):** I speak on both the Motor Sports Bill 2022 and the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022, but I am really focused on the Motor Sports Bill. As we heard in the second reading speech, the object of the bill is to regulate motorsport, support the expansion of motorsport in New South Wales and facilitate the conducting of major motorsport events in New South Wales. This bill brings back special memories for me because I was in this place with the member for Wyong in 2009 when the initial legislation was passed for the World Rally Championship in the Far North Coast, partly in my area and partly in the electorate of Lismore. As we know, that event spent one year there and caused concern in certain areas of the local community. There was concern about vehicles transgressing dirt roads, the possibility of wildlife kills and upsetting the amenity of some of our great forests et cetera.

Unfortunately, there was some behaviour that was not nice from some members of the community, like the "stop the rally" group from the Northern Rivers Guardians. There were rocks thrown at cars and nails put out on the track. That was a shame because the event was good for the business community. There were a lot of tourists and visitors to our area, our motels were full and our restaurants were very populated at that time. That was back in September 2010. The event moved to the electorate of Coffs Harbour. The member for Coffs Harbour at the time, the Hon. Andrew Fraser, who is a big fan of motorsport, was very pleased to have it, and the event was conducted successfully. It spent a couple of years there.

As we emerge from COVID and do the critical work of rebuilding our State economy and getting events and tourism happening again, we need to remove artificial barriers. In my experience with the World Rally Championship, it was quite difficult to navigate between State Government agencies and local government agencies. That took a considerable amount of time, with a considerable cost to the promoters. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 is a very good piece of legislation. We have races in Newcastle, but we cannot have them in Wollongong, Dubbo or St Ives. This legislation opens that up. As we know, motor racing is not for everyone, but it is extraordinarily popular. Vast numbers of people, both young and old, go to the Mount Panorama track in Bathurst to enjoy the racing around the mountain. It is Australia's most prestigious race by far, and it has featured many great champions and idols. We all remember the great days of Holden versus Ford, and whether you were a Ford man or a Holden man. That would have been debated in many bars and backyard barbecues around the nation, and it probably still is to varying degrees.

There are a lot of people involved in motor racing, so there is a strong base to expand the number and locations of these events in the future, bringing more drivers, crews, officials and fans to our regions. Ernst & Young has calculated that, Australia-wide, the sector involves \$3.1 billion in direct gross output, \$5.5 billion in indirect gross output and 9,560 events. There are nearly 19,000 formal and unpaid officials, and I know that for a fact. Near the great electorate of Tweed, over the border in that other State, they have the car racing at Surfers Paradise. It is very popular, and it attracts visitors not only domestically but from overseas. There are around 188,000 motorsport participants and nearly 1,400 local clubs. This bill is about a particular type of major motor event, but those numbers show the public interest and the economic benefit of motor racing generally.

The bill will allow us to greatly increase the capacity to tap that interest and have more of the big events, realising major economic results and a lot of happier fans, which I believe is also very important. Think about the

numbers I just quoted: 188,000 participants and 19,000 officials. That is a lot of people who are travelling to the events, staying in hotels, having a few beers, eating out in our local restaurants and supporting other businesses as well. A lot of side trips are taken to local landmarks and activities and it is a priceless word-of-mouth promotion when people go home from an exciting motor race and tell their friends about all the great things that they can see and do in regional New South Wales.

There is also a competitive aspect in this for New South Wales. We want to retain our existing events and we want to stand out nationally so we can attract new events. Ernst & Young calculates that New South Wales represents about 26 per cent of the motor industry's contribution to Australia's economy, with Victoria and Queensland just behind. A quick survey of Victoria and Queensland motor racing legislation shows that they have no artificial geographical limits to motor racing. A very important part of this cognate bill is that it puts no geographical boundary limits on motor racing. In Queensland, motor racing events are held on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, and also in Townsville from time to time. So the sport is moving around. It is a great sport; it is conducted safely and I have a lot of respect for the officials, the safety officers and all the other people involved.

Do motor racing events please everyone? No. I know motorsport would not appeal to some people in my electorate, including my good friend the president of the Nimbin Environmental Centre, Scott Sledge, or Sledgie as he is known. Sledgie and I, believe it or not, meet on a regular basis and discuss the future of koalas, climate change, sharks and a number of other things. Do we agree on everything? No, not really, but we at least have a rapport with each other. Nimbin was, unfortunately, one of the affected areas during the floods. A few years ago there was a tragedy in Nimbin when the Hemp Embassy burnt down, which caused a great deal of stress to the locals there. I am pretty sure that Scott would not be a great fan of motor racing.

Motor racing deserves the support of the Government. We have seen its economic effect and the competitive nature of both international and national tourism. Now, with us coming out of COVID and seeing our borders opening up, we can travel overseas and people from overseas can travel here. It is all about jobs and the economy. I am quite hopeful that after 17 April the cruising industry will be back. In my electorate, 30-odd per cent of constituents are over the age of 65 and cruising is a big part of their lives.

I am a little dismayed that many of my constituents will not be able to use the iVote system at the next election because they will be on cruise ships. But that is something for the Electoral Commissioner to consider. The Motor Sports Bill is all about getting the economy back and supporting sport. New South Wales has a great history of supporting sport in virtually every code. In the last winter Olympics I believe one member of the curling team came from Sydney. Curling was a sport that I did not know existed until recent times—we do not have much ice up north to practise that sport. But I believe it is all important to be active. [*Extension of time*]

I was involved with international lawn bowls and televised events. Compared with the set-up involved for motor racing events, they pale into insignificance. I note that it takes about four weeks to set up the race track in Queensland, with barricades, seating, food stalls, safety equipment and so on, and that it takes another two weeks to pull it all down. It is an enormous cost to these promoters. Wherever motor racing is held it is going to cost the local government and the State government. State governments bid for these events and, being a former Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism and Major Events, I believe this is worthwhile.

The Major Events Amendment Bill is also important. As my colleague the member for Ballina will acknowledge, the Blues & Roots festival and Splendour in the Grass are major events, although with the Blues & Roots festival I often say to my Sydney colleagues that if they are going to go they should take their gumboots and a raincoat because nine times out of 10 it will rain. But people have a fabulous time and it has an enormous impact on my electorate. Accommodation in Byron Bay is at a premium at that time and Tweed is only about 30 or 40 minutes up the road, so a lot of people stay in Tweed and commute from there.

I thank the Minister. He has always been forthcoming and, I would say, innovative in making us more competitive and putting certainty into these events. I hope to see it go a little further. One of my concerns has been that the State Government will often sponsor or support financially the filming of a lot of movies—and *Pirates of the Caribbean* starring Johnny Depp was filmed in my area, as was *Aquaman* and a large number of other films—but often the filming can be tangled up in red tape and some grey areas.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I bet Barnaby didn't come over.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Swansea. When Johnny Depp was in Australia—and we all remember his little dogs, Pistol and Boo—I met Mr Depp and I threw my support behind him because I saw him donate about 40 minutes of his time to raise money for charities by signing autographs. The queue stretched from the equivalent of this Chamber to George Street. The majority of women in my electorate were very happy to meet Mr Depp and to get something signed by him. I do not think I was too popular with Barnaby Joyce, but Mr Depp was well received within our local area. I hope in the future we can

have movies filmed in the area because we spend a lot of money financially supporting the industry. I support both bills and commend them to the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (10:27):** As shadow Minister for Sport, it is my pleasure to lead for the Opposition in debate on the Motor Sports Bill 2022, which was introduced and second read on 22 February after the Government withdrew the Motor Sports Bill 2021. My colleague the member for Wyong has made his comments on the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 which, cognate with the Motor Sports Bill, will facilitate the reintroduction of many major events and tighten up some aspects of the Major Events Amendment Bill as our State and our economy open up. The member for Wyong made some important observations on aspects of the Major Events Amendment Bill, noting that it applies only to a very small number of events but that they have a huge financial impact and are very widely enjoyed by thousands and thousands of people.

I state at the outset that the Opposition will not oppose the Motor Sports Bill. However, in the other place we will move several amendments to close significant gaps in the legislation the Government has introduced and to improve several important pieces of the legislation. I will discuss those amendments later. The Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney has said that the object of the bill is to regulate motorsports to support their expansion in New South Wales and facilitate the conduct of major motorsports events in New South Wales. The Minister said:

Three Acts and several associated regulations have been instituted over time to facilitate major motorsport events in New South Wales. Each Act is specific to a geographical location and requirements of each existing event, which limits our ability to easily attract new event content into New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Granville will be heard in silence.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** The Minister continued:

The Motor Sports Bill 2022 consolidates these Acts—

that is, the Mount Panorama Motor Racing Act 1989, the Motor Racing (Sydney and Newcastle) Act 2008 and the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act 2009—

to achieve a holistic legislative framework for the conduct of motorsport events in New South Wales. The bill will provide one set of powers and a consistent approach to similar activities across motorsport events; the ability to account for the unique characteristics of an event and its location, if required, through the use of race authorisation conditions and an event specific regulation; a consistent approach to track safety inspections, facilitated by a New South Wales Government-approved sanctioning body, which will be one of the industry peak bodies; clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities of various government and non- government stakeholders to improve event oversight; and a streamlined and efficient approvals pathway for authorisations across the events.

The last time the Government introduced a motorsports bill was the Motor Racing Legislation Amendment (Newcastle 500) Bill 2017, which amended the Homebush Motor Racing (Sydney 400) Act 2008 to facilitate the conduct of an annual motor race and associated races and events at Newcastle. The then Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills said in his second reading speech:

The bill facilitates the race by extending the current legislation allowing the V8 Supercars race to be conducted at Sydney Olympic Park to Newcastle, and by removing the references to V8s, which will allow for a greater variety of Supercars to race in Newcastle in the years to come. All the commonsense provisions currently contained within the Homebush Motor Racing (Sydney 400) Act 2008 will apply to the race event at Newcastle.

These include Destination NSW oversight and a streamlined authorisation and approval process for the conduct of the race, which provide certainty for both the race promoter and the community. Significant safeguards relating to consultation, public safety and environmental protection will also be maintained. For example, the Act currently allows Destination NSW to impose any conditions it considers reasonable on the race promoter, including for the protection of the environment and public safety. If the promoter breaches one of those conditions, it can be prosecuted, and in the case of the most serious or continuing breaches, have its authorisation revoked.

Pre-race works cannot commence until Destination NSW is satisfied that the race promoter has complied with statutory requirements to consult with stakeholders affected by its works proposal, including residents and the local council.

That has been hugely important in both Newcastle and previously in Homebush. These races attract tens of thousands of people and are hugely popular but do have considerable impact on the local residents, not just on the days of the races but also during bump-in and bump-out. Last year the then Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans introduced the Motor Sports Bill 2021 by leave and without notice, claiming it was urgent, on 23 November 2021. Then on 22 February the supposedly urgent bill was withdrawn and the Minister for Tourism and Sport introduced the Motor Sports Bill 2022, with minor changes from the previous bill. I note that the Minister did not claim it was urgent this time.

Since the first bill was introduced in January, Supercars has decided to postpone the Repco Newcastle 500 to a later date. Many of the Opposition's and stakeholders' concerns have been addressed by the rewrite, and I thank the Minister for making those changes. One of the differences between the 2022 bill and the 2021 bill is

clause 46, which provides for the interaction of specific Acts with things authorised, permitted or required to be done by or under the proposed part. The definition of "unauthorised activity" no longer refers to the Biodiversity Conservation Act. Another minor difference is that schedule 3 now defines "government sector agency" in the same way as the Government Sector Employment Act and now includes the local council, which is incredibly important. As this bill facilitates motorsports activity right across the State, including perhaps in areas that have not hosted them in the past and on non-dedicated racetracks, it is really important that local government is consulted early and thoroughly.

Clause 55 specifies the obligations of the government sector agency in relation to a motor race. The proposed section also enables the Minister to give a written direction to a government sector agency, now including a local council, requiring it to comply with a request by the government coordinating agency in certain circumstances. Labor has a very proud track record in supporting motorsports. Indeed, in relation to Mount Panorama, the then Labor Minister for Tourism and Sport and Recreation, Minister for Women, and Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development introduced the Mount Panorama Motor Racing Amendment Bill 2006 to increase to five the maximum permissible annual number of events using the whole Mount Panorama motor racing circuit under the Mount Panorama Motor Racing Act 1989. By promoting increased visitation to the area, this measure was intended to assist the Bathurst Regional Council, the owner of the circuit, in developing a significant local tourism resource. Since 1938, when it was a dirt track, there has been motor racing at Mount Panorama, and most significant Australian motor racing identities have competed there and created a strong tradition.

We all know the Bathurst motor race and have watched it for pretty much our entire lives. Certainly when I was growing up, as we have heard from previous speakers, the contest between Ford and Holden was something that we all sat there watching, gripped and on the edges of our seats, with a lot of ribbing going on in the playground about "Still Holden Together" and "Found on Rubbish Dump". My family were on the "Still Holden Together" side. There are few comparable circuits in the world; it is an incredibly beautiful track. Growing up in the Central West, I know everybody in the entire region was very proud that the whole world was watching Bathurst. For many years, the mountain was a mecca for Australian motorcycle racing as well, with a special mystique, a long tradition and some significant heroes.

Mount Panorama has been a tourism drawcard for more than half a century. It is estimated that over four million Australian viewers watch the Bathurst 1000. The race brings an injection of more than \$21 million to the Bathurst economy, \$25 million to the wider Central West and \$55 million to New South Wales overall. In his second reading speech, the Minister claimed that:

The bill repeals the existing Acts and associated regulations for the Motor Racing (Sydney and Newcastle) Act 2008, the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act 2009 and the Mount Panorama Motor Racing Act 1989. The bill enables motorsport activities to occur on public roads through the suspension of certain road legislation, principally the Roads Act 1993 and the Road Transport Act 2013. It also streamlines the approval of activities over multiple jurisdictions and/or landholdings through interactions with other legislation, such as the Local Government Act 1993, the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, the Forestry Act 2012 and the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

However, as is often the case with this Government when it claims to be cutting red tape, in practice, there are more bureaucratic hurdles to jump through. The Government has not made a strong case for change. It might like to think the replacement of three Acts with one might sound reasonable at face value. It has not explained what the problems are with the current three Acts, or what it is hoping to fix. But harmonisation, on this occasion, means that local differences are put aside.

Some of the other concerns raised with us by stakeholders about the bills before the House today are that some of the proposed provisions formalise the hierarchy that already exists, and that may not need to be formalised and may prevent the evolution of the sport and the way the sport is administered. However, they also told us that under clause 55 councils will be required to comply with the Minister's directions. This could be interpreted by some in the community as meaning that councils will be at the beck and call of the Government. My understanding is that that is not the intent. It is the intent that councils actually be consulted, and bringing councils in is an important part of the rewrite of this bill. But I certainly think that requires a little clarification. While the Minister did not address the issue of the geographic limitations of the current three Acts, the previous Minister did so in her second reading speech for the withdrawn Motor Sports Bill 2021. She said that the Acts:

... are tried and tested, and they work. The problem is that they are geographically or event limited.

Stakeholders have told us that it is entirely appropriate that the Mount Panorama Act is geographically limited, since there is no other venue that presents the same characteristics as Mount Panorama. The previous sport Minister also said:

Mount Panorama orders are different in that an order can allow up to five full-scale events a year. That reflects that Mount Panorama is a unique case, as a dedicated race circuit on a public road. Clause 5 also appoints the government coordinating agency for the event.

The government coordinating agency has an important role in coordinating the relevant agencies to support a successful event, including the police, Transport, Health and others. The promoter is in charge and responsible for holding the event, but government services need to be wrapped around the event and coordinated, including to support local residents and amenities.

The Minister has not made a case for change or guaranteed that the uniqueness of Mount Panorama is recognised in the bill. Accordingly, the Opposition will move some amendments to address these shortcomings. As the Government has itself recognised, those Acts are tried and tested, and they work.

The bill also creates a new structure, where clause 6 enables the Minister to give an authorisation for a motor race for a period of up to five years, on the advice of the government coordinating agency for the motor race. Clause 7 provides that a motor race authorisation may be given subject to conditions that the Minister considers reasonable to impose, including conditions relating to certain matters specified in the proposed section. The Minister may change the conditions at any time by giving written notice to the promoter and must give the promoter written notice of the change before changing the conditions. The government coordinating agency must review the conditions within four months after the end of each motor race. This contrasts with current provisions, including section 5 (1) of the Mount Panorama Motor Racing Act 1989, which states:

The Minister may, on the application of the Council, issue a permit to the Council authorising it to hold or authorise the holding of a meeting or meetings for motor racing and associated events (including events not connected with motor racing) at the Mount Panorama Circuit on a day or days specified in the permit.

Section 5 (1) of the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act 2009 states:

The Minister may, by order, authorise a person (the *rally promoter*) to conduct a rally event within the declared rally area during the declared rally period, subject to and in accordance with this Act.

Section 12 (1) of the Motor Racing (Sydney and Newcastle) Act 2008 states:

The Minister may, by order published in the Gazette, declare any area within Sydney Olympic Park or the City of Newcastle local government area as the area within which a motor race may be conducted (the *declared racing area*.)

Section 4 of this Act delegates various functions to Destination NSW. In practice, the simple processes in these three Acts are bureaucratised and insert the Government into an approvals process, perhaps unnecessarily. This could introduce uncertainty and delays in those processes, without improving consultation with the wider community or with the industry at large. Where it is claimed that it streamlines approvals, it may actually achieve the opposite.

The Motor Sports Bill, in establishing motor racing events as major events, provides for the banning of any advertising in the area of a street race unless authorised by the promoter. This can be interpreted as enabling the Government to enforce the promoter's rights to ban advertising unless the advertising is approved by the promoter—in effect, to ban ambush marketing. The Government could destroy any advertising in the area that is noncompliant with the promoter's wishes. It is not reasonable that existing advertising on billboards located on street circuits could be destroyed or removed, or that building names could be altered for the duration of a race.

In addition, if the promoter approaches the Government for an event to be held in Greater Sydney, the bill provides that local fixed tracks be consulted and a genuine attempt made to locate the event at an existing track. It provides also that the Minister should be satisfied that there is clear economic and social benefit to Sydney not to have the event at an existing track. In fact, the Minister should not just be satisfied but should explain in detail the reason he is satisfied that an event cannot be held at an existing track.

The Opposition's proposed amendments include improving community consultation to ensure the applicability of the Heritage Act 1977. While the amendments to the legislation are not agreed to in the Legislative Assembly, it is proposed to move similar amendments in the other House. The amendments also include ensuring that the Minister is required to consult the relevant local council and receive submissions from the public before making a motor race authorisation, and clarifying which races may be held at the Mount Panorama race circuit without a motor race authorisation. Currently, traffic management plans are approved by council's traffic committee, which includes Transport for NSW. Approval by Transport for NSW adds an additional unnecessary layer of approvals at Mount Panorama. So one of our amendments relates to approval for Mount Panorama events to be given by the local council.

The bill currently allows that a person may ride a bicycle in a motor race event lane. For consistency and safety reasons, we will move an amendment to clarify that that is an authorised person. That amendment is very important. The Bathurst Regional Council currently has numerous registered trademarks for Mount Panorama events. Giving approval to a State government agency over titles, logos or symbols creates another level of unnecessary bureaucracy. The bill creates transitional measures for the Newcastle 500 held on 4 to 6 March. Similar provisions should apply for the Bathurst 12 Hour race. Obviously the Newcastle 500 has already been held, but it is important that those provisions apply also to the Bathurst 12 Hour race in a few months' time.



We also need to ensure that, prior to a promoter approaching the Government for an event to be held in the Sydney Basin, the local fixed tracks have been consulted and a genuine attempt is made to hold the event at a local track. There are many local tracks across Sydney. Eastern Creek hosts a number of motor racing events and has the capacity and enthusiasm to host more events. We have seen that with the Parramatta Speedway's relocation in recent years to accommodate the metro, moving out of my area to Eastern Creek. There is capacity there and Eastern Creek should be considered first and foremost when looking at holding any races in the Sydney Basin.

As somebody who has lived very close to the former Parramatta Speedway for more than 25 years, I have seen the difference between a well-managed motorsport event and a poorly managed event in, for example, the number of noise complaints. The current operators at Eastern Creek also ran Parramatta Speedway and they ran it very well, generating very few noise complaints. Twenty years ago you could not leave your windows open on a Saturday night because of the noise and more often than not the races would continue a long time after the designated finishing time, making life hell for the local community. There is a huge difference between running an event and running an event well. As we have seen, through consultation with the local communities and running a motorsport event well, these events do not become a source of antagonism and endless complaints to the local council and local members of Parliament. There are plenty of operators in this industry who want to do that, who want to grow the sport, and who want to attract their neighbours to the races rather than have their neighbours complain about them to the council. It is important that we consider everybody when attracting these incredible events to our city and to our State.

As I noted at the beginning of my contribution, although the Opposition supports these bills, we reserve the right to move amendments in the other House to address the shortcomings in the legislation. We will support the bills but note that we have concerns. I hope the Minister will take on board the issues we have raised, and we look forward to working through them, together with the community and stakeholders. Motorsports are great events that deserve to be supported by us, together with support from our local communities. If the Government had supported our amendments to the 2017 bill, some of these amendments would not be needed today.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (10:46):** On behalf of The Greens, I appreciate the opportunity to address the Motor Sports Bill 2022 and cognate bill, the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022, the purpose of which are to support the expansion of motorsports in New South Wales. Members will recall the 2009 debate on similar legislation. Our position remains solid in terms of our concerns, particularly relating to Indigenous heritage. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 consolidates three existing motorsport Acts to permit large-scale motor races on public roads anywhere in the State. The Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 updates the Major Events Act 2009 to ensure consistency and simplicity, to provide greater flexibility for locations and times, and to keep pace with social and technological change. I thank the Minister and his staff, who provided a briefing to crossbench members, and I appreciate that many of our questions were answered and issues were resolved.

The existing motorsport event legislation is specific to the geographical location and requirements of each existing event, which the New South Wales Government says limits its ability to easily attract new events. I note with pleasure and recognise that the Motor Sports Bill 2021 was withdrawn from the Legislative Council. That bill had what I sensed was a kind of creep, where departments and offices try to include as many overarching provisions as they can. Importantly, that bill made it clear that the government coordinating agency can be a council, and it also removed the capacity of a racing authorisation to override the Biodiversity Conservation Act. That was overreach, and it is a positive result that it has been resolved in this way.

The Greens have historically expressed strong concern about legislation to permit rally events, especially in national parks. We believe that national parks are places that are not suited to rallies in general and that there must be a very diligent and thoughtful assessment before any rally takes place in a national park, particularly where there is a risk to biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage. I note the debate in the House around the 2009 Act.

While we welcome the removal of the capacity of a motor race authorisation to override the Biodiversity Conservation Act, our concerns remain that under this legislation these events can be carried out despite specific protection for Aboriginal objects and declared Aboriginal places. That protection is in part 6 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Currently the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act overrides the Aboriginal heritage provisions on roads or adjacent lands. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 continues that arrangement, so we are unable to support those elements in the bill.

I will be clear here. The bill means that, if an authorised activity needs to occur on a road or adjacent area, then the Aboriginal heritage provisions of parts 4A and 6 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act would not apply. We think that the protection of Aboriginal heritage is important. The provisions within the Act are not super strong; we are not talking about ironclad provisions to protect Aboriginal heritage. The overriding of those provisions, as relatively minor as they are, should not be supported by this House. It is an unacceptable risk to Aboriginal heritage, especially given the Government's history of poor consultation with communities. We have

seen that when it comes to the consultation mandated in the Act. So we have concerns about the Motor Sports Bill 2022.

When it comes to the cognate Major Events Amendment Bill 2022, there are a lot of positive things. As I mentioned, the Minister's staff outlined some of the positive elements. We understand the Government's position on overriding the Aboriginal heritage provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, but we do not support that. Protection of Aboriginal heritage should be followed according to the Act. Actually, we believe that the protection of Indigenous heritage in the Act should be even stronger. On that basis, we do not support the ability of the bill to override those important protections.

I acknowledge the effort and work that has gone into this. We saw clearly throughout this discussion the amount of effort that has gone into trying to develop these bills. I acknowledge the efforts of all the stakeholders, staff, councils and fixed track players, and all the people who are involved in this sector. But we continue to express our concern about the bills overriding the protection of Aboriginal heritage in the Act. We would like to see that amended. We understand that in the other place the Opposition will be moving sensible amendments, which we support. We look forward to seeing progress on this matter.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (10:51):** I commend the Minister and the Minister's staff for bringing the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 and cognate Motor Sports Bill 2022 to the House. They are important bills that I support wholeheartedly. The Government wants to strike the right balance between economic and environmental outcomes. Motor racing events can be disruptive to the environment although, if you have a rally on a regional road network, you are to an extent just swapping long-haul freighters and private cars for rally cars. But the Government has decided to draw a stronger line around national parks and State conservation areas. Currently the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act overrides the National Parks and Wildlife Act, meaning that a rally could be held in a national park. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 does not continue this provision. Instead, the National Parks and Wildlife Service would need to agree to a rally being held in one of its parks, which I imagine to be highly unlikely.

The Motor Sports Bill 2022 also continues the current situation of leaving the Biodiversity Conservation Act untouched and contains strong provisions to ensure compliance with any environmental conditions. If a race permit requires environmental, noise or other measures to be taken and these are breached, there is a maximum fine of \$1 million. Works such as grandstands, fuel dumps and communications infrastructure must be the subject of consultation with not only occupiers and businesses but also the secretary of the department of the environment pursuant to proposed section 16. The bill provides that, at the end of the event, the promoter must remediate any impacts of works, including by the removal of rubbish. This must occur in a reasonable time. If it does not, the Government can step in, clean up and bill the promoter pursuant to proposed section 20.

I will shift the focus to the environment. It is important to understand that the companies that run these events are responsible environmental actors. They want to do the right thing by the environment to minimise public concern and ensure that they get invited back. Let me run through some of the environmental measures these companies take. Coffs Harbour has hosted a major rally event for many years. The organisers went spotlighting over five nights along the competition route to see whether they could find any species that might be active at night and might be disturbed by the race. They spotted one koala and posted a warden to keep an eye out for him. At Coffs Harbour International Marina there is an important colony of mutton birds. The competition route was kept a full 600 metres back from their rookery, and remote infrared cameras were installed to monitor the birds before and after the event. No change in the birds' activity was seen. Madam Deputy Speaker, could I ask for a bit of quiet, please? It is quite distracting.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Heffron will not have an audible conversation in the Chamber while the member is speaking.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Two mobile field teams were active during the event, attending stages and watching for anything that might affect wildlife. To make for exciting photographic opportunities, a special water splash was installed at one location, and the promoters put in sediment control measures to protect water quality and reduce sediment in the drainage lines. No fuel or chemical spills were reported, and special measures were taken to safely store and collect fuels and other hazardous substances. As I said, these are the actions of a responsible promoter who is highly motivated to be a custodian of the environment. We would happily have them in Coffs Harbour for as many years as they would like to be there.

I love motorsport. Like many people, I grew up often setting my alarm clock to watch the Formula One late at night. I would go to school tired and sleepy because I had been up for a few hours watching. The beauty of motorsport is it is about not only the skill of the driver but also the whole team behind them. It is about their manufacturers, their designers and the team of engineers who can make the difference. Although it might seem counterintuitive, motor racing is great for the environment. The advances we have seen in vehicle technology have

largely been accelerated by the motor racing industry. Fuel economy, material sciences, tyre technology and suspension technology have all been greatly improved and tested in the motor racing arena. Safety improvements such as ABS, traction control and stability control all came out of motorsport. You can drive a modern car for 100,000 kilometres without any issues whatsoever, and most modern cars will get you at least five times that far without any issues. That reliability comes from designs and testing in the motor racing industry.

On top of that, motorsport is a really fun thing to watch. I enjoy participating in a bit of go-karting. I put on record that I raced the Hon. Sam Faraway two years ago at Picton Karting Track and also that I beat him by at least a second. Motor racing is about good fun and about the technological advancements it can bring. It also brings enjoyment to many people throughout our State, throughout our country and, indeed, all over the world. When Coffs Harbour hosted the World Rally Championship, drivers and teams came from all over the world and really put our city on the map. That was great for our tourism because it was televised all over the world, and it was also great for locals. A round of the Australia Rally Championship coincided with the World Rally Championship. We saw drivers from my home town compete on the same roads as the best drivers in the world. People got to see their local back roads being featured on television all around the world. It was a wonderful advertisement for motor racing and a wonderful advertisement for Coffs Harbour and for New South Wales in general. I thank the Minister for introducing these bills. I thank his staff for all the work they have done. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (10:59):** I speak in debate on the Motor Sports Bill 2022, which is cognate with the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 repeals the Motor Racing (Sydney and Newcastle) Act 2008, the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act 2009 and the Mount Panorama Motor Racing Act 1989. In commenting on the Motor Sports Bill 2022, I also refer to the history of motorsport in New South Wales that has led to it. Many years ago two dedicated tracks existed in the Sydney Basin: Amaroo Park Raceway in Kenthurst and Sydney's Oran Park. Those tracks no longer exist. The precincts have been developed and now contain significant housing. That led to the construction of Eastern Creek International Raceway, as it was known back then, in 1990. It is now known as Sydney Motorsport Park [SMP]. Over time other road races were developed, including the Homebush road race, which was very successful, and the V8 Supercars race in Newcastle. It would be remiss of me not to mention Mount Panorama, which has been part of our culture—in our psyche and DNA—for many decades. It is important to realise where we have come from and where we are going.

Given the significant investment in motorsport across all formats, it is important to give promoters and individuals the correct tools to host road races and to give regions right across New South Wales the opportunity to host those events. But it is also important to have in place environmental and heritage controls, and controls to protect the Indigenous Aboriginal sense of the sacred, so that nothing is compromised in the delivery of any motor racing format. A single Act will support the expansion of motor sports and make the conduct of major sports events possible in New South Wales. As the shadow Minister who led for the Opposition on these bills, Julia Finn, has said, Labor will not oppose the bills in the Legislative Assembly. As has been mentioned by previous speakers, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted major events in New South Wales. It has also had a ripple effect on the tourism sector and the economy right across the State. This legislation will assist in putting New South Wales at the forefront of major sports events in Australia.

The calendar for motor sports events on public roads in New South Wales is substantial but has the potential to be expanded. These bills will ensure that occurs. As I said previously, the Newcastle 500, the World Rally Championship, and the Mount Panorama racetrack events, including the Bathurst 1000 and the Bathurst 12 Hour, all attract huge crowds and therefore boost the economy substantially. They also place New South Wales on the global map of motorsport racing due to the wide media coverage. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 consolidates the conduct of all those events and provides a consistent legislative framework for any future events. However, the Opposition proposes to move some amendments to refine the bill. As has been mentioned, in 2017 Labor moved amendments to the Motor Racing Legislation Amendment (Newcastle 500) Bill 2017. Those amendments focused on improving the level of community consultation and would have made sure that the Heritage Act 1977 was included in the planning and execution of a race. Unfortunately, those amendments were not agreed to. It is hoped that similar amendments to this bill, which the Opposition will propose, will be considered and adopted.

We will also propose an amendment to clause 5. That clause relates to matters that may be specified by the Minister for a motor race. Under clause 5 (1) (c) one of those matters is the person or promoter who is entitled to apply for an authorisation to conduct the motor race. The Opposition suggests clause 5 (1) (c) be amended to require the Minister to consult the relevant local council and to receive submissions from the public before issuing a race authorisation. Another proposed amendment addresses several concerns expressed by Bathurst Regional Council about division 3 of the bill, which deals with roads and traffic. They include race authorisation and the races that may be held on Mount Panorama race circuit without a motor race authorisation; traffic management plans; motor race event lanes; official titles; and transitional measures for the Bathurst 12 Hour.

The Motor Sports Bill 2021 was withdrawn by the Government. Small changes to the 2021 bill have been made in the 2022 version of the bill. One of those relates to schedule 3 to the bill, which now defines a "government sector agency" as including a relevant local council. The Opposition proposes that prior to a promoter approaching the Government about an event in the Sydney Basin, the Government consult with local fixed tracks and attempt to locate the event at the track. In this case I am referring to Sydney Motorsport Park at Eastern Creek, which is one precinct that should be given due consideration first. SMP is operated by the Australian Racing Drivers' Club [ARDC] and has transformed the precinct into a world-class track. Significant investment has occurred there with the provision of lights for night-time racing. As members may recall, if it were not for Sydney Motorsport Park and the ARDC last year, the V8 Supercars Championship would not have been able to be completed in 2021. The ARDC opened up the track and subsequently there was one month—four weekends back to back—of motor racing, allowing the championship to occur.

I congratulate the CEO of ARDC, Mr Glenn Matthews, and his team on their work in developing the track into a world-class track—there is no doubt about that—and on the simple fact that they have jumped massive hurdles to keep major events going, particularly the V8 Championship, under very difficult circumstances. Supercars in Australia is part of our DNA and part of our culture. Moving forward, I believe that all regions across New South Wales should have the opportunity to host Supercars and other types of racing formats. Whether it be the far North Coast, the mid North Coast, out west, the Central Coast, the South Coast or Wollongong, all communities should have the opportunity to have these types of events because, as we know, they not only boost the economy but also provide support services and employment for people in the regions. As I have said, motorsport is an economic driver that provides support services with opportunities for business and employment. Personally, I have attended New South Wales road races at Homebush, when they were there, at Mount Panorama on numerous occasions and, of course, at the wonderful street circuit in Newcastle. I have witnessed firsthand the benefit that motorsport brings to communities and what it does for the local economy. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the House for its indulgence on this important piece of legislation. When an event comes to town, local people get right behind it. Members need only look at what has happened over the years in Newcastle. I am glad to have the opportunity to say that the Newcastle Supercars race is "Mount Panorama by the sea". I mean that in a gracious way. The scenery, the event and the way in which it is run by the Newcastle City Council are second to none. We must make sure that other regions across New South Wales have that opportunity to showcase themselves. Anyone who pops into Newcastle CBD for the weekend to support V8s or to visit for the first time should also explore the region by going further afield to the Upper Hunter or the Central Coast. An event has benefits for the town and cross-regional benefits. The advent of the Gen3 series next year will see the Ford Mustang go up against the Chevrolet Camaro. How good would it be to see that on the streets of Wollongong, for example? That is why the bill is so important—to ensure that all the mechanisms are in place, that the promoter gets it right and that there are no issues, as I said before, with heritage or the environment for a particular venue.

The bill goes a long way. But we need to realise that we have come a long way since the racing days of Glenn Seton, Peter Brock, Dick Johnson, Allan Moffat, John Bowe and Steve Richards. With Gen3 coming next year, we are now looking to a new generation of drivers—Mark "Frosty" Winterbottom, Anton de Pasquale, Will Davison and David Reynolds. How good would it be to see local heroes such as Frosty winning well in New South Wales—the State he grew up in? As the sport evolves—from Group A racing many, many moons ago, to the Supercars and now to Gen3—it is so important to promote it further.

We, as a State and as a city, should be bidding for Formula 1 to come to Sydney. There is no doubt about that. The Formula 1 Grand Prix has long been held at Albert Park in Victoria. I have to say that the Victorians—regardless of which government has been in power—have undoubtedly hosted that weekend and event with distinction. But it is time for New South Wales to bring that event across the border. That is why this bill is important—potentially we might see Formula 1 racing down Hickson Road, taking a right-hand turn under the Sydney Harbour Bridge somewhere around Circular Quay and back up Grosvenor Street. Who knows? I am just thinking out loud, but that would be great.

It would be a massive economic driver not only for Sydney but for the whole State, with people from intrastate, interstate and overseas coming to see what could potentially be a world-class event on the shores of Sydney Harbour. It would be great to see the next Jack Brabham, Alan Jones, Bob Jane, Mark Webber or Daniel Ricciardo racing Formula 1 in Sydney. The bill is really important because it opens up the opportunity for promoters to say, "Hey, let's invest in New South Wales." I have said it before and I put it on the record again that I would like to see a Formula 1 race in Sydney or somewhere in New South Wales in the near future, for all the economic and other benefits it will bring to the community. New South Wales Labor does not oppose the bills.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Fairfield. Before calling the member for Willoughby, I note that this will be his first contribution to debate on a bill, and I congratulate him.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (11:12):** Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I am delighted to speak today in support of the Motor Sports Bill 2022 and the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022. Perhaps it is fitting, on my second day in this place, that I speak to bills that go to moving at pace and travelling fast, for that is what I intend to do—forgive me for that indulgence, but I am delighted to support the bills. I will commence with the Motor Sports Bill 2022. Motorsport, as we all know, has a special place in the hearts and minds of many people in New South Wales, including in my electorate of Willoughby. It is an iconic Australian sport, pursuit and indeed community, and a driver of our economy. The bill is about unlocking the opportunities to have major motor events anywhere across our great State. Such events have significant recreational, social and economic benefits for communities. An essential positive of the bill is that it allows for a tailored approach. This point is at the core of my contribution today.

It could be a rally in the Far West of the State or a street race in Wollongong—both would be firsts and both would be quite different events. A big city race of course involves closing roads and altering traffic flows, affecting how people move around their town or community, get to school or run their business. A rally on a regional road network might not disrupt local businesses or domestic activity in the same way, but it may, for example, be held in a State forest or go past important natural habitats. So what is needed is an Act that sets up a strong framework for the successful and safe conduct of these large and important events, but one that, importantly, allows for a tailored approach to adjust for the local situation. I will outline some of the features of the bill that are fixed and some areas where a tailored solution is allowed.

A key aspect of the bill is the capacity to impose conditions via the race authorisation. This is set out in clause 7 of the bill. Clause 7 lists a comprehensive set of areas where conditions can be imposed, for example, around safety, the environment, noise, community consultation, works and engineering certification. But the bill does not stipulate what these conditions will be—for that would be inflexible. So, for example, in the case of the Newcastle 500, the Newcastle community has already been heavily consulted and has seen the race many times. So while consultation with the community is still important each time the race is run, it can just be at a normal level, if you like. But if a race is to be held for the first time elsewhere, a more detailed consultation requirement might be imposed to ensure strong and effective community buy-in.

Regardless of what conditions are chosen, there are also some fixed features. Importantly, on safety, the promoter will always be required to get a peak motor racing body to sign off on its race rules. This is set out in clause 8 of the bill. To promote compliance with any race condition, proposed section 10 sets up a large fine of up to \$1 million for breach of a condition. Another example is community consultation about works. This is set out in proposed sections 13 to 16. The Act imposes a base set of consultation requirements. Proposed section 13 requires that the promoter must consult on works proposals with those who occupy land where works will occur or land adjacent to affected land, businesses who may be affected by the works and the relevant council. But if broader consultation is required, it can be added under proposed section 14.

Noise management is another significant example. The bill overrides the noise provisions of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act. This is common sense. A major motor race, as we all know, will generate a lot more noise in some areas than is normally the case, and current motor racing Acts simply suspend the noise regulations. But that does not mean there will be open slather on noise. Under the race permit, there is a clear provision for a noise mitigation plan, backed by a maximum \$1 million fine for a major breach. In practice, New South Wales agencies will work with the promoter, councils and, where appropriate, the community to set up a sensible noise management regime.

I turn now to Bathurst—a special place in my mind, and I think the minds of everyone across our State. Many people have been fortunate to have driven a lap around the Mount Panorama racetrack. It is a special and yet unusual racetrack because it is a public road. Unlike other motorsport events that are held in New South Wales—for example, the Newcastle 500 or the rallies that we heard have been held around Coffs Harbour for many years—the Mount Panorama circuit is there all year around and has permanent race infrastructure and, while some people live within the racetrack footprint, they have chosen to do so. Council works closely with those residents and engages them throughout the year, but it is not sensible to apply the general approach taken for building temporary works. The bill provides that persons affected by works must be consulted prior to each work activity. That is pointless for Bathurst, which is used all through the year and where many of the works are already in place.

Finally, as I have mentioned, the bill overrides some existing legislation. That has always been the case for the current motorsport Acts, but the bill includes clause 45, which for the first time allows an event-specific regulation to be made that modifies how the override works. If some particularly important asset needed to be called out and managed in the way it normally is then the regulation could nominate it and reassert the normal legislation. The noise laws could be reasserted around a particularly sensitive place such as a hospital or at certain times, for instance, during the night. That flexible approach is in everyone's interest because it means that local

issues can be surfaced and addressed, which maximises the benefits and minimises the disruption, leaving lots of content motor fans and lots of content locals who we hope will want the event back next year. In conclusion, the bill is fit and sound legislation that will deliver the tailored approach needed to help make motorsport in New South Wales as strong and successful as can be.

The cognate Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 brings forth a range of sensible measures and simplifications to help ensure the continuing success of major events in New South Wales. That is all the more important at this time as we rebuild and recover from COVID, but it is always important in our State. The Minister and his staff have consulted widely, heard from stakeholders, addressed issues and concerns in consultation and delivered a comprehensive and considered set of bills that will deliver for New South Wales. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:22):** I make a contribution to debate on the cognate Motor Sports Bill and Major Events Amendment Bill introduced by the sport Minister, Mr Stuart Ayres. I saw him poke his head into the Chamber, but I do not think he is presently here. I was not necessarily going to speak on the bills but I listened to some of the speeches in my office—particularly that of the member for Coffs Harbour, who spoke in support of the bills. A World Rally Championship round is run in Coffs Harbour, which is of great benefit to his community. The member for Fairfield also spoke in support of the bills. I know he is a very passionate motor racing enthusiast, going to various tracks and venues throughout the State: the Bathurst 1000, the Newcastle 500 and a whole range of things. I too am a very passionate supporter of motor racing so I thought it was important to also contribute to this debate.

I listened to the member for Fairfield speak about Oran Park and Amaroo Park, tracks that I raced on many years ago as a young lad in the car club that I was in, and now they are housing developments. If one drives past Oran Park now, one would not know it was a racing track of sorts back in the day. With the proximity to Bathurst of my electorate of Orange, I see firsthand the benefit motor racing brings not only to Bathurst but also to the Central West more broadly. I speak on behalf of many of my constituents who are also very keen motor racing enthusiasts and make the annual trek to Mount Panorama to watch the V8s, as I have over many years, and have participated in motorsport—in the experience, the sounds, the smells, the crashes and the excitement that motor racing brings to so many people in our community. I have a prop here that I had hanging in my office. Mr Assistant Speaker, the member for Lake Macquarie, may have seen it hanging up. It relates to my enthusiasm for and interest in motor racing. It is a photo with the late, great Peter Brock, taken almost 30 years ago in 1992 at Eastern Creek raceway.

**Mr Christopher Gulaptis:** Can you table that?

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** As long as I can get it back. Peter Brock was a bit of a hero of mine, regardless of what people might think of him now after he has passed away and certain things have come out. I always found in my dealings with Peter Brock—and I met him a few times and spoke to him—that he was very patient with his fans and supporters, and he had a great support base. Through your association with members of the motorsport community, Mr Assistant Speaker, you also know how popular he was. We should do anything we can to promote motor racing and bring it to communities throughout the State. We should make it easier for events to be held, and the bills touch on that. I see that firsthand from the annual Bathurst races—not only the Bathurst 1000 but also the 12-hour race, which I think is around Easter. It does not bring in as many people as the Bathurst 1000 does, but it certainly brings a lot of people to Bathurst and the Central West.

During the weeks when those races are on, the Central West is a hive of activity. One gets a real sense of the festival that the motor racing community brings to a town. It extends to places like Orange, Lithgow and Cowra, which are booked out for accommodation during the Bathurst 1000. It brings millions of dollars into the local community and provides a lot of casual jobs during the weeks in preparation for the Bathurst 1000—building and construction jobs in the erecting of portable grandstands, for example, and other infrastructure around the track. It provides a great economic boost to those towns. The member for Newcastle is sitting in the Chamber. He can probably attest to what the Newcastle 500 brings to Newcastle and the street circuit scene. I use that term quite loosely now, because there is quite an attraction to racing on street circuits. Obviously, Bathurst is the Mount Everest of motor racing on street circuits, not only in Australia but probably also in the world. I know from speaking to the member for Granville, who is the shadow Minister, that Bathurst council may have some concerns about the bills in so far as they might take some of the authority it has out of its hands. But overall, looking at the bigger picture, those conditions can certainly be mitigated.

If we can promote events and bring events to local communities, whether it be Bathurst, Dubbo, Sydney, Wollongong or Orange—and Orange itself has a strong motor racing connection with the Gnooly Motor Racing Circuit around the Sir Jack Brabham Park, where I believe Jack Brabham raced back in the fifties. Orange does have that strong connection with motor racing, although now the street circuit is no longer used for motor racing. The Orange Go Kart Club, for example, is another strong motor racing community with hundreds of members.

I recently participated in its come and try day and drove a kart around the Orange Go Kart Club. The club was successful in receiving a grant for the resurfacing of that track, for which it is very thankful. The Orange Go Kart Club is a real family-run club and is a real pathway from go-karts into higher levels throughout the hierarchy of motor racing. A lot of grassroots people start with go-karts and then move on to bigger, more powerful and faster vehicles—potentially into V8 Supercars, or whatever they will be called now, or even on to Formula 1. Many Formula 1 drivers started in go-karts. It is a great breeding ground and a great training ground.

**Ms Julia Finn:** Mark Webber.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** Mark Webber, Ayrton Senna. I recently watched a program on Netflix about Ayrton Senna and his success in going from go-karting to becoming a Formula 1 world champion. Putting that aside, the bills make provision to allow local areas to draw on, host, attract, participate in and encourage those events in their local communities. I think it is a good thing and something that we should be promoting. As the member for Fairfield said, it would be great to see the cars going around a circuit, say, in Wollongong on the coast or at the beach, similar to Newcastle. It is a great coup for a local town to attract such an event. The bills go some way to facilitating that by providing a pathway for local councils and local motor racing organisations to navigate, host and bring these events to our communities. These are good bills and, for those reasons, I will be supporting them. I commend the bills to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Although the member for Newcastle got the jump, I have given the call to the member for Clarence for other reasons.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (11:30):** I attribute that early jump by the member for Newcastle to the enthusiasm that the member for Orange displayed with his racing prowess and his portfolio of racing memorabilia. I support these cognate bills, the Motor Sports Bill 2022 and the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022. As has been said by previous speakers, these are very important bills, especially for regional communities, because we love our motor sports and our major events. I do not think there are too many of us who do not get excited by the throaty roar of the exhaust of a V8. It certainly sends the blood surging through the veins, except of course when it is 2.30 in the morning and you are trying to sleep. It is important to support these bills, which will regulate these sports and ensure that they are run safely and with the environment in mind.

In my electorate, the Grafton Sporting Car Club is a very popular club. It had its beginnings in 1955 on a section of unsealed road climbing a steep hill at Mountain View, on the outskirts of South Grafton. A group of 12 motoring enthusiasts with no experience of motorsport conducted a very basic hill climb using a flag to signal the start and a stopwatch at the finish for timing. This event, held on a Saturday afternoon, began a movement that would lead to the formation of a sporting car club in Grafton on 28 June 1955. So the Grafton Sporting Car Club began with a hill climb 60 years ago, and throughout its history the club has enhanced its reputation in its presentation of outstanding hill climbs, from club level events to State and national championships. From a humble beginning, with the conduct of hill climbs and quarter-mile sprints on public roads, the club has developed to its present day ownership of a 67-hectare property at Mountain View featuring a 968-metre challenging hill climb and incorporating a 560-metre sprint kart circuit.

The club has a well-deserved and longstanding reputation for its organisation of hill climb and sprint kart events. The facilities for competitors are outstanding, and include canteen services and overnight camping. I am pleased to say that I made a contribution to the club through the Community Building Partnership program to extend and improve its facilities. This year the historic hill climb will be held over three days at the Mountain View Motor Sport Complex from 15 to 17 July, and I would encourage anyone who has not been there to go. I had the pleasure of doing a lap around the circuit with a gentleman who took me in his open-top kit sports car. It was quite exhilarating sitting very close to the ground, and even though we were travelling at a modest speed it felt like we were flying.

The prospect of motor racing excites many people. Cars are the modern mustang of the 1800s. There are other clubs in Grafton that enjoy not just motor sports but also vintage cars. The Grafton Vintage Motor Vehicle Club has 400 members. Doug Clark and Kim Dahl, in particular, are the driving force behind the vintage car club. The club holds exhibitions or motorfests at Jabour Park on Crown reserve land, which it has taken over and managed to perfection, ensuring that the grass is well maintained and the facilities are up to standard. It now has grey nomads, in their caravans and campers, camp overnight on the land to raise money to maintain the first-rate facilities. The motorfest this year will be held on 28 August and there will be cars, trucks and motorbikes. It is a terrific exhibition. A lot of old cars are on exhibition, including Rolls-Royces, Jags, Triumphs, every manner of car that you do not normally see on the road. The owners are very proud of these beautiful cars. It is a terrific, fun day for everyone who attends the event.

Of course, it is not just motor sports that stimulate regional economies and provide entertainment and social opportunities for regional communities. The New South Wales visitor economy contributes significantly to the

regional economic development of our communities. In particular, in my electorate we have the Grafton Jacaranda Festival, the oldest floral festival in Australia, having started in 1934. The current president is Jeff Smith, but everyone in Grafton is involved. The festival is usually held at the end of October or start of November when the jacarandas are in full bloom. It is a showcase of purple blossoms, especially when driving down avenues with blossoms not only on the trees but all over the ground. Words cannot express the absolute magnificence of the purple haze.

Everyone gets involved in the festival, from schoolkids to businesses. It touches every person in Grafton and the Clarence Valley. The Thursday of the festival is dress-up day, prizes are awarded to the best businesses, and we have a crowning of a jacaranda queen and princess. People sit for hours on this very regal occasion waiting for the announcement of the Jacaranda Queen. People come from all over the region and interstate to watch and participate in events such as the ball, the crowning of the queen, art exhibitions, woodwork displays and morning teas. In fact, we get many interstate and overseas visitors. In particular, many people from Asia come because they are fascinated with the colour of the blossoms. The Jacaranda Festival is one of those events that brings people together and stimulates our economy. It is something that we look forward to every year. I know that many members of this place have visited, including Premiers. It was terrific to see former Premier Gladys Berejiklian at the festival, where she was presented with a jacaranda umbrella. She showcased the umbrella in a number of TV interviews and said she was really proud to have it.

In the town of Casino in my electorate, another event that helps bring the community together is Casino Beef Week. The president is Frank McKey. It is 11 days of events and festivals, which kick off on 21 May. It is a terrific event that brings thousands of people into Casino, brings the community together and helps to stimulate the local economy. Some of the events include live entertainment, which starts on 21 May; there are farm tours on 21 May; opening night is on 21 May; the Casino Beef Week Queen is announced on 21 May; the window dress up is on 23 May; and the cattle spectacular is on 25 May. *[Extension of time]*

Other events include the Wednesday cattle show on 25 May; the junior judging and paraders event; a youth education day; Breakfast with the Butchers, which is terrific because you get bacon and sausages for breakfast; an industry day on 27 May; the Dot Robson Memorial Craft Market on 27 May; the Beef Week Cup on 27 May, which is held at the Casino Showground; the carcass competition on 27 May; and Beef Week Saturday on 27 May, which is a terrific day to see the street stalls and the cattle displays. It is Casino's version of a running of the bulls because the cattle are on display in the street. They are not running; they are tethered. It is wonderful to see such prized livestock. Casino is the beef capital of Australia, and it is certainly on display during Beef Week. On 28 May there is the Mr Beef competition. I was a late entry in that, but my wife rejected the nomination. On 28 May there is also the street parade, which is about looking at the prized cattle that the area raises.

**Mr David Elliott:** Did you enter that too?

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** No, but on 28 May I decided to enter the stud show. Again, my nomination was refused. These are some of the events that happen in my electorate that help to stimulate the economy and bring people together to socialise. In Casino we also have the PRIMEX ag field day, which is run by the Wright family, in particular Bruce Wright. This year it will be held from 19 to 21 May. It started in 1985 in Casino, which is in northern New South Wales. The event has evolved from a localised event, with around 40 companies and a few thousand visitors, to one of the country's leading primary industry expos. It now boasts in excess of 300 exhibitors, 1,000 different companies and more than 25,000 visitors across three days.

If people have not been to PRIMEX, I encourage them to go and have a look at what is on display. It is not just an ag field day; there are a lot of other activities and events. There are products that are of interest not just to people in agriculture but also to anybody who has an interest in regional New South Wales. These cognate bills will help to support the economy and improve the wellbeing of regional communities by providing them with an opportunity to socialise in an organised way. I therefore support the bills.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (11:44):** I speak to the Motor Sports Bill 2022. I am experiencing *deja vu* here today. Five years ago I stood in this spot and spoke of the issues around community consultation and communication regarding the Newcastle 500, and today I am back doing the same thing. It is pretty disappointing. Five years ago the Supercars arrived in Newcastle, and we had to push for a team that would talk to the community and answer its questions. That was despite Newcastle's event replacing the Sydney 500, which had the Homebush Motor Racing Authority established solely for it. Five years ago Government members stood in this place and said, "What is Labor talking about? We are doing that." Do you know what we got? We did not get a whole motor racing authority established; we got just one person. This event had never been held in Newcastle before, and we got one person to deal with community concerns.

It is also disappointing that the bill is so relevant to Newcastle, yet no-one has reached out to the local member on behalf of the Minister or the department. There is no need for these failings. In the other place, Labor



will move amendments to the bill because the Minister should not be able to authorise a race without consulting with the local council that hosts it or the community that may be inconvenienced because of it. In addition, Labor will move an amendment to ensure the applicability of the Heritage Act 1977 as the race location in Newcastle is the historic East End, which rivals The Rocks in Sydney in terms of history and significance not just to our city but to the State. This is easy to fix, and it would be silly for the Government not to support these worthwhile amendments.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (11:46):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Motor Sports Bill 2022 and the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022. Over the past two years, the pandemic has impacted all aspects of our lives, including the running of and attendance at major events. The Government has continued to support events throughout the course of the pandemic, and its focus has consistently been on getting the economy moving again and getting visitors back into New South Wales. Supporting major events through legislation will position New South Wales as both the premier visitor economy and the events capital of the Asia-Pacific.

Motorsport events are a key part of the New South Wales Government's annual major events calendar. These events attract tens of thousands of people to New South Wales and inject millions of dollars into our economy. The delivery of motorsport events is often complex, but it is even more so when they are hosted on public roads, public land or public venues over multiple land tenures and council jurisdictions, with large volumes of temporary infrastructure. Three Acts and several associated regulations have been instituted over time to facilitate major motorsport events in New South Wales. Each Act is specific to a geographical location and the requirements of each existing event, which limits the ability to easily attract new event content to New South Wales. That is what needs to be dealt with and improved in the bill. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 consolidates these Acts to achieve a holistic legislative framework for the conduct of motorsport events in New South Wales.

The bill repeals the existing Acts and associated regulations for the Motor Racing (Sydney and Newcastle) Act 2008, the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act 2009 and the Mount Panorama Motor Racing Act 1989. The bill enables motorsport activities to occur on public roads through the suspension of certain road legislation, principally the Roads Act 1993 and the Road Transport Act 2013. It also streamlines the approval of activities over multiple jurisdictions and/or landholdings through interactions with other legislation, such as the Local Government Act 1993, the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, the Forestry Act 2012 and the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

Sensibly, the bill allows for conditions to be imposed on the event to reduce or avoid potential impacts on the event and also on the non-event community. Conditions may include matters related to public safety and environmental protection, particularly things like noise. Event organisers must comply with any of these imposed conditions. New regulations will be made for existing motorsport events to enable them to continue in their current location and format.

I turn now to the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022. The bill will update the Act in a range of aspects, and I will refer to the Minister's second reading speech because the amendment bill will enact quite a lot of changes. Those changes include: refining the definition of the locations of the major event to which the Act's provisions may apply to accommodate events that are held in more than one venue or area; streamlining the process for activating provisions contained in part 4 of the Act through the making of regulations; ensuring that the Act interacts appropriately with planning and environmental legislation and that major event developments and activities can, where necessary, be carried out with the approval of the Minister for Planning; enabling the regulations to provide that compensation is not payable by the event promoter in respect of major event-related matters, and to prohibit the delegation of the responsible authority's key regulatory functions, providing more certainty to event stakeholders; consolidating some definitions to ensure consistency and simplicity; making minor amendments to keep pace with social and technological change; and including drones and other unmanned aerial vehicles in relation to certain aerial advertising matters.

The amendments will improve the overall function and use of the Act in major event facilitation while providing more certainty to the event promoter, responsible authority and other stakeholders involved in a major event. In New South Wales, Destination NSW plays a key role in attracting and facilitating over 100 major events annually. In New South Wales in 2019, event visitors stayed 5.9 million nights and spent \$2.4 billion. The New South Wales Government is committed to investing in world-class events that drive visitation and enhance the social wellbeing of our residents, in line with our New South Wales Visitor Economy Strategy 2030. Ensuring that New South Wales has a streamlined and efficient legislative framework for major events and motorsports is critical to delivering that commitment.

In a similar way, the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 will update the Major Events Act 2009 to ensure that it remains contemporary and relevant for attracting and hosting major events in New South Wales. Through our tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW, the New South Wales Government has secured and/or retained 918 events since March 2011. Those events will deliver more than \$3.5 billion of visitor expenditure in

New South Wales. Not only do those events contribute to the visitor economy and support jobs, but they also activate our sports and cultural venues, enhance our enviable lifestyle and add to the fabric of our communities. Looking to the future, we have secured several global events that will turbocharge visitor economy recovery over the coming years. For example, as part of our 10 world cups in 10 years initiative, we have secured the UCI Road World Championships in Wollongong from 18 to 25 September this year and the World Athletics Cross Country Championships in Bathurst in 2023.

The 10 world cups events are expected to generate over \$1 billion for the New South Wales economy. The \$200 million State Significant Event Fund will put New South Wales in pole position to secure many more major events and extend our global profile. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic and international visitors contributed \$38.1 billion in Gross State Product and supported 296,000 jobs and over 107,000 businesses in New South Wales. The cognate bills will support our continued success in attracting and retaining major events for New South Wales well into the future to achieve our goal of \$65 billion in visitor expenditure by 2030 and position our State as the events capital of the Asia Pacific.

The bills will deliver a contemporary major events legislation that will enable us to host the world's biggest and best events, while ensuring a sustained legacy for New South Wales communities. The bills put New South Wales at the forefront to draw new events and visitors from around the country and overseas to our great State. The bills will set New South Wales up well for the future and provide a stronger and safer framework within which to conduct these events. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (11:54):** I speak in favour of the Motor Sports Bill 2022, which supports the expansion and facilitates the conduct of major sport events in New South Wales. The agency that runs tourism and major events, Destination NSW, has secured or retained nearly 1,000 events across New South Wales since 2011. Those events deliver a significant contribution financially to not only Sydney but also regional New South Wales. When I travel around this great State of ours and visit many different towns and locations, I see the incredible interest in motorsport and its input into the economy. It is not just at Bathurst, which every year hosts what could be described as the motorsport race that stops the nation. I think nearly every Australian would at some point have that race on their television on the Sunday that it is held. They will perhaps do a bit of yard work or housework or something else, but that race stays on the telly all day. During the day you can drop by and get a bit of an update on how the Bathurst 1000 is running; a couple of minutes give you a snapshot of the great race. You can go out, do your work and come back and catch up again with how the great race is going, such is the interest in it of not only those at the track but also those who are watching it on television. I think that interest is replicated across the State in local motorsport racing, whether it is bikes or cars, in different locations.

In the great Tamworth electorate we have the Oakburn Park Speedway, where cars, bikes, open wheelers, sedans and different classes of vehicles race. It is a closed-loop circuit and it also holds lap dash events, which are great. Motorsport provides a really good opportunity for local clubs to encourage young people to participate, particularly in lap dashes, at local events. You can get a one-day race licence to race your car. Provided that it is safe and you meet all of the criteria, you can take your car out there and go for a hoon around the track. It is done safely and legally. You can get out there, spin your wheels, do doughnuts and all those sorts of things in a safe, controlled environment as opposed to doing it on the streets late at night—and, as we know, so many communities complain about late-night revheads and hoons. The best place to do that hooning is in a controlled environment on a racetrack.

Our local sporting car clubs and organisations do a fantastic job in setting up those events and race days. Lots of different people participate. You do not have to be a young person to go out there and get a one-day race licence. You can get a race car and test your skill and your vehicle's capability and capacity in a controlled and safe environment. Tamworth Sporting Car Club holds such events as well. Some of our great motor racing drivers come from the karting community. Across the State there are fantastic facilities—and again I come back to Oakburn Park Raceway—where State and national championships in karting are held at different regional venues. It is a great tourist boom, and it is a destination. They come, they buy parts for their karts if they are taking part in the karting championships, they buy fuel and they spend money on accommodation and food. There are lots of other flow-on and multiplier effects from the visitors to regional New South Wales.

When I think about our local racing fraternity, Ryan Briscoe, a local karting champion who started in karts and is doing great things, comes to mind. When I think about the great town of Werris Creek I think of Garnet Patterson, who was an open wheeler and now travels the world test-driving motor vehicles that need to be tested and pushed to their limit.

Garnet Patterson—from the great town of Werris Creek, which has a population of 1,500—travels the world testing cars for the biggest and best manufactures in the world, which is great. His dad, Garnet Patterson Sr, runs a mechanical industry and a workshop in Werris Creek. I was there last week when I caught up with Garnet

and had a chat about what is happening in the great town of Werris Creek. He was telling me about his son, Garnet Junior, travelling the world. He tests vehicles at a very high level on some of the best racetracks in the world. That is what motorsport does; it is not just a case of getting behind the wheel and being a glamour driver, like we see in our V8s.

**Mr Victor Dominello:** It is more than just that.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** It is much more than that. I note that the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government is in the Chamber and is a big motorsport fan himself.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Ferrari.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, his choice of vehicle is a Ferrari. There is nothing wrong with a Ferrari. The 408s are great, as long as they are red.

**Mr Victor Dominello:** Red does go faster.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** As the Minister just said, red does go faster. I come back to the leave of the bill. Motorsport plays a big part in our tourism and events. I see lots of people coming to regional New South Wales. At Coffs Harbour, the World Rally Championship is a huge event on the calendar. It brings millions into the community and some of the world's best drivers to Coffs Harbour. Think about the spin-offs. Think about the benefits. Think of the exposure, through a marketing component, that Coffs Harbour achieves through that. Destination NSW will put up a package highlighting what Coffs Harbour has, and it will throw in the rally championship as well. There is a spin-off benefit in showcasing Australia, showcasing New South Wales and showcasing regional New South Wales. That is all achieved through motorsport and, in Coffs Harbour, the World Rally Championship.

Coming back to my local area, recently the great, thriving town of Gunnedah had the Weeks of Speed Festival. Unfortunately COVID caused a bit of a problem by interfering with and interrupting a lot of sporting organisations, but Weeks of Speed was back. Gunnedah's annual Weeks of Speed Festival takes place in March. It showcases a program of heart-thumping speed-related activities and motorsports. Festival highlights include drag races, speedway racing titles and greyhound racing, believe it or not; speed incorporates lots of different things. There is the hot rod drag safari and, for the first time this year, there were whip-cracking championships.

I know we are talking about motorsports, but referring to speed, how does a whip crack? It breaks the sound barrier. The end of the whip breaks the sound barrier and makes a crack. That was a first. As well as the Gunnedah Weeks of Speed, there was live entertainment and local venues kicking on with each day of festival action. That is what Weeks of Speed does. I just talked about the flow-on effects and the multiplier. Not only do they race motorsports vehicles—motorbikes, sidecars, solos or whatever they may be—but the attractions also flow. If a region has a "weeks of speed" event like Gunnedah does—and it does it very well—other events can be folded into it, and it becomes a true destination. It becomes a true money-spinner and a focal point of that region, and it highlights the benefits that region has.

It was great to see that revheads were not the only ones benefitting in Gunnedah; so were lots of other people. The main sponsor of 2022 was Whitehaven Coal. Think about the sponsorship dollars that are generated for that town, as well. The promotion, marketing, communication and everything involved in motorsport is critical. I commend the bills to the House; this is really important. Oakburn Park Raceway in Tamworth is hoping to do a major renovation. I am hoping to come back to the House at a future time to talk more with my colleagues about Oakburn Park Raceway. It has huge potential not only for cars but also for motorbikes and lots of other areas. It has a skidpan. Mr Temporary Speaker, I do not know if you have been on a skidpan, where you sit there and do doughnuts and blow your back tyres up. There is smoke everywhere. It is a lot of fun. You will have to try it one day in a safe, controlled environment at a motorsport parkway.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:04):** I contribute to debate on the Motor Sports Bill 2022 and the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022. I do not know if the Minister and member for Tamworth just shot down the bills with The Greens by talking about doing burnouts on skidpans, destroying the environment and adding to the CO<sub>2</sub>, but I will try to resurrect this debate for them.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** And loving it!

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** And loving it. As the former mayor of Blacktown City Council and member for the electorate next door to Sydney Motorsport Park, I have my fair share of attendance there. I welcome the bills that the Minister has brought before the Parliament and acknowledge the member for Granville. The Labor Party does not oppose the bills but wishes to talk about some amendments. Later I will address the concept of the amending bill and why it is important. I might focus on Sydney Motorsport Park first because it is a major precinct in the Sydney Basin. Firstly there is Sydney Motorsport Park, run by the Australian Racing Drivers' Club [ARDC].

The CEO is Glenn Matthews and the president of the association is Andrew Leithhead. Both gentlemen have been involved with the motorsport park at Eastern Creek for many years and are passionate in bringing major events, supporting different aspects and linking them to the local community.

For instance, members know about Supercars. Last year through COVID it was difficult for Supercars to move to different venues or even run a race, and yet at Eastern Creek it was requested, and Supercars put its hand up and ran for four weekends in a row. It was fabulous having it in my backyard. It shows the ability of the ARDC, which has been running that venue since the beginning, to adapt to the challenges of having all the cars based out there, and running and completing the Supercars series. Apart from the major races, the ARDC also runs a lot of events to support charities. The Soar & Roar Festival is an excellent event that is held there for Special Olympics Australia. It is mainly for motorbikes. The event raises money for the Special Olympics and is also an awareness program in relation to health and proper rider safety. Key people come along and keynote riders attract crowds and build awareness.

Other events the ARDC has done in the charity space include raising awareness for domestic violence. My claim to fame on that field is driving a garbage truck when I was the mayor of Blacktown. I reckon I was the fastest mayor in the world driving a garbage truck. I had a garbage truck driver next to me who was a bit worried when we cracked the 110 kilometres per hour mark. It was the speed limit and I reached it going down to the bottom of a hill. We were coming to a corner. We were kind of on two wheels as we went around. He said, "If the mayor rolls the garbage truck, that's fine. The mayor can do whatever he wants with his garbage trucks." But we survived. It was a good way to raise awareness and focus on domestic violence, trying to cut through and get boys with their toys to talk about domestic violence awareness.

On the track they also do a lot of test days. Various motor vehicle companies go out there to test their vehicles. They run many street car events, as well as the introduction of learner programs. When my son was on his Ls, he was able to be out there with all the other L-platers driving around the V8 Supercar track. They got a bit of a thrill, but obviously because they were on their Ls they were not driving that fast—hopefully not.

Recently, to its credit, the State Government invested \$30 million-odd into the sports precinct. That has allowed for night racing, which I recently attended for the first time. What do they do out there? Oli Myer's Focus Driver Performance academy uses the latest technology for virtual driving—which is used around the world but not too much in Australia—where people can develop their driving skills. Unlike sitting at home on a Nintendo or PS5 game, it is a lot more realistic. People can test their cars on virtual tracks, which are reflective of tracks around the world. RunWest and the Blacktown City Fun Run take place there. Others include the Sydney Dragway, with its top fuellers; and Jim Reid, a legendary driver who is no longer driving, and his Reid Racing Team. In 2017 he was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame for top fuelling. Jim was Australia's first driver in the quarter mile to beat seven seconds, then he beat six seconds and then he beat five seconds, until his retirement. He is not that far off, even by today's standards, the world record of 544 kilometres per hour. Jim was one of the first to crack the 500 kilometre mark in Australia.

Santo Rapisarda, a local business entrepreneur, has about four top fuellers that he normally runs at these races. Do not forget we have got the dulcet tones of Rusty Gregory who narrates at the Sydney Dragway when they have their major events. It also allows for weekly street car events and concerts. As the member for Tamworth was talking about earlier, karting is really where most people get their start. The Sydney Premier Karting Club, run by Garry and Sandy Holt, is out there. It is the incubation for future motor racing champions. Karting is a safe environment to get motor skills—even for basic driving. Mark Winterbottom, V8 Supercar driver, grew up in Doonside. He drove on the Eastern Creek karting track before he got into Supercars. We always support him when he comes out and we look forward to him winning the title that he won a few years ago. The latest group to join the family is the Eastern Creek Speedway. The member for Granville lost it; it has now moved into the Blacktown area.

We have heard the positives about this bill. Outside the Sydney Basin it is ideal for the country areas, where there are no real fixed venues, to host motorsport events. As I said, since 2000 both Labor and Coalition governments have invested large amounts of money into the Sydney Motorsports Precinct. I am concerned from the drafting of the bill, and the shadow Minister will have further discussions with the Government about this, that a promoter could identify some type of venue somewhere in Sydney—whether at Homebush, across the Harbour Bridge or wherever—and start negotiations with the Government. We have invested so much money into the Eastern Creek Motor Sports Precinct. Before any promoter approaches the Government to conduct a race in the Sydney Basin, I would like to see the Eastern Creek Motor Sports Precinct given the first opportunity to be consulted and work through the challenges of hosting that particular event. It is the only venue in the world that has karting, motorsports, drag cars, speedway as well as motorbikes in the one location. I think we should try to make this the premier location in the world. This is our opportunity to do it.

I can see the challenges and why some promoters may not want to go out to Eastern Creek. I am disappointed that over the two decades or so that it has been there, when you drive along Bradman Drive, as you go under the M4 and see the motor racing precinct, you almost have to duck your head because there are loose brick tiles falling down from above. There are weeds in the area. To improve the road presentation we should have banners along there. As soon as you turn off the Great Western Highway or the M4, all the roads leading into the motor racing precinct should have statues or flags. People are heading into one of the world's best motor racing precincts. If we do that, then the promoters may be more inclined to have the events in western Sydney. I note the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney, and member for Penrith, is in the Chamber. [*Extension of time*]

The Minister speaks vehemently about getting tourist events out to western Sydney. I know he has been to the Sydney Coliseum Theatre, West HQ, which presents a 2,000-seat stadium for indoor musical events et cetera. We need to hold a premier event at Eastern Creek. The tracks themselves are world-class, whether it is the drag racing or the go-karting track—which is seen as one of the safest and most well-supervised tracks, not only in Australia, but probably the world. We need to use these as the benchmark to be able to say to promoters, "You cannot just drive around Homebush or Parramatta or Liverpool or Sutherland or across the Shire. We have built a dedicated track. Why is this track not front and centre? What would be the cost-benefit analysis in moving the event somewhere else?" The challenge to this area, as I said, is the presentation as you drive in. We have got to make it look like a world-class precinct.

I congratulate the Government—after a 12-year battle and a signed petition by 10,000 people asking for lifts at Doonside railway station, we finally have them. Doonside is literally down the road from Eastern Creek. You drive down Doonside Road onto Bradman Drive. It is a straight road, no change in direction and you are at the motor racing precinct. We do not have an events bus service. I would like to sit down with the Minister for Tourism and Sport or with Destination NSW and compare the V8 Supercar series, which is the benchmark or the major event, with events held at Eastern Creek, to look at the size of the crowds at the two different events. What needs to happen to make more people attend the major events at Eastern Creek? There is a reasonable attendance but we have to ensure people can get there through public transport. We need to prepare a vision statement of how it looks as you enter the precinct. Consideration must be given to the cost of bumping in and bumping out if events are held at other locations across the Sydney Basin and the disruption that it would cause to local businesses.

The Minister may recall there was some discussion—and I do not know his view on it—for Parramatta to host a Supercars race. Honestly, you cannot even park in Parramatta when you go to West HQ stadium—I love going and seeing the Wanderers play there. How would you put a Supercars series through there? It might have been just a couple of rogue councillors out there suggesting it when the Supercars were looking for an alternative event to Homebush; we have got a dedicated track. Imagine if someone said, "I want to do a drag race across the Harbour Bridge. You only need a quarter mile and lots of parachutes. You have got the water to catch the cars if they move off the Harbour Bridge." Essentially, we have a great facility with the dragway, go-karting and the racetrack itself. We need to promote it. The facilities are world-class, but we need to invest more to make the entrance statement world-class. Having bump-in bump-out events in the Sydney Basin, where promoters directly approach the Government without consulting the motor racing precinct, is wrong.

I am not saying all events in the Sydney Basin should be forced to be at Eastern Creek, but Sydney Motorsport Park needs to at least be involved in preliminary discussions to see whether it can accommodate the event and whether there is a business case to move it elsewhere. The Minister can then make a decision on whether to continue the proposal. I hope the Government considers an amendment to that effect. We as a Parliament have invested in Eastern Creek to create a world-class venue. It is now up to us to finish the job by having proper public transport and a promenade that shows, when you are driving into the area, that you are at an international centre of excellence for motorsports.

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:20):** In reply: I thank the contributors to this debate, the members representing the electorates of Wyong, Tweed, Granville, Balmain, Coffs Harbour, Fairfield, Willoughby, Orange, Clarence, Newcastle, Mulgoa, Tamworth and Blacktown. I think it was the second speech in Parliament made by the member for Willoughby. Through the course of this reply, I will come back to a couple of the remarks made by some members. Major events deliver significant economic, social and promotional benefits for the people of New South Wales. The Government is committed to supporting the events sector to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and these bills will ensure that New South Wales has a contemporary and fit-for-purpose legislative framework to facilitate major events in the future. Major events promote New South Wales to a global audience and, prior to the pandemic, they attracted tens of thousands of visitors each year.

We know that major events are complex to deliver and can sometimes be disruptive. These bills will provide further confidence and certainty to the community and event organisers through a consolidated legislative framework. The Major Events Act 2009 remains an important policy lever for attracting major events to New South Wales and ensuring that these events are conducted in a manner that is safe and enjoyable for participants and spectators. The Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 will improve the Act and ensure that it remains contemporary and relevant so that we can continue to attract world-class major events to New South Wales. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 will enable the safe and successful conduct of existing events and motor vehicle racing activities in a more consistent manner, while facilitating smoother delivery of new world-class motorsport events in New South Wales. Overall, the improved legislation will help boost the events sector and its recovery, and position New South Wales as the premier visitor location and visitor economy in the Asia-Pacific region. The Opposition has advised that it will move a number of amendments in the other Chamber. We will work through the matters raised by members when we see those amendments.

I was glad to hear the member for Fairfield and the member for Blacktown make contributions in relation to the investments the Government has made at Sydney Motorsport Park. It is an outstanding facility. Over \$33 million has been invested to upgrade those facilities. The new centre of excellence has been established and will be built. The lighting is now functional and adds additional capacity to that wonderful facility. The dragway has been upgraded and the speedway has been relocated to make way for the Sydney Metro West. The member for Balmain raised Aboriginal heritage protection. The Motor Sports Bill 2022 continues the arrangement currently in the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act. This means that, if an authorised activity needed to occur on a road or adjacent area, the Aboriginal heritage provisions in parts 4A and 6 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act would not apply. This is a measure the Parliament has already allowed for rally races in New South Wales. If there were an important piece of Aboriginal heritage right next to an existing road, the race permit would be able to protect it. This is provided for in clause 7 of the bill.

However, the current Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act also overrides the entire National Parks and Wildlife Act. So you could currently have a rally in a national park. The bill does not allow this, so the main part of the National Parks and Wildlife Act would apply, which means you would effectively never be able to have a rally in a national park, given the sensitivity of such places. Also, neither the Motor Sports (World Rally Championship) Act nor the bills create a power to make roads. So any road needs to already exist.

I note the comments of the member for Blacktown around encouraging people to use Sydney Motorsport Park. That is something the Government continues to do. It is a wonderful asset, but promoters and event owners would not want every race in the motorsport landscape to take place in a racetrack setting. Street circuits provide a different customer experience. For street circuits to be used, this provision is required to be on the statute books. This legislation will consolidate the increasing number of Acts that sit on the statute book to allow that to happen. It does not mean that we are actively encouraging promoters to consider locations away from existing race facilities like Sydney Motorsport Park. It is about having a piece of legislation that is fit for purpose to allow events that would naturally take place on public roads to happen in a safe, open and transparent way that allows for appropriate community engagement and allows for participants, fans and customers alike to be able to partake in that event in a safe way.

It is important to recognise that this legislation would apply only when we need to use public roads. Things like Sydney Motorsport Park function as designated racetracks. A good example of using public roads is what we have done with the World Rally Championship. Often it uses dirt roads and public roads. This legislation would provide the legal framework for races to take place on those roads. It would provide also for the opportunity for longer distance racing, which would use different types of roads, often through multiple local government areas.

Around the world, a lot of motorsport content is quite mobile. My view is that there is plenty of motorsport content that can make its way to fixed, established motorsport facilities like the fantastic, world-class Sydney Motorsport Park. The member for Blacktown is absolutely right about that. We can also provide opportunities for race owners and race promoters to use public roads where appropriate. The Sydney Supercars event, which has taken place at Eastern Creek, is a great example of fully leveraging those asset upgrades. The organisers of that event also have the capacity to take their content into other locations, like we have seen in Newcastle. When communities around the State want to be able to host those events, this piece of legislation allows them to do so in an appropriate fashion. In this legislation, we also account for the unique nature of Mount Panorama Circuit, which is a racetrack but also a public road. We have accounted for the provisions of the historic Mount Panorama Motor Racing Act.

I will say one thing to the Opposition as it is considering its amendments. I know there is a strong desire to ensure that communities get appropriate consultation. I counsel the Opposition to consider when that consultation takes place. It is one thing to front-load consultation, but it is important that the public is consulted on something that actually exists. Ensuring a plan has been agreed to and is formulated so that there is enough

information to actually engage the public on does not mean that there will not be changes or tweaks based on community consultation. It is absolutely critical that consultation take place at the right time because it would be rather ineffective consultation if a race promoter did not have a clear understanding of what would be permissible. In that case, the promoter would not be in a position to actually engage and consult with the community. There is a strong sense from the Government that the bills will create greater opportunities for community consultation. That is definitely its intent, and I want all members of the Parliament to understand that. I counsel everyone to recognise that consultation without a clear plan is no consultation at all. The bills will set up New South Wales well to attract new major events in the future. They modernise the Major Events Act 2009 and remove some of the changes that were required post our review. Importantly, the consolidation of the motorsports Acts that sit on the statute book into this new motorsports Act will give us a modern, fit-for-purpose piece of legislation that strikes the right balance for race promoters, owners and communities. I commend the bills to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that these bills be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I move:

That these bills be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Addresses

#### HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE

**Debate resumed from 24 February 2022.**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (12:31):** I am pleased to continue my contribution to the address in honour of Her Majesty's momentous celebration of 70 years as the monarch on the throne for our Commonwealth. When I began my contribution, Her Majesty was suffering from COVID. At that time I indicated, along with many other members, my best wishes for her speedy recovery. I am pleased to see that she has recovered and has resumed duties, serving the community as best she can, given the physical challenges that she has. Her recovery is very good news. The monumental world events that have occurred during Her Majesty's reign and the nature in which she has guided us for the greater part of the past century will not be matched for a long time. We should always strive to serve to our highest ability, especially in this place where we debate and act as champions for the people who elect us to serve them. Let Her Majesty's service be a reminder that we always answer to the people who put us here. We recognise her length of service to not only Britain and the Commonwealth but also the global community. We acknowledge her tremendous work, and we thank her for it.

At a time when most women's highest ambitions, as permitted by society, were to marry and bear children, a young monarch began a lifetime of service to millions of people, whilst building a strong and loving marriage and raising four children. Her example of female leadership, influence, strength, fortitude, resilience, and quiet and steadfast resolve is one that all aspiring leaders can and ought to look up to. Personally, I am grateful for her service and commitment. She has shown leadership and compassion throughout the highs and lows of human experience, and of national and international celebrations and crises, during her 70 years of service. It is the first time that any British monarch has achieved and celebrated a platinum jubilee. In her Accession Day message, the Queen said that she hoped the platinum jubilee will bring together families, friends, neighbours and communities. She said:

The anniversary also affords me a time to reflect on the goodwill shown to me by people of all nationalities, faiths and ages in this country and around the world over these years.

She thanked everyone for their support, loyalty and affection, and signed the message "Your servant". The Queen's example of servanthood, her humility and selfless commitment should be a lesson for every current and aspirational politician. True leadership of the people is servant-heartedness. Putting the needs of the people first and foremost is true leadership. The Queen fully embodies authentic leadership. On behalf of my family, and especially my stalwart monarchist mum, Zenona Pogmore—I had to get that in somewhere. I would never be forgiven if I did not acknowledge my dearest mum's love of the monarchy. Good on you, Mum. On behalf of my constituents in the electorate of Mulgoa and the members of the Parliament of New South Wales, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Queen on the achievement of her platinum jubilee. God save the Queen.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (12:35):** I pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Australia as we commemorate and celebrate her platinum jubilee. I pay tribute to her 70 years of service, dedication and unwavering duty to the people of New South Wales, Australia and the

Commonwealth. As the monarch of our beautiful State, Her Majesty continues to demonstrate her lifelong dedication to public service. We in this Chamber should count it a privilege to serve under a queen who demonstrates such character. We are blessed to have such a highly respected public figure whose legacy of service and loyalty continues to inspire generations of people across the world. Throughout the turbulent world events of the latter half of the twentieth century, the changing face of her Commonwealth and the modernisation of New South Wales and Australia, Her Majesty has been a source of stability and security for us all. She has also been an inspirational leader and figure for aspiring female leaders, representing strength and resilience that women across the world can identify with. Generations of Australians have grown up knowing Her Majesty as the face of our democracy, a non-partisan reassurance of stability and continuity who sits above the political fray.

The Queen's platinum jubilee is a time to reflect on her lifetime of service and to pause and be grateful for her firm belief in the constitutional monarchy, the rule of law and the obligation of civilised societies to leave our children a better world than the one that we inherited. We can reflect on notable moments from her reign, such as her first visit to Australia in 1954—she was the first monarch of Australia to do so. Her Majesty has toured Australia 16 times throughout her reign, further illustrating her love of and commitment to our country. She remains an irreplaceable figure in the public mind and a beloved household hero in our hearts. All members in this Chamber, regardless of politics or beliefs, can reflect on and recognise her lifetime of warm and persistent dedication to the people of New South Wales and all citizens throughout the Commonwealth. I express personal congratulations to Her Majesty and the congratulations of the people and communities of the Goulburn electorate. We thank Her Majesty for her lifetime of service and wish her continued health and success into the future.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:38):** I acknowledge the 70-year jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Australia. For most Australians there has only ever been one monarch on the throne. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been a fixture in our life experience—ever dutiful, ever gracious and ever concerned for the welfare of the peoples of the Commonwealth. It is an extraordinary reality that she has been the monarch of Great Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations since the days of Menzies and Churchill, and through the Australian prime ministerships of Harold Holt, John Gorton, William McMahon, Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser, Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, John Howard, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison. Her amazing work ethic, commitment to duty and great example have been inspirational throughout that very long time. As we address this motion today, we are all aware—as the member for Mulgoa mentioned—that Her Majesty has recently recovered from COVID-19. I join with earlier speakers, and no doubt all members of this place, in wishing Her Majesty good health and a complete recovery from that illness.

Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of Prince Albert, Duke of York, and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. As is well known, it was the abdication of Edward VIII in December 1936 which led to Elizabeth's father becoming King George VI. That was a dramatic change for his family, especially for Elizabeth, who suddenly became the heir apparent to the throne. During World War II, Princess Elizabeth and her sister, Princess Margaret, spent much of their time safely away from the London Blitz and separated from their parents, living mostly at Balmoral Castle in Scotland and at Windsor.

When Princess Elizabeth turned 18 in 1944, she insisted upon joining the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the women's branch of the British Army. In 1945 she began her training as a mechanic. She undertook a driving and vehicle maintenance course at Aldershot, qualifying on 14 April. Newspapers at the time dubbed her "Princess Auto Mechanic". For many years thereafter she enjoyed driving when the opportunity arose, including driving her favourite Land Rover when at Balmoral in Scotland. On her twenty-first birthday in 1947, Princess Elizabeth spoke from South Africa to the people of the then British Empire, saying:

I can make my solemn act of dedication with a whole Empire listening. I should like to make that dedication now. It is very simple.

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

But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do: I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow, and God bless all of you who are willing to share in it.

I think any fair-minded person would acknowledge that she has indeed made good her vow to the best of her ability. Her fidelity to that vow is in large part responsible for the widespread affection in which she is held by millions of people worldwide and within Australia. In the summer of 1951 the health of King George VI entered into a serious decline and Princess Elizabeth represented him at Trooping the Colour and on various other State occasions.

In October Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh set out on a highly successful tour of Canada and the United States of America. In January 1952 she and the Duke set out for a tour of Australia and New Zealand but en route, at Sagana in Kenya, news reached them of the King's death on 6 February 1952. Elizabeth, now Queen, at once flew back to England. After she had moved from Clarence House to Buckingham



Palace, she undertook the routine duties of the sovereign and carried out her first State opening of Parliament on 4 November 1952. Her coronation—a great national event—was held at Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953.

Queen Elizabeth II was the first and, to date, the only reigning British monarch to visit Australia. When the 27-year-old sailed into Sydney Harbour on 3 February 1954, she practically stopped the nation. Her arrival at Farm Cove, where Captain Arthur Phillip raised the British flag 165 years before her, attracted an estimated one million onlookers in a city with a population of about 1.8 million, according to the 1954 census. Those who could not be there in person could listen to the ABC radio's nationwide coverage of the historic occasion. Amalgamated Wireless Australia helped make history when it filmed the Queen setting foot on Australian soil and relayed the footage to the Spastic Centre in Mosman. Thus, the royal arrival became the first televised event in Australia.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:43):** On behalf of the Chair: I address the House regarding the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 40/57*, dated 22 March 2022 and tabled the same date. I am standing in for the chair of the committee, Mr David Layzell, who is ill today. In the fortieth Legislation Review Digest, the committee examined two bills introduced in the sitting week beginning 22 February 2022 and commented on 14 statutory instruments. The committee also reviewed an additional 21 regulations without comment and one disallowed regulation, which appear in appendix two to the digest.

I will now draw the Parliament's attention to some of the issues raised in the digest concerning the legislation reviewed by the committee. Turning to the cognate bills introduced in this Chamber, the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 and the Motor Sports Bill 2022 provide an updated framework for organising and hosting major events, including motorsports, in New South Wales. The committee observed that the Motor Sports Bill 2022 allows authorised officers to search persons who wish to attend an area where a motor race is being held. This search power includes physical searches of their outer clothing, possessions and vehicles and can be conducted without an officer suspecting that the person is breaching the bill or poses a safety threat. The committee commented that this search power may allow all patrons of motorsports events to be subject to a physical search. However, the committee recognised that this search power must be balanced against the need to protect public safety at major events with large numbers of people in attendance. It also noted that the power to physically search a person is limited to their outer clothing. In light of those safeguards, the committee made no further comment.

I turn now to a statutory instrument examined in this week's digest. The committee examined the Surveillance Devices Amendment (Body-Worn Recording) Regulation 2021, which extends the trial period allowing ambulance officers to use body-worn recording devices by a further year. It postpones the repeal of the exemption for ambulance officers from offences relating to listening or optical surveillance devices. The committee noted that the trial extended by this regulation may impact a person's right to privacy. However, it also noted that the exemption only applies to trials in three locations and that there are a number of privacy safeguards in the legislation and recognised that the purpose of the trial is to deter violence and antisocial behaviour towards ambulance officers. That concludes my remarks on the fortieth digest for this Parliament. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:47):** I wish the chair of the Legislation Review Committee all the very best. I understand he is unwell today. It gives me great pleasure to comment on the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 40/57*, dated 22 March 2022 and tabled yesterday. The committee considered two pieces of legislation, the Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2022, and the cognate bills the Major Events Amendment Bill 2022 and the Motor Sports Bill 2022. The committee commented on both. The committee also considered 35 regulations—continuing its record of considering large numbers of regulations under this Government—and commented on 14 of those regulations. Those comments are included in the digest. The 22 regulations otherwise not formally commented on are in appendix two to the digest, so members can refer to those as well.

The committee considered the Water Management (General) Amendment Regulation 2021. The committee's comments on the regulation are included in appendix two. The committee noted, prior to the tabling of the digest, that this regulation was disallowed in the Legislative Council on 24 February. However, the committee's review is there for members' reference, just in case. I refer members again to the 35 regulations considered. There is a lot of information there that members may find useful. In particular, members might like

to look at the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Housing) Regulation 2021. That regulation goes to boarding houses, affordable housing, co-living housing in certain residential flat buildings, and seniors' housing. I know that many community members often express an interest in those sorts of developments in electorates, so members might like to have a look at that and bring themselves up to date on the important changes under that housing regulation. As usual, I thank my colleagues on the committee and the secretariat that supports the committee. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Members*

#### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** On behalf of Mr Paul Toole: I inform the House that the Acting Premier will answer questions today in the absence of the Attorney General. I further inform the House that the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Health.

*Documents*

#### **LEGAL ADVICE – EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHARGED WITH A CRIMINAL OFFENCE**

**Tabling**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** For the information of members, I table the memorandum of legal advice from the Deputy Secretary and General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet enclosing legal advice received from the Crown Solicitor's Office entitled "Legal advice: Expulsion or suspension of a member of the Legislative Assembly charged with a criminal offence", dated 23 March 2022.

**Document tabled.**

I would now like to give notice of a motion having regard to the interests of alleged victim-survivors having their complaints considered by the criminal justice system, the interests of the fairness of criminal trials, the integrity of the Parliament, and taking the strongest action permitted by a Parliament to balance these various interests.

*[Notice of motion given.]*

*Question Time*

#### **MEMBER FOR KIAMA**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:21):** My question is directed to the Acting Premier and relates to a question that I asked him yesterday. Is the Acting Premier aware of any complaints that have been made against the conduct of the member for Kiama prior to the establishment of Strike Force Condello on 13 May 2021? It has been 24 hours since I asked the Acting Premier. Will he inform the House?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on the back benches will remain silent.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:21):** The simple answer is no. Yesterday in this House I outlined that I expect all members, and the public expects all members, to uphold the highest standards. Very simply, I have answered the member's question yesterday and today.

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES FLOODS**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:22):** My question is addressed to the Acting Premier. Will the Acting Premier update the House on how the Government is supporting flood-impacted communities as they rebuild and recover?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:22):** I thank the member for Tweed for his question and for the work that he has been doing in his community. I know that his community and his electorate have been impacted by recent flooding. I have had the opportunity to be up there with him, as have other members of this House, and to see firsthand the impact that it has had on businesses and individuals as their lives have been turned upside down. I note that, as a

local member, he has been working proactively to assist those families and those communities to rebuild, and I thank him for the work that he has done.

As I said yesterday, the New South Wales Government will continue to do everything that it can to assist those communities to get back on their feet. It will be a long road ahead, but every day is a step forward to ensure that those communities can rebuild. Around 20,000 damage assessments have been undertaken. With those damage assessments, many homes will need to be demolished. I have visited a number of evacuation centres with a number of MPs, and it is a heartbreaking experience. I visited the recovery centre in Mullumbimby with the member for Ballina and was blown away by the incredible work that has been undertaken by our local emergency services workers and all the volunteers that were in place to assist that community. It was there that I also had the pleasure of meeting the Sikh volunteers who travelled all the way from Victoria to cook hot meals for flood-affected individuals.

We have started the process of transitioning people from evacuation centres, hotels and motels into longer term accommodation, as part of the Government's \$285 million Temporary Housing Support Package. This package has the capacity to provide support for around 25,000 households into the future. Those people have lost their houses and most of their possessions, and we will do everything that we can to support them in this time of need. In addition, \$10 million has been allocated to deliver 120 motorhomes to people in urgent need—40 have already arrived in Casino, 40 more have arrived in Lismore and an additional convoy arrived in Ballina on Monday of this week. We cannot rebuild houses overnight, but we can do everything that is possible to ensure that people get a roof over their heads as quickly as possible and that some stability is returned to their lives.

To make matters worse, the Northern Rivers faces another four-day rain event, with the potential to cause further flooding. Our emergency services have worked tirelessly to help recover and rebuild across this State. The task that those agencies are undertaking is enormous, with staff being called away from ordinary roles to assist in flood recovery operations. Many of them are away from home. They are away from their families and they are living in tents or other temporary accommodation. There are members who have travelled from across this State to lend assistance to those communities that need support now. Every minute of staff's time is devoted to that flood recovery, and every member of this place will agree that at this time, as we face another rain event, it is essential that those staff and agencies are allowed to do this important job.

It angers me to announce that a motion is being moved by others in the other place today. The shadow Minister has moved a motion under Standing Order 52 to compel our emergency services workers to produce all flood correspondence and briefings to the upper House in the next 21 days. Let me be clear to the House what this actually means. It means that all of our frontline SES workers, Fire and Rescue NSW workers, police and Resilience NSW workers all have to go back to their offices. Forget about being up there helping those communities. They now have to go back to their offices and print out all of those emails and text messages, instead of having a pair of hands in those communities, helping them to rebuild. *[Extension of time]*

This is nothing more than a kick in the guts to those communities that have been doing it tough. To know that those opposite are going to be asking for all of this additional information, all of this time being wasted—do you know what? There is a time for that. I make no apologies for that. I agree that government should be transparent, but I also say this: Now is not the time to be asking those people to provide this information. There will be an inquiry that will look at addressing this.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I do not read much of it but someone showed me the Leader of the Opposition's social media and it said, "While the community has come together doing superhuman things, the road to rebuilding will be long and hard. The New South Wales Government must do everything that it can to support this community through this crisis as they emerge from it." I wholeheartedly agree with those sentiments, but it is with that in mind that I implore those opposite to use some sanity in this situation and to make sure that they withdraw the Standing Order 52 motion, which means that the people on the ground now are not able to assist those people who need it. With potentially four days of more rainfall and four days of more flooding into those communities, they are stopping them from doing the job that they do so well. I expect scrutiny and, as someone said previously, there will be an inquiry. An inquiry will look at the causes, preparation, response and recovery.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** You need to go to those communities and have a look. The member for Canterbury and the member for Bankstown, how dare you turn around and not stand up for these communities that have lost everything. I know that these people—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Acting Premier will resume his seat.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** I ask that the Deputy Premier direct his comments through the Chair rather than directly at members. They are responding and the Speaker is putting them on calls to order.

**The SPEAKER:** I would have upheld the point of order but the Acting Premier's time has expired so it is academic.

#### MEMBER FOR KIAMA

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:29):** My question is directed to the Acting Premier. It is in reference to his previous answer that he was not aware of any complaints against the conduct of the member for Kiama. How does the Acting Premier explain an article in *The Australian* on 14 May 2021 stating that former Premier Berejiklian's office received a complaint against the member for Kiama in 2020?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:30):** First of all, let me give the Leader of the Opposition a little lesson in Ministers and who is in ministerial roles. Last year and even the year before, I was the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. The Leader of the Opposition would not have known that because he did not care about the regions, so therefore he never asked a question about regional transport, roads or regional New South Wales. The other thing is, I became the Minister for Police in December. Regarding the comments that have been made by the Leader of the Opposition, I read that there were allegations that were made against an individual. It was not until this week—yesterday—that I saw that those charges were actually officially made. I refer to my previous answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time. I note that the clock was not on but the time was well under the five minutes.

#### JOBS GROWTH

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:31:2):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer update the House on the State's latest jobs figures and any policies to drive jobs growth in New South Wales?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:31):** It is great to get a question from the member for North Shore. The best member that we have ever had on the North Shore, and I am one of them. It is great to get a question from someone who is passionate about creating jobs and wants to see more jobs across New South Wales. That is unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who is only interested in doing a job on his predecessor. The only interest he has is in pushing people out of jobs.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I was so well behaved yesterday.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Well, you are not today. You never said those things about the member for Kiama, did you?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Make it up.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Heffron is pushing it. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The comments that the Treasurer is making about the Leader of the Opposition are not remotely relevant or even introductory to the question he was asked. I ask the Speaker to require the member to be generally relevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied, as I normally am in the first minute, that introductory comments are being made.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I think they are very relevant. We are talking about jobs. This Government is focused on creating jobs. The only job that the Leader of the Opposition cares about is for his predecessor and doing a job on her—pushing her out of a job. Luckily for the former Leader of the Opposition, because we have the lowest unemployment rate in New South Wales, she should have no problems finding a new job. That is bipartisanship in action. We are creating jobs and we have just delivered the lowest unemployment rate in the State's history—3.7 per cent, which is below the national average of 4 per cent. What it means is that all of those people who want a job can get a job. In addition, people who want to work more hours can do so, because our participation rate for the month of February was up half a per cent as well.

There are currently 87,000 new jobs in New South Wales, above where we were before we went into the pandemic. Things like this do not just happen. In fact, around 78,000 new jobs were created for the month of February and more than two-thirds of them were created in New South Wales. That is because there is a Coalition government in place. Under the Perrottet-Toole leadership, we have been able to create new and better paying jobs and grow the economy going forward. That is what Coalition governments are about. It does not stop there. There are going to be more jobs into the future as we unroll one of the biggest infrastructure investment pipelines in the world. There are projects that will benefit people right across the State, particularly in western Sydney. People in western Sydney will see new transport infrastructure that will reduce travel times and create jobs.

I was surprised to see the Leader of the Opposition does not seem to understand that some of these projects are in western Sydney. The other day he was tweeting that the south-west metro line is not in western Sydney. He does not seem to understand that the people of Lakemba and Bankstown are going to benefit from a new metro line that will improve travel times, provide vital public transport and create jobs. I am sure the member for Lakemba is surprised that piece of infrastructure that will benefit his community is not part of western Sydney. I am sure the member for Bankstown is surprised that the Leader of the Opposition does not understand her electorate is in western Sydney. They are not alone. I am sure the member for Auburn is surprised that the Leader of the Opposition does not understand the metro west will go through the seat of Auburn.

**Mr Mark Coure:** She lives in Rockdale anyway.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Maybe the member for Auburn, who lives in Rockdale, can show the Leader of the Opposition exactly where western Sydney is. While she is as it, perhaps she can show Andrew Charlton where western Sydney is as well.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I think I have worked out exactly what the problem is here. The reason the Leader of the Opposition does not understand the transport infrastructure program we have got going in western Sydney is that Huang Xiangmo does not pay for junkets to travel to western Sydney.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: I have a list of all your trips to China.

**The SPEAKER:** I again warn the member for Heffron that if he makes quips instead of taking a point of order, he will not be heard.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I will grant an additional two minutes, but I am happy to hear the point of order from the member for Heffron.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Treasurer is making personal reflections on the Opposition leader. Not only that, Mr Speaker, you should not exercise your discretion to grant a two-minute extension because he is departing from the question and being provocative. You should apply the rulings of previous Speakers and the practice of the House and not grant him two minutes, otherwise there will be further disorderly conduct in the House.

**The SPEAKER:** The disorderly conduct of the member for Auburn has now put her on two calls to order. I grant a two-minute extension, but I ask the Treasurer to desist from attacking the Opposition leader because I am giving him the extension on the basis that he will answer the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** That is an excellent ruling. I am talking about jobs and how these infrastructure projects are creating jobs, primarily in western Sydney. At the same time, we are delivering better services and essential public transport infrastructure that those communities have missed out on after 16 years of corrupt and failed Labor rule. It was a rotten government, which the Leader of the Opposition was an integral part of. He does not understand where western Sydney is because Huang Xiangmo has not paid for a junket—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Treasurer is now in breach of Standing Order 130, debating the question. Mr Speaker, you gave him an extension on the basis that he answer the question properly and provide information to the House. He is now debating what I submit is a pretty irrelevant issue.

**The SPEAKER:** We will move to the next question.

#### MEMBER FOR KIAMA

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:39):** My question is directed to the Acting Premier. If a schoolteacher or police officer were announced as the subject of a strike force investigation into serious sexual violence allegations, they would be removed immediately. Between 6 December 2021 and 15 March 2022, the member for Kiama was allowed to visit local schools, including Berry Public School, North Nowra Public School

and his former high school at Bomaderry. This was six months after a strike force investigation began against him into criminal sexual violence offences. How can the Acting Premier explain this double standard?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:39):** I am going to go back to what I said previously. If the Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have any allegations that they wish to refer, they should refer them to the police. Otherwise, I refer them to my previous answer.

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

#### VISITOR ECONOMY

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:40):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Tourism and Sport. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's investment in major events is supporting the economy?

**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 Port Macquarie for her question. I know she is a big fan of the tourism sector, and her community in Port Macquarie derives a huge amount of social and economic benefit from it. The Port Macquarie IRONMAN event is coming up. Like so many events across the State, it has been two years since the Port Macquarie IRONMAN 70.3 has been able to get there for the thousands of people who take part in the event, creating lots of jobs and economic activity for Port Macquarie. This event is like a number of others that are starting to come back to New South Wales.

As the Treasurer was saying, this is about making sure that we boost the New South Wales economy. Having a stronger economy means there are jobs, jobs and more jobs. In New South Wales the unemployment rate is down to 3.7 per cent and, as the tourism sector bounces back, it will be a big driver of that. In pre-COVID times, the tourism sector had the capacity to support over 290,000 jobs across New South Wales. As we start to get the economy moving again, we want to make sure that people are more confident getting out and about and that we get people back to events and across communities with their hands in their pockets and spending in local areas around the State.

There was some exceptional journalism in *The Daily Telegraph* today by editor-at-large Matt Benns—a double-page spread about all of these fantastic events, with a great calendar. I do not know who this Matt Benns guy is, but he has done a wonderful job showcasing all the things that are happening in New South Wales. It is such a great list. This is what we have got coming up. If opera is your thing—and even if it is not—get down to the harbour to Handa Opera. This is the best opera stage in the world. We have got *The Phantom of the Opera* from 25 March to 24 April. It is an absolutely stunning production. If you are more into surfing, make your way up to Newcastle, where we have Surfest. It is the thirty-sixth anniversary of Surfest, and it is on from now until 27 March. The Sydney Royal Easter Show is coming up. Who does not love the Sydney Royal Easter Show, getting all the kids back there and all the great agricultural activity?

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** We love it.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** The Minister for Agriculture loves showing off everything that happens at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Everyone loves a show bag. We have got the Tamworth Country Music Festival. Once again, this is an event that did it tough earlier in the year. It was not pulled; it was just postponed, and they have got it going again. If you want to hit the road, get out to Tamworth and see the best country music you will find anywhere in the world. If Tamworth is a little too close, you can go even further to the Mundi Mundi Bash in Broken Hill. It is an exceptional event, with the best of Australian music. I am certain the member for Broken Hill will be at the Mundi Mundi Bash.

If you love your footy, we have got State of Origin coming up. I love kicking the Queenslanders. Why don't we win another one, Freddy Fittler and the team! Get out there to Accor Stadium and check out the State of Origin. Vivid is back after two years away—the largest festival of light, music and ideas anywhere in the world. This year we are making the Light Walk the best it has ever been; it will be eight kilometres long with over 50 light installations. We have over 111 ideas events and more music than you know what to do with. This will be an absolute bumper Vivid. Fashion Week is coming back to Sydney as well. It is such an important trade element, getting people back into Australian fashion and selling those great Australian designers overseas.

Up north, I know they have done it tough in and around the Northern Rivers. Bluesfest—another event that the New South Wales Government helped get back on its feet after some cancellations—is back on this Easter weekend, from 14 to 18 April. Get up there; it has an absolute cracking line-up. If you like horseracing and you are not up at Bluesfest in Byron Bay for the Easter period, get over to Royal Randwick for the two days of the championships. I know the racing Minister will be there. I think Kerry Parker of Kembla Grange is taking on the

big guys in town. Let's get the little guys over the line. And the list keeps going. We have got absolutely the best musicals going on. *9 to 5: the Musical* is absolutely singing up a storm at the moment. Kicking on out of that, you can get out to Parkes for the Elvis Festival. [*Extension of time*]

It did not quite make my list, but the Minister for Multiculturalism tells me the Greek Festival is on this Sunday, so let's add that to the list too. We have got the Sydney Biennale, one of the world's great arts festivals. Tomorrow night the Socceroos are taking on Japan to make sure that we get into the World Cup. We also have Great Southern Nights happening at the moment. I say to every member in the Chamber: Make sure you get onto the Great Southern Nights website. It is an amazing gig guide. We have over 500 live music events in over 300 venues right around the State. There is literally something for everyone. It is a great partnership between Destination NSW and the Australian Recording Industry Association to get our performing artists back out on stage. They have not been able to do live music because of COVID.

These are all great examples of how the New South Wales Government is out there, through Destination NSW and many other agencies, supporting people to get back onstage and getting those events back into our communities. What that means is a stronger community. It is making sure that we bounce back hard from the impacts of COVID by supporting those sectors of the economy that have really done it tough and by getting those events going again. What that means is more jobs in our community: jobs, jobs and more jobs. That is what the visitor economy delivers. We want that unemployment rate getting even lower than 3.7 per cent. We want people coming back in from overseas. Our Aviation Attraction Fund will link Australia back up again. These are the things that we are putting in place to make sure we have got a strong plan for the economic recovery, and the visitor economy is leading the way.

### DISASTER FUNDING

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:47):** My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Catherine Cusack, MLC, has announced that she will resign from the Parliament in disgust at the Federal Government's unethical approach to disaster funding. Does the Minister share Catherine Cusack's concerns?

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (14:47):** I thank the member for Blue Mountains for her question. I think it is fair to say that the Hon. Catherine Cusack shares my concerns in relation to a number of aspects of this unprecedented event that has swept through the east coast of New South Wales. A lot has been said over the past three weeks, and certainly in this place yesterday, in relation to what has occurred across New South Wales, particularly in the Northern Rivers region. I reiterate that my thoughts are with the communities, the families and the individuals who have found themselves in very difficult circumstances as a result of what has occurred.

As the Premier announced earlier this month, followed by the Acting Premier on Monday 21 March, as a government we have established an independent inquiry to examine and report on the causes of, the preparedness for, the response to and the recovery from this catastrophic event. I very much welcome that inquiry, which will be led by Professor Mary O'Kane, AC. As we all know in this place, Professor O'Kane led the independent bushfire inquiry, which made 146 recommendations, from memory, all of which the Government has adopted and all of which are either underway or have been completed.

So I think the answer to the member's question is that I share the concerns raised by not just the Hon. Catherine Cusack but also all members in this place right across the divide. The member for Lismore, the member for Ballina, the member for Tweed, the member for Clarence—a number of MPs—have raised issues with me and we will look into all of those issues through the inquiry. I look forward to seeing the results of the inquiry. But I give my assurance to the communities that have been impacted by these events that I will work day and night to do everything I can. I will work with anyone to ensure that we get communities back on their feet as quickly as possible and that we get families into substantive homes and out of emergency accommodation. I say to our emergency services workers, for whom I know the member for Blue Mountains has very high regard—whether it is the RFS or, in this case, the SES, as the combat agency for storm, tsunami and flood—that I will fight tooth and nail to ensure that they have adequate resourcing to respond, because we rely on them to keep our communities safe at the end of the day.

### NEW SOUTH WALES FLOODS

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:51):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is assisting councils responding to and recovering from the floods?

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (14:51):** I thank the member for Clarence for his question. He knows all too well the importance of the Government standing side by side with flood-affected councils to assist them and their residents to recover from the flooding disaster. Last week

I saw firsthand the impact of the devastating storms and floodwaters in the communities of Tweed, Ballina and Lismore. All three councils have been affected by the worst floods on record. While I was in the Northern Rivers I spoke with affected councils and residents to assure them that we, as a government, are here to assist and support them with the enormous clean-up effort and that we will remain with them as we begin to rebuild the towns, communities and livelihoods that have been devastated.

During my visit last week, I met with the mayor of Tweed, together with the member for Tweed, who is an outstanding member and has been with his community and supporting them through this enormous tragedy. I also met with the mayor of Lismore and the mayor of Ballina. I gained a deep understanding of the challenges and what is required to get this region back on its feet. I am looking forward to meeting with the mayor of Lismore, Steve Krieg, and general manager John Walker again later today. I have reached out to a number of other disaster-declared councils and have spoken to many of the mayors, general managers and council workers from across New South Wales.

Fifty-seven councils across the State have been declared disaster affected in the March floods alone. I have heard countless stories of how the ongoing flood crisis, particularly in the Northern Rivers, has battered those communities. My thoughts are with those families, individuals, businesses and communities who have been, and continue to be, affected. But the people of New South Wales need more than just our thoughts. They need actions and they need immediate support. They also need every level of government to work together to help clean up and rebuild. That is why this Government, alongside the Commonwealth Government, has announced a further \$742 million in funding to support councils, residents, primary industry, businesses and rural landholders affected by this flooding disaster.

This is on top of nearly \$1 billion for emergency response and relief that has already been provided as part of the joint packages between State and Federal governments. Importantly, this new funding will include \$120 million for impacted local councils to help them get back on their feet. It is made up of \$40 million in grants to address immediate operational challenges and \$80 million to create a working capital fund, which will supplement councils experiencing flood and disaster recovery in cases where residents are unable to afford their rates. This is in addition to the \$57 million in funding given to councils already to assist with their immediate social, built, economic and environmental needs.

Even before the latest funding announcement, the New South Wales Government had been supporting the councils hardest hit by the North Coast floods. Last week the Government announced \$46 million in emergency funding that would be fast-tracked to kickstart urgent road repairs and restore access to communities. There have been millions of dollars of damage to road services from wrecked signage, landslips across roads and damaged bridges due to the floodwaters. The funding will help with the costs of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets, including vital regional road and rail infrastructure networks. The Government has also provided operational support to councils to assist with the painstaking job of damage assessment and repair, ensuring councils have access to the cash they need to get work underway right now.

But it has not stopped there. The flood event and subsequent clean-up has been tough and physically traumatic for all involved. To assist, the Government has waived the waste levy in affected council areas so that people can get on with the job of cleaning up. The Government is providing \$145 million to urgently repair and replace water and sewage critical infrastructure capacity in the Northern Rivers. I have tasked the Office of Local Government to reactivate its local government emergency response support group. This group facilitates peer-to-peer resource sharing for councils affected by the crisis by leaning on unaffected councils that are able to assist. I thank those councils that have offered their support. As was the case with previous disasters, this generosity of spirit will help families and communities recover, rebuild and get back on their feet. The Government has not stopped in its efforts to ensure that councils and their communities have the financial support they need to recover from the floods. *[Extension of time]*

There are disaster relief grants for low income earners. There is fast-tracked access to trauma and recovery services and \$285 million from the State and Commonwealth governments for a temporary housing support package. There are freight subsidies, grants for farmers, grants for primary producers, and grants for individuals and businesses. The New South Wales Government will continue to provide this pivotal assistance. I acknowledge the ongoing service and dedication of our local councils in taking on the responsibility of coordinating emergency efforts in the current recovery effort. Councils are the first port of call in the recovery efforts, working around the clock to provide as many services as possible to those in need. There is no better example of the importance of local government to our communities than what we are witnessing at the moment in New South Wales. The tireless work of councils in responding to multiple crises enables communities to get back on their feet. Rest assured, the Government will continue to stand side by side with councils and their communities across the State to ensure that they have the support required to recover from these floods.



### ERARING POWER STATION

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (14:58):** My question is directed to the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. Given that Origin Energy has signalled an intention to close the State's largest coal-fired power station, at Eraring, in 2025—up to seven years early—what is the Government doing to ensure energy security in New South Wales? Will the Treasurer assure the communities in Lake Macquarie and the Hunter that new jobs will be created in the areas where they are being lost?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:58):** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question and acknowledge his advocacy for his community at this very difficult time, with the closure of the Eraring coal-fired power station. Origin Energy's announcement that it intends to close Eraring Power Station in 2025 is difficult news for his communities and those of many members representing electorates in the Hunter. I acknowledge the member for Swansea in particular. Many of the workers at the power station and the mines that supply the power station have helped to power our State for decades. The power station plays a big role in supporting the Lake Macquarie and Hunter economies. I want to make it very clear that I expect Origin to honour its obligations to its workforce and do everything in its power to support those affected and the community at this very difficult time.

The Government is committed to supporting jobs and ensuring that the people of New South Wales have access to secure and affordable energy. That is why the Government has announced a three-part plan to respond to Origin's decision. The first part of the plan relates to energy reliability. To ensure reliability, the Government is working with industry partners to deliver the biggest network battery in the Southern Hemisphere: the giant, 700-megawatt Waratah Super Battery. The Government will go through a competitive process, but it is looking to utilise government-owned sites like Lake Munmorah, as an example, next to Colongra Power Station. Again, the Government will go through a competitive process to make sure that it gets the best site and the best deal for taxpayers, but it is looking to find a site as close as possible to Eraring, to keep those jobs local and inject that investment into the local economy.

Currently, powerlines must operate well below their capacity so that they can handle any sudden shocks, like a power surge from a bushfire or a lightning strike. The Waratah Super Battery will act like a shock absorber, absorbing those power surges and freeing up extra transmission capacity to transport more electricity from existing generators in New South Wales, like Snowy Hydro, for example. New South Wales has the strongest electricity reliability standard anywhere in the country, and that is known as our Energy Security Target. The Australian Energy Market Operator has advised that the planned additional transmission capacity, including the Waratah Super Battery, will give the State access to enough electricity generation to meet the Energy Security Target when Eraring closes, so that we have enough of a buffer to ensure that we can keep the lights on whilst not putting upward pressure on power prices and so that we have another way to deal with power prices, which brings me to my next point.

We know how important it is to put downward pressure on electricity prices, and that is why the second part of the Government's response is to accelerate the implementation of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. We know that the best way to put downward pressure on electricity prices is to build more supply, and that is exactly what the road map seeks to do. It is a comprehensive plan to transform our electricity system that will keep power prices as low as possible for homes and businesses across New South Wales. The road map is expected to deliver \$32 billion worth of private investment in electricity infrastructure by 2030, create around 6,300 construction jobs and 2,800 ongoing jobs in 2030, and save households around \$130 per annum on their household bills between 2023 and 2040.

I recognise the contribution of every member of this House who supported the road map 18 months ago in a show of cross-party support to deliver affordable, reliable and sustainable electricity. That was genuinely every member of this House apart from the Shooters, who teamed up with One Nation to deprive people across the State of cheap, reliable and clean electricity. Notwithstanding that, the Government is also establishing a transmission acceleration facility that will fast-track the delivery of critical transmission infrastructure needed to connect new sources of generation that will put downward pressure on electricity prices.

The final part of the Government's response is a comprehensive plan to support jobs. I am pleased to update the House that the Government's plan will support up to 3,700 jobs in future industries, including an estimated 500 jobs from a \$250 million renewable manufacturing fund for initiatives to boost locally manufactured content for the renewable energy sector, such as wind towers, electrolyzers and batteries. That will support the work of the Renewable Energy Sector Board, which is currently being chaired by Craig Memery and Dan Walton, to make sure that we get local content and local labour used in these projects in a way that protects consumer interests. That money is on the table to support those initiatives. There are 500 extra jobs that will be created from \$300 million of investment in new industries, like green hydrogen. There are 2,700 direct construction jobs from

fast-tracked delivery of critical transmission infrastructure under the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. *[Extension of time]*

The Hunter and Lake Macquarie communities are in pole position to take advantage of the jobs that will be created in these new industries. The Hunter and Lake Macquarie are home to the highly skilled workforce that we need to drive our economic prosperity in a rapidly changing world. I assure the member for Lake Macquarie and his community that this Government is committed to delivering jobs in his community, in communities across the Hunter, in the member for Swansea's community and in the communities of all members who represent that region.

**Mr David Harris:** Wyong?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** And in the member for Wyong's community, of course. This is an issue that must be beyond politics. We must put in place the policies that will see New South Wales electricity consumers get access to the cheapest, most reliable and cleanest form of electricity, which will lead to a manufacturing boom for heavy industry and energy-intensive industries across this State. I believe that with the policies that have been collectively supported by all members of this Chamber—apart from the Shooters and One Nation—we can see the next industrial revolution in New South Wales because we will have a competitive advantage in a new world that is quickly emerging.

Today 50 per cent of the world's GDP is being created in jurisdictions that have committed to net zero emissions. If we can get ahead of the curve by producing those goods and services that the rest of the world will need to meet its carbon objectives, then we will do so in a way that creates jobs, drives investment and underwrites a new era of prosperity for the Hunter and the whole State. That is the objective. I thank every member of this Chamber who got behind those policies, and who put policy, engineering and science at the forefront of decision-making—ahead of ideology and mythology. Unlike the Shooters and One Nation, those members prioritised investment in the future of this State, ensuring that we can see jobs, investment, cheap energy prices and a manufacturing boom like we have never seen before led by the Lake Macquarie and Hunter communities.

#### FLOODS AND TAFE NSW

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:06):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Training. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is supporting communities across the State through TAFE?

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides of the Chamber will remain silent. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (15:06):** I thank the great member for Hawkesbury for her question. I acknowledge her amazing and tireless work in her electorate in recent weeks. Part of her community has been doing it really tough, and they are fortunate to have such a hardworking local member in their corner fighting for them every day. She is not the only one. The member for Clarence is also fighting hard for his community, which has been impacted by the floods—

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** —as well as the great member for Tweed, who is 100 per cent for the Tweed. Last week I was fortunate to spend some time in the Northern Rivers with the member for Tweed to meet our great TAFE staff, who have been instrumental in the response to the floods. They are working hard to get classes back up and running in that area. In Kingscliff the member for Tweed and I met Susie George and her team at TAFE, who turned their campus into an incredible evacuation centre when the community needed it most. Teachers and staff, some of whom had lost everything in the floods, spent days cooking and caring for people who had nowhere to go, using TAFE's commercial kitchen facilities—

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Why did you cut the TAFE course then?

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** You do not want to hear about the great people at TAFE, do you? Why are you always talking down TAFE? Why don't you want to hear about the great people who work for TAFE? Why? Why do you keep talking down TAFE?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the second time. I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time. I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the first time. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the third time. I will hear the point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** If the Leader of the House would refrain from shouting across the Chamber, members may be a bit more orderly.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House will restrain himself, but I make the observation that he was responding to an interjection by the member for Newcastle.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I apologise. I was talking about TAFE staff who have lost their homes in the floods and who have been working day and night to look after their communities. I get a little angry when someone like the member for Newcastle interrupts me while I am praising our hardworking public servant TAFE teachers. It is completely outrageous. It is completely unfounded and so I did get a little bit upset.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time. I call the member for Cabramatta to order for the first time. The member for Newcastle will remove himself from the Chamber for one hour under Standing Order 249A.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Newcastle left the Chamber at 15:11.]*

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Leader of the House was clearly making a personal reflection that is irrelevant to the question. He was making a vexatious and direct attack on the member for Newcastle, who has now been removed for simply trying to defend himself. The Minister provoked him across the table, as the member for Heffron pointed out. I ask that the Minister be called to order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Treasurer to order for the first time. I clarify that the member for Newcastle instigated that exchange; however, Ministers should restrain themselves in those circumstances.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am sorry, but if only the member for Newcastle had the great privilege I had to meet Jamie and Hayley at Kingscliff TAFE and their tourism and hospitality team, who used their skills and the facilities at TAFE to feed their community for a number of days in that evacuation centre—in their hour of greatest need—he would not have been shouting across the Chamber and upsetting me. They are heroes. In this House I was talking about heroes but, unfortunately, Labor members could not help being Labor members. They could not help talking down TAFE and talking down our great teachers at TAFE. The member for Tweed knows what I am saying because he was with his community. It was all hands on deck. It is a shame that members opposite want to talk us down. The great staff at Wollongbar TAFE turned their campus into a headquarters and base camp for the emergency services and defence forces to respond to the floods.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Last week there was still a huge Australian Defence Force presence in Wollongbar when I was there. The vice-chancellor of the Southern Cross University at Lismore, Professor Carlin, has opened up his campus to offer a whole range of supports, including to the Labor member for Lismore, I might add, who has now relocated her office to that campus. On top of that there is a mobile temporary police station, a Service NSW mobile van servicing the community, and the military. That is how our great State tertiary institutions have responded to this crisis. They are not just bricks and mortar. They are community hubs that are doing a great thing for our State.

#### *Documents*

### **LEGAL ADVICE - EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHARGED WITH A CRIMINAL OFFENCE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I table additional papers to the memorandum entitled "Legal advice: Expulsion or suspension of a member of the Legislative Assembly charged with a criminal offence", dated 23 March 2022.

**Documents tabled.**

#### *Committees*

### **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

#### **Reference**

**Mr LEE EVANS:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters has received a referral from the Attorney General to conduct an inquiry into caps on third-party campaigners' electoral expenditure in section 29 (11) and section 35 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

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

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** On behalf of the Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1) and Standing Order 284, I inform the House that the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics has resolved to conduct an inquiry to review the Code of Conduct for Members, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

*Petitions***RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to electronic petitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital—lodged 15 February 2022 (Dr Geoff Lee)

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones—Affordable Housing—lodged 15 February 2022 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Dugald Saunders—Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act—lodged 15 February 2022 (Mr Roy Butler)

*Members***INAUGURAL SPEECH**

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Strathfield, I announce that officers from the office of the Leader of the Opposition have been authorised to take photographs of the member for Strathfield from the side doors of the Chamber during his inaugural speech. I warmly welcome those seated in the Speaker's gallery and the Cooper gallery who are family and friends of the member for Strathfield and are here to watch his inaugural speech. There is a wide range of people, but I particularly acknowledge Meredith Burgmann, former MLC, and Guy Cooper, Janet Cooper, Lucy Cooper, Yasmin Li, Henry Li, Matilda Li, George Li, Pansy Li, Ben Ashton, Emma Cripps and Harry Cripps, who are all family members of the member for Strathfield.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (15:18):** Today was my first experience of an energetic question time. I found it very edifying. I look forward to bringing back peace, tranquillity and high-brow earnestness to the Chamber for the benefit of everybody here and my guests and friends in the public gallery. The story of Strathfield starts with the original owners of our land. My electorate is home to the Wangal clan, which is believed to have inhabited the Strathfield area for over 20,000 years. I acknowledge the clan's traditional custodianship and its ongoing connection to the land, the waterways and the community. I pay my respects to its Elders past, present and future. I extend that respect to all First Nations people.

This is a weighty time to be giving an inaugural speech. At home, the devastation in the Northern Rivers and, abroad, the suffering in Ukraine overshadow everything. When I worked at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, there was a quote from Dr Martin Luther King that we often saw. It read, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." It was a sort of informal motto for our work but also a reminder that we are all connected and that, even though we may live far from disaster, it touches all of us. Just two years ago, we emerged from catastrophic bushfires to confront a global health crisis. To face these challenges, we have relied on the qualities that make modern Australia great.

We found strength together by being connected and worked as a community. We protected our precious social cohesion. We committed to the service of others, with an active role played by government, the community and business. All these qualities—these strengths—define the wonderful electorate of Strathfield, which I am tremendously honoured and proud to represent in this, Australia's first Parliament. I am so grateful to this community that quickly embraced me and my family. By-elections are like speed-dating democracy. The former member for Strathfield and Labor leader, Jodi McKay, came to the electorate with a reputation for unbreakable integrity and tireless commitment. She only strengthened that reputation during her peerless service to the people of Strathfield. That is why Jodi is so loved. I pay tribute to her today.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is not appropriate for visitors in the public gallery to be clapping. I allowed it at the beginning and will allow it at the end, but not during the speech, please.

**Mr JASON LI:** The electorate of Strathfield is like a microcosm of the modern world. We reflect the diversity of Australia in our community, our people, our aspirations, our strengths, as well as our challenges. It is reflected in the diversity of our faith. Whether you are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Tamil, Sikh, Buddhist or any other faith, you will find company and a place for prayer in Strathfield. The people of Strathfield also come

from many socio-economic backgrounds. Alongside the grand mansions of Strathfield, the bustling commercial energy of Burwood and the family-friendly villages of Croydon, Homebush and Enfield, there is also rental stress and homelessness and insecure work and housing.

Given we are so diverse, I ask myself what unites the electorate? What makes us distinctive? What are the unifying aspirations that residents share? What can we offer the State and the country? I believe we are a model, a kind of blueprint for how diversity can be cohesive and united and how it can drive economic dynamism, civic engagement and community resilience. I went to a service at the Intercession of the Holy Virgin, Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Strathfield, in early March. One of the Ukrainian Australian parishioners, with tears in her eyes, asked that I pray for the people of Ukraine, who were her family. Then she asked that I also pray for the Russian people and for the Russian Australians, who were her dear friends. In spite of the horror unfolding in Europe, there was no animus here, no hatred, just great sadness and distress, empathy and love. This is the unifying bond of our Australianness. The protective power of our social cohesion carried us through the darkest days of the COVID lockdowns, when the residents of the Strathfield and Burwood local government areas endured some of the toughest restrictions and curfews. We did our bit, and we did it with a spirit of togetherness, of solidarity and of collective responsibility.

I have spoken before about the special responsibility and challenge of being an Australian of Asian heritage in public office. I say it again: It was not okay that, during the campaign, my volunteers and I were subjected to racist comments that questioned our loyalty to Australia and were whispered into the ears of voters as they approached the polling booth. Our campaign team endured it. I am very thankful that we prevailed, not so much because of me but because the majority of citizens of Strathfield rejected this appeal to bigotry and distrust and saw me for who I am and the values that I represent. I thank the whole community of Strathfield for giving me this opportunity to serve and, most fundamentally in our democracy, for giving me their trust—their democratic trust.

When the first Chinese migrant to Australia, Mak Sai Ying, stepped off the convict ship *Laurel* in Port Jackson in February 1818, he probably thought to himself, "The food here is going to be really horrible." So began the deep and rich history of the Chinese in Australia. It is a very long history. Mak Sai Ying arrived just 10 years after the Rum Rebellion of 1808, eight years after the arrival of Governor Lachlan Macquarie and just two years after this building was built. It would still be 30 years before the gold rushes, 80 years before Federation, 100 years before the Great War, 130 years before the founding of the People's Republic of China and some 140 years before my father, as an international student bound for Sydney, boarded a small vessel in Hong Kong harbour with two suitcases and said goodbye to all that he knew.

Mak Sai Ying worked first as a carpenter at the Newington estate of John Blaxland who, in a serendipitous accident of history and family, is the ancestor of my brother-in-law Andrew Blaxland. He would have been one of the first non-British migrants to Australia and a pioneer for millions of others who came from all corners of the world to call Australia home in the centuries to follow. I often wonder how hard it must have been for him, how alien he must have felt and how resilient he was.

My parents came to Australia in 1960 with nothing but big dreams. This is not just my family's story. It is the story of thousands of residents in the electorate of Strathfield and millions of Australians who came here to build a better life. Having married in Auckland, New Zealand, Mum and Dad returned to Sydney, staying in a hotel in Kings Cross while they searched for a home and Mum applied for teaching jobs. One day as they were walking around the Cross, they met real estate agent John Barraclough, who also happened to be the Liberal member for Bligh in the Askin Government. Seeing the potential of two unattached and clearly clueless voters, he invited Mum and Dad to Parliament the following day, where they sat in this House's public gallery. Barraclough introduced them to the assistant education Minister at the time, the renowned World War II fighter pilot John Lloyd Waddy. Lo and behold, a week later Mum received a telegram advising her to report for duty at Bexley North Public School, where she taught until I was born in 1971. The Askin Government, after all, was known for its efficiency in some matters.

I grew up in a red double-brick house in Bexley, playing with my next-door neighbour, riding our BMX bikes up to the corner store to buy milk bottle lollies or to play the new space invader machines. We played cricket on warm summer afternoons in the middle of the street with an old bat, a tennis ball and those metal rubbish bins that used to line the streets of Sydney. But at school, kids would call me "Ching Chong Chinaman" and laugh at the soy sauce chicken drumsticks that Mum would pack me for lunch.

We did things differently from other Aussie families. We took our shoes off at the front door. We drank hot water, not cold. We showered at night, not in the morning. Dad would engage in guerrilla warfare tactics to pay the restaurant bill before his dinner companions even had a chance to finish their meal. Mum did not bake cakes or scones but made tofu in the kitchen. We only spoke Chinese at home, Mum and Dad knowing that as soon as I went to school I would refuse to speak Chinese because I would just want to fit in. And they were right.

I wished I did not look different and sound different. I asked Mum to make me devon sandwiches with tomato sauce for lunch, like everyone else, and she dutifully made them with white bread stuffed with barbecue pork char siu.

Turning on the TV, watching cricket and rugby league, which I loved, no-one looked like me. The only time you saw Asians on TV were as drug dealers, waiters and kung fu masters but never as leaders, except Bruce Lee. I never felt like I belonged, even though I was born in Australia, and I never thought I would be here in this Parliament. My aspirations were never that high. It is hard to be what you cannot see. Last year an Australian senator demanded that three Chinese Australian citizens appearing before a Senate inquiry denounce a foreign government and affirm their loyalty to Australia purely because of their race. Russian Australians may now also be feeling the same creeping damp of distrust.

With increasing geo-strategic tension, we face a fundamental democratic challenge. But it is not just from foreign actors; it is also an internal challenge for our own liberal democracy. How do we manage geopolitical competition without it fracturing our social cohesion and causing distrust of our own citizens? Distrusting one's own citizens will corrode our democracy from the inside. It is what authoritarian regimes do, not liberal democracies that are confident about who they are. The best way to resist a drift towards authoritarianism is to make our own democracy stronger, more inclusive and more effective. The notion that everyone can belong and have a place, a seat at the table of our democracy, lies at the heart of everything I have done in public life before politics. It underpinned my work in the late 1990s, fighting racism, advocating for multiculturalism and campaigning for an Australian republic. What could be more democratic than the ability of any Australian, regardless of his or her background, to aspire to the highest constitutional office?

It has been a 25-year journey that has led to the great honour of becoming a member of this House. I thank those who have shared it with me. Thank you to my wife, Lucy. You are still my magnetic north after all these years, grounding me in what is important. Nothing that I do is important if I cannot share it with you. To my kids, Yasmin, Henry and Matilda, you are the centre of my universe, my purpose and my courage. I love you guys. To my Mum and Dad, thank you for making me who I am today, for giving me my most fundamental values and for the huge sacrifices you made for me and my sister. To my sister, Peony, and my brother-in-law, Thao, thank you for your boundless generosity. To my parents-in-law, Guy and Jeanette Cooper, thank you for your love and support. I do not think you ever voted Labor before I came along, but I am glad you do now.

I also thank my long-time mentors and friends, Wendy McCarthy, Sam Mostyn, Bob Carr, Tony Burke, Chris Bowen, Meredith Burgmann, Linda Burney and David Dawson, for their always available counsel and support. Thank you to Sam Mattila, who stewarded my reputation for the past 25 years, protected me fiercely and gave me confidence in my own voice. Thank you also to the NSW Labor Party and our Labor movement for embracing me as an outsider in every sense. Thank you to NSW Labor leader Chris Minns and deputy leader Prue Car for making me feel so welcomed and so much a part of our amazing team.

To the many parliamentary colleagues who supported me during the campaign, I am deeply grateful. Not only did you share your advice and your experience with me but also you gave me the most precious thing that a busy politician could give, which is their time. To Bob Nanva, Dom Ofner, George Simon and all of the New South Wales party office, thank you. To Mark Morey from Unions NSW and the members of the trade union movement across the State, thank you. I thank my amazing campaign team and wonderful members of our Labor family from far and wide: John Faker, Karen Pensabene, Kym Ralley, Raj Datta, George Mannah, Cathy Callaghan, Mark Drury, Jo Carlisle, Kath Cummins, Alex Yang, Sherry Xiao, Emma Ross, Sravya Abbineni, Aruna Chandrala, Sharangan Maheswaran, Liam Rankine, Leon Pun, Max Kennedy, Cindy Tan, Jessica Wei, John McManus, Nicholas Faulks, and the hundreds of members of the mighty Strathfield branches and Young Labor.

As I said earlier, Mum was a public school teacher for 40 years before she retired. She instilled in me a fundamental belief in the transformative power of education. That is another way of saying she was a real tiger mum. This is the same belief that brings hundreds of families to Strathfield, attracted by our outstanding schools, and underlies my commitment to the tertiary education sector through my work with the University of Sydney and the George Institute for Global Health. I am a great believer in university research in New South Wales and its importance not only for our future prosperity but also for our State's contribution to tackling humanity's grand challenges. The first person in the world to release the genomic sequence of the COVID-19 virus was University of Sydney's Professor Eddie Holmes. He did that through a research partnership with Fudan University. Without that research and international collaboration, there would be no vaccines.

Dad was a small business battler. I remember the smell of the soldering irons and the metal shavings on his dusty factory floor. I also remember how he treated his staff like family, always making sure that they were paid before he was. He would plead with his customers to pay him on time after the three- to six-month terms they demanded, whilst fending off the bank who threatened to take our home. His customers were far bigger

companies. They would seize the more lucrative servicing contracts and squeezed the margins of small manufacturing subcontractors. Sometimes, they would put their companies into liquidation only to phoenix them again, and Dad would get nothing.

I got a lot of my Labor values through experiencing the hard-hearted factory floor, not as a worker but as a business owner. I believe that the Labor Party can, and should be, the party of small business, contractors and the self-employed, as we evolve from outdated concepts of class to an inclusive narrative about power and aspiration. In other words, we bat not only for employees and the disadvantaged but also for anyone facing unequal power in society as they chase their dreams—for tradies and owner-operators sick of being done over as subcontractors; for retail share investors who are fleeced when powerful insiders manipulate share prices and benefit from privileged information; for migrants who come here with no contacts, no family and no local knowledge; for women standing against sexism and harassment in the workplace; for young professionals facing unaffordable housing, insecure work and unequal bargaining power. The local shopping strips in my electorate are still graveyards of small business—not only suburban retail but also tourism, the creative industries and the arts, education and training. We must do more to support our small businesses.

I commend the New South Wales Government for its Net Zero Plan and its Hydrogen Strategy, but I must ask: How do the commercial opportunities of net zero and hydrogen flow to small- and medium-sized businesses and not just to billionaires and large corporates? And with the growth of megacities around the world—dynamic clusters of economic activity and connected networks of capital, people and information, and ambitious populations of hundreds of millions—where does Sydney fit in? Where do we plug into this, so that our small- and medium-sized businesses are not left out in the cold?

Twenty years ago I led the sustainability team at a major Australian insurance company. We explored how the business model of insurance meant that what was good for the community—fewer road accidents, less illness and injury, less property damage—was also good for the company because it resulted in fewer claims. Twenty years ago, we modelled the impacts of climate change on extreme weather events such as bushfires, storms and floods. Twenty years ago we warned of the catastrophic future consequences of inaction. Now, 20 years of policy failure has meant the future has arrived. If there has been one common lesson from the pandemic, the bushfires and the floods, it is that community solidarity, being in it together, is central to our national character. From border closures to lockdowns, wage subsidies and the willingness to get vaccinated, there is strong public support for collective responsibility and for government leadership directing and correcting the market if necessary. People need and want strong institutions.

In corollary, small government and rugged individualism offered no real solutions to the COVID pandemic or to other crises. It was, at best, impotent; at worst, dangerous. It is very hard to get the image out of one's mind of citizens rescuing their neighbours from the roofs of submerged houses in canoes and dinghies. Yet, some are now urging us to regard the pandemic, the bushfires and the floods as anomalies, regrettable exceptions, one-in-100-year events. They want us to see this period of mutual support and solidarity as an idealistic fever dream, to be shaken off as fast as possible, so we can get back to business as usual, with a weakening of government and everyone looking out for themselves. The so-called "freedom" narrative can be superficially appealing. After all, none of us want lockdowns again. But it misses a fundamental point: The wicked challenges facing our society are not going away. COVID and pandemics are here to stay. So too is climate change and the extreme weather it brings, the disruption to entire industries from technological change in the fourth industrial revolution, and the rewiring of global supply chains and centres of economic activity—and we need government leadership and capability to manage these challenges and opportunities together.

What we need is not an individual freedom narrative, but a narrative of community resilience. We have seen how the community has stepped up in responding to crisis and disaster. In Strathfield, in the darkest days of lockdown, who delivered food to families who had no income? It was community associations, like St Mercurious Charity, Cottage Kitchen and St Paul's Parish Pantry. This should trigger an epiphany in how we govern our society and institutions. Government and organisations alike must embrace not just efficiency and growth, but also resilience and sustainability as core organising principles. We must invest in and build our care infrastructure and the capability of our public service and community sectors. To meet the massive and increasingly complex challenges of our society today, government must not only partner with the community and business but also lead and enable those partnerships. Because, with climate change upon us, neither COVID, nor the 2020 bushfires, nor the recent floods will be the last nor the greatest emergencies that we will face together.

I come to this House as a businessman, lawyer and community advocate. I have never been a politician before and, to be honest, I am not entirely sure how to be one. For me, being here is not a job and it is not a career—it is service. I regard all of you here as my colleagues, for whom I have great respect. We are all driven by just causes that are bigger than us and, in the words of Simon Sinek, we pursue "something that is infinite"—for all intents and purposes, unattainable. I hope to learn from you, to collaborate and, where we disagree, to

disagree well. I finish with three aspirations for all of us: first, that we can be non-ideological problem-solvers for our constituents and collaborate to tackle the great challenges that only broad-based collaboration can solve; second, that we can make this place genuinely representative of the community, so that any one of our kids can see themselves reflected in our leadership and can genuinely believe that they can belong here in Australia; and, third, and most fundamentally, that we can rebuild the public's trust in politics and politicians.

Last week, when visiting a high school in my electorate, two girls ran up to me for a photo. One was Asian and the other one Eurasian, like my kids. They said to me, "We are really proud of you. It's good to see some representation!" If I achieve nothing else in politics but to inspire a few more young people who are wondering where and whether they belong, that they can and should be leaders in our Australian democracy, then I will be happy. Thank you.

*Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.*

**The SPEAKER:** I join the House in congratulating the member for Strathfield on his speech.

*Addresses*

### **HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:45):** Before the debate was adjourned I was discussing the 1954 visit of Her Majesty to Sydney and New South Wales. I noted that more than half the population of Sydney, according to the census at the time, turned out to greet her—something that I suspect will never be repeated in a single event held here. The 1954 royal tour was a much-anticipated event. Planning had commenced in 1949 for King George VI, Elizabeth's father, to visit Australia and New Zealand. However, due to the King's ill health and an impending operation, it was decided that he would be unable to visit the Antipodes as planned. Instead, the then Princess Elizabeth and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, would come in his place.

As I noted earlier, the King's death in 1952 saw that planned tour interrupted. By the time Elizabeth II came to Australia, of course, she was no longer Princess Elizabeth; she was our Queen. At the time, the royal tour of 1954 was the single biggest event ever planned in Australia. It was organised in the days before emails and mobile phones. Official printed programs stated that all those responsible for an event were to synchronise their watches with the ABC time signals at 9.00 a.m. each day. The royals visited 57 towns and cities during the 58 days they spent in Australia, which is an awesome number. They traversed the country by plane, train, ship and car, from Cairns in the north to Broken Hill in the west to Hobart in the south.

They attended 28 major programs during their 10 days in New South Wales, with events scheduled for the morning, afternoon and evening. Queen Elizabeth's days varied from the cultural, watching a surf lifesaving demonstration at Bondi Beach; to the civic, addressing 107,000 schoolchildren at three outdoor venues; to the constitutional, opening a session of this very Parliament. While Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh were on tour, their schedule was not that of tourists relaxing but of hardworking people in public service, striving to make contact with and make themselves available to as many Australians as possible in the time that their schedule allowed.

One cause that Her Majesty has passionately supported is the promotion of the fellowship of nations represented by the Commonwealth. Her father, the late George VI, oversaw the emergence of the Commonwealth from the former empire, recognising a new and respectful relationship between the former colonies and dominions and Great Britain. Their shared heritage and aspirations provided common ground for collaboration. The Commonwealth is a unique grouping of 54 developed and developing nations spread over every continent and ocean in the world. Its membership reflects many religions, races, languages and cultures, and its combined population of over two billion people accounts for approximately 30 per cent of the world's population. Over 3.3 million Australians were born in other Commonwealth countries.

The values and aspirations that unite the members of the Commonwealth—democracy, human rights and the rule of law—are reflected in the Charter of the Commonwealth adopted in December 2012. The charter expresses the commitment of Commonwealth members to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity. The Commonwealth has observed more than 140 elections in nearly 40 countries since 1980. It has been a passion of Queen Elizabeth II that this good work undertaken by the Commonwealth extends as far, as wide and as deep as possible to ensure that the citizens of all of those countries can enjoy as prosperous, as safe and as free a life as possible.

Australians have been fortunate beyond measure to be able to enjoy the peace, stability, opportunity and prosperity that citizenship of this country has entailed since Federation. A significant factor in providing the conditions in which our communities are able to flourish has been the political foundation provided by our



constitutional monarchy. While in many respects Australia's system of government has evolved rather than being planned or designed—and it is almost certainly not one that would be proposed by political scientists if the nation were beginning from a blank canvas today—the system has proven to be exceptional in delivering the personal freedom, safety, security, cohesion and certainty that are prerequisites for the flourishing of a society and economy. It has been noted that the accidental genius at the core of the system is the position of the monarch, who has immense moral authority but zero political power. Political power can emerge only through the democratic process, but it exists within the bounds of both explicit constitutional constraint and implicit conventions arising from our political evolution.

It concerns me that knowledge of our system of government is lacking within our community, particularly among younger generations. We can be informed citizens and participate fully in our democracy only if we appreciate why that democracy takes the form that it does. This royal jubilee should be an occasion to refresh our understanding of the role played by the constitutional monarchy within our democratic system of government. While the constitutional arrangements do not depend on the personality or identity of the monarch of the day, there can be no doubt that the manner in which Her Majesty has carried out her duties has done nothing but enhance the effectiveness of those arrangements.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II understandably travels far less these days than was the case in earlier years. Her extensive travel throughout the Commonwealth and elsewhere over the years has been one of the hallmarks of her reign. Those trips included a remarkable 16 visits to Australia, including the memorable occasion in 1973 when she officially opened the Sydney Opera House. Her many visits to Commonwealth countries enabled her to play a part in deepening the relationships between member countries and fostering the development of democratic institutions throughout the Commonwealth. I conclude by simply congratulating Her Majesty on the occasion of her seventieth jubilee and offering my sincere thankyou for her conscientious service.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:52):** It gives me the greatest of pleasures to congratulate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on her platinum jubilee. The Queen has undoubtedly been a steadfast pillar of stability for many years, not only in her country of England and her representation of Britain and the United Kingdom but also throughout the Commonwealth. She is recognised around the world as a phenomenal figure of leadership who has seen peacetimes and wartimes—an incredible history over her almost a century of life. She was thrust into the job quite unexpectedly, and she has done nothing less than give her all—her complete and utter dedication to the role. She continues to do that to this day, and she is to be commended for that. I take the opportunity to do so and also to outline some of the reasons why I am such a supporter of the monarchy. I will endeavour to do that over the next few minutes.

Officially, the Queen celebrated her platinum jubilee on 6 February this year and she remains the longest serving English or British monarch, the longest serving incumbent monarch and the fourth longest serving sovereign monarch in our history. Until the age of 10, the likelihood of her ever becoming queen was quite minute. However, this changed with the 1936 abdication of her uncle King Edward VIII. Not too many people in this Chamber will remember that time. It was a long time ago. It was something that my parents remembered quite well. It was an extraordinary moment in history because I do not know whether an abdication had ever happened in the history of the British monarchy. It was certainly something the world was not accustomed to. Once someone became a king or a queen, their life was virtually locked in to committing to that particular role until they eventually passed away and the throne was handed down to their successors.

Looking back to that particular time, the media was quite incredible. Edward had a relationship with an American divorcee—how times have changed—by the name of Wallis Simpson. He chose to live his life with her as opposed to serving the Crown. These days a lot of people would say that everyone has the right to choose what they do in life. Love can sometimes take us in a myriad of different directions. It certainly took King Edward VIII in a direction that was not his chosen path. He was the successor to the throne and should have been the king of England until his death and the throne then passed to his successor. But that was not what happened.

King Edward VIII abdicated and his brother Prince Albert, who would become King George VI, went on to be a well-loved king, despite the fact that—as we saw in that wonderful film *The King's Speech*—he had a significant speech impediment and was embarrassed by speaking publicly. But, as we know from the famous role that Geoffrey Rush played in the film, that was rectified by an Australian person who helped to reduce his stammer. King George VI served his country well until, sadly, his untimely death, which thrust Elizabeth—or Lilibet as he famously called her, and as she is known by her family—his eldest daughter, onto the throne. In the years preceding her ascension, Her Majesty served very humbly in the Auxiliary Territorial Service as a driver and mechanic throughout the Second World War and, despite her honorific ranks, was quite comfortable working alongside the service men and women within her regiment. In 1947 she married Prince Philip and remained by his side until Philip's death only last year.

I put onto the record that I support the monarchy for the reasons of tradition, heritage and the historical fact that our country was settled by Europeans in 1788. In that first group of 700 convicts, now colloquially known as Australian royalty, were my family. Joseph Wright, who was a convict aboard the *Scarborough* which arrived here in 1788, was very fortunate to be given a land rank, ironically, at Mulgrave on the banks of the Hawkesbury River. From that point in time, sadly, until now, my family has lived in The Hills and Hawkesbury areas—I say "sadly" because of the onslaught of many hundreds of floods that have affected those areas—which were predominantly prime farming land. For well over a century and a half they were wonderful producing areas for the growing colony of Sydney, until other land was ultimately made more viable and predictable in terms of its weather.

Joseph Wright, my first ancestor who arrived here in 1788, married a lady by the name of Eleanor Gott, who arrived aboard the *Neptune* in the Second Fleet—a traumatic fleet that cost the lives of so many convicts. They married and had five children. One of those children was a lady by the name of Mary Wright. Mary Wright would go on, at the very young age of 15, to marry a person by the name of Robert Allen, another one of my ancestors. He arrived here in 1796 aboard the *Marquis Cornwallis*. They would go on to have three children. James, one of their children, built a stone house on land granted to the family in 1814 on Castle Hill Road. My grandmother Martha Grace Allen had that stone house moved. In the 1930s her brother Reg moved it by horse and cart to Round Corner, where it proudly sits today. It is known as Allen House on Old Northern Road, Dural. That is a bit of history about my background.

As I said before, my staunch support of the monarchy is because our system of governance was very much shaped by the system of governance and democracy underneath the Commonwealth. That democracy and system of governance, as we know it today, standing in this very historic Parliament, was founded on those quite distinct foundations from the British Commonwealth, and that system of governance and democracy serves us to this day. It has served our country very well. There have been arguments in the past, and there will be arguments that will carry on for many years to come, as to why this country does not become a republic. I think one of the failures of that particular argument is what system of governance or leadership would we have?

Who should be our head of state, if it is not the Queen or the Queen's representative in our Governor-General and our various Governors in each State? Who will be our head of state? How will that head of state be chosen? Will it be a political representation? What will our system of governance look like? They are all the questions where I think the republican argument for this country has failed because, at the end of the day, people look at what we have got. They look at the freedoms that we enjoy. They look at this incredible country, which has embraced multiculturalism. Almost 50 per cent of the people in our country were either born overseas or have family members born overseas. It has been by far the most successful diversion and migration of people from all four corners of the globe who have come to settle in this country.

We are only a little over 200 years old. As I said to the many people whom I met when I was the Minister for Multiculturalism, we all have skin in the game. It does not matter where you come from. Our country is not finished; our country is very much in the early stages of being formed and shaped. Everyone who is here now, and everyone who comes here in the future, is helping to shape this country; however, it sits under a system of governance and democracy that was derived from the Commonwealth system. Sitting at the top of that governance system are our kings or queens, and in this case Queen Elizabeth II.

The death of Queen Elizabeth's father, King George VI, while she was in Kenya rocked Her Majesty. She was tremendously fond of her father and regarded his accidental rise to the throne as having a significant impact on his health and his subsequent passing. All of this is to say that, by the time she ascended in 1952 at the tender age of 25, Her Majesty had already been through a great deal. I remember a story I was told while representing this Parliament on a trip to England in 2007. As we know, there has to be a separation of the monarchy and the people's Parliament. The monarch is never allowed to enter the people's Parliament. We have exactly the same system here to this day. However, the monarch can sit in the House of Lords, or the upper House as we refer to it.

The story I was told was that Queen Elizabeth, at the tender of age of 15, visited the British Parliament—which I was pleased to look around—with her school and sat in the public gallery of the House of Commons. If the same thing had happened to her as happened to King Charles I, she would have been beheaded. It was lucky that she was there for a fleeting moment and nobody discovered there was a member of the royal family seated in the House of Commons, albeit in the public gallery. I thought it was an extraordinary story. It is just another rare aspect of her particular reign.

Her reign from the point when she took the throne has been one of triumph and difficulty; however, she has maintained her distinction and grace throughout. She has ruled over the Commonwealth in a reign that has included the swift decolonisation of much of the new world; The Troubles of the 1970s, including the assassination of her uncle-in-law, Lord Louis Mountbatten; the social uprisings of the 1980s; and her annus horribilis of 1992, with the fire in Buckingham Palace and the issue of how the repairs would be paid for. I think that was the first

time she was ever questioned—when she expected the taxpayers of Great Britain to pay for those repairs. The people rose up and were quite annoyed. She ultimately incurred the cost herself, which alleviated some of the problems within Britain and calmed the taxpayers, who felt that they had paid enough to the monarchy. They may well have been correct, and it was quite appropriate that she paid for the extensive repairs, which ran into many millions of dollars. But she ensured that fascinating piece of historical heritage was rebuilt.

Queen Elizabeth faced a swathe of other difficulties, most notably the death of her daughter-in-law Princess Diana. We all remember that. Throughout it all, Her Majesty has maintained a stoicism and surety that she has become well known for. This is not to the exclusion of her magnificent sense of humour and the wit and optimism with which she has lived her entire life. One of the constants throughout her life was the presence of her mother, Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, or the Queen Mother, who remained by her side until her passing in 2002, seven weeks after Princess Margaret passed away. Princess Margaret was a significant figure when the world was watching the two young princesses grow. She was perhaps viewed as being a bit more on the wild side than Elizabeth was, but she was a much-loved figure who undertook her representative duties around the world. She was both revered and well loved, as Queen Elizabeth II is.

Both of those ladies were Her Majesty's closest friends and provided welcome support throughout the aforementioned difficulties in her life. It would be remiss of me not to mention Her Majesty's children, Charles, Anne, Andrew and Edward; her grandchildren, William, Harry, Peter Phillips, Zara Tindall, Princess Beatrice, Princess Eugenie, Lady Louise Windsor and James Viscount Severn; and her great-grandchildren, George, Charlotte, Louis, Archie, Lilibet, Savannah, Isla, Mia, Lena, Lucas, Sienna and August. Several of those relatives have caused controversy in recent times, often exaggerated by a heavy-handed and demanding British press. But that is nothing new for the Royal Family.

Despite the waning popularity of certain family members, Her Majesty remains as popular as ever. It is a testament to the Queen that the love the British public has for her is so enduring. The British royal family is one of very few monarchies that survived the global machinations of the twentieth century and one of very few Western monarchies that retains any notable power as head of State. I leave the Parliament with the words that Her Majesty spoke on her twenty-first birthday in a Commonwealth-wide broadcast. She said:

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

It is certainly fair to say that Her Majesty has achieved what she set out to do and continues to do so to this day. God save the Queen.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:12):** I congratulate Queen Elizabeth II who, on 6 February this year, became the first British monarch to celebrate a platinum jubilee. This marks 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the realms and the Commonwealth. When Queen Elizabeth was born, being the daughter of the youngest son of King George V, there was little prospect that she would accede to the throne. It was not until her uncle Edward VIII abdicated in her father's favour in 1936 that her father, King George VI, became the king and she became the heir presumptive. The Queen was educated privately at home. She was supervised by her mother, Queen Elizabeth, also known as the Queen Mother, who had her and her sister taught by governess Marion Crawford. She was grounded in history by Sir Clarence Henry Kennett Marten and instructed in music and language by visiting teachers. She began to undertake public duties during the Second World War by serving in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

On 20 November 1947 Elizabeth was married in Westminster Abbey to the late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. After only five years of marriage, her father, King George VI, passed away on 6 February 1952, and thus began her reign as queen. At the age of 25 most of us would only just be starting to find our footing in our jobs, in our personal lives and in the world. Elizabeth was taking on the responsibility of being queen regnant of seven independent Commonwealth countries and Head of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth of Nations is a group of 54 independent countries, most of which are former colonies of the British Empire, that work together to promote socio-economic and cultural ties among themselves. The Commonwealth of Nations alone is estimated to account for a third of the world's population. As Head of the Commonwealth, the Queen has been instrumental in bringing socio-economic benefits to those countries; this includes the Commonwealth Games, which is a global event that helps promote cooperation amongst the 54 nations.

Queen Elizabeth is the most widely travelled head of state, having made hundreds of state visits to other countries and tours of the Commonwealth. After her coronation on 2 June 1953, the Queen and her husband embarked on a seven-month tour around the world, visiting 13 countries. Elizabeth was the first reigning monarch of Australia and New Zealand to visit those nations. During that trip to Australia she was followed by crowds, and it is estimated that three-quarters of the Australian population saw her. Queen Elizabeth is the longest lived and longest reigning British monarch, the longest serving female head of state in history, the oldest living and

longest reigning current monarch and the oldest and longest serving incumbent head of state. It is exhausting just to think about it. She has carried herself in a manner that befits a true monarch. Her ability to keep up with the changing times has earned her enormous praise from all over the world. In her length of reign, she beats her great-grandmother Queen Victoria, who is the second longest reigning monarch. It speaks volumes for a monarch to be regarded in the same light as Queen Victoria.

As well as being a queen, Elizabeth is a wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She is the mother of four children: Charles, Prince of Wales; Anne, Princess Royal; Andrew, Duke of York; and Edward, Earl of Wessex. She has eight grandchildren and a growing number of great-grandchildren. During her 70-year reign the Queen has seen horse-drawn carriages, the first landing on the moon, terrorist attacks, wars, riots, diseases and pandemics. She has been subject to many criticisms regarding her family and her decisions as a queen and has suffered many hardships over her reign. In a speech to mark her ruby jubilee in 1992, she called that year her "annus horribilis", which translates to "horrible year". During that year Windsor Castle caught fire, the marriages of her three oldest children floundered and the royal family was very heavily criticised. However, she continued to carry herself with decorum. She rose above the criticisms of the press and guided her family into brighter days.

Queen Elizabeth has also, on occasion, had cause to fear for her life. In 1981 a 17-year-old man fired six shots at the Queen, who was riding a horse during the Trooping the Colour ceremony in London. The shots were, fortunately, blank and the Queen was not harmed. Later that year the Queen's life again came under threat when she visited Dunedin in New Zealand. A 17-year-old man fired a single shot from an empty toilet stall in a building close to where the Queen's convoy passed. Fortunately, the young man missed and he was immediately apprehended by the police. During both those incidents the Queen showed a remarkable level of composure.

I and others look upon the Queen as our sovereign. The institution that she represents has given Western democracies a thousand years of stable service. The Queen is a true leader and role model for women. She has dedicated her life to her position and has made great personal sacrifices for the state. She never ceased to inject high doses of commitment and passion into her job. A true matriarch of the royal family, Elizabeth has been responsible for making the monarchy once again relevant to the ideals and aspirations of the newer generations on social media. For example, she has kept up with the trends of the fast-changing internet environment. In 1997 she launched a website that details the charitable activities and works of the royal family.

During her reign Queen Elizabeth II has dedicated much of her time to different charities. She has truly made an impact that deserves respect in the field of charity and philanthropy. Her presence as a patron of any charity brings to it a level of awareness, respect and funding. Over 600 charities and causes have had the honour of receiving the Queen's patronage. Queen Elizabeth's 70-year reign is one to be admired and looked upon. How many of us can say that we have worked in the same job for 70 years? She has shown poise, integrity, resilience and stability. She is phenomenal in her own right, not just because of her position and title. Even now, at the age of 95, the Queen is unfortunately experiencing COVID-19, but is continuing with light duties. Her sense of work ethic and duty is something for all of us to aspire to. There is a stiffness about the royal family that she carries out very well. No matter what challenge is thrown towards her, she rises above the problem and handles herself with wonderful decorum. As the British say, "Keep calm and carry on". Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth does that so well. I thank her for her service to date. Here's to her good health in the years ahead.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:21):** I wish to make a contribution to debate on the address to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her platinum jubilee. For 70 years the Queen's leadership has been absolutely magnificent. Never have we seen a monarch serve for so long. One can just imagine the number of Prime Ministers and governments that she has counselled and the number of interesting conversations that have gone on inside the palace. It has been quite amazing to watch her leadership. For many years we have had lots of debate in this country about becoming a republic. But the Queen's leadership has been solid. She has served for many, many years in such a gracious way.

Obviously, the tragic death of her father brought her early to the throne. I and my wife became kind of hooked on *The Crown* series when it came out a few years ago. When I had the privilege of working for Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Caroline, her media spokesperson at the time, was a former media adviser for Buckingham Palace, and they approved the first series of *The Crown*. It is a magnificent series on Netflix and I urge any MP in this Chamber, if they have not watched the series, to go and watch it. It is a wonderful series to watch and is very entertaining. Yes, a few home truths come out in it—every family has their issues—but I think the Queen has done well.

I raise a toast to the Queen of Australia, Queen Elizabeth II, on reaching her historic milestone of 70 years since her ascension to the throne, on 6 February this year. For the Queen, the day is bittersweet as it also marks the anniversary of the passing of her father, King George VI. It was while the young Elizabeth and her husband,

Prince Philip, were on a private visit to Kenya, en route to Australia—totally in their element on safari—that she received the sad news and became Queen at 25 years of age in 1952.

A year later, in 1953, she was crowned in Westminster Abbey and made her coronation oath, part of which was to govern the people of Australia. Over that time, she made many royal tours. The young and glamorous Queen first graced our shores at Farm Cove in Sydney on 3 February 1954, aged 27, and famously travelled the length and breadth of our beautiful country, meeting a whopping 75 per cent of the Australian population. That is pretty huge. I do not know many political leaders who could do that. I know that most members of Parliament would love to meet 75 per cent of their electorate in a short period of time.

Putting herself out there in campaign efforts, the young and glamorous Queen shamed us all, covering 10,000 miles in the air by taking 33 flights and covering 2,000 miles by road in 207 separate car trips, visiting all State capitals except for Darwin, and visiting 70 country towns via special royal trains. I am very lucky and privileged in the electorate of Wollondilly to have the NSW Rail Museum, probably the best museum in the country. The museum has the largest amount of heritage trains in the country.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** Toot, toot!

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** Yes. "Toot, toot, all aboard!", as my good friend Justin Owen would say. He is also a good friend of the member for Willoughby and the director of Norths Collective, which is trying to bring the North Sydney Bears back to the NRL. At this wonderful museum, people can not only visit the trains but also ride on a steam train and take a trip through time back to the glory days of steam. Those steam trains are a beautiful use of coal, I must say. It is wonderful stuff. During the election campaign in 2019 I was lucky enough to get an extra \$5.5 million to rejuvenate the line between Buxton and Colo Vale. It goes through Hill Top, which is the deepest rail cutting in the Southern Hemisphere. I bet members did not know that. It is very exciting.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** What does this have to do with the Queen?

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** I am getting back to the Queen. We also got an extra \$9.1 million, so altogether there was \$14.6 million for this beautiful project to rejuvenate heritage rail. The museum, which is based in my electorate at Thirlmere, houses the Governor-General's carriage, which is the carriage that the Queen and Prince Philip rode in in 1954. We treasure this carriage so much that if there is a bushfire and the museum goes up, the first order in the fire plan is to get that carriage to safety.

The Thirlmere Festival of Steam is coming up from 25 to 26 June. I had put it on my Facebook earlier this year but it was postponed because of the recent bad weather. It is a wonderful festival that brings in roughly 30,000 people. We have not held one since 2019 because of COVID and lockdowns, so I encourage everyone to come and visit the Queen's carriage. It is one of the most comfortable carriages ever made. It is made of 300 timber panels of English oak and Australian cedar, individually hand carved and depicting the botanical specimens of New South Wales. Australian flora is also featured on the glass panels. It is a wonderful carriage. All members of Parliament are most welcome to use their Dine & Discover vouchers to visit the Thirlmere museum and that wonderful carriage.

Her Majesty has done so much for this country. I have more I could say, such as the way Menzies spoke about her and the wonderful leadership that she has shown, but I would like to sum up by toasting the Queen. Australians have a deep respect and affection for the Queen. She is a constant presence in an ever-changing landscape of drought, storms, flood, fires and COVID. She is a symbol of wisdom, strength and endurance and a role model of service and self-sacrifice. At the same time, we all feel we know the Queen personally.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION**

#### **Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council that the Hon. Catherine Cusack has been appointed as a member of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission in place of the Hon. Don Harwin, resigned.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (16:30):** Australia Day is a day to reflect on the remarkable qualities of

our great nation. On this day we celebrate those who have made outstanding contributions to their community as well as our newest citizens. In my electorate there were seven recipients of Australia Day honours, including Dr Geoffrey Herkes, AM, from Pymble, for significant service to medicine as a neurologist, to medical research and to professional associations; Mrs Philippa Bloomfield, OAM, from Turrumurra, for service to youth through Girl Guides; Mr Ian Frame, OAM, from South Turrumurra, for service to the community through a range of organisations; Mrs Louise Mahoney, OAM, from Wahroonga, for service to the community through charitable organisations; Ms Lydia Sharpin, OAM, from Wahroonga, for service to the community through a range of organisations; Ms Sally Ruston, AM, from Wahroonga, for dedication and service to primary education and professional associations; and the late Mr David Timms, OAM, formerly of Turrumurra, for service to the minerals sector. I congratulate each of them on their outstanding contributions to our nation, reflecting our greatest qualities and values.

#### **WOMEN IN GOLD INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FESTIVAL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:31):** The Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum [IAUGF], in conjunction with CORE Community Services, hosted the Women in Gold International Women's Day Festival on Sunday 13 March 2022. In true fashion, the event was full of colour and style, with a spectacular Golden Women Show showcasing traditional handmade Iraqi costumes. Also on display were art and craft works from local south-western Sydney Iraqi women. The gathering was entertained by the Heavenly Angels Ballet Group. It was an honour to present achievement awards to Iraqi women for their continued contributions to the community in social welfare, health and education. Congratulations to the IAUGF organising committee for hosting the event and acknowledging the achievement of local women. Happy International Women's Day!

#### **CENTRAL COAST LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:32):** Recently the Central Coast had its 2022 Local Business Awards. The awards highlighted businesses that were nominated by their customers. For the third time, George's Fruit Barn in Terrigal took out the top spot in the Fruit and Vegetable Shop category. I was honoured to talk with owner Marie George, who was also a nominee in the Terrigal Local Woman of the Year Awards, and hear about the range of quality products George's Fruit Barn offers. Its fruit and vegetables are second to none. Marie also owns and operates another business, which took out the winning spot in the New Business category. Green View Gallery in Kincumber features fine art created by over 20 locals, including new artists. The gallery also features gifts, ladies fashion and accessories, and homewares. I congratulate Marie on her incredible contribution to our community and local employment, and also her contribution to local business support across the Central Coast, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was a very worthy nominee for Terrigal Woman of the Year.

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

#### **PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE FLOODS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:33):** Like many areas of our State, Port Stephens has been impacted by damaging floods over recent weeks. Our SES crews were out assisting residents from the very start, responding to over 100 unique requests for assistance. This work included evacuations, sandbagging, fodder drops, medical resupply, animal rescues and even assisting people to access important medical appointments. The township of Hinton was one of the most affected areas of Port Stephens, effectively becoming an island. When Hinton became cut off for a number of days, the orange angels were on hand, helping our community when they needed it the most and even ensuring that the pub did not run out of beer. I ask the Parliament to recognise those Port Stephens SES members who were on deck during the floods: Adam Ferrando, Bruce Gendre, Ethan Hansen, Gregory Smith, Levi Lewis, Raymond Morrow, Alysha Springett, David Cockbain, Ewin Lewis, Jessica Lichtwark, Michael Lee, Stuart O'Brien, Andrew Aldis, David Douglas, Graham Brewer, Joanne Pearce and Pamela Sharp. They were all volunteers, working hard. I thank them one and all.

#### **NEPEAN MEN'S SHED**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (16:34):** The Nepean Men's Shed was tasked with the job of making a presentation box from the timber of a 70-year-old pin oak tree that had been uprooted in the grounds of Government House. Unbeknown to its members, the box was to be used to hold a bottle of gin and to be personally delivered to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth for her platinum jubilee as a gift from the people of New South Wales. During the making of the box Nepean Men's Shed members were not aware of the intended purpose of the box until Her Excellency the Hon Margaret Beazley, AC, QC, Governor of New South Wales, visited them to inform them of the purpose and significance of their work. Of particular note is the work by Farshid Mahmoudi. A man of Iranian background, Mr Mahmoudi lived in Japan for seven years prior to becoming an Australian citizen and learnt Japanese traditional arts and crafts and woodworking. He was instrumental in the

making of this box. This is a wonderful achievement for the men of the Nepean Men's Shed and we should all be very proud of them.

#### **ACCOUNTANT TONY VIDRAY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:35):** I congratulate a very valuable member of the Maitland community, Mr Tony Vidray, on achieving 40 years in the accounting profession. I also say a very deep thankyou to Tony for the support he has provided to hundreds, if not thousands, of business owners across the Hunter. I am honoured and grateful to have shared in the celebration of this significant career milestone with Tony and colleagues at The Executive Connection. It was an honour to share our experiences as CEOs through The Executive Connection, and I know from the important and insightful comments that Tony has made about the various issues raised in our group over the years that he is a thoroughly decent human being, who always gives more than he takes. His business contribution stands alone as impressive but, in the face of his contribution to community, it is outstanding. His lived experience and advocacy for Angelman syndrome has raised awareness across Australia and internationally. His positivity in the face of challenges, his commitment and his dedication show in all aspects of his life. I commend Tony for his dedication to his family, his profession and our Maitland community.

#### **NORTH SHORE ADULT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER SIMONE SHORT**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:36):** I recognise Mosman local Simone Short, who was awarded the North Shore Adult Volunteer of the Year Award for 2021 for her work with the Gidget Foundation. The Gidget Foundation was created in 2001 after Simone's sister Louise sadly lost her life to suicide after silently battling with postnatal depression and anxiety. I once again offer my condolences to Simone and her entire family for that loss. I commend Simone, her friends and her family for all their work to raise awareness and break the stigma surrounding postnatal depression. Congratulations on receiving this well-deserved award. For over 20 years, the Gidget Foundation has been providing essential awareness and perinatal support for women in need to help prevent them suffering in silence from postnatal depression and anxiety. Most importantly, the foundation also brings women together through support programs to keep them connected with a network who can help them through their battles. I thank Simone, the entire team and the volunteers at the Gidget Foundation, which is headquartered in my community of North Sydney, for all the amazing work they do to support women.

#### **REDHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS NIXON SHERRY AND SACHI SCOWEN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:37):** Like many of us, 10-year-old Nixon Sherry was deeply saddened by news coverage of the flood emergency in northern New South Wales. The Redhead Public School student wanted to do something for the people who had been forced to leave home suddenly and without warning. Teaming up with her best friend, Sachi Scowen, she launched an appeal. Supported by class 5T, their teacher Mrs Thomas and all the Redhead Public School community, it took just a day for a large pile of non-perishable goods to start to arrive. The goods, which included everything from nappies to canned goods, toothbrushes and two-minute noodles, have been delivered to my office and will be part of a shipment north next week. I am in awe of what Nixon and Sachi were able to organise in such a short amount of time, driven only by their compassion and desire to help, supported by their friends and community. Thank you to Nixon and Sachi, Mrs Thomas, the Redhead Public School community, all those who donated, and all the many wonderful individuals and community groups who are doing their part to make sure the people affected in northern New South Wales are supported.

#### **THARAWAL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (16:38):** I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of the Tharawal Primary School on their appointment. Tharawal Primary School is a wonderful community of caring and hardworking students. Led by outstanding principal Gerry O'Brien, the teaching and support staff work hard to support their students throughout their education journey. Tharawalians are known for their sense of fun and these incredible students always welcome everyone to their school with open arms as they learn and grow together. The 2022 leadership team truly embody the values that make Tharawal Primary School such a wonderful place to learn and grow. I congratulate school captains Kobe Manu and Isla Crowther and vice captains Jackson Browne and Indiana Tarasoff, along with prefects Ellis Cohen and Abbey Sandgren, on their successful appointments. To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I look forward to seeing the opportunities they embrace throughout the year. I commend the student leaders from Tharawal Primary School for their success and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

### ALL OCCASION FLOWERS

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:39):** Recently I was invited to officially open the new premises of a fantastic Port Kembla business—All Occasion Flowers. It takes a lot of work to get a new small business premises up and running, and some of the work was only completed on the afternoon of the opening. But it was great to see so many other Port Kembla business operators, customers and supporters of the business gathered to celebrate the opening. Owned and operated by Renay Horton and her sister Dallas, All Occasion Flowers opened its new shop in the middle of Small Business Month and during celebrations surrounding International Women's Day—a fitting time for a business started and grown by a passionate local woman to launch a revamped offering to its customers. When Renay first sought to open her business several years ago, she was laughed at by her bank, so she did it without bank support and in a location where people said she could not make a go of it. But make a go of it she most certainly has. She has a loyal customer base of locals and local businesses and has become a passionate advocate for small businesses in Port Kembla and the southern suburbs of Wollongong. Renay has worked incredibly hard to build her business while raising her family and should be congratulated on her efforts.

### MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL FOUNDER DAVID ADLAM

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:40):** Today I recognise the amazing period of service that Master David Adlam has provided in my electorate of Mulgoa. For the past 20 years David has been delivering martial arts classes in the Glenmore Park community. Since 2001 he has welcomed over 1,000 students into his taekwondo, Korean sword and tai chi kung fu classes. Trained in martial arts for most of his adult life, David opened his very own school in Glenmore Park and has refereed and competed at State and national levels of competition. His classes feature his own uniquely developed martial arts syllabus to help teach students to be their best selves. A lot of emphasis is placed on respect—respect for yourself, your family, your teacher and the people you train with. David's belief is that respect and confidence are the main benefits of martial arts for his students. After a lengthy recess as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, David is back to delivering classes and now has classes in Orchard Hills each week. Well done to David, and I hope for his continued success post-COVID-19.

### RUGBY AUSTRALIA AWARD RECIPIENT PETER FENTON

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:41):** I congratulate and applaud legendary rugby union stalwart and all-rounder Peter Fenton who was awarded the Joe French Award for his exceptional contributions to the game of rugby union in New South Wales and Australia at the Rugby Australia Awards. Peter was born in Boggabri, New South Wales, and educated at Parramatta High School. He played rugby union for many years at Parramatta rugby club and in 1977 transitioned to coaching, where he led the club to its inaugural premiership. Peter applied his coaching experience and knowledge during the Shute Shield competition, working with Eastwood, Penrith and Sydney District. Peter also earned himself a life membership with NSW Rugby Union. As well as all his rugby union work and coaching, Peter is a poet and amazing raconteur. Peter wrote the NSW Waratahs' current team song and has a distinguished literary and film career. I thank Peter for all his sincere contributions to sport, rugby union, the arts and the many communities he has been involved with over the years. He is truly an iconic and one-of-a-kind Australian.

### MATES MORNING TEA

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:42):** I acknowledge the great work done by volunteers Len Anderson, Don Clayton, John Lacovich and Wally Kolasa from Mates Morning Tea at Thurgoona Community Centre promoting men's health. The team of volunteers were nominated for Albury's Australia Day Community Group Awards for their outstanding community projects. Founder Don Clayton started the group five years ago after seeing a play about how men survive on their own. The group promotes men's health through social networking and other platforms, and at times special guests are also invited to speak about men's health. Mates Morning Tea runs every Friday morning and is just for men. It is a great network to meet new people and perhaps hear an interesting yarn or two. Congratulations to all those who have developed great friendships through this weekly community gathering.

### LONDONDERRY WOMAN OF THE YEAR MARIAM LATIFI

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:43):** I proudly recognise the 2022 Londonderry woman of the year, Mariam Latifi. Mariam is a Marsden Park local. She is a powerhouse community leader. She is an educator, an English as a second language teacher, a published author and the CEO of Gift of Knowledge, an organisation focused on empowering student learning. Mariam also organises and leads the Elara Playkiddies Community Group, which brings together families from across the growing estates in Marsden Park and Melonba. That is how I met her. It was such a pleasure to join Mariam, her mother and her sister at this year's NSW Local Women of the Year Awards. Mariam is an outstanding role model for young women. I am proud to work alongside her for



our community. She embodies the community spirit of families who support each other in making north-west Sydney a wonderful place to live. I congratulate Mariam and thank her for all she does for our growing community.

#### **STARS OF YOUNG**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (16:44):** I commend a group of young locals who are putting their best dancing feet forward as our 2022 Stars of Young. Stars is a fun and engaging community-wide fundraising initiative in support of the Cancer Council, a cause dear to the hearts of many, with over \$170,000 raised in Young over recent years. Over coming months, eight acts will fine-tune their dance moves ahead of two big performances in early July. I congratulate NRG Fitness, Jason Brown, Belinda Allen and Karen Thornhill, Anthony Murphy and Bridget O'Connor, Nick Duff, David Munnerley, Teena Whitechurch, Tanya Brown, Lois Terry and Carmen Thackeray and also, of course, dance teachers Leanne Simms and Gaby Capra. I thank the great number of local businesspeople who have shown incredible generosity towards the cause. Let us get behind our stars. Every little bit counts when it comes to cancer research, prevention and support.

#### **CAMPSIE POLICE AREA COMMAND**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:45):** On 17 March I had the pleasure of attending the Campsie police medals and award ceremony. I was joined by the member for Canterbury, who shares my appreciation and admiration for the Campsie police unit. Also in attendance were Assistant Commissioner Anthony Cooke, Commander Kerrie Lewis and Superintendent McKay, all good people. Being in the police is never easy. There have been times, particularly over the past few years, when police have been required to go above and beyond the call of duty. I am grateful for the excellent relationship I have with the local Campsie Police Area Command, which predates my time in Parliament. We have joined together on many occasions and done good things for our local community.

At the ceremony it was wonderful to witness a recognition of service, courage, bravery and dedication to the protection of our State and local community. I thank each officer and congratulate the recipients of medals and awards. I also acknowledge their families, who play an incredible support role and carry the emotional weight of their loved ones potentially being in harm's way. I offer special congratulations to my long-time friend Mr Gandhi Sindyan on his 20-year service medallion. We have worked on so many projects together over the years. I was thrilled to see him recognised. I thank the sworn and unsworn officers of the NSW Police Force.

#### **EASTERN SUBURBS CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:46):** On 12 March I joined my local cricket club, the Eastern Suburbs Cricket Club, also known as the East Dolphins, for President's Day celebrations at Waverley Oval in Bondi. It is a day to celebrate the club's many successes and its members, from local girls trying cricket for the first time through to test cricketers. The club's president, Jim Maxwell, AM, joined by his son, cricketer Oliver, made a speech. We welcomed cricket great and club member Peter Nevill while we watched the East Dolphins first grade side play a one-day fixture. Wentworth MP Dave Sharma and Waverley councillor Sally Betts also joined me on the day. I have been happy to support the club's good work with \$27,500 in Community Building Partnership grants and Local Sport Grants to enhance its girls' cricket program and replace the wicket covers at Woollahra and Waverley ovals. This is a testament to the club's great leadership, whom I thank again: Jim Maxwell, Peter Lovitt, Matthew Lawrence and the whole management committee.

#### **WARNERVALE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:47):** On 12 March the Central Coast district of the Rural Fire Service officially opened Warnervale Rural Fire Brigade station. Unfortunately, I could not attend, as members of my family had contracted COVID-19 and I was being cautious in determining whether I was a close contact, but the member for Terrigal was there in my stead. The fire station features three truck bays, an office, a training area, storage space, a toilet and a kitchenette. While construction of the station began in 2018 and members have occupied the site for some time, the final touches on external works, like surrounding concreting outside and construction of a sandstone retaining wall, have completed the works. Fourteen members of the Warnervale brigade and district group officers were presented with National Emergency Medals for their efforts during the 2019-20 fire season. The medal is awarded to members whose service was for a minimum of five days in the protection of lives and property or interests that are not their own.

#### **HASTINGS SECONDARY COLLEGE STUDENTS HANNAH AND MATILDA STEWART**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:48):** I recognise two academic geniuses, Hannah and Matilda Stewart from Hastings Secondary College, for scoring a high distinction and a medal as part of the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools [ICAS] 2021. Honoured recently with the prestigious

ICAS medal for year 11 and year 9 English were siblings Hannah and Matilda Stewart. Both received high honour results, which placed them in the top 1 per cent of entrants from across 20 countries around the world, including in Asia, Africa, Europe, America and the Pacific. Hannah and Matilda have been stalwarts in the ICAS annual testing, which involves extracurricular exams that compare academic learning against other students in their age bracket, but never before have they topped their year level and been deemed sufficiently meritorious by the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools. The successful students will attend a virtual awards ceremony in April, with Hannah and Matilda excited to be formally recognised for the highly esteemed honours. It is an amazing accomplishment by two sisters who have worked exceptionally hard to achieve academic excellence. I congratulate Hannah and Matilda on their dedication and commitment towards their studies.

#### **CENTRAL COAST FLOODS**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:49):** For the third year in a row, the Central Coast has been impacted by flooding, particularly around Tuggerah Lakes and in my electorate. I put on record my appreciation and the thanks of my entire community for the work of all the agencies involved in responding to those floods. Central Coast Council has had 120 callouts after hours. The staff has had to close 80 roads. There have been 21 landslips in the electorate. There have been five homes around Tuggerah Lake made uninhabitable by the flood, 46 moderately damaged and 200 with slight damage. The volunteers of the State Emergency Service, working with council in cooperation with the incident management team and now the recovery team, have done great work. I thank them on behalf of my community.

#### **BOWRAL BEEKEEPER HAMISH TA-MÉ**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:51):** A Bowral beekeeper has worked hard in the aftermath of the floods to mitigate the damage done to our local bee population. Hamish Ta-mé devastatingly lost many bees, as hives were waterlogged and some drowned. The prolonged cold weather and rain has made this year a very hard one for bees, but Hamish, who runs workshops on beekeeping, has been helping other beekeepers salvage what is left of their hives and bee populations. Many flowers had all their pollen washed away during the recent rains and flooding, and the bees now have no food. Hamish has been doing emergency feeds for bees and advising beekeepers to have sugar syrup on hand so that the bees do not starve. This is incredibly important work, as the number of bees in the area has a real impact on pollination and therefore on food and crop production. I thank Hamish Ta-mé for his motivational efforts during this difficult time.

#### **WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:52):** On Monday of this week we observed World Down Syndrome Day, which is a day of global awareness. The date for World Down Syndrome Day is the twenty-first day of the third month. That date was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication of the twenty-first chromosome, which causes Down syndrome. I recognise all of the fabulous families and communities in the Blue Mountains electorate who together advocate for the rights, the inclusion and the wellbeing of people with Down syndrome not only on 21 March but every day, every week, every month of every year. I particularly acknowledge a family friend of mine, Joshua Elston, and how proud I am to know this beautiful soul.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF NORTHBRIDGE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:53):** I recognise and commend the activities of the Rotary Club of Northbridge. This is a vital community organisation that works on humanitarian issues that are local, regional and international. In February the Rotary Club of Northbridge mobilised quickly to support those in Tonga who lost their homes, possessions and, sadly, their family members through the tsunami. More recently, the Rotary club organised a \$34,000 disaster response grant to provide relief to those affected in northern New South Wales and Queensland following the floods and storms. The Rotary Club of Northbridge also acted with a disaster response grant to support refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. I applaud the Rotary Club of Northbridge for its steadfast commitment in helping all those affected people through its outreach, funding initiatives, care and compassion.

#### **CANTERBURY LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR NORMA SMITH**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:54):** I am very lucky to have dedicated and selfless community leaders in my electorate, one of whom is Ms Manormani Smith, lovingly known as Norma. I am proud to have nominated Norma as Canterbury's 2022 Local Woman of the Year, recognising her decades of service and care to our community and her work across faith groups and charitable organisations. Norma is known by many as someone they can rely on and who loves to have a coffee and a chat. Usually Norma can be found walking up and down Beamish Street doing something that involves the community. She is involved in multi-faith groups where she advocates for harmony and acceptance across all cultures and religions. We call her "our wonderful Elder". She is always one to hold out a helping hand, particularly during COVID. I acknowledge, praise and thank Norma Smith for what she has done in Canterbury.

### TRIBUTE TO PHILLIPA MORRIS

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:55):** I acknowledge the passing of Phillipa Roslyn Morris, who was a longstanding resident of Mosman. Phillipa was a member of the Mosman Historical Society and served on the society's committee from 2011. She was also the secretary of the earlier Mosman Historical Society until its close in 1994. The society described her as "passionate and dedicated to Mosman's history and heritage." That passion did not stop at her involvement with the society. Phillipa also volunteered at Mosman Library as a research officer for local studies. She regularly contributed articles to the Lost Mosman website and authored many feature articles for the society's newsletter. I offer my sincere condolences to Phillipa's family and loved ones on their loss. I extend my condolences to all of her friends in the Mosman Historical Society, led by president Debbie Higginson, and the broader community. I am sure she will be greatly missed by many in the local area. Vale, Phillipa, and thank you for all your amazing work.

### GOSFORD MEN'S SHED

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:56):** I congratulate Gosford Men's Shed on its successful application to the 2021 Community Building Partnership [CBP] program. Gosford Men's Shed serves an important function in our community, providing a space for local senior men to come together to work on projects, fix objects and enjoy a strong support network. It is vital for men to be able to come together to share their struggles and establish meaningful friendships. The organisation has also done some wonderful work in serving the broader community in response to the natural disasters that have been impacting our regions. I sincerely thank Gosford Men's Shed for that contribution. The grant money will be used for a new mezzanine floor, which will increase the storage capacity for important equipment like tools and machinery and open up more areas for projects. That is in addition to two other extensions that are currently under construction, one of which is funded by the 2020 CBP. I thank Gosford Men's Shed members for their patience and perseverance in making those projects happen during the past two years of lockdown challenges and for all their wonderful work. I know that this funding will be put to excellent use.

### ERINA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MAKAYLA REILLY AND NICOLE DUNCAN

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:57):** I am proud of the fantastic sporting achievements of students across the Central Coast and, in particular, two Erina High School students. Recently year 12 student Makayla Reilly was selected for the Australian women's goalball squad, the Aussie Belles. Goalball is a team sport specifically designed for those with a vision impairment. Last year the Aussie team made the quarterfinal at the Tokyo Paralympics. Recently, student Nicole Duncan participated in all eight events of the three-day NSW Junior Track Championships. Nicole received four gold medals, two silver medals and one bronze medal. In the team sprint event, Nicole's team broke the national record. I wish Makayla and Nicole the best of luck for their sporting futures.

### CROCKERS PAINT AND WALLPAPER

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (16:58):** I acknowledge Crockers Paint and Wallpaper in Miranda, which was named Specialised Retail Business of the Year at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. For over 35 years this family-owned business has helped brighten many homes in our community. The wonderful team at Crockers provides specialist paint and wallpaper expertise across all types of products so that customers are able to find the perfect match for their home. As the Minister for Small Business, I am delighted to see local businesses in the Miranda electorate, like Crockers, receive recognition from our local community. Established by Paul Crocker, whose vision was to add value to people's homes with colour and happiness, the team at Crockers continues to uphold the excellent service and expertise they have provided for over three generations. I acknowledge directors Shaun Crocker and Tracey Morrison, who share over 70 years of experience between them. I also recognise team members Murray Morrison, Nerida McDougall, Nicole Crocker, Korynn Morrison and Lizzie Crocker, the store's favourite staff. I congratulate Crockers Paint and Wallpaper on its success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

### SUBWAY FRANCHISEE CARLY SIMPSON

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:59):** The floods have brought out the best in a lot of people in our communities. I recognise Carly Simpson, who runs the local Subway franchise in Woolgoolga. As was mentioned earlier in the House today, volunteers travelled up from Melbourne to help distribute food at Lismore. Both of the local Sikh temples in Woolgoolga did a lot of cooking and distributed their meals through the local Subway franchise. Carly was instrumental in getting the food trucked from Woolgoolga to Lismore, Woodburn, Ballina—wherever it was required. The front of the store is now chockers with donations. People have been

donating generously to flood victims, but it takes people like Carly to help distribute those goods. I recognise her for all the hard work she has put in over the past couple of weeks.

*Public Interest Debate*

**ISOLATED PATIENTS TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the importance of access to high-quality health care for remote, rural and regional people.
- (2) Acknowledges that the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme [IPTAAS] is an important part of supporting patients and their carers to get to the vital care they need.
- (3) Calls on the Government to urgently review the IPTAAS to ensure it is widely known, easily accessible, and provides assistance that reflects the current needs of patients and their families.

The Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme, or IPTAAS, has operated for many years to help rural people access the treatment they need. But the time has come for a substantial review of the scheme. Too few people know about it, and when they do become aware of it, it may be too late in their treatment. The application process remains difficult and the current rebates, which have not changed since 2015, do not reflect the current needs of patients and their carers. In particular, they compromise not-for-profit providers. I will address those three issues.

As to the first issue, that too few people know about the scheme, it seems surprising that IPTAAS remains relatively unknown. After all, it is the key support for rural people who seek support to attend metropolitan areas for treatment. But the fact is that patients and families remain unaware of it. Why is that the case? It seems that those in the system know what IPTAAS is. However, the term "IPTAAS" could seem quite bizarre to a first-time patient, and their family members, who has to travel to the city for complex cancer treatment. It is a bizarre acronym, is it not? It sounds like a government tax or a rare skin disease. In fact, when the public interest debate topic was read out earlier today by the Speaker, a number of members said to me, "What is this IPTAAS thing?" The fact is that it remains unknown. If members of Parliament are relatively unaware of it, despite its important role in people getting access to care, then we have a problem. Jeff Mitchell, as the then CEO of the Cancer Council NSW, told the rural health inquiry:

The out-of-pocket costs faced by people with cancer are higher for people outside of metropolitan areas, so much so that one in five people with cancer in regional New South Wales report that they skip health appointments because of the cost.

He went on to say:

People in regional New South Wales are less likely to have access to a nearby public hospital and, for those that cannot be treated locally, travelling to and from treatment and staying away from home comes at an enormous physical, emotional and financial toll.

Annie Miller, director of cancer information and support services for Cancer Council NSW, told the inquiry that people still decide to not start treatment or once started to not continue because of the costs of travel and accommodation. Majella Gallagher, the relationship manager for the cancer charity Can Assist, told the rural health inquiry:

When they are actually deciding whether or not to have treatment right back in the early stages, if people were more aware of the availability of IPTAAS and what it could do for them, we do think that would help.

As for clinical trials, IPTAAS does not even apply to clinical trials and so, effectively, possibly 25 per cent of the population is cut off from participating in possibly lifesaving treatments. The underlying issue is that people need to know what help they can get so that they can make the best decisions for their health care.

The second point is it is hard to fill out the forms. Surely this Government, with its commitment to digital technology, could have designed a simple application long ago. I am asking that it does that. There have been attempts to simplify the online process, but it remains complicated. In fact, when you go to the landing page there is an eight-minute video to explain the online process. I know that is meant to help applicants through each of the six separate forms they need to upload, but the process requires internet access. It is still a primitive process requiring the upload of documents that have to be completed manually and signed by each of the relevant people. The fact of the matter is the process is complicated. I had feedback from a professional in Wagga who is used to form filling, case management, file keeping and good communication, and they found the application process incredibly difficult. They said, "Imagine what it's like for those with language or technological barriers."

I tell a story that highlights this issue. It is about a mother with a child requiring cancer treatment in Sydney and her experience with IPTAAS. The family made over seventy 400-kilometre one-way trips during an 11-month period. She described her experience with IPTAAS to Can Assist, the Cancer Assistance Network. She said:

We were first made aware of IPTAAS by a family friend when my son was diagnosed, who also suggested we keep all the receipts regarding food and parking, only to then realise that this was a waste of time after the form was sent. The requirements on the form are very unclear and confusing regarding what is eligible. We were very hesitant.

She went on to say:

The last 12 months have been a nightmare, from diagnosis to the blur of constant appointments and hospitals, to many sleepless nights. The last thing we had the time to think about or could concentrate on long enough to fill out was the very confusing IPTAAS form, which is so complex and not crucial to our child's immediate needs at that time. When your son is unwell due to treatment and major surgery, he is the priority. The impractical application for IPTAAS is just an extra form that in the end goes to the bottom of the pile. Tracking down signatures is not a priority at this time and the fact that we needed to source someone to scan the receipts and send forms back was also a hassle.

That had a big impact on that family. In fact, in the end, Can Assist had to support that family to the tune of \$20,000.

The third issue concerns the current rates. They have not changed since 2015. The not-for-profit sector gets \$40 a night. In fact, over all categories, their rebate in New South Wales is lower than the rest of the country 68 per cent of the time. The not-for-profit sector is a very important provider of accommodation and support services in rural and regional communities. And there are other aspects of the rebate scheme that need to be addressed. The funding for an Airbnb without a business licence is \$20 compared with the full rebate. There are different rebates for single accommodation and double accommodation. It is having a big impact on our regional providers. The time has come for an urgent review of IPTAAS. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:07):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing the motion to the House. I share his interest in this issue. I think all members share the concern of wanting to ensure that health care is accessible to people in remote, rural and regional areas. That is what it fundamentally comes down to. At the end of the day, accessibility to health care is about embedding a health service within the community or, alternatively, where that cannot be embedded in the community, providing assistance to those who need to go outside of their community to gain access to health care. Ensuring that the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme [IPTAAS] remains fit for purpose is fundamentally important in that regard.

I draw on a couple of points made by the member for Wagga Wagga. The member made the important point that accessibility and the ability to get to a health service can ultimately be a decision point for treatment. That is important when we are talking about health care for regional people. Speaking from personal experience, I can appreciate the load—the pressure—that is on families and individuals during that moment when their health concern is fundamentally the most important thing facing them. To then be confronted with the challenges of completing and submitting paperwork to obtain assistance is a significant issue. In that sense, as I said, this is very much about moving forward and ensuring that the IPTAAS remains fit for purpose so that people can access health services.

There was a review of IPTAAS in 2017-18, which looked at addressing recommendations from the New South Wales parliamentary inquiry into access to transport for seniors and disadvantaged people in rural and regional New South Wales. Recommendations from that review centred around reform of the IPTAAS claims process, expanding eligibility, and raising awareness and knowledge of the scheme. The review resulted in the New South Wales Government removing the requirement for a co-payment from isolated patients and looking again at the claims process. Previously, adult patients who were not pensioners or Health Care Card holders were required to make a co-payment of \$30 per trip for the first four trips per year. In 2019 the New South Wales Government released a revised IPTAAS policy directive, which is a more simplified document that provides a revised governance framework and outlines updated eligibility and subsidy requirements.

I agree with the member for Wagga Wagga and I welcome the Government supporting this debate. I note from a recent conversation with Cancer Council NSW that in its budget bids it has requested an increase in subsidy rates for the IPTAAS and an expansion of eligibility criteria. I think there are a couple of other points that we can really focus on, including making IPTAAS accessible for those that are in clinical trials. At the moment if you are undergoing a clinical trial as part of your medical treatment, you cannot access IPTAAS for that. That is significant, because we know that clinical research trials are an important way to access cutting-edge medical technology. As someone who lives on the border, I think we also need to be looking at what we are doing about interjurisdictional recognition and cross-border recognition.

I agree wholeheartedly with the member for Wagga Wagga about the IPTAAS application process. It is something that the Minister for Health and the Minister for Regional Health could seek to work on with the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, because I think there is a real opportunity there—perhaps through use of the Service NSW app and the MyServiceNSW account—to make the application process more accessible, particularly for those people who are going through a real ordeal with their health at that time. I also agree in terms of the rates. I am happy to prosecute the argument that we should be looking at travel rates, which

in my understanding is something like 22c a kilometres at the moment. We should also be looking at accommodation rates—a little shout-out to Hilltop Accommodation Centre in Albury—and perhaps a CPI adjustment. There is much to look at in terms of a review of the IPTAAS. I welcome such a review and the opportunity to work with the member for Wagga Wagga and other members to improve the IPTAAS.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:12):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing this important motion to the House today, because access to health services for people living in rural and regional New South Wales is an issue of significant public interest and importance. For years Labor has been raising its voice, both in this place and elsewhere, on behalf of rural and regional New South Wales, urging this Government to do better to deliver the health services that people living in rural and regional New South Wales need. But this Liberal-Nationals Government has not listened and will not listen—not even those members of the National Party who purport to represent some of the regional areas in this place.

The Government refuses to accept that there are hospitals right now in rural and regional New South Wales without doctors; that there are nurses staffing hospitals on their own, hoping to goodness that no-one is going to be wheeled into their emergency department with a life-threatening condition; that there are people dying when they are taken to hospital because there is no doctor to treat; and that hardworking, experienced nurses are leaving the profession because of the stress of the situations they are frequently facing due to the lack of resources and a lack of support from this Government.

Ryan Park, Labor's shadow Minister for Health, has been speaking with communities across New South Wales, as have I. Years ago I attended a rally in Wagga Wagga where the community was raising its voice, and they were not demanding much. The people of Tumut, Cootamundra and Gundagai wanted adequate services in their hospitals. They particularly wanted doctors in their hospitals. I also visited Dubbo, Wellington and other areas, meeting with local doctors, nurses, paramedics and residents who painted a dire picture. IPTAAS was mentioned, but the fundamental delivery of essential services to those communities was high on everyone's lists. That is why the New South Wales Labor Opposition fought for, and finally established, a parliamentary inquiry into rural and regional health.

Since the inquiry was formed in late 2020, an extraordinary 720 submissions have been received and 15 hearings have been held. The inquiry has heard from people across the State who have had poor health outcomes due to the lack of health services in their areas and people who have lost loved ones due to the dire state of the health system in rural and regional New South Wales. It has heard from health professionals who are frustrated to be working within a system starved of the resources that they need to deliver the health services that they want to deliver.

The health divide between the city and country is very real. People living in rural New South Wales live shorter lives and suffer higher levels of disease and injury due to poorer access to health services compared with our city counterparts. Again, IPTAAS will be a part of the inquiry's considerations. The review that the member for Wagga Wagga is discussing today will no doubt become a recommendation of the inquiry, and Government members will no doubt talk today about what the Government has been doing in rural and regional areas in terms of building infrastructure and hospitals. But bricks and mortar do not fix broken bones; they do not save people's lives. It is the doctors, nurses and paramedics who do, and we have entire towns without them.

Despite the Minister recently declaring in this place that every corner of the State has been a beneficiary of his beneficence, Port Stephens, the beautiful area that I represent, has not seen a thing—no hospital upgrade, no increased staffing, nothing. My community has even had to fight to get an X-ray service in its own hospital. Tomaree hospital has so few services, despite having one of the oldest populations in the State. We have no local dialysis and no local rehabilitation—and do not even get me started on mental health services. The last upgrade to Tomaree hospital was an ED, years ago, which was funded by a generous benefactor in a bequeathal, and still the former health Minister had the gall to turn up and cut the ribbon.

The many people who fled Sydney following COVID and the lockdowns, and who are now choosing to live in the country, will be surprised by what they see when they get there. The motion by the member for Wagga Wagga today is part of a solution to a much broader problem. Access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote areas of New South Wales is a genuine problem that requires a genuine commitment from the Government to fix. IPTAAS is part of it, but there is a much bigger issue here. After 11 years of this Liberal-Nationals Government, it is obvious that members opposite have no interest in fixing it.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:18):** It is well known that regional New South Wales is suffering from a long-term, chronic shortage of medical professionals and health services. It has been that way for decades. While members await the findings of the recent inquiry into regional health, we already know that there are obvious reasons why health outcomes are so poor. The sparse population means private medical professionals or institutions do not have the lucrative client base they might have in large cities or towns, so it is harder to establish

a viable health service. It is also harder to attract medical professionals to public health care in regional areas, although the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party welcomes initiatives like the announcement today by the Federal regional health Minister of a \$708 million specialist training program that provides incentives for doctors to work in regional areas.

But even if there are schemes being implemented to get more specialists out west, there is still the immediate problem of the isolation of many communities and individual patients, which makes it difficult for many people to travel to seek medical treatment. People who live in the city can never really understand the desperate situation that sometimes ensues when a person who is ill has to decide whether they can afford to travel to get medical help. Many either wait until their condition becomes life threatening or do not go at all and suffer in silence. Ultimately, many medical problems that could have been easily dealt with wind up becoming worse. It is up to the Government to try to fill the gaps in some way. In fact, it is in the Government's interest to help get regional residents to medical treatment because, as they say, an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure. It is better to take on the small burden of getting people to early treatment for treatable conditions than to see those patients become a bigger burden as their conditions get worse.

While incentives to get more medical professionals to move to the country is a longer term solution to the gaps in medical services in the regions, that will take time to achieve. Most people who live in regional areas have realistic expectations regarding access to health services. They do not expect there to be top-flight cardiologists, oncologists, osteopaths and neurosurgeons on every corner or a multistorey, fully equipped modern hospital in every town. But if the health services cannot be provided locally, the Government needs to at least provide ways for people to travel to the services they need. The existing scheme for transport is the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme, or IPTAAS. That scheme subsidises travel to the tune of 22c per kilometre for private car travel. That was not generous to begin with, but it now seems even more inadequate given the upward pressure on fuel prices. The scheme does offer full reimbursement for public transport, albeit minus GST, and for air travel, again minus GST. Taxis are reimbursed at a rate of \$20 for one day and then \$40 for a two- to seven-day appointment, \$80 for an eight- to 14-day appointment and \$160 for 15 or more days.

While it could be argued that that is better than nothing, it could almost certainly be much better than it is. Many other schemes that compensate people for mileage set the rate at the Australian Tax Office rate of 72c per kilometre, and IPTAAS seems paltry by comparison. Patients will also need accommodation when they arrive at the town where they will have their treatment, so IPTAAS subsidises accommodation for one to seven nights at \$43 a night for a single occupant and additional nights at \$65 a night, or \$85 if they are staying with the person who escorted them. That is at a not-for-profit venue. The rates are not much better at commercial venues, even though the price of the accommodation is likely to be much higher.

It is not too much to ask that people who are seeking treatment should have some of their financial pain alleviated. We are not talking about sending people around in limousines and housing them in luxury for a nice holiday. Those people have their own distresses to deal with, and they deserve to have some of their burden relieved. They deserve to have some of their costs defrayed, but the existing scheme no longer cuts it. It is well past time that the Government took a look at the obvious shortfall. Of all the electorates in New South Wales, nowhere is the problem more acute than in mine. No other electorate in the State has the vast distances Barwon has.

In February last year I asked the health Minister during question time for a review of IPTAAS, which even then fell short for many people. He agreed to report back in six months. I understand that when that promise was given we were enjoying a brief lull in the pandemic and that later in the year, when the Minister's six-month deadline drew near, we saw some of the worst outbreaks of COVID. But it is now over a year. In February last year the review was a pressing enough issue, but the Minister hopefully now realises that the current inflationary pressures will even more adversely affect the people who have to cross vast distances for medical treatment.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:22):** I contribute to the personal interest debate on the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme [IPTAAS], which gives people living in rural and regional New South Wales greater access to specialist medical treatment by helping them pay some of their out-of-pocket expenses. Regional and rural New South Wales is a unique place to live, and our resilient communities in the regions spend greater amounts of time travelling greater distances to access health care.

The New South Wales Government has made it clear that it supports those living throughout regional New South Wales, particularly during more difficult times such as when accessing health care. Annual expenditure for IPTAAS has more than doubled, from \$12.2 million a year in 2011-12 to \$27 million in 2019-20. Annual expenditure in 2020-21 was \$22 million and reflects the impact of COVID-19 on travel for health care. More than 26,000 people were assisted through IPTAAS in 2020-21, with about 57,000 claims processed. There were fewer claims than in 2019-20 as fewer people travelled to appointments.

Since 2015 the New South Wales Government has made reforms to IPTAAS to help make the scheme easier to access. Most recently, the Government introduced changes to IPTAAS from 1 October 2018 that have further reduced both costs and red tape for people who need to travel long distances to access specialist health appointments.

Do we need to do more? Yes. We would like to see a further reduction of red tape around the scheme. It must be accessible to anyone at any age. The Minister for Health has committed to reviewing IPTAAS. The new Minister for Regional Health has identified this as one of her priorities. IPTAAS is an important scheme for those in regional New South Wales and one way in which the New South Wales Government is supporting patients and carers. It is a good scheme that could be done better and that is what this Government will be doing under the leadership of Minister Taylor.

I commend the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing this debate to the House. I think it is very important. I recognise his previous experience, before Parliament, in the medical arena. I imagine he must have had to deal with this issue on quite a regular basis in his previous career. I agree with him that it is largely unknown. I did not know of IPTAAS until I became a parliamentarian. The online process could definitely use more work and be more streamlined, and the member for Albury outlined some ideas for how to achieve this. I also commend the member for Barwon for his reasonable and sensible comments about IPTAAS. I agreed with not all but a lot of what he said. When we live in regional New South Wales there are some things we accept, including that we live in a more sparsely populated area and we will not always get what Sydney gets. But it does not mean we should not keep fighting for the best available health care, especially in larger centres like Wagga Wagga and Coffs Harbour.

We must continue fighting for those services and continue to attract the best medical services, be they public or private, because it is not always publicly administered health services and doctors that are required in those areas. Often the best oncologists and specialists at the top of their fields run through a private practice. Most doctors can make far more money in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and on the Gold Coast than they can in regional New South Wales because there is a bigger client base. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing this public interest debate to the House.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (17:26):** I speak in strong support of the motion moved by the member for Wagga Wagga about the need to review the system of support for rural patients who have to travel for medical treatment. This morning a stressed doctor from Griffith called my office. This is not uncommon. His phone call was a reminder of how urgent this issue now is. He told me that the maternity ward at Griffith Base Hospital is on the verge of closing due to the New South Wales Government's failure to pay and look after our nurses properly. Nurses who chose to uproot their lives and move six hours to Griffith have no special allowance or incentives. The maternity ward is down to two midwives. That hospital services 80,000 people. Staff are resigning due to stress and overwork. The agency nurses do not get paid overtime. The hospital is chronically understaffed. If one more goes, the maternity ward will close and expectant mothers in Griffith, Hay, Hillston and surrounds will face a two- to three-hour journey to Wagga Wagga to give birth.

One of the operating theatres at Griffith Base Hospital will close next month, meaning more patients will have to go to Wagga Wagga for surgery. It is the same story across rural New South Wales. Under the Liberals and The Nationals, we continue to lose doctors, nurses and basic health services. This means more and more country folk have to travel for hours to access basic health services that people in Sydney take for granted. The New South Wales Government should be providing proper health care across the State, regardless of where people live. Country people should not have to drive for three hours when they break a bone or are nine months pregnant, suicidal or dying of cancer. After stripping services across rural hospitals, the least this Government could do is provide sufficient, accessible financial support for those who must now travel to bigger cities.

But no. Patients are put through hell, forced to travel several hours and asked to complete a lengthy, repetitive form, only to receive inadequate financial support from their Government. A patient who needs to travel to another city for treatment gets \$43 a day if they are travelling alone. That is right—just \$43. When was the last time you saw a hotel room anywhere in Australia that cost \$43? This is a ridiculously low rate. It has not changed in 10 long years. By contrast, politicians who travel to Sydney get a daily allowance of \$310. But a cancer sufferer who has to go to Sydney because the Government has not funded the services in Griffith gets just one-eighth of what they give themselves.

But wait, there's more. Just accessing this measly \$43 is a colossal headache. The Government makes people fill in seven pages of forms and answer 20 of the same questions twice to get this payment. A government that is about to give out billions of dollars in water licences to big corporate irrigators with scant metering or oversight forces a cancer patient to fill in seven pages of forms to access \$43 when they travel to Sydney for radiation therapy. That is a good indication of where this Government's priorities lie. What we are asking for in this motion is pretty simple. Rural folk often have to drive several hours to have a bone set, give birth or access



life-saving cancer treatment. In some cases, we have to travel at night on inadequately maintained gravel roads and dodge roos, feral pigs and goats. We are asking two things of this Government. One is that it provides us with a decent accommodation allowance so families do not have to go into debt when critically ill, paying for their medical treatment. The second is that the Government makes the process of applying for it simple and user-friendly. It is the least it can do.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:31):** I support the motion moved by the member for Wagga Wagga. My colleague the member for Blue Mountains, who was sitting with me a moment ago, said, "This is the real stuff, isn't it? This is the real stuff that this Parliament needs to talk about." This is the stuff that reaches into every nook and cranny of our State, that affects incredibly vulnerable people and that changes lives. As we have heard in the debate today and throughout the inquiry into regional health, it makes or breaks a person's decisions about life going forward. It is a deciding factor in suicide. It is a deciding factor in whether to pursue medical treatment, knowing that without that treatment you will die.

These are the real issues. I am flabbergasted to discover that the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme [IPTAAS] does not cover clinical trials. Let us think that through. If we do not have a mix of metro and regional people participating in clinical trials because regional people cannot afford to travel to metro areas for the trial, does that mean that, scientifically, we end up with clinical trial results only for metro people because we have no regional cohort to compare them with? I have sat in this place for 11 years and heard many conversations about regional relocation and decentralisation, but one of the fundamentals of making regional existence attractive, possible and tenable is affordable access to health care, just like our metro cousins have. As that shrinks and shrinks, the palatability of moving to the regions also decreases.

We have dozens of examples, I am sure, in regional communities of people who made a sea change or a tree change and moved to the regions in early retirement, in their 60s and 70s when they were quite healthy, but who then, as their health deteriorated, moved back to the city to be closer to the medical services they needed. That is temporary decentralisation; it is not permanent decentralisation. There are probably myriad reasons for that, including, undoubtedly, access to specialists. Advances in technology and the amazing skills and abilities of our medical teams allow the best specialists to increasingly refine treatments and target illnesses. Massive departments like NSW Health are left twisting in the wind and facing litigation for not providing the absolute best treatment. For decades now, collective governments have been saying we should move away from litigation and centralise, then centralise what has been centralised and then centralise what has been centralised. In essence, we end up having three or four hospitals, if that, providing services for an entire State. If one does not happen to live in the neighbourhood of one of those two, three or four hospitals, one often has to travel large distances because one-third of the population lives outside our metropolitan areas.

I briefly speak to the documents and forms. I cannot believe what has been described in the debate today about the seven pages of documents and forms. As MPs, surely we have all had the experience of people who cannot filter, process, deliberate and complete forms that government agencies require them to. They are written by people who very successfully completed their education, probably did tertiary education and probably got university degrees, qualifications and master's degrees. It is not a criticism of them, but they are the wrong people to write forms for a community that often operates at an educational standard much lower than that. The further one moves out of metropolitan areas, the lower the average education levels are and the less likely one is to be connected to the internet to fill forms out online. Surely in 2022 we have the technological capacity to recognise that a patient who lives in Broken Hill and is getting treatment at RPA has travelled and we should pay them. It is not that hard. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing this to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:36):** In reply: Firstly, I thank the members representing the electorates of Albury, Port Stephens, Barwon, Coffs Harbour, Murray and Cessnock for their contributions. The member for Albury and the member for Coffs Harbour made considered, thoughtful and genuinely positive contributions and suggestions, particularly relating to the technology available to improve access. This is a government that has often prided itself on its digital innovation, and I think its suggestions are welcome. I also welcome the support of the Minister for Regional Health and thank her.

The member for Barwon spoke eloquently about the paltry nature of the rebates in the current scheme. He raised this issue with the health Minister over a year ago, and there was a commitment for a review in that time. Admittedly, we have had the COVID situation in the meantime, but the point remains: That review is long overdue. The fact that there have been delays is partly what prompted me to move this motion. I also talk about the contributions of the member for Port Stephens and the member for Murray. They both made many good points about the fact that the scheme needs a review, but they have also made the fundamental point that this is a small part of a larger problem within rural health that needs to be addressed. We have heard the submissions in the rural health inquiry, and there is clearly a disparity in access to services and health workforce. That needs to be addressed.

The member for Cessnock made a very considered contribution, and I thank him for that. He made the point that this is a function of an increasingly centralised approach to health care in this State. That is a very significant point. I do not think that we are going to tackle these rural health issues, of which IPTAAS is one, until we have a rural department of health. The current structure has been at it for a long time now and has not delivered. We have a scheme that is supposed to be for remote, rural and regional communities, but it is not serving them as it could or should. It is a scheme that is run from a central, metropolitan focus. At times it seems to be set up to limit access to benefits in the name of cutting costs. If there was a rural department of health to advocate for the health of rural people, we would not need to have this debate. There would be a real understanding of the importance for people to get care that is far away from them and for support to access that care. This is a small part of a larger issue; nevertheless it is an important part. We will always have to access care away from our centres. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Private Members' Statements*

**SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (17:40):** People in Pittwater have asked me to clarify my position on comments made by a colleague on so-called "woke" issues and their apparent impact on the result of the South Australian election last weekend. Just today *The Daily Telegraph* headlined Federal Opposition leader Anthony Albanese's protestations that he is not woke. So what is being woke and why is it contentious? Woke is a new word. It is an adjective first attested a few years ago, having originated in African American Vernacular English. It means to be awake and aware of issues of injustice and discrimination in society. Being awake also means being open to different views, not cancelling or deplatforming those with whom one disagrees. Ironically, a movement ostensibly associated with a so-called woke agenda actually seeks to undermine it.

I certainly do not believe that the South Australian Liberals lost the election because they were too focused on issues of injustice. I do not think that South Australian voters moved away from a centre-right government because they thought the government was not far enough to the right. If they did, they would have installed a One Nation government. Instead, they voted in a Labor government. To my way of thinking, people do not vote for a left-wing party because the right-wing party is not far enough to the right. In fact, I do not think most people vote on the basis of whether a party or candidate is left wing or right wing at all. In my experience, people vote on the basis of who they trust to provide the best possible future for them and their families.

This brings me back to "woke". All of us in elected public office need to be awake to issues of injustice and discrimination. It is kind of the point of being an elected public official. Our society functions on the basis that we care for one another. The social contract is founded on the notion that we surrender some freedoms to preserve others. We agree to restraints on gun ownership so that we do not get shot, we surrender our rights to speed so that we do not die on our roads and we take special care of those who have historically faced repression, discrimination or exclusion. In the past, that has included slaves, emancipists, orphans or religious denominations now considered mainstream. Today it includes racial minorities, First Nations people and people identifying as LGBTIQI. It has pretty much always included women, the elderly and people with disabilities. That is not to say that everyone who is gay, Aboriginal or disabled is vulnerable or powerless. It is merely that vulnerability is an attribute shared across humanity.

Every one of us will face occasions where we are weak and open to exploitation, like when we are very young, very old, sick or alone. That is when we need others to be awake to our plight, and that is when we need our community and elected officials to support, restore and empower us. Being conservative is not about being reactionary. It is not being afraid of change or of difference. Rather, it is embracing what is wonderful about our institutions and adapting them for the future. As Edmund Burke said, society is a contract between the living, the dead and the unborn. Conservatives should look forward as well as backwards. We should not merely concern ourselves with failures in markets but with failures to care for our society and the natural systems that sustain us. Empowering those who have been marginalised does not mean disempowering others. When everyone is empowered, all of us flourish.

As an MP who counts gay people and disabled people among my constituents and my close family, as well as women and the elderly, I am awake to the issues of discrimination they face, whether big or small, overt or covert. As a dad of teenagers, I am not too concerned about whether they wear pants or a skirt, or about the layout of the school toilets. But I am concerned every day about their mental health, their anxiety and whether they feel excluded or hopeless. I do not believe that being awake to the reality of discrimination or prejudice is about being

politically correct. I do not believe that being alert to injustice is, to quote my colleague, a "petty" issue or one that is largely symbolic. People in positions of power have an obligation to serve the weak, not to malign them or be frightened of them.

Realising that frailty and vulnerability is a shared human condition is the basis of forging a strong society. In contrast, seeking to assert strength or retain power by ignoring, dismissing or attacking those subject to injustice is a recipe for rendering society weak. This is what Wilberforce meant when he said that one of his two great objects in public life was the reformation of manners. He said, "The distemper of which, as a community, we are sick, should be considered rather as a moral than a political malady." As elected officials, we must not slumber in the face of our responsibilities. We must be awake: awake to injustice, discrimination and to the service of the public.

### **TAFE COURSES AND OFFSHORING**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:45):** In Newcastle we have a lot of experience with this Government offshoring work we could have done. In the past we produced ferries, but this Government offshored the construction of the newest vessels to China and Indonesia. A bus-building plant at Tomago was wound up after its government work was taken away. Meanwhile, buses were built in Malaysia, and trains. This State's latest acquisitions were built in South Korea and China, even though the UGL workshop at Broadmeadow is operating as we speak. When we speak of government offshoring, manufacturing tends to dominate the conversation. When we talk about billions of dollars and thousands of jobs going overseas, that is quite understandable. But we have recently, and so sadly, learnt that this Government's love affair with offshoring is not just in skilled labour; it is also in skilled education.

Towards the end of last year, we learnt that TAFE courses all around the State were going to have their commencements delayed, along with having their enrolments open late, because the deadline had been missed to have 261 courses updated to meet new requirements of the Australian Skills Quality Authority. The result was chaotic. Courses were being advertised that could not be enrolled in and courses were not receiving enrolments because they were not being advertised. Students trying to leave school and start TAFE were thrown back into school at the last minute because their course simply disappeared. I heard from one constituent whose course disappeared just before he completed it. Another constituent described it quite simply as a nightmare.

This is not the fault of the people on the ground at TAFE; they were frantically trying to get it fixed. TAFE teachers want people enrolling in their courses; they want to teach. But the bigger picture here is bigger than the deadline being missed to get the courses updated. Enter \$16.6 million worth of contracts that were awarded to EY and Deloitte. What were those contracts for? They were for the course upgrades. Unable to complete the work in house, the rewriting of the courses was outsourced. But it gets worse. EY got the contract, then subcontracted part of it to a company called Infopro Learning, which has offices in New Jersey, Washington, New York, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Canada, New Delhi and Goa—but not one office in Australia.

The writing of TAFE courses to meet new Australian requirements was not just outsourced; it was offshored to people who had no experience in the subject matter they were writing for and, in some cases, also had to get through a language barrier. I am sure the people at the end of the line overseas were doing the best they could, but just take a guess at the quality of work that is being returned. Now TAFE subject matter experts, who really should have been doing this work in the first place, are having to come back to fix the written coursework anyway. Under this Government TAFE has lost a third of its workforce. I cannot help but wonder what the internal capacity to upgrade courses would have been if those jobs still existed.

Meanwhile, students have had the start of their courses thrown into absolute disarray, and casual and part-time teachers who were expecting to be working now are not. The Minister will hear what I am saying and he will proclaim that Labor is talking TAFE down. It is his favourite line and he uses it all the time because he does not have a real defence for this Government's persistent cuts to TAFE. I also know that he knows that line is absolute codswallop. Everyone knows that I love TAFE. I especially love the passion that TAFE teachers have for what they do. Labor is not talking TAFE down, Minister; we are talking you down. It is an audacious position for the Minister to take, considering he is part of a government that, since 2011, has overseen the loss of 6,400 jobs in TAFE, the sale of 15 campuses and the loss of 30,000 apprentices. The Minister can accuse the Opposition of talking TAFE down all he wants, but it is the Government who is running it down. Keep the work onshore and employ locals to do it. Everyone benefits from that.

### **TWEED ELECTORATE FLOODS**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:50):** I think everyone in this place is aware of what has occurred in recent times up on the North Coast. The Minister for Emergency Services has done an amazing job; she held up. It is a very difficult job in any emergency, with the rescuing of people, the organising of resources, and

everyone wanting a piece of you, in many regards. This is my fifth flood; I have lived through five of them and I have seen devastation each time, and on this occasion the Minister did a sterling job. The rain started falling heavily in Tweed and surrounds over the week leading into 27 February 2022. At 11.05 a.m. on Monday 28 March, an evacuation order was issued for the CBD of Murwillumbah, with the Tweed River reaching a level of nearly six metres. This was, no doubt, going to affect us downstream in a massive way.

By 3.30 p.m. the Murwillumbah levees had breached and major flooding was occurring in the townships of Tumbulgum and Chinderah. The flood levels in Murwillumbah were now considered record flooding, above the March 2017 and March 1974 levels. The Tweed River at Chinderah, Barneys Point, was to peak near 2.6 metres around 9.00 p.m. The same night, we had a high tide of just on 1.8 metres. With major flooding anticipated, an alert went out at 4.00 p.m. and the SES started directing people in low-lying parts of Chinderah, Fingal Head, Bilambil, Banora Point and Seagulls Estate and low-lying areas of Tweed Heads to evacuate the high-danger area and go to higher ground. With rain constantly falling all across the catchment, water levels were rising fast. The M1 was well and truly underwater northbound and southbound, with no access between Tweed Heads, Kingscliff and Murwillumbah. With numerous houses and caravan parks positioned along the Tweed River, the SES was inundated with calls for assistance to rescue families, the elderly and vulnerable members of the community.

The evacuation centre at Kingscliff TAFE was in full swing and at one stage had well over 500 people in it. The evacuation centre in Banora Point had close to 400 people and the evacuation centre in Murwillumbah had about 300 to 400 people. I was extremely disappointed that a number of caravan park managers left their parks without doing a roll call. I think that is deplorable. People criticised the SES, and I spoke about that yesterday in this place. But I stand right behind them. There are 14 members of the SES in Murwillumbah, for a population of 18,000. Of that 14, seven are over the age of 70. In Tweed Heads alone, there are 30 members of the SES and half of them are over the age of 65. Our best flood driver in Tweed Heads is Tommy, and he is 80 years of age. There is a lack of volunteers. But what I saw on the ground was resilience in the local communities. People's houses were destroyed; their businesses were destroyed. People were crying in the streets. It was very emotional for everyone involved.

I know there is going to be an inquiry into the Government's response, but I do not think that response could have been improved. In all honesty, you had to be there, not in this place. You had to be out there sitting in a boat in about two feet of mud or with mud up to your waist, dragging nappies and baby formula to people who needed it. We had to supply drugs and medications to a number of areas. One of my staff members swam with a foam box of drugs to get it there. For a while we had 60-odd boats from private citizens on the river. It looked like the flotilla from Dunkirk. People responded together. The big plus was the ADF coming into town. The soldiers have been fantastic. Most members know that I was very critical of the Prime Minister around this time last week for his failure to include the Tweed, Ballina and so on within that. Luckily, I think common sense is there.

Finally, I praise Janelle Saffin from the Labor Party and Tamara Smith from the Greens. We have worked together. We have put politics over there and we are working for the betterment of our community. But it is not over yet. If we get more than 50 millimetres of rain in the next 48 hours or over the weekend, we will have major land slippage. In one area we had 40 acres of land slip down a mountain and take out 12 houses. This is not over yet, and I have a bad feeling that this weekend is going to bring a lot of hardship and devastation to the good people of the Tweed. God bless them all.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY PHILHARMONIC

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (17:55):** It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the good work that the Western Sydney Philharmonic, affectionately known as West Phil, does in the community. West Phil is a new charitable initiative that brings students and top professional performers together in a unique space in western Sydney to learn from each other and, in the process, create thrilling, dynamic and memorable performances. West Phil's media launch took place at Riverside Theatres, Parramatta, on Monday 21 February. It included a thrilling performance of Mendelssohn's *Octet*, a taste of the calibre of work we can expect in the future. True to its mission of training and providing a pathway to the profession, the West Phil octet featured four of western Sydney's most talented young musicians and four top professional performers, with renowned violinist and West Phil artistic director Kristian Winther in the lead.

The performance was followed by an address from West Phil patron Kim Williams, AM, who has given considerable support to the organisation, and West Phil chairman Max Holzner, who is an accomplished violinist as well as chairman of the Music Teachers' Association of NSW. The launch was well attended by the media and supported by several State MPs, both current and former, alongside prominent representatives of stakeholders in the region, decision-makers and VIPs, all of which augurs well for the future. West Phil has already received critical support from the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue and will headline with a performance at the

dialogue's partnership gala dinner on 5 April. The broader music profession of Sydney is also supportive, with West Phil assembling a stellar array of stars from the profession to run June and September programs in 2022. Both programs will consist of workshops for students over consecutive days, culminating in public performances in western Sydney.

An important point of differentiation between West Phil's programs and others across the country is that they are free to participants. Whilst these programs certainly seek to address the paucity of top-notch performance training opportunities in western Sydney, West Phil has the vision of creating a sustainable pathway or pipeline for musicians in the region. Unfortunately many initiatives in the past have either failed or struggle to exist in western Sydney, not for want of talent or passion but because of isolation, lack of strategic vision and planning, or simply the prohibitive logistical requirements of situating given programs within a connected pipeline. Sporting codes, however, offer an important model or playbook, with much accumulated, tested and successful experience in transplanting and nurturing various codes in different places across the country.

West Phil is fortunate to be able to draw upon the expertise and support of people with backgrounds in sports governance and administration at the highest levels, both upon their board—most notably Bonita Mersiades, who has worked at executive levels in sport, including as manager of the Socceroos—and in a growing list of supporters and friends of West Phil, including Football Australia board member Joseph Carrozzi, AM. West Phil is therefore able to position its work and planning within the strategic context required and will move ahead next year simultaneously with programs addressing other parts of the pipeline, assisted through collaboration and formal partnerships with a number of stakeholders, including Sydney Eisteddfod, Western Sydney University, the Music Teachers' Association and Parramatta and Campbelltown councils. I congratulate West Phil and all involved and wish them all the best in the future.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:00):** On Tuesday 8 March people from all over the world celebrated International Women's Day to recognise global gender equality and the enduring need for change. This year's theme, "Break the Bias", makes a strong statement about fairness and equality. It is a day for women to celebrate and be celebrated. International Women's Day serves as a reminder of the obstacles women have had to overcome and still struggle to overcome so that we might have a society that is safe and equal. I commend the work of all women's groups, especially those in the electorate of Lakemba, where I get to see firsthand the challenges those organisations face, as well as the achievements of individuals who continue to strive despite the challenges they often face.

These community groups, like many across New South Wales, are often led and supported by women who make it an intention to do things that make life better for others. I was very grateful to accept an invitation from the Lebanese Australian Friendship Committee to attend their Women's Day event. The aim of the committee is to establish social, cultural, sporting and educational events that help women and girls from various backgrounds to integrate into the Australian community. The event gave women in the electorate of Lakemba the opportunity to share powerful reflections on how they have overcome various challenges in their lives. Gender inequality is perpetuated in various facets of people's lives: in their careers, their communities and their personal lives, particularly when it comes to the responsibility of raising a family. Each of the women I heard from met those obstacles and managed to go on and achieve their goals. Some stories moved me to tears, and their resilience and grit inspired me.

Like all MPs in this place, I nominated my Local Woman of the Year. I am proud to acknowledge the electorate of Lakemba's Local Woman of the Year, Ms Joumana El Jamal. She is the chief executive officer of Sydney Community Connect. She is a local businesswoman who, in her very limited free time, has also managed to establish this not-for-profit. Through her tireless work supporting the disadvantaged, Joumana illustrates that cultural, gender and religious barriers can be overcome when we work together for the common good of our society. She continually strives for excellence by bringing together corporate and community sectors to provide care packages, furniture, clothing and anything else that is required for struggling families. Whilst it should be something that is always at the forefront of our minds, International Women's Day gives us a chance to come together to honour women's advancement.

It is also a reminder of two things: one, that continued vigilance and action are required to ensure that equality is maintained; and, two, that gender equality has no single face. Women in my electorate show that the cause of gender equality cannot be reductive or homogenous. The cause of gender equality succeeds when the cause of all women, no matter their faith, class or ethnicity, succeeds. I see in Joumana El Jamal the very essence of a woman who should be celebrated. She is a constant fundraiser for good causes; a successful local business owner; a mother, grandmother and wife; and a friend to all. Joumana balances everything with aplomb, dignity and grace. We did an incredible amount of work through the COVID period. Most recently we worked together

in establishing some support structures for recently arrived Afghan refugees. We had enough donations to effectively fill half a basketball court, and they went to Afghan families.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the very important women in my life, who not only are the women closest to me but also play an incredible role in shaping the person I am. I acknowledge my mother, who had me very young and never had a chance to finish her education but is one of the smartest people I have ever known. Her care, compassion and kindness to others always motivates me to do the best that I can. I acknowledge my lovely wife, Erin, who is absolutely phenomenal. She is a brilliant friend, wife and mother, and an outstanding teacher who cares so much about everybody that she teaches. She made the conscious decision to be in the classroom so that she could spend more time with kids. She is fantastic. I have two daughters. Everyone who has daughters wants them to be fierce, strong and independent. I am very proud of the girls that they are and exceptionally proud of the community service and volunteering they do, whether it is packing local hampers or helping people in need.

My story and the impact it had is not unique. I acknowledge all grandmothers, mothers, daughters, teachers, innovators, nurses, scientists, doctors, lawyers, artists and politicians who embody what it means to be a woman. They have broken through every barrier and obstacle put before them and have made the path easier for younger women to follow in their footsteps, yet there is still so much that women are not recognised for each and every day. Today I tell them that I very much appreciate their constant, selfless energy. I want all girls and all young women to have the same opportunities as their male counterparts. There is nothing more important in everyday life than the women who make it all possible. The world cannot adequately thank women for what they add to and do for society.

### **BANKSTOWN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE AND FLOODS**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:05):** I extend my appreciation and gratitude to the men and women of the NSW State Emergency Service, and particularly to the Bankstown SES unit, for their tireless and brave work protecting our community from the effects of the devastating floods that confronted New South Wales throughout February and March. For many weeks, New South Wales has been battered by record-breaking rainfall and storms, which resulted in severe flooding across the State and specifically in the Northern Rivers region and parts of western Sydney. My electorate of Bankstown experienced more than 70 millimetres of rain in just one day. In particular, residents living in the Georges River area faced multiple sudden evacuation warnings and orders and road closures. Many homes were left with water damage. Three minor flood warnings and one moderate to major flood warning were issued for the Bankstown and East Hills electorates, with over 800 properties along the Georges River at Georges Hall, Milperra, East Hills and Picnic Point being issued with warnings.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the SES Bankstown unit, which has worked tirelessly to ensure that everybody managed to pull through this very challenging time. To date, the Bankstown SES unit has responded to over 500 requests for assistance in March and has issued in excess of 6,000 sandbags. The SES Bankstown unit attended to several flash floods around Bankstown, Georges Hall and Milperra, with the most significant being a flash flood at Milperra on Milperra Road. The flood resulted in a large amount of water, with a depth of two metres, flowing from the Bankstown Airport and Ashford Avenue onto Milperra Road, trapping in excess of 40 cars in a very short time frame. Other locations where vehicles were trapped include Auld Avenue and Henry Lawson Drive. A shipping container was spotted floating down Auld Avenue, Milperra. A flood warning and offer to relocate was provided by the SES Bankstown unit to a farmer to relocate his livestock from Milperra.

On Friday 4 March, I had the pleasure of visiting the SES Bankstown unit, where I had the opportunity to meet with some of the hardworking men and women of the SES. As part of my visit, I received a briefing from Bankstown SES Deputy Unit Commander Graham Tomkinson. Mr Tomkinson informed me of the situation that was unfolding in the Georges River area and explained the critical work that the Bankstown SES was conducting to protect our community. I take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to all the volunteers stationed at Bankstown SES. Thank you to Unit Commander David Niven and deputy commanders Graham Tomkinson, Tony Harb and Tegan Askwith. Thank you to every staff member and the 150 volunteer members at the SES Bankstown unit for assisting our community during this challenging time. I extend my sincerest appreciation to the broader SES network. The floods have had extensive effects across the State. Thousands of homes and businesses have been destroyed and, sadly, lives have been lost. We are all very thankful for the courageous work of the SES.

I also acknowledge and thank the many agencies that assisted, including the NSW Police Force, NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Health and out-of-area crews, including the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service, South Australia SES, Victoria Police and ACT SES. These organisations and agencies supported the Greater Sydney metropolitan SES units with flood rescue and storm damage operations. SES volunteers are a special breed of people; they are willing to assist, often at a great personal and professional cost. I often speak to some of these members, who struggle because they have ordinary jobs. Although legislation is in

place to ensure they cannot be punished in any way for taking time off work, it is often difficult for them to do so. We rely entirely on volunteers to manage these devastating natural disasters. I am pleased that laws are in place to prevent volunteers from being adversely treated at their respective workplaces. Natural disasters, such as floods, require all hands on deck and we owe a great deal of gratitude to the men and women of the SES who offer assistance throughout such a challenging period.

### **KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE SCOUTS GROUPS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (18:10):** At a time when many people are seeking a greater sense of community and a break from the indoors, the residents of Ku-ring-gai have stepped up and continue to demonstrate their leadership skills and passion for the outdoors. What better reflection of those skills and love of the outdoors than the Scout movement? In the Ku-ring-gai electorate several Scout groups continue to thrive. They include the 1st Wahroonga, 1st East Wahroonga, 1st Gordon, 2nd Gordon, 1st Pymble, West Pymble, 1st Turramurra, 2nd Turramurra, 1st North Turramurra and Normanhurst Scout groups. Scouting provides many benefits to young and older people alike through developing resilience and good character and facilitating social connections. One of my favourite qualities of Scouts is their ability to instil leadership skills in young people, providing a myriad of benefits that last a lifetime. However, becoming a Scout leader is no easy feat. Leaders undertake multiple training courses, including Work Health and Safety Act training, Child Safe training, first aid, navigation, abseiling and personal training skills. The pinnacle award for a Scout leader is the advanced leadership training or Wood Badge, which builds on the basic areas of leadership and personal development.

Recently, Ku-ring-gai Scouts launched a social media campaign to recognise their leaders past and present as part of the leadership training project. I enjoyed learning about the remarkable leaders in my local community, including Assistant Scout Leader Jenny from West Pymble, Assistant Scout Leader Peter from the 2nd Turramurra Scout Group and Assistant Scout Leader Harriet from the 1st Gordon Scout Group. Peter from the 2nd Turramurra is one of the longest serving assistant Scout leaders. He joined Scouts at the age of 12 in the 1960s due to his love of boating. Throughout his time he has learnt about the outdoors and made many friends along the way. After moving to Sydney he became a Scout leader and passed on the skills he learnt to his son. Peter has never forgotten what he learnt as a youth in Scouts, including sailing, abseiling and using box trailers.

Jenny from West Pymble is an assistant Scout leader who joined as a young member before becoming a leader due to her love of adventure. Perhaps her most notable case for Scouts is the transferable skills she has learnt that are applicable in everyday life. In response to being asked what she most valued about Scouts, Harriet of the 1st Gordon said that it provides life skills that are not typically offered in the school curriculum, including camping, hiking, navigation, first aid and emergency training. They are just three of the many leaders in Ku-ring-gai Scouts who use their own leadership skills to teach young people those same skills. Personally, I believe those skills are critical for young people to flourish and become great leaders themselves.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the way that Scouts and Guides have taken a strong leadership position in the local community on Anzac Day. They have organised and run our dawn service at West Pymble Bicentennial Park and services at the Wahroonga memorial, the Turramurra memorial and the Kokoda memorial in Wahroonga. I also highlight Scouting's focus on the outdoors—something that should be encouraged and cherished by people of all generations. Ku-ring-gai is rich in bushland, parks and trails. I appreciate Scouts for encouraging young people to pursue outdoor physical activity. Research has shown that 71 per cent of Australian children and teenagers spend less than one hour a day outdoors, and one in two families do not spend time outdoors with their children more than twice a week. Simultaneously, our daily screen time has increased. While there are benefits to the digital medium, it is vital that we do not lose touch with the outdoors. This is why I welcome Scouts' continued growth and look forward to seeing their leadership training project attract even greater numbers to the organisation.

I am pleased that the New South Wales Government has supported our local Ku-ring-gai electorate Scout groups over the years through the Community Building Partnership program. In 2021 multiple well-deserved grants to Scout groups in the Ku-ring-gai electorate were supported, as had occurred in previous years. I will always continue to support our great Scout troops and groups in the Ku-ring-gai electorate, who provide immense value to not only the members and the leaders within their Scout troops but also the wider community. It is great to see our local leaders being recognised and the continued presence of this longstanding organisation, which instils commendable and admirable traits and a love of the outdoors in our young people. I congratulate our great Ku-ring-gai Scout groups and the leaders who operate them and pass on valuable skills to our young men and women.

## TEACHER WORKLOAD

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:15):** It will come as no surprise that we have a teacher shortage. Anybody who does not recognise that problem or wants to contest that or debate that should quickly get on the boat and go back to the deserted island from which they have come. I will read into *Hansard* today a note I have received from one of my local teachers. As MPs we should have all been engaging with our local teachers over recent years. There is a myriad of problems, concerns and frustrations within the teaching profession that have been vented in part in the media and also privately. I put this particular comment from one of my local teachers on the record:

...

In 2018 and 2021, two NSWTF-commissioned independent inquiries reported NSW teachers as working an average 55 hour week, a figure 'high on an international as well as domestic scale'.

In 1856, Melbourne stonemasons went on strike, protesting employer inflexibility to accept demands for reduced working hours.

Eventual negotiation resolved that stonemasons worked no more than an eight-hour day.

While initially only a minority of workers, mainly building trade workers, won the eight-hour day, in 1948, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court approved a 40-hour, five-day working week for all Australians.

Except, seemingly, NSW teachers.

The NSW Department of Education and Training is well aware of the hours being worked by teachers, and yet allow what may well be an illegal circumstance to flourish, even fester, every day of the week.

Indeed, a recent circumstance which saw a restaurant chain not paying its employees for time worked well in excess of a 38 hour week was described thus –

"This is a business model and system of work implemented and condoned by the management of Rock pool Dining Group that is unlawful." ...

...

Many Federation members seem to believe NSW teachers work long hours because we have a large workload.

That idea is back-to-front. Teachers have a large workload because we have long hours imposed upon us. And we work long hours because our work hours are unregulated (and not paid for), into which workload is dumped.

NSW teachers need ... a 'work hours' campaign. ... There is no unit of measurement for 'workload'. There is an intrinsic unit of measurement for 'work hours'. The Melbourne stonemasons' campaign was not about 'workload'. It was about 'work hours'.

There are precedent examples of this for us.

The OECD's *Education at a Glance 2018* report indicates 27 of 36 OECD countries incorporate 'total statutory working time, in hours, for teachers'. i.e., regulated working hours.

In NSW, 10,000 "junior doctors have launched a class action to recoup tens of millions of dollars in unpaid wages ... earned caring for patients under exploitative conditions ... The class action's lead applicant is a female doctor ... made to work up to 15 hours on top of her rostered hours per week." ...

Nationally, "Australia's top law firms are telling graduates they can expect to work only 40 hours a week as they prepare for new reporting conditions on staff pay and hours set down by the Fair Work Commission." ...

Meanwhile, the financial whizzes of the NSW Dept. of Finance, who 'enjoy' their 'standard working week' of '35 hours', must thank the budgetary gods that NSW teachers' working week is 57% longer (for free) than that of the whizzes, saving the NSW annual budget billions.

While Australian conservatives often argue a low tax regime is required to fully reward 'hard work', there is no reward at all for the enormous extra hours teachers perform each week for the benefit of students and the community.

But there is a cost.

Countless academic papers report the negative effects of working 'very long hours', including increased weight gain, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, alcohol and tobacco usage, depression, anxiety, suicide ideation and rates, diabetes, cancer, damaged personal relationships, divorce rates and decreased offspring birth weight.

Notably, WorkCover (2014) outlines 'Teachers make more mental stress claims than any other industry'.

In 2021, WHO reported on 55 hour + working week ... leading to 745 000 deaths internationally...

Statistically, that would suggest 75 teachers in New South Wales each year would die from their workload under any of these health conditions. The comment continues:

It is notable that 'maximum weekly hours forms part of the (Australia's) National Employment Standards'. The Fair Work Ombudsman outlines those hours are 'for a full-time employee, 38 hours'.

Maybe that is something we all need to think about.



**NETBALL UMPIRE MAUREEN BOYLE, OAM**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (18:20):** I give very big and hearty congratulations to Maureen Boyle, OAM, who was elevated to legend status in the Netball NSW hall of fame at its recent annual general meeting. Manly Warringah Netball Association has been part of our community for more than 57 years. Maureen Boyle started her netball career with the Dee Why Swans netball club some years ago. At 12 years of age she made history by being awarded the umpiring C Badge, which is usually given only after 16 years of age. Between 1982 and 1987 she served on the executive committee of Manly Warringah Netball Association as umpires convenor. Between 1986 and 1990 Maureen was director of umpiring for Netball NSW. She was named the NSW Sports Federation Official of the Year in 1996. Maureen received her OAM in 2004 for services to the community.

Maureen has officiated 168 international netball matches and was ranked as the world's number one netball umpire. Maureen has umpired at the world championships around the globe on numerous occasions. Maureen's extensive résumé includes the International Umpires' Award and being umpire of the Australian team and a former member and chairperson of the international rules committee. She has been awarded life membership of the International Federation of Netball Associations, Netball Australia and Netball NSW and, of course, Manly Warringah Netball Association. Maureen received the Netball NSW Anne Clark Service Award. She has been named the Warringah Council Australian of the Year. She was appointed a life member and patron of Manly Warringah Netball Association in 2018 and, as I said, was recently awarded legend status in the Netball NSW hall of fame. Anne Sargeant remarks of Maureen that her legacy to umpiring is incredible. Maureen continues to provide support and mentorship to umpires around the world and gives umpiring seminars across Australia. Maureen is still involved locally as Manly Warringah Netball Association's high-performance umpire coach. She continues to serve the netball community from grassroots to the elite level.

Many members in this place are very aware of the many volunteer hours it takes to make a sporting and community club run well. To that end I congratulate the 2022 executive team of the Manly Warringah Netball Association: Colette Longley, the president; Cathy Hurditch, the secretary; Nicole Carter, the vice-president; Reyner Stephens, the treasurer; Robyn Armsworth-Brack, the competition secretary; Natalie Harrison, the coaches convenor; Karen Hayes, the representative convenor; and Lisa Davison, the umpires convenor. I heartily thank all of them. It has been a challenging couple of years for community and grassroots sports organisations across the State. I congratulate Maureen Boyle, OAM, on her elevation to legend status in the Netball NSW hall of fame and for a job well done. May she continue umpiring for many years to come.

**SALAMANDER BAY PROPOSED LAND SALE**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:23):** On Tuesday 22 February, just one month ago, Port Stephens Council made the shocking decision to sell off precious public land on the foreshore of Salamander Bay without any prior notice or public warning whatsoever. In fact, councillors were only given one hour's notice before they were asked to vote on a mayoral minute to sell that koala corridor, which is right next to Mambo Wetlands. The long history of Mambo Wetlands should be well known to all members of this House. In 2016 the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government sold this important parcel of environmentally sensitive land and critical koala habitat to a property developer for a measly \$250,000. My community was appalled. The sale spurred on one of the greatest community-led campaigns that I have ever witnessed. At least 15,000 people formally joined the campaign to force this Liberal-Nationals Government to buy back the land. Once the Government realised the anger it had created and the strength of the community opposition, it publicly admitted the sale was a mistake. Then it spent more than three years and hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars to buy back the land.

When Port Stephens Council proposed to sell 109 Foreshore Drive, we were witnessing a repeat of that terrible history. With no notice and no community consultation, the council decided to sell a parcel of public land right next to Mambo Wetlands—land that koalas frequently tread to access the beach and lick the sand to get the minerals that they need. It is that special. Normally, motions to be debated by council must be published the week prior to give community members a chance to read and digest them, contact their local representatives and attend the council meeting to provide public feedback. However, unlike every other councillor, the mayor is vested with a special power to put forward motions with zero notice. That is what happened in this instance. So not only was the community blindsided but councillors were blindsided also. To their credit, half of the councillors on Port Stephens Council voted and spoke strongly against the surprise sale. They included Councillor Leah Anderson from East Ward, Councillor Jason Wells from Central Ward, and councillors Giacomo Arnott, Peter Francis and Peter Kafer from West Ward. However, given the tied result, the mayor then used his casting vote to push through his special motion, which required no notice, to flog off the land. In my view, that was a shocking error of judgement.

As loath as I am to run public commentary on council decisions, councils are an elected level of government, and councils and councillors are accountable for their decisions and actions. Putting forward a motion

to sell off public land without any notice or consultation with the people who own it—the public—is objectively poor governance. I am sure everyone in this Chamber would agree. Pushing ahead with the sale, particularly in the absence of majority support of the councillors, is even worse. Such a decision in this Parliament would never be allowed. The whole saga was terribly disappointing. Many people have contacted me to express their anger. I am sure they have also contacted the environment Minister, who is present in the House. He is nodding his head. They asked, "How was this allowed to happen?" In less than a month I have attended two community rallies. Lots of community outrage was vented. Thankfully, last night a rescission motion was unanimously supported by council, which means this precious parcel of land—a koala corridor between Mambo Wetlands and the foreshore at Salamander Bay—has been saved, for now. I recognise Councillor Leah Anderson, who played a pivotal role in opposing the terrible decision and getting it reversed last night.

I also acknowledge the Federal member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson. From the get-go she joined me in the campaign and fought to save this parcel of public land. Most importantly, I pay tribute to the many community members who stood up and said no. They raised their voices and protected this parcel of public land for the future. However, the fight is not over. Another motion to sell the land could come at any time. To stop any future sale, the land must be reclassified as community land by the council. I support that reclassification. As the local member of Parliament, I commit to working with Port Stephens Council to fight for more resources from the State Government to prevent it from thinking that selling precious public land is the solution to filling potholes. In 2019 the New South Wales Government promised to take ownership of a number of Port Stephens roads in disrepair, like the Avenue of the Allies, but to date nothing has happened. That would dramatically improve the budget bottom line for all ratepayers. For now, we will take a win for the community and another clear demonstration that there is power in community members raising their voices.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (18:29):** Early childhood education is going from strength to strength. The industry is thriving. An increasing number of children are being enrolled in early learning services, and jobs in the sector are also on the rise. Participation in early childhood education is fundamental to ensure that children have the best possible start to their educational journeys. Early learning services play a critical role in supporting children and families. Research shows that children who participate in a quality early childhood education program for at least 600 hours in the year before they start school are more likely to arrive at school equipped with the social, cognitive and emotional skills they need to engage in learning. That is why the New South Wales Government is committed to investment to make sure that every child receives a quality education right from the start.

Under the Start Strong program, the New South Wales Government has delivered investment to six services in the Cootamundra electorate. By assisting with the learning of Aboriginal and vulnerable children, that investment will have guaranteed returns in the future. The six centres are Gumnut Grove Child Care Centre, which received \$10,000; Young Preschool Kindergarten, \$7,000; Bland Preschool, \$10,000; Goodstart Early Learning Junee, \$8,832; Goodstart Early Learning Young, \$8,217; and Bland Shire Mobile Resource Unit, \$10,000. It is great to see, and the funding will be much appreciated by the community, staff and families connected to those centres. The grants will go towards the development of a range of measures to improve participation in early childhood education.

The measures include transport initiatives, such as establishing partnerships with local schools, councils or transport providers to increase access. Other initiatives that will assist Aboriginal children and children from low-income families include staff development opportunities, such as training and conferences that promote outreach; resources that support access and participation; access to specialised staff; development of educational resources that promote outreach; engagement of an Aboriginal community member to work with the service or the local Aboriginal community; engagement of a cultural or local community member; and re-engagement of Aboriginal and low-income families where enrolments may have declined due to COVID-19 and other unforeseen circumstances such as flood, bushfire and drought.

In 2019 the proportion of Aboriginal children enrolled in early childhood education for 600 hours in the year before starting school was 93.1 per cent, up from 80.9 per cent in 2016. That increase can be attributed partly to the great partnership between the New South Wales Government and early childhood centres and their staff, who continue to go above and beyond in providing services for children and families. Families with young children in the Cootamundra electorate will also have better access to early childhood education thanks to the funding agreement between the New South Wales and Federal governments. That agreement will give every child in our region the opportunity to attend at least 15 hours of preschool a week. These targeted initiatives have been put in place to support not only the vulnerable but also the dedicated staff working at early childhood centres. The funding will give them extra resources to tailor their teaching approaches so they can adequately cater for the needs of children from low-income and Aboriginal families.

Early childhood services are in demand. That is evident from the workforce boom. The occupation of early childhood educator is expected to be the fastest growing occupation in the Cootamundra electorate over the next three years, climbing by 14.3 per cent. To support the sector, the 2021-22 Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Scholarships and Early Childhood Education Scholarships Program has been developed to help increase the number of qualified early childhood teachers. That program will generate approximately 40 scholarships of up to \$20,000 each for those commencing or completing a bachelor-level early childhood teaching degree. I look forward to catching up soon with the hardworking early childhood teams in our centres across the Cootamundra electorate. I thank the New South Wales Government for its holistic approach to early childhood education investment and acknowledge the great work that our early childhood educators are doing.

### **ILLAWARRA STEEL INDUSTRY AND ENERGY PROJECTS**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:33):** More than 15 months ago—nearly 500 days, for those doing the maths—this Parliament passed the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020. It was passed with much fanfare for the then Minister for Energy and Environment and with bipartisan support. It was also passed with provisions around the development of local content requirements following amendments secured by Labor, and I was part of the negotiations. The local content provisions related to the construction and manufacture of renewable energy infrastructure. Specifically, part 2, section 8 of the Act requires the development of a plan to maximise the use of locally supplied goods and services, employ suitably qualified local workers and foster opportunities for apprentices. Nearly 500 days later there is still no plan. Expressions of interest have been sought for a number of renewable energy zones throughout the State but there are still no local content provisions. A little over a year ago—again, to much fanfare and backslapping for the then Minister for Energy and Environment, and now Treasurer—a commitment of \$70 million was announced to help build a hydrogen industry in the Illawarra and the Hunter. More than a year later, not a cent has flowed.

Some members might be wondering why I have a strong interest in both of these issues and how these issues are connected to the Illawarra. They are connected to, and are fundamentally about the future of, the steelmaking industry domestically, particularly in Port Kembla. I have been a vocal advocate of making sure that more locally produced steel is used in New South Wales government-funded and supported infrastructure projects. Whether it is a bridge, a school, a stadium, or renewable energy generation or transmission infrastructure, local content should be looked to first. Why? That is because in the Illawarra we recognise that the steel industry is one of the hard-to-abate industries, but we also recognise that in order to build the infrastructure of the future you are going to need steel. There are a number of people who would prefer that our steel industry closed because it is difficult to decarbonise. They feel that it is, or will become, too much of a problem, but for us they miss the fundamental point that the steel industry is part of the solution.

The future of steel is also likely to rely on the development of a hydrogen industry as part of that decarbonisation journey. Hydrogen is widely recognised as a replacement for coking coal in the steel production process, but it is not going to happen overnight. It is going to take a concerted research effort to develop the technology and scale it to a plant that produces more than three million tonnes of steel a year like Port Kembla does now. It will take a number of steps along the way as the technology is developed and refined to be able to produce enough hydrogen to use for steelmaking. That journey is going to have to build capacity, improve technology, develop a supportive workforce and drive down the cost of hydrogen production. Those were the purposes of the \$70 million in year-old but as yet undelivered funds.

The private sector needs the backing of government on this one in the early stages. The task is equivalent to developing all of the associated technologies needed to put a man on the moon. While those technologies were developed by both the public and private sectors, they were supported by direction and investment from government. What New South Wales has is plenty of headlines and little action. When it comes to developing these new technologies that a region is willing to back and embrace, regions like the Illawarra deserve more than a government that is pretending. Headlines, no matter how glowing for the government or Minister in question, do not build new industries. They do not create local jobs and they do not help to advance a region like the Illawarra. Tonight I want the Government to take the Illawarra's aspirations seriously for a change.

While some of the elements were touched on in question time today, we have still got no plan. The Opposition wants to see three things as a matter of urgency. They all relate to the simple goal of having a government actually deliver on its promises rather than thinking the job is done when "send" is pressed on the media release email. First, if the report of the NSW Renewable Energy Sector Board containing its recommendations is in the Minister's in-tray, he should get it out and release the report and its recommendations on local content immediately. Second, if those recommendations match the promise the Government made in 2020 to have a "local steel mandate for renewable energy projects" then it should implement this immediately and in full. There should be no further delays. Third, the Government should get moving on rolling out the \$70 million in funding to support the development of hydrogen projects.

The Hunter and Illawarra communities deserve an update on all of those matters now. They deserve the serious investment in jobs and industries. I acknowledge the recent work of Hysata, a homegrown, Wollongong-based company—from the innovation campus formed and funded by Labor—that has developed a new technology that may drive down the price of hydrogen to the much-sought-after \$2 per kilogram price more quickly than first thought. Companies like Hysata and others that are working on developing a hydrogen industry in the Illawarra and Australia cannot do it without the promised government support. Recently I read a tweet from the Treasurer pointing out that he was part of 100 climate conversations. It would be nice if he could be part of another conversation, this time with the Illawarra, which started: "Today I am delivering on the overdue promise I made to the Illawarra."

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:39):** While huge swathes of New South Wales were being devastated by unprecedented flooding, people were dying and thousands of homes were being destroyed, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] handed down its most recent report. The main takeaway from that report is that climate change is already with us. It is already fuelling extreme weather events, and the window to act to prevent devastation beyond that we can adapt to is rapidly closing. As happened with the 2019 bushfires, it is beyond frustrating that people are still referring to the recent catastrophic and tragic floods as "unexpected" or a one-in-100-year or even one-in-1,000-year event. While the recent floods might have been unprecedented and absolutely devastating, the extreme weather events are certainly not unexpected. Scientists have been issuing increasingly urgent warnings to policymakers for decades. In case members have not yet read the IPCC report—and it does provide an easy-read summary for policymakers—it is bleak and unambiguous. It states:

It is unequivocal that climate change has already disrupted human and natural systems ... Societal choices and actions implemented in the next decade determine the extent to which medium- and long-term pathways will deliver higher or lower climate resilient development ... Importantly climate resilient development prospects are increasingly limited if current greenhouse gas emissions do not rapidly decline, especially if 1.5°C global warming is exceeded in the near term ...

That is a clear and present warning and danger. It takes time to implement many of those adaptive approaches to help us be more resilient to natural disasters—and we have already wasted decades. We have also failed to limit our greenhouse gas emissions to a level that will contain global warming to a more manageable 1.5 degrees Celsius. Instead, we are hurtling towards three or four degrees Celsius of warming. It was pretty astounding that the Coordinator-General of the National Recovery and Resilience Agency suggested that residents must "face realities" and that potentially some of these communities are no longer livable. He also stated:

The taxpayer and the ratepayer cannot continue to pick up the bill for these huge, catastrophic damage events.

However, I doubt that he meant we should make the fossil fuel companies pay, which is exactly what The Greens think we should do. While he is right that we should be limiting development on flood plains, simply saying that people should go and live elsewhere does not make sense. Where should they go? In Sydney some 200,000 people were evacuated because of the floods. Heatwaves in western Sydney are anticipated to hit 50 degrees Celsius if we continue on our current emissions trajectory; it will become a very difficult place to live. Nearly all regional areas are at the risk of bushfires, including Cobargo, which was hit really hard despite being mostly grassland. Towns and cities along the coast are particularly at risk from sea level rise and coastal erosion. Inland areas are at the risk of severe water shortages, desertification and extreme, unlivable heatwaves.

All of us are at risk—and the risks are serious. We cannot simply live elsewhere because the impacts will start to compound and there will be no elsewhere. The IPCC report goes on to warn that one of the greatest dangers to our resilience is coping with multiple disasters at once when multiple areas are hit at the same time. That means that there is no-one left to help and send additional resources from other places. The IPCC also warns:

Despite progress, adaptation gaps exist between current levels of adaptation and levels needed to respond to impacts and reduce climate risks ...

The science is clear: The mining and burning of coal, oil and gas are the cause of the climate crisis. Yet here in New South Wales we continue to export coal and gas and we continue to approve new coalmines. That is simply not compatible with keeping global warming to a range that is possible for us to adapt to and live with. As a country and as a State, we are yet to take responsibility for being one of the biggest fossil fuel exporters in the world. By a trick of accounting, the New South Wales Government does not consider it to be our responsibility. But our actions are fuelling the climate crisis and we have the capacity and the responsibility to act. To finish, I will read to members the closing sentence of the IPCC report. I want all members to sit with it for a moment. It states:

The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.

### PICTON BYPASS

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:44):** "Prepare to evacuate! If you remain in the area you may become trapped and it may be too dangerous for the SES to rescue you." Trapped—that is what the people of Picton felt during this month's severe weather conditions and unpredictable rains. They waited anxiously to find out if Stonequarry Creek would flood and cause them to evacuate. Traffic was diverted and businesses closed so that sandbagging could begin. Those precautions were justified as conditions were reminiscent of the June 2016 floods, when the creek burst its banks, sending a torrent of water along Argyle Street and beyond. This time the water level almost covered Argyle Street bridge before subsiding by three metres the following day. Then it went up again and came back down. That happened five times; it was an emotional rollercoaster. There is only one exit road and Victoria Bridge, which was built in 1897 by Percy Allen, can carry only a certain amount of traffic, cannot take heavy freight and is often closed for ongoing maintenance or because of accidents.

"It is very scary for our community. We are sitting ducks," said Alicia Hirst of Tahmoor after the Green Wattle Creek fire raged towards the towns of Balmoral, Buxton and Bargo on 19 December 2019, tragically killing two volunteer firefighters. Thousands of people tried to evacuate all at once, causing a 15-kilometre traffic jam from Bargo to Picton. It was bumper to bumper. People were carrying animals, kids and personal belongings, stuck on one road without an escape route. If the winds had changed, there could have been hundreds of dead people on Remembrance Drive. Sadly, for many of my constituents it has become familiar to have that most horrible feeling of running out of options.

The community agrees that the only answer is the Picton bypass, which will provide an alternative route for evacuation during bushfire and flood. It will improve the amenity in Picton town centre, provide an alternative for freight movement and reduce the number of vehicles using Victoria Bridge. Day-to-day traffic congestion around Picton has increased significantly, and modelling predicts that traffic will back up across Victoria Bridge during peak times. Increased traffic is a result of the new growth in the areas of Picton, Thirlmere, Tahmoor and Wilton. Residents accept that the population of Sydney is expanding but, as Mr Wallace of Picton said, "We have one of the last country town streetscapes left in New South Wales and it is beautiful. We are also custodians of historic cottages. The traffic lights would make it more suburban."

Currently the council is considering installing traffic lights at the corner of Prince and Argyle streets to deal with the congestion that already occurs, but it would prefer to preserve the heritage value of Picton and instead build the bypass. In future, Wollondilly will be the choice destination for people in Sydney and western Sydney who seek a close country getaway. The 52 towns, villages and rural areas are already an attractive tree change for families who want peace and quiet, a proper backyard for their kids and a town with plenty of charm and character. The Government cannot support the constant upgrades to Victoria Bridge and the refurbishment of historic buildings and then expect the community to solve local traffic problems that are caused by old infrastructure and new growth, which has taken some of the population burden off Sydney.

We deserve to have a plan for resilient road infrastructure and safety, including a safe exit in an emergency, particularly in my electorate, where the standard of public transport is less than desirable and where access to employment in other locations is associated with long commute times and high car dependency. When the WestInvest survey went live online, constituents nominated the popular Picton bypass as a tailor-made project that would make a real difference to community amenity and economic recovery. It will be truly transformational and it will address more than one major challenge that has been created by population growth in the community. It would support livability, culture and amenity, improve access to education, employment and health care and, fundamentally, increase road safety.

I implore the Minister for Metropolitan Roads to give the people of Picton and surrounds hope by funding the Picton bypass in the 2022-23 budget. As I mentioned earlier, the bushfires proved how dangerous it is to have only one exit road for the community. The recent floods have once again reminded us of that. The Picton bypass would provide our community with multiple options to escape bushfires and floods. It must be built. With the support of Mayor Gould, I know that Minister Ward will deliver a vital infrastructure project.

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:49):** Every year International Women's Day is a chance for celebration, reflection and hope. We celebrate the historical and ongoing contributions of women across society; we reflect on the gains women have achieved and the sacrifices that have been made in pursuit of those hard-fought gains, and the work that is still to be done; and we hope for a better future, free from gender-based discrimination. When Women's Day was first celebrated in New York City in 1909, American women were more than 11 years away from achieving suffrage. In Australia, white women had been able to vote for only seven years; in New South Wales, women would achieve the right to stand for Parliament in 1918; and it was not until 1965 that regulations

prohibiting First Nations people from voting in State and Federal elections were finally abolished and our First Nations sisters were able to vote.

One part of the history of International Women's Day that is often forgotten is that it was originally International Working Women's Day. The first International Women's Day was celebrated in Sydney, Australia, in 1928. On that day people stood up and protested for equal pay for equal work, for an eight-hour day for shopgirls and for paid leave. In many ways we are still fighting for those issues. This year I was reminded of that history when I marched with hundreds of others from Birdwood Park in Newcastle West to Newcastle's iconic Civic Park, which was organised by Hunter Workers. I was invigorated, inspired and strengthened by marching alongside my sisters in the struggle and with my brothers who support us.

While we marched I thought of all of the extraordinary women that I have met in my capacity as an MP—women who do extraordinary things in our community, women who stand up, give back and do everything they can to make tomorrow better than today. I thought of Charlestown electorate's 2022 Local Woman of the Year, Rosalind O'Shannassy, whose work in support of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service transformed what was a horrible experience for her into something positive, beautiful and uplifting. I thought of Mercia Buck, OAM, my predecessor as North Ward councillor in Lake Macquarie and a committed advocate for the performing arts, who was last year named a Freeman of the City of Lake Macquarie. I thought of Pamela Comerford, who was awarded an OAM in this year's Australia Day Honours for her work founding I Am Here, A Place To Be Me, otherwise known as Hunter Brain Injury Respite Options.

I thought of Lynn Howlett, the superintendent of St John's Ambulance Warners Bay Division. I thought of Christine Speer, Lake Macquarie SES commander. I thought of Cathy Jenkins from Charlestown & District Meals on Wheels, and I thought of Lydia and Elizabeth from Our Community Place in Windale. I thought of those women who are growing up and who we are marching for, including young women like Edie Hall, who raised \$15,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation when she shaved her head, for which she received the One to Watch Award at this year's NSW Women of the Year Awards. I thought of another budding young activist in Calista Bowdler, who wants to put an end to child slavery. I thought of young women like Nixon Sherry and Sachi Scowen from Redhead, who organised a collection of food and dry goods with their school community to be delivered to those who have been impacted by the devastating floods up north.

I thought of the amazing women who work at our specialist domestic violence and homelessness services, including Kelly Hansen, Suellen Moore and Ann-Maria Martin. I thought of the countless women who have been on the front lines of the pandemic over the past two years: the teachers, nurses and shop workers who have been putting themselves at risk to make sure that our communities continue operating. I thought of the brave women in Ukraine who are struggling for their homes, families and way of life. I thought of the brave women—including our own sister in this place, Janelle Saffin—in northern New South Wales and Queensland who have lost so much. I thought of the women who fight every day all over the world for freedom, equality and opportunity.

I thought about the enormous strides that we have made. My presence in this Chamber and that of my female colleagues is proof of that. I thought of all of the work that is still to be done. That day of celebration, reflection and hope is now over for 2022, but the chants from the march stay with me. All of our voices, united as one, are calling for a better tomorrow—not only for women but for everyone.

### TEACHER SHORTAGE

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (18:54):** A crisis is generally defined as a time of intense difficulty or danger, or a time when a difficult or important decision must be made. On 2 March 2022, when questioned in a Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education budget estimates hearing examining the proposed expenditure for Education and Early Learning, Minister Mitchell went on record denying a teacher supply crisis. In the case of Canobolas high school in Orange, teacher shortages resulted in 849 merged or uncovered classes in 2021 and, as of today, there have been a staggering 798 uncovered or merged classes in 2022. Last Friday the school had 15 classes merged into one in its school hall. Sadly, this is a frequent occurrence.

That is just one school of hundreds across regional New South Wales that are experiencing significant teacher shortages and, worse, children are going without critical education. Multiply those uncovered or merged classes by those affected students and the number of students negatively impacted by the loss of critical learning and development is shocking. The period of a child's education and development is time critical. A reasonable person considering the teacher shortage at the Canobolas high school and its detrimental effect on children's education would agree that the teacher shortage and undelivered education most certainly meets the definition of a crisis. The parents of students who are losing out on their education would be justifiably outraged. Education is a fundamental right in a First World democratic nation, but this Government has been derelict in its responsibility to ensure teacher supply.

The teacher shortage at Canobolas high school is not a suddenly emerging issue. I made the Minister aware of it last year and provided a reasonable suggestion for her to consider implementing to attract teachers to the school. The local branch of the NSW Teachers Federation has also raised this with the department, but to no avail. In May last year in a question on notice I asked the Minister to consider permanently awarding the Canobolas high school four points benefit as an incentive to attract and retain teachers. At that point in time there were 15 teacher vacancies and the school had experienced a 50 per cent turnover in teaching staff during the preceding two years. In response to my suggestion, the Minister wrote:

The Government is currently reviewing the incentives used to attract and retain teachers to rural and remote parts of New South Wales. The aim of the Rural and Remote Incentives Review is to assess the effectiveness of the current scheme and provide recommendations for improvement.

Given that teacher positions at the school still remain unfilled and that the number of uncovered or merged classes is worsening, it is clear that existing incentives are insufficient to attract and retain teachers to the school. The school remains classified at just one point benefit, which on the scale of benefits has no listed incentives at all and does nothing to attract teachers to fill vacancies. I have recently asked the Minister to consider applying a six points benefit for the school, which would be a real and meaningful incentive to attract and retain teaching and support staff. Six incentive points involve financial and professional benefits to attract a teacher to an unfilled position. Financial benefits could include annual retention payments and rental subsidies of up to 70 per cent, which would be a significant incentive as the rental market in Orange for our government-paid essential workers is an obstacle to teacher recruitment. Professional benefits include, amongst other incentives, a placement trial at the school before a teacher commits, which is important for longer term retention.

I have met with some of the passionate and caring teachers and staff at Canobolas high school, and they are in despair. The pleas for help by teachers and the Teachers Federation representatives have landed on deaf ears. I have focused on the teacher shortage and education crisis, but there is a growing psychological crisis for the teachers and administrative and support staff who, out of the goodness of their hearts and dedication to their students and their profession, are taking on additional workloads and consequential stress to help students who are missing out on teacher-led education. We may see teachers and support staff burn out, which is unfair to them and their families, and we will see more teachers eventually leave the school and possibly even leave the profession altogether. When the Minister says she is incentivising, it is just lip service. Canobolas high school and other regional schools are suffering a teacher shortage crisis. They are on the other side of the Great Divide, well out of the sight and thoughts of Macquarie Street. I call on the Government to consider the welfare of overworked teachers and support staff and the students whose education is being neglected as a result of its inaction and to address the chronic teacher shortage, which is now an education crisis.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:59):** I start by congratulating you, Mr Temporary Speaker, on your elevation to the chair. This is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak while you are presiding in the Chamber. I hope that my contribution is worthy of your position.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I hope so too.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I want to talk tonight about this year's International Women's Day and Women's Week and to reflect on this year's theme, "Break the Bias". As we know, women are still under-represented in our boardrooms and workplaces, including here in Parliament, and the gender pay gap is very real. Many women often have to forgo full-time work opportunities when raising families due to the lack of access to affordable child care, and despite significant structural progress, women still experience gender disparity due to culturally ingrained biases and stereotypes within our society. There is so much change that still needs to happen to shift this bias before we can reach true equality. During Women's Week in New South Wales, we shined the spotlight on amazing and diverse women breaking the mould and challenging this bias through the Women of the Year awards. Many of my colleagues here joined me in attending those awards, where we celebrated women from across the State and recognised their amazing achievements in a wide range of areas.

I particularly acknowledge North Shore Local Woman of the Year Tamara Keniry and recognise her contribution. Tamara is president of the Mosman Chamber of Commerce and has been instrumental in providing essential support to our local businesses in the village of Mosman and the wider community, particularly throughout the pandemic. Just recently Tamara championed the delivery of a seminar on skills development for local businesses—through a partnership of the Mosman Chamber of Commerce and the New South Wales Government—called "Rebuild, Recharge, Renew". Businesses had the opportunity to hear from a host of keynote speakers, including our Minister for Small Business, the Hon. Eleni Petinos, MP, the Small Business Commissioner, and a range of different advisory and strategy providers on reinvigorating their businesses. Tamara's dedication to the chamber of commerce and her support for our local businesses are amazing. She is also an inspiring businesswoman who is trying to change the world by improving sustainability through her company,

PureFree. I thank her for the amazing work she does for our community, for our businesses and for the thriving and bustling village that is Mosman. She is a true leader in our local area and she constantly challenges stereotypes of women in leadership in everything she does.

Of course, on International Women's Day and throughout Women's Week, we also look at the future and what we want the State to look like for growing girls. I had a real blast attending the Mastercard Girls4Tech education program together with girls from North Sydney Demonstration School. On the day, the girls were mentored and engaged in activities across different areas, including algorithms and cryptology. They are much brighter than my generation—or maybe that is just me. It was truly amazing to see how excited these young girls were to learn about STEM education. I was blown away by how smart they are. They had lightning-fast puzzle and algebra solving skills. Some of them were already making their own codes and ciphers. I give a huge thankyou to Cass Smith from Mastercard for coordinating and delivering this Girls4Tech program and I thank all of the staff who mentored on the day, particularly North Sydney Dem teachers who facilitated. There is a real need for more women in STEM education and we have to break the bias that women are not interested or capable of being in STEM fields. Programs like Girls4Tech are crucial in fostering an interest in this area at a young age.

As a local representative, a mother and a woman, I am also extremely proud of the work that the New South Wales Government is doing to address gender inequality in our State for future generations. We have provided free preschool, which helps to get women back into the workforce and improves women's economic opportunities and outcomes, as well as roughly 60 hours of free before- and after-school care per child, which also helps to facilitate women being able to return to work full-time if they choose. We have delivered record-breaking investments in the prevention of domestic and family violence against women, with almost half a billion dollars committed last year—the single largest investment in domestic violence prevention that this State has ever seen. More recently we announced the landmark Women's Economic Opportunities Review, to be delivered by our Treasurer, Matt Kean, and led by an expert panel of four women and one man.

I want to give a huge thankyou to the expert panel, led by the president of Chief Executive Women, Sam Mostyn, AO. I join their meetings and I am blown away by their knowledge, their energy and their fervour for change. I cannot wait to see what comes out at the end of this review. If women's participation reached parity with men's, the economy could be a whopping 8 per cent larger in 40 years' time. I look forward to the recommendations of the panel being handed down. Together as a Government, as a Parliament and as a society, we can forge equality and break the bias for good. When women succeed, we all do.

### ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:04):** I am saddened to say in the Parliament that on 12 January this year a 13-year-old boy stabbed another 13-year-old boy to death in the suburb of Kariong. Around about the same time I received a letter from Gabby Greyem, a local cafe owner and great advocate for the Umina community, about antisocial behaviour in the skate park precinct. I have received a letter from Sandra Henri, a mum who is greatly concerned that her two young girls do not have much to do and are potentially getting into trouble. I have a letter from a grandmother who wants to move her granddaughter out of my community to Sydney, out of fear of her getting caught up in the ice drug culture. I also have a letter from Willow from Gosford High School, a great new member of our regional taskforce, saying that we need to do something to help young people get off their devices and engage in positive activities in our community.

We need a long-term, coordinated approach to these issues on the peninsula and in Kariong—not just ad hoc, hope-for-the-best responses and Government funders jumping in when there is a crisis. We need an oversight that pushes down to the southern end of the coast to help our young people. The statistics tell us that four out of every five young people have experienced mental health problems over the past two years, which is very concerning. But we are on our way to solutions. I commend my community for jumping on board together and getting involved to look at what those solutions could be.

In particular, I thank the Brisbane Water Local Area Command youth liaison officer, who has been fantastic. He knows the community. He is upset because a group of young people whom he had not seen in trouble before threw bottles at his police car on New Year's Eve. He is a fantastic member of the police force, who currently works in behaviour management control in Sydney and volunteers in our community to help improve things. We also have Regional Youth Support Services Inc. [RYSS] providing input. I thank RYSS's CEO, Kim McLoughry, for providing me with her S.T.A.K.E.holder plan, which proposes a strengths-based solution to youth antisocial behaviour. I commend the RYSS team, who have started surveying young people about what they want. Kim has recommended that we need to "Step up" and address the big issues first, such as community safety; "Tackle" community daytime policing; "Activate" the support and education needed; "Keep it real" and have the community involved; and "Encourage", which is the best bit and what our community is working towards.



Coast Shelter has also got involved to assist. It is a great housing provider that intervenes early before young people face homelessness. That is part of how we can provide wraparound support to young people who are at risk. The Umina Community Group has noted that a lot of young people are out after dark because they do not have safe homes. We have some work to do moving forward as a community. The Umina PCYC is on board, which is fantastic. It was already offering lots of great programs and will continue to do that and hopefully expand and connect its resources with other service providers. The counselling team at Coast Community Connections and their CEO, Bruce Davis, are doing great work. We just need a bit more funding to oversee what is going on in the community. We have great resources, but let us expand what we have to make it better.

Labor's candidate for the Federal seat of Robertson, Dr Gordon Reid, has attended a meeting to listen to the community about what young people in the area need. Our current Federal member, Lucy Wicks, also attended a meeting by telephone. Pastor Dan and Jessie from the Hope Unlimited Church, the Umina Eagles Football Club, Woy Woy Rugby, Jon Treble and Sandra Henri have all been involved. Disappointingly, local council representatives employed in roles dedicated to working with youth said they would come along to two of these meetings but did not turn up. Thankfully Brett Sherar, the council's manager of open space and recreation, came to the meetings with maps of the new Peninsula Recreation Precinct. The precinct gives us hope, but connecting young people with the precinct is something we will have to work hard at.

I commend Anne Vine from Kariong Mountains High School, who will be retiring this year. She is passionate about the community and finding solutions. We are already talking about solutions such as midnight basketball and taking buses of kids from Kariong to the Youthfest that we have planned on the peninsula. Shaun from the footy club, Lisa from the eco garden, Chris Clarke from Kariong Baptist Church and three great representatives from Kariong Progress Association are all on board. We have a starting point—the Youthfest and the midnight basketball—and we are looking at saving a skate park in Kariong. It is exciting that whilst there are problems in the community, plenty of people want to be involved in finding solutions. It would be great to see the Government come on board with funding. If we always do what we have always done, then we will always get what we have always got.

#### **HAWKESBURY WOMAN OF THE YEAR DIANE RUSSELL**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:09):** I am pleased to recognise Diane Russell as the recipient of the 2022 Hawkesbury Woman of the Year for her amazing and inspiring work through her foundation Hope4U. Hope4U offers around-the-clock support and consolation to families and individuals grieving the loss of a loved one through suicide, as well as provides support through a safe intervention program for people faced with domestic violence. Diane's own experience of the terrible grief and confusion that follows suicide kickstarted her mission to reach out and help others. Diane was a victim of domestic violence as well and raised two children as a single parent. Tragically, in 2015 her son Jason committed suicide at 31 years of age, leaving behind a wife and a child. Just six years later in 2021, Diane's youngest son, Aaron, died through suicide as well.

It was as she was dealing with this devastating loss of Jason that Diane recognised a shortfall in the process and felt a pull to bridge that gap. There was no-one there to console her and prepare her for the trauma that loved ones left behind are forced to deal with. Diane moved into action and began volunteering her time and effort, while drawing on her experience, to help others who are left to deal with the unimaginable grief of losing a loved one to suicide. Working closely with police at Hawkesbury local area command, Diane is ready at all hours of the day and night to go and sit with loved ones immediately after a suicide. When a loved one commits suicide in the family home, it is treated like a crime scene. Family members cannot go back into the home while the police are in attendance, so they may be stuck outside on their verandah at two in the morning, feeling ostracised and confused.

The recognition of Diane as the 2022 Hawkesbury Woman of the Year is without question. I am very proud to know Diane and I know that people in Hawkesbury appreciate her invaluable contribution to the community. Continuing her good work and raising awareness about suicide and the impacts it has on families, Diane organised an annual Hope Walk, which is attended by many community leaders and advocates, families affected by suicide and domestic violence, and friends and supporters. The sixth annual Hope Walk was held this year on 12 February, on a beautiful sunny day, and I am very pleased to say it continues to be a growing success. It is important that we recognise the great achievers in our community. It is the hard work and dedication of people like Diane that makes Hawkesbury a wonderful place to live and I am proud to say we have locals who are willing to make sacrifices for the good of their neighbour. Diane saw a need and found a way to fill the gap.

Diane donated even more of her time to volunteer with Hawkesbury's Helping Hands in February and March this year. As one of the locals impacted by the devastating floods, she wanted to help and to give back to her community. She assisted with the packaging of food supplies for people isolated and stranded by floodwaters. She just keeps giving. She is a tireless worker for the Hope4U Foundation and continues to encourage and support

a community that is often on its knees. I send my heartfelt congratulations to Diane on being named the 2022 Hawkesbury Woman of the Year.

### CENTRAL COAST HEALTH DISTRICT

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:13):** I have a really disturbing story to share with the House tonight. I had a mum come to my office and talk to my staff. Her daughter, who is a nurse, had been assaulted at work that day. I rang the nurse to find out how she was going and what the situation was, and she told me there are chronic staffing shortages in the Central Coast Local Health District. That is no surprise; it was a problem before COVID but is much worse now. According to CEO Scott McLachlan, currently the Central Coast Local Health District has approximately 200 vacancies, which puts a lot of pressure onto the existing staff.

People may not know that patients are presenting to hospital emergency departments with more and more complex issues. One problem is around the NDIS, of which I am a big supporter. But when the deal was done between Federal and State governments and the State pulled out of having facilities for clients, I always feared—as did my colleague Kate Washington—that there was no safety net and that those really high-needs patients would have nowhere to go because they were too expensive to look after. That has happened here.

The nurse told me that complex patients with NDIS funding issues are causing major havoc on wards. There was a big young fellow with an intellectual disability. He had to leave where he was because of funding issues and went home. His dad went out to do some shopping and the young man unfortunately assaulted his mum, so they called an ambulance. He was then taken to emergency. Emergency staff are not adequately trained to care for those with special needs and requirements, and they do not have the proper facilities to look after those people. The young man unfortunately went on to assault six emergency department [ED] staff members, and that is not uncommon. The nurse told me it has been happening in Gosford and Wyong mental health wards for months.

The first nurse was thrown across the room into the wall. The nurse I was talking to had gone to assist the other nurse and was covering her up because the fellow was attacking the two of them, and then others got injured as they tried to assist. Miraculously, the nurses did not blame the gentleman in question because he has complex needs, but they are saying the ED is not the place for him to be. He tied up a number of staff, including security, for a number of days, because that is how long it took to put him in an appropriate placement. That is on top of the fact that many of the wards are running short. Those six nurses went on leave because they were injured, and that put more pressure back onto emergency. The nurse said that they are having terrible trouble trying to recruit new staff. That has been exacerbated by another Federal problem, which is the GP shortage.

More and more people are presenting directly to emergency because they cannot get to a GP, or they are having to use telehealth because of COVID. That means that by the time they get to ED, they are much sicker. The nurse is a very resilient person; I know her and I have purposely not mentioned her name because she has a high profile at the hospital. She is absolutely committed to her profession but said to me in the conversation that it is wearing even her down. She worries about the young nurses because they are seeing the older, more experienced nurses suffering in that way and they are not sure whether they will stay with the system. That will be a problem into the future. The State-Federal funding issues, particularly around the NDIS, have to be resolved because otherwise we will not be able to retain quality staff in our hospital system, which would be a tragedy for the whole community.

### TUGGERAH LAKE FLOODING

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:18):** The recent devastating floods across New South Wales have rightly led to calls from our community that the response to flooding in the State be reviewed. Flooding also occurred in my electorate of The Entrance, around Tuggerah Lakes and across the wider Central Coast. Tonight I talk about the flooding around Tuggerah Lakes and in my electorate and how my colleagues and I—including the member for Wyong, who is in the Chamber tonight—have responded to that natural risk to our community.

On the Central Coast, we have experienced flooding around Tuggerah Lakes for each of the past three years. That represents a significant increase in flood occurrence around our area. Flooding around Tuggerah Lakes is a fact of life, but the recent increase represents a significant change in flood expectations. I will go back to how we responded to the flood in 2020 and compare it with how we are responding now, and report on what we have done to improve our response to flooding around Tuggerah Lakes.

On 8 February 2020 the local SES issued a minor flood warning for Tuggerah Lakes, predicting that the lake level would reach 0.9 metres—Tuggerah Lake usually sits at 0.3 metres—and that that would occur on Sunday morning. On Sunday morning the floodwaters reached that minor level, but then they continued to rise; by Tuesday 11 February the waters stood at 1.65 metres. Over the next couple of days, they eventually reached 1.67 metres. No other warning was issued to the community. As a consequence, people around the suburbs of Berkeley Vale, Chittaway, Killarney Vale and Long Jetty saw their homes and properties inundated. People who

were not able to prepare had their properties and their vehicles inundated. Terry Schofield at North Entrance had his mobility scooter inundated. He reported to my office that it cost him \$4,000 to replace it.

In the aftermath of that flooding, the community rightly called for an improvement in our response. My colleagues and I were determined to address the issue and at the time I called for three things: better flood warning, better management of The Entrance Channel—that is where the floodwaters get out of Tuggerah Lake and are released to the ocean—and more education on flood risks. My colleagues and I arranged briefings and meetings with the SES and council to discuss the issue, and when flooding recurred in 2021 there had been an improvement. The flood warning system had still not been reviewed by the Government. Because Tuggerah Lake was still open to the ocean, flooding was not as bad as it had been in 2020. But waters still reached a level of 1.5 metres, and we were still operating on a flood plan that had expired in 2018. My colleagues continued to press the Government, and we have had some significant improvements.

On 28 February this year a minor flood warning was delivered by the SES and the Bureau of Meteorology. Floodwaters reached the minor flood level on Thursday 3 March and an evacuation order was issued. The evacuation centre was opened and accommodation provided to those who needed it. By Friday 4 March moderate flood level waters had been reached, and on 5 March a disaster was declared. By Sunday the floodwaters were falling back to a minor level, and by 11 March they had fallen below the minor level. The improvement in the warning system and council's action in opening the channel early this time, before the floodwaters had reached a moderate level, have resulted in a much better response. The floodwaters were released, and we did not get the high flooding we got in 2021. We will continue to press the agencies responsible to improve flood response around the coast and do the best we can to reduce flood risk for our constituents.

### REGIONAL AND RURAL ROADS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:23):** As I drive across the Albury electorate, it is plain that weather events have taken their toll on country roads. Before I go further, I take a moment to say how our thoughts and hearts go out to communities across our State who are so significantly impacted by floods, particularly the Northern Rivers communities. While the Albury electorate has not suffered from flooding to any degree comparable to the devastation wrought in the north of the State, we have had a rolling series of major storms that have severely tested almost every road and drainage system, every culvert and every gravel verge. I have visited farmers in my electorate like Greg Doyle and Tim Coyle in Walbundrie to speak with them about the challenges they are facing, and I have also spoken with Greg Blackie, the Director of Engineering from Greater Hume Shire Council to gain an insight into the impact weather and usage has on our roads.

It is important to recognise that in a regional setting the concept of being connected is more than just about telecommunications and whether you can download a document or watch a movie online. Being connected includes driving and the condition and safety of the roads network. Country roads are what connect us—to each other, to our communities and to other regional centres where we can access essential services ranging from groceries or a pharmacy to medical attention. This type of connection—our roads network—is crucial. Safety concerns us all, and maintenance of these roads is a very real issue for everyone. However, in regional areas we face particular issues that need ongoing attention to keep us safe. Some sections of the regional and local roads network are heavily burdened with freight transport. Whether it is logging trucks or grain or livestock transport, the road surface takes more than its share of punishment.

Fortunately, our State and Federal governments work with councils to fund substantial maintenance and upgrades to the regional roads network. Additionally, we must be aware of what might be called the "first kilometre and last kilometre"; namely, that part of the road system that is on the edge of a regional centre. These sections play a prominent role and require different strategies and treatments to ensure they are safe to use and distribute traffic in a way that reduces wear and tear. It is vital that these sections of road do not miss out on funding that will in turn make a road in its entirety a safer prospect for travellers and for those in their vehicles on business. Collectively, the safety of roads has a significant impact on attracting and growing businesses in regional areas. As Deputy Premier Paul Toole noted, the amount of freight transported across regional New South Wales will grow by 12 per cent to 286 million tonnes by 2036, with at least three million tonnes of that travelling on Federation Way.

It should be acknowledged that the New South Wales Government committed \$4.4 million under the Fixing Country Roads program, with an additional \$650,000 from the Federation Council towards their roads. Fixing Country Roads is about moving freight more efficiently. Those projects support jobs and economic growth in regional New South Wales. The fund has seen the completion of a \$5.1 million upgrade to a 24-kilometre section of Federation Way, north of the Riverina Highway at Buraja. Additionally, the \$16.5 million Davey Road interchange project was completed in November 2021, unlocking Albury's booming industrial precinct and boosting freight access to the area. The Davey Road interchange now provides a direct connection for freight to

the 450-hectare NEXUS Industrial Precinct and the Ettamogah Rail Hub, both of which are key to providing economic benefits to the Riverina.

Over the two-year period from 2019 to 2021 New South Wales has provided capital and operational funding to: Snowy Valleys Council, over \$7 million; Federation Council, \$16 million; Murrumbidgee Council, \$2.3 million; and Albury City Council, \$9.7 million. I know that funding is greatly appreciated by the electorate of Albury. We acknowledge those significant contributions and now look to how we can further support those essential works by ensuring the rest of our network is maintained in a way that recognises the pressure put on our local roads. As part of my conversations with councils and regional businesses, I am increasingly aware of the difficulties and constraints faced by local councils when confronting the often overwhelming demands of supporting their local regional roads network. Indeed, through my travels, I have found that perhaps the most fundamental challenge facing governments over regional roads is how can we futureproof our country roads. Roads, our lifeline, must be protected and serviceable, fit for purpose and designed to handle exceptionally punishing weather conditions. Let's keep New South Wales moving.

#### *Members*

### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from Her Excellency the Governor convening a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and the members of the Legislative Assembly on Thursday 24 March 2022 at 10.30 a.m. for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin, resigned. I direct that a joint sitting with the Legislative Council for the election of a member of the Legislative Council be set down as an order of the day for 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 24 March 2022, as appointed in Her Excellency's message dated 23 March 2022.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

### **ISABELLE PURCELL**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I pay tribute to Isabelle Purcell, formerly of Caringbah South, who passed away in January. Isabelle was a long time club patron and life member of the Cronulla-Caringbah Sharks Junior Rugby League Football Club. Isabelle was a member of the club for more than 60 years. She is fondly remembered by many ex-players and families for her patient work in her younger days sewing numbers and Sharks emblems onto jerseys and publishing the weekly newsletter. She followed in her late husband Bill's footsteps in being awarded life membership in the 1970s. The Cronulla-Caringbah club says Isabelle was one of a kind to everyone involved with the Sharks. I extend my sincere sympathy to her sons William, John, Gregory and James, other family, her friends and her family at the club.

### **WONDERING WOMEN**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—Wondering Women was founded by Lisa Tilsed and Adriarn Crane in the Sutherland Shire in 2016 to connect women through walks and other activities to promote wellness and wellbeing. It now has more than 1,500 members who meet regularly for walks and other activities. In 2021 they started a Bayside chapter, which now has over 200 members. When the flood waters devastated Northern Rivers communities recently, Wondering Women launched a flood disaster support project. Within days of putting out the call to our local community, the group had collected a semi-trailer load of much needed items such as linen, clothing, cleaning products and water. The Wondering Women group is helping people in need and also providing a safe space for women in the Shire. I acknowledge the great work of Lisa, Adriarn and the members of group.

### **SAM'S GRIT SALUTED FOREVER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the late Samuel McPaul who tragically lost his life as a volunteer fire fighter on the 30th December 2019, whilst fighting the Green Valley Blaze in regional New South Wales. Samuel will always be remembered for his warmth, generosity, hard work, and for striving for excellence. A memorial service was held west of Jingellic on Saturday 11th March 2022 in honour of his bravery and dedication. A permanent plaque with a statuette of a firefighter has been erected in this place to recognise the bravery and sacrifices made by our volunteer fire fighters and to salute the service of Samuel McPaul. We will always remember his commitment in life, working to keep others safe. Rest in Peace, Sam.

### **VALE "THE NICEST BLOKE"**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the passing of Dr Tim Landy of Albury on March 4th, at 72 after his battle with a rare cancer. Although born and raised in Melbourne, Dr Landy chose

to pursue his medical career in Albury, a gain for our regional city and a service which lasted more than 40 years. In 1979 Dr Landy became a specialist general physician and Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians, followed by decades of work as a visiting medical officer at Border hospitals. In 1980 he established the 'Insight Clinic' with his colleagues to provide endoscopy services and minor surgical procedures which were not available in local regional towns. Dr Landy was described a wonderful physician who cared for his patients first and foremost. He also found a role as a mentor for other practitioners, passing on a wealth of experience. Rest in peace Dr Tim Landy.

### LEAVING HOME TO COME BACK BETTER

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Tiarna Burke of Jerilderie, who has been awarded the Rice Growers Association of Australia scholarship this year. The \$3,000 book support will go towards her student course materials. Tiarna is studying a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at Charles Sturt University, and her dream is to one day return to Jerilderie and provide specialist care and to give back to her home community. Growing up on a mixed-cropping farm, Tiarna is well aware of farming hazards, and the lack of specialised services in regional and remote towns. The most common injuries occur through slips, trips and falls, livestock handling, machinery use and associated with farm vehicles. Tiarna I wish you all the very best in your studies and congratulate you on your career path to help enable people with limitations or impairments to participate in everyday life.

### NORM PROVAN STAND

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Like many in the St George community, I was saddened to hear of Norm Provan's passing last October. Norm Provan was a captain, coach, father and grandfather with a commitment to excellence in sport. He led the Dragons to 10 of 11 premierships, a feat that will likely never be matched in first class professional sport anywhere else in the world. Norm's image still remains in the game today, as part of the NRL trophy in the gladiators image alongside Western Suburbs rival Arthur Summons. Norm Provan described the qualities he associated with the St George Dragons as friendship, fair play, ambition and loyalty. On the 18th March, I attended the first Dragons game at home, where the Western Grandstand at Kogarah Jubilee was officially named in honour of his legacy. I supported hundreds of fans who signed a petition urging Georges River Council to have this change made. I am proud to highlight the efforts of many people in my community in their campaign to pay tribute to such a great St George legend!

### BURDEKIN ASSOCIATION

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I would like to acknowledge the Burdekin Association, an Australian charity which works with community members to offer an integrated approach to solving issues of child and youth homelessness. The Association uses innovative and industry-leading support practices to help guide young people aged 9-24 to fully functional adulthood. They are an Out of Home Care Provider for the NSW Government which provides accommodation and support options for children and young people aged between 9 and 17 who are under the care of the NSW Minister. The Association finds homes and foster carers for children across Sydney, including Hurstville and Rockdale. The Burdekin Association, founded by former Federal Human Rights Commissioner Brian Burdekin AO, in 2000 was recognised by the Department of Community Services as one of the most progressive supported accommodation services in NSW. I congratulate the Burdekin Association on their honourable work with youth in the community.

### MARIST COLLEGE KOGARAH - HIGH ACHIEVERS 2021 EVENT

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—On Friday 11 March, Marist College Kogarah celebrated the success of their HSC Class of 2021. I am proud to highlight the efforts of students in my electorate of Kogarah who, despite the significant interruptions to face to face learning, 100% of courses achieved results that were above state average. Marist College Kogarah was the only Sydney Catholic School to achieve 100% demonstrated growth in student learning across all courses offered. 54 students were acknowledged on the Distinguished Achievers list, scoring 90% or above in a subject. Blake Tambimuttu, the College Dux, received an ATAR of 99.25 and was an 'All Rounder'. Eric Sutevski, Joseph Kazzi and Justin Cibalevski were also 'All Rounders', achieving a Band 6 in every subject. 25 students from Marist College Kogarah received an ATAR of above 90 in 2021. I congratulate all the teachers, students and community members of Marist College Kogarah for their hard work and continued perseverance in receiving such a fantastic result in the 2021 HSC. I especially congratulate the community for their hard work in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic and significant interruptions to students learning around the State.

### GRANDVIEW LADIES PROBUS CLUB

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I acknowledge the Grandview Ladies Probus Club who have recently celebrated their 30th Anniversary. It was an

honour to attend their celebration event at St George Masos to commemorate the commitment of the organisation to our local community. I would like to make a special mention of Margaret Binskin, Betty Lynch, June Kirsten, June Webster and Beverley Stacey who are five of the founding members of the Club. This is an incredible achievement and it acknowledges all of their hard work in building the organisation right from the very beginning. I also wish to thank the executive committee which consists of their President Jenny Crocket, Secretary Evelyn Harwin and Treasurer Lorraine Sellick for putting together this fantastic event. The Grandview Ladies Probus Club is always looking for new and energetic members to join their Club. If you are interested in meeting new people and making positive contributions to the local community, I most certainly encourage you to join their outstanding organisation. Well done again to everyone at Grandview Ladies Probus Club.

#### **ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I acknowledge the continued commitment of St George Community Housing in protecting the wellbeing of our most vulnerable local residents across the region. For more than 35 years, St George Community Housing has provided safe and affordable homes throughout all parts of our region. They currently provide a place to call home for around 11,000 people across their portfolio of more than 6500 properties. Social and affordable housing plays an important role in safeguarding the wellbeing of individuals and their families and I want to particularly thank the organisation for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2019, they have provided COVID-19 hardship relief to more than 200 clients, housed 10 rough sleepers through our Government's Together Home program and provided almost \$100 million in rental subsidies to tenants. Our entire community is grateful for the ongoing commitment of St George Housing to providing care and assistance to those who need it most. I wish their Chief Executive Officer, Scott Langford and his entire team all the best for many more years of outstanding service.

#### **SOUTHERN SYDNEY SYNAGOGUE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I acknowledge the outstanding work of the Southern Sydney Synagogue, a local Jewish organisation that has been active in our community since 1943. The St George region is home to one of Australia's most thriving and diverse Jewish communities and the Southern Sydney Synagogue is continuing to share their community history. I want to particularly mention my dear friend and neighbour, Rabbi Tzuri Avila, who has recently stepped down in his role as Minister of the Synagogue after more than five years in the role. For the past 20 years during his life in Australia, Rabbi Avila has continued to promote the needs and values of our Jewish community. Prior to this role, Rabbi Avila was the Assistant Rabbi at the Chabad Synagogue in Double Bay before travelling to Los Angeles where he married his wife Fiona. In 2015, he became the fourth Minister of the Southern Sydney Synagogue and I am again deeply saddened to hear that he has now stepped down from this role. I wish Rabbi Avila and his wife Fiona all the best for their new journey together.

#### **HELEN RIGNEY**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—I wish to congratulate one rather extraordinary woman from Tweed, Ms Helen Rigney. This year Helen was recognised for her commitment to her community with being awarded the Tweed's Woman of the Year. I have known Helen for many years and I'm delighted that her dedication has seen her nationally recognised. A well-known local within the netball community, Helen has held almost every role within the club from being the toilet cleaner, canteen manager and now secretary, a role she has held for the past 8 years. Helen has been an integral part in the growth of the Tweed Netball club, with there now being more than 1000 players. Helen is to be congratulated on being a role model to many young girls and women throughout the Netball Community and the wider community as a whole.

#### **HELEN DEAN**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I acknowledge the life of a remarkable woman who was a much-loved, long-time member of the Mullumbimby community. Helen Dean, known as Heeling, passed away on January 24 after a major cardiac arrest. Helen's beautiful heart and smile were so big that they shone love to all who crossed her path. A local personality, tarot reader and alternative therapist, she was known for her community spirit and contributions as a volunteer: the Byron Writers Festival, Schoolies (every year), Bluesfest, the Mullum Museum and Pets for Life were just a few of her passion projects. Always happy to lend a hand, Helen was the first to reach out to support members of our community who were in need a friend in need or in a crisis. Her humane, fun and uplifting contribution to the region will be sadly missed.

#### **EMPEROR OF JAPAN SIXTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Wednesday 2 March 2022, it was a pleasure to attend a reception to celebrate the 62nd Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, Emperor Naruhito. The occasion

was celebrated by His Excellency Kiya Masahiko, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney and Mrs Kiya Yayoi. Throughout the reception, we reflected on the strength of the Japan-Australia relationship, including strong security and economic ties built on people-to-people exchange with the cultivation of mutual understanding and trust. In particular, the Consul-General conveyed the importance of infrastructure and development in Western Sydney which has great potential for collaboration with Japan to create a twenty second century city. We acknowledged the sister city relationships between NSW and Tokyo. The reception also included an Imperial Decoration Conferment Ceremony to present Mr John Ajaka, former President of the NSW legislative Council and former NSW Minister with The Order of the Rising Sun. I look forward to continue working with representatives of our Japanese-Australian community and helping strengthen the bond between our nations. I wish Emperor Naruhito all the best and congratulate His Majesty on the celebration of his 62nd birthday.

#### **CHIEF JUSTICE BATHURST RETIREMENT**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I would like to offer my personal congratulations and thanks to Chief Justice Bathurst, who has recently stepped down as the Chief Justice of NSW. After a decade dedicated to the role, Chief Justice Bathurst retired from his duties on 5th March 2022. During his time as Chief Justice, Justice Bathurst worked tirelessly while facing many unprecedented challenges and demands. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of the Queen's Square building due to bushfires, the flooding of the Supreme Court Registry, and the tragedy of the Lindt Café siege, the Court continued to deliver justice under Justice Bathurst's leadership. Justice Bathurst has made an outstanding contribution to upholding the law and public confidence in the administration of justice through his leadership. Chief Justice Bathurst should be commended on his efforts on improving the justice system for our First Nations people by supporting the launch of the Walama List pilot program through the work of the Juridical Commission's Ngara Yuru Committee. Thank you Chief Justice Bathurst for your service, dedication and leadership. I wish you the very best in your retirement.

#### **IMPACT INTERNATIONAL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Thursday 11 March 2022, it was great to tour Impact International, Smithfield, with NSW Labor Leader Chris Minns MP. Impact International is a fantastic family owned company that has built a reputation for designing and manufacturing industry-leading packaging tubes for a variety of internationally recognised companies across Australia. With almost 90 years of experience, the Lajovic family supply aluminium and laminate tubes to top brands such as Colgate Australia, Dencorub, Deep Heat, Nestle. In 2018, Impact International opened a solar farm. The facility is now 100% powered by renewable energy, an admirable achievement for our Western Sydney Business community. We toured this impressive facility and met with the workforce to discuss issues currently facing the manufacturing industry. Manufacturing companies have dealt with many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic including keeping their workers safe from contracting the virus and dealing with challenges caused by the COVID-19 lockdown. It is clear that manufacturing businesses need more support. Thank you to Dimitri Lajovic, Chairman, and Aleks Lajovic, Managing Director, and the entire team at Impact International for your continued efforts to support our Western Sydney community through creating jobs, stimulating the local economy and providing outstanding services.

#### **STEPHEN PEARSON**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate year 12 Nowra Anglican College student Stephen Pearson for successfully committing to the Lake Area Rattlers Baseball Academy in Kentucky USA in 2023. Stephen started playing baseball in 2010 with a tryout day with the Shoalhaven Mariners where he found his passion for baseball and of course it stuck with great success he is on his way to achieve bigger things in his baseball career. Stephen attended the CIS Baseball Team selection Trial in North Ryde on February The Trial had more than 50 young players show up to compete and to complete the team of 15, having made the team twice before with no surprise he made the team for a third time. Not only will this opportunity take Stephen a step closer to his dream at an elite college program but it will also give him the access to recourse and training facilities he hasn't experienced before. What an absolute achievement I am delighted to give my best wishes to Stephen and I wish him all the best with his future in Baseball I know he will continue to succussed with the passion he carries for the sport.

#### **FOURTEEN NEW TEACHERS FOR NARRANDERA SHIRE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—As a new school year begins I welcome 14 new teachers to the Narrandera Shire. The Narrandera Public School welcomed 5 new teachers; Bev Levett, Carrie Studholme, Corey Svenssek, Jade O'Bryan and Alison Sparkes. Whilst Narrandera High School welcomed 6 new teachers; Heath Chappell, Andrew Hitchman, Tristan Herron, Brooke Lucas, Nicole Irons and Gary Ingram. Helen McPherson, Haidee Sullivan and Kathryn Lowan are the 3 newest teachers to Narrandera Easts Infants School. After a challenging 2 years of on and off teaching from home and teaching in the classroom it is wonderful to see schools finally going back to

some sort of normality and being able to welcome new teachers into schools is fantastic. Teachers are a vital part of all schools and without them we would all be lost. They provide the upmost care and attention to the younger citizens of our community and set them up with the skills that they will need well into the future. I look forward to heading back to the Narrandera Shire and meeting you all.

#### **CWA LADIES CRAFT UP A STORM**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I wish to congratulate the Cootamundra branch of the CWA on the incredible milestone of reaching their centenary. In conjunction with International Women's Day these wonderful ladies of the CWA, from branches across the region, gathered together at Junee Ex-Services Club for a day of handicraft and celebration. There was an observance of the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women along with discussions on a wide range of topics, focusing on how to build a more sustainable future for all. Of the handicrafts presented, Jennifer Heard of Gundagai took out the coveted title of Champion with her beautifully knitted garment, with Marle Root of Cootamundra winning the Hume Group competition with a stunning pot-holder, delightfully shaped like an owl. As the CWA and some of its earliest branches obtain the milestone of 100 years, it is wonderful to be able to recognise the local ladies who contribute to such an important organisation. I would like to congratulate all the branches who gathered at Junee for this fabulous day, and on holding such a wonderful event to celebrate being 100 years young.

#### **ST ANDREWS TURNS 140 YEARS OLD**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I wish to congratulate St Andrews Presbyterian Church and Reverend Derek Yu on the 140th anniversary celebrations of this significant part of Temora's history.

Initially scheduled to be held last year, COVID-19 restrictions sadly meant that the celebration of this notable anniversary had to be postponed until now. Built in 1881, the St Andrews Presbyterian church hall, which was originally the Presbyterian Church itself, is the oldest brick building in Temora, and as part of the celebrations of this wonderful historic building old photos and memorabilia will be displayed for all to enjoy. A service of thanksgiving, a special morning tea and cake-cutting, a musical event and unveiling of historic photographs of all ministers who have served at the church throughout its 140 years were all part of the organised commemorative events. Thank you to Reverend Derek Yu and all church volunteers and supporters who have made these celebrations possible. I would like to once again congratulate the church and the Reverend on this significant anniversary and the celebrations that have ensued.

#### **PASTOR GREG HOLDER**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to Pastor Greg Holder, who recently retired from his ministry at the Riverside Church in South Grafton. Pastor Greg has not only been an inspirational minister within his church, but he has ensured that the needs of his local community have also been met, whether that be through fundraising events for the needy, organising Carols at Christmas time, organising memorial services for such events as the Cowper Bus Crash. He was also responsible for ensuring that Riverside Care was a successful arm of the ministry within the local area. Along with this work, Pastor Greg has also been the Police Chaplain and has provided immeasurable support and love to our local Police officers and their families. This was emphasised by the local Superintendent at Pastor Greg's farewell service, along with the fact that he is pleased that Greg will continue to be involved in this role. To Greg, and his wife Helen, I wish you both a long, happy and healthy retirement and I hope to catch up with you in the near future for a coffee.

#### **KYE AND BRAYDEN SUTHERLAND**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Congratulations to Elderslie High School Students Kye and Brayden Sutherland who will be representing NSW at the National Hockey Tournament next month. Brayden, turning 15 will play in Newcastle while Kye, 16 is headed to Cairns. Both Kye and Brayden first started playing hockey at the age of four. Both inspired by their father who travelled internationally playing at the highest levels. Once again, I congratulate Kye and Brayden on this achievement which is no doubt a reflection of your hard work and I wish you all the best at nationals next month.

#### **NSW WOMEN'S WEEK 2022**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—The 2022 NSW Women's Week ran from 7 to 13 with International Women's day being celebrated on Tuesday 8 March. The theme for 2022 was #BreakTheBias which was all about celebrating the achievements of women and calling out gender bias and inequality. Although Camden and other places in NSW were in the peak of the floods and the devastation and hardships that come with floods, it was important to take a moment to acknowledge the women of Camden. I took great pleasure in supporting



Blue Wren House, Camden Women's Shelter by attended their #IWD2022 fundraising High Tea event at Camden Valley Inn. I thank all those involved who made the fundraiser such a success.

#### **HARRINGTON ESTATES - THE STABLES**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Last year in December I had the privilege to attend the official opening of 'The Stables' by Harrington Estates. Over the past 28 years Harrington Estates have created the residential estate, Harrington Park, Harrington Grove and Catherine Park which are all held in the high esteem. Harrington Park within Camden is now a vibrant community and houses over 15,000 people who are all proud to call it home. 'The Stables' located within Harrington Grove includes an enviable outlook combined with acreage living, access to all amenities and most importantly the ultimate Equestrian Lifestyle. I am excited to see the stables come to life ensuring that Camden has the best of both worlds with growth and the semi-rural lifestyle many still enjoy.

#### **COOMEALLA HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVERS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to congratulate two distinguished achievers of the 2021 Year 12 at Coomealla High School for outstanding results in their HSC - Matthew Hancock and Makayla Witte. The disruptions of last year presented many challenges that, together, these students worked to overcome. From home-schooling to multiple exam date changes, they have shown real resilience in the face of adversity, and demonstrated that hard-work and determination really do pay off. They are role models to their school community and their success during such a disruptive period in our history makes their achievements even more commendable. I congratulate Matthew and Makayla on this wonderful accomplishment.

#### **MARY CASEY - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to congratulate Mary Casey of Murrumbidgee Regional High School on achievement of the Highly Accomplished Teacher certification from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Mary, a well-regarded member of the high school's teaching staff, began her teaching career in Young, before moving to Balranald and Darwin, and finally settling in Griffith. Her teaching subjects include community and family studies, food technology, hospitality, and textiles and design. To achieve Highly Accomplished Teacher accreditation, Mary worked tirelessly, submitting a portfolio of evidence addressing thirty-seven unique standard descriptors, as well as writing up a program, implementing it and then reflecting on the impact it had on her students. She found the experience 'overwhelmingly positive', and credits it with making her better at teaching and supporting her peers. I congratulate Mary on her achievement and thank her for her ongoing contribution in the lives of our young people.

#### **NORTH SYDNEY GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ROWING TEAM SUCCESS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to congratulate the North Sydney Girls High School (NSGH) rowing team for their recent success. From the 20th to the 22nd of February, the rowing squad participated in the annual Combined High Schools Regatta at the Clarence River in Grafton. This Regatta was for all public schools within the state. The entire NSGH squad performed extremely well with almost all of the crews finishing on the podium. The senior quad came 2nd in the Championship Women's Quad category. The senior double came second in the under-17s final. In Year 9, the quad groups took out 2nd and 3rd in the under-16s final. In Year 8 the three quad teams swept the podium taking out first, second, and third in the under-15s final. Congratulations to all of these teams for these amazing results. The entire rowing squad should be proud for representing themselves, their school, and our local community with such pride. Thank you to NSGH rowing coaches, school staff, and parents who have supported the development of the rowing squad and helped organise this trip for them to participate in the regatta.

#### **RECOGNISING KATE COX FOR HER CHARITABLE WORK**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to recognise a member of the local community, Kate Cox, for her charitable work with the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation. The foundation helps support women in Ethiopia with obstetric fistulas during pregnancy. This internal injury involves the formation of a hole in the birth canal leading to severe health issues, agonising labours, and often stillborn births. In Ethiopia, a stillbirth will usually lead to a woman being completely ostracised by their partner and community. The Foundation set up a dedicated fistula hospital in Addis Ababa, since then more than 60,000 women have been operated on. Kate has been involved with the Foundation for over a decade now. She has previously travelled to Ethiopia on a charity tour to meet and work with Dr Hamlin AC at the hospital in Addis Ababa and other regional charity hospitals supporting the disadvantaged. Kate has also volunteered at the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation for many years where they sell handmade fair trade products from Africa including jewellery made from old bullets by women with HIV, scarves, spices and more. Thank you Kate for your inspiring work with this excellent organisation helping African women.

### **NORTHS ANNOUNCES LINK WENTWORTH AS A CLUBGRANT RECIPIENT**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to recognise Norths who announced Link Wentworth as one of their ClubGRANT recipients. Norths contributed \$3500 to Link Wentworth to go towards their amazing community housing services. Link Wentworth is one of the biggest community housing providers in the country, helping over 10,000 residents across 6,400 homes. Everyone deserves the right to somewhere safe and secure to sleep, Link Wentworth helps those who are homeless or struggling with housing pressures that may arise from financial or personal circumstances. At a local level in North Shore, the Link Wentworth Mosman House, delivered in partnership with Women's Community Shelters, offers housing for women facing housing hardship in our community. In addition to providing housing there, residents can also benefit from regular social and support initiatives to keep them connected and improve wellbeing. Thank you to Norths CEO Luke Simmons and team for selecting Link Wentworth as a recipient for funding through the ClubGRANTS program, this will help many local women in our community struggling with housing. Thank you to the team at the Link Wentworth Mosman House, and the entire Link Wentworth organisation, for all of the amazing work you do.

### **NORTH WAGGA WAGGA HERITAGE TRAIL**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It was a pleasure to attend the launch of the North Wagga Wagga Heritage Trail earlier this month. The project features 26 carefully crafted information signs on a trail winding through the village and it has come to life after nearly three years of hard work by the North Wagga Wagga Residents' Association. The 26 signs have been installed at various landmarks and historical locations across the suburb, each telling the unique stories that lie behind them. Peter Morris, one of the project's principal drivers, and his wife Sherry, a respected Wagga Wagga historian, conducted many interviews and read through countless documents and old newspaper articles to bring the suburb's history to life for the project. Wagga Wagga City Council contributed funds to bring this project to life, with the remaining money being generated almost entirely through donations from local residents and businesses. I commend Mr and Mrs Morris and the North Wagga Wagga Residents' Association, headed up by Robyn Dawson, for the vision and hard work that has allowed the rich and colourful history of this strong community - that will not be moved - to be not only preserved, but shared.

### **MID NORTH COAST JUNIOR LIFE SAVER OF THE YEAR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate the Mid North Coast Junior Life Saver of the Year recipients, Milly McGrath and Jarvis Lineham for their outstanding leadership and service to Surf Life Saving over the past 12 months. Milly McGrath has been a dedicated member of the Wauchope Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club for the past three years. At the age of 14, Milly's surf awareness and skills continue to improve as she continues to perform routine patrols at Rainbow Beach. Jarvis Lineham is another asset who inspires the junior members at Port Macquarie Surf Life Saving Club. Known for his love of the beach and competition, Jarvis has claimed the Club's Age Champion four times and also the Branch Age Champion since joining the nippers program at age nine. Milly and Jarvis will now participate in the Surf Life Saving NSW three-day leadership development program in Sydney which will see both our Mid North Coast representatives compete for the opportunity to be crowned the NSW Junior Life Saver of the Year. I congratulate our young role models and thank them for their service to our community.

### **SPEED FRIENDING**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—As we approach World Autism Awareness Day on 2nd April, I acknowledge a local team in my electorate who are coordinating a new social event called 'Speed Friending' aimed at supporting adults on the autism spectrum meet new people. Organisers Todd Beness, Danni Slattery and Amy Vallentine are focusing on a new initiative in our local community to help those on the spectrum connect and socialise with new people in a safe and controlled environment. Amy Vallentine is an occupational therapist in Port Macquarie who is passionate about reducing social isolation for young adults on the autism spectrum. With the help of Todd and Danni, Amy is hoping the event scheduled for 2nd April will install confidence and reduce anxiety for the 20 adults aged between 18-40 who will participate in the event. Speed Friending is inspired by the television show 'Love on the Spectrum' and will involve participants splitting up in pairs then rotating to a new table every two minutes. A cheat sheet to aid in conversations well as sensory fidget tools will be utilised to assist with emotional regulation and anxiety. Well done to the organisers and every success for this unique event.

### **GARY RANDALL - PUBLIC WORKS LEADER OF THE YEAR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate Senior Manager of Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Gary Randall for claiming the Public Workers Leader of the Year accolade at the NSW Institute of Public Works Engineering Awards (IPWEA). Taking out the top honours at the IPWEA gala presentation in Parliament House, Canberra was local public servant Gary Randall recognised for his instrumental contribution

in growing Council's project delivery team. At the event Gary was also applauded for his significant delivery of capital works projects across the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA through his leadership. Projects Gary has overseen in his time at Council include the Town Centre Masterplan upgrade, Coastal Walk upgrades, Stingray Creek Bridge, Three Villages Sewer Scheme, Town Green upgrades, airport terminal upgrades, waste facility expansions, boat ramps and jetty upgrades, Flynn's Beach seawall rebuild and various road safety improvements. Within the next five to ten years Gary will lead his team of professionals into securing approximately \$500 million in capital works projects for the Port Macquarie-Hastings region. Congratulations on this much deserved recognition

#### **SINGLETON NAMED NSW TIDY TOWNS WINNER 2021**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Singleton has once again proven that it is a community with strong environmental credentials. I congratulate Singleton on being named the most sustainable community in New South Wales for 2021 at the recent State Tidy Towns Awards in Albury. I note that Singleton previously won the NSW Award in 2016. Singleton received eight awards including four in its population category and four highly commended accolades. The successes include: the Communication and Engagement Award for Citrus Rescue to reduce food waste and encourage backyard gardening; the Heritage and Culture Award for identifying issues impacting on the conservation of the 1866 Mechanics Institute building; the Recycled Organics Award for the 'Your Organics Working in Singleton' initiative encouraging correct use of green bins. Highly Commended projects include Celebrating Adopt a Road, Recycle Cycles and Singleton Tidy Towns Committee's work with the Singleton Clontarf Academy and Singleton Heights Pre-School. Singleton Tidy Towns president Lyn McBain was also recognised at the State awards with a Certificate of Contribution to mark her 30 year involvement with the local committee. Singleton now represents NSW in the national awards and will host the NSW Tidy Town Awards in November 2022.

#### **TIDY TOWNS RECOGNITION FOR THE UPPER HUNTER AND MUSWELLBROOK**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—The 2021 NSW Tidy Towns Awards recently held in Albury delivered well-earned recognition for the Upper Hunter communities of Murrurundi, Belltrees and Muswellbrook. Murrurundi, 2019 recipient of the State Tidy Towns Award, was a finalist in its population category of the latest awards. The town now also boasts a 2021 Community Spirit and Inclusion Award for the PUSH48 fitness endurance challenge. Jennifer Sanders and Dayna Hynes set out to support local schools and their students raising almost \$10,000 for Murrurundi Public School, with a further \$500 contributed to developing staff wellbeing activities. Murrurundi CWA's Sharing Memories project was highly commended in the Heritage and Culture Award for enabling local community members to share memories resulting in stronger community connections. The Return and Earn container deposit redemption scheme also delivered success for the Upper Hunter Electorate. Belltrees Public School won a School's Achievement Award for Waste Stream Management @ Belltrees PS raising over \$7,500 and recycled over 75,000 bottles and cans. And, Muswellbrook District Junior Rugby League Football Club received a Return and Earn Litter Prevention Award for using Return and Earn to reduce its waste footprint and offset dump fees.

#### **GUNNING COMMUNITY CARE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I formally recognise the contribution of Gunning Community Care to the community. The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges that we as a community have not only faced - but risen to. Without the tremendous effort from Gunning Community Care throughout this pandemic, particularly for their contribution in the momentous vaccination effort - we would not be in the position that we are today. Mr Speaker, I also wish to publicly acknowledge, thank and praise Gunning Community Care for their actions. The sheer dedication and hard work of each and every person - Doctor, Nurse, Pharmacist, Health Administrator and Staff or Volunteer - who supported our community in a medical capacity is indefinably appreciated. Thank you for your service.

#### **HIGHLANDS GENERAL PRACTICE MOSS VALE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I formally recognise the contribution of Southern Medical Centre Moss Vale and Bundanoon Practice to the community. The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges that we as a community have not only faced - but risen to. Without the tremendous effort from Southern Medical Centre Moss Vale and Bundanoon Practice throughout this pandemic, particularly for their contribution in the momentous vaccination effort - we would not be in the position that we are today. Mr Speaker, I also wish to publicly acknowledge, thank and praise Southern Medical Centre Moss Vale and Bundanoon Practice for their actions. The sheer dedication and hard work of each and every person - Doctor, Nurse, Pharmacist, Health Administrator and Staff or Volunteer - who supported our community in a medical capacity is indefinably appreciated. Thank you for your service.

**SUE BOWNS OF TOONGABBIE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I take this time to recognise Sue Bowns, who was a long-serving teacher across public schools in Western Sydney who retired at the end of last year. Sue recently served as the assistant principal at Toongabbie Public School since 2010. She also filled in as the relieving Deputy Principal on multiple occasions. Sue also worked for many years at other local schools in Parramatta. She worked for the Department of Education for over 45 years. It is always a pleasure to be able to recognise her terrific work at Toongabbie Public and to the public education system across Western Sydney. Sue is a vibrant person who always strived to engage the community at Toongabbie Public. Many of Sue's colleagues viewed her as an inspiration and looked up to her great work. I would like to thank the Toongabbie Public School community for making Sue's final days with the Department so special, and I wish Sue all the very best in the next chapter of her life.

**ANNE-LOUISE O'CONNOR LWOTYA NOMINEE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Anne-Louise O'Conner's commitment to supporting access to learning and education is central to her nomination within the Local Woman of The Year Award. Anne-Louise has been a member of Voice, Interests & Education of Women (VIEW) Clubs of Australia for 21 years. Anne-Louise was elected and served as the National President for VIEW Clubs of Australia in 2020-21. Previously Anne-Louise had spent thirty years as a Media Manager for an advertising agency before retiring in 2017. Since moving to the Hunter in 2015 Anne-Louise has focused on strengthening and developing VIEW clubs in the Hunter, promoting VIEW, The Smith Family and the Learning for Life program that supports disadvantaged Australian children with their education. Seeing these children as our future, Anne-Louise is passionate about giving them every opportunity to achieve their dreams and aspirations and help break the cycle of disadvantage. I thank Anne-Louise for her many years of commitment and consistent effort, and I am certain our community joins me in those sentiments.

**KERRIE DUFFEY LWOTYA NOMINEE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Our sense of community only exists due to the concerted efforts of individuals. Kerrie is a mother of four and has eight grandchildren. Kerrie has been a volunteer for her local Church, St Christopher's Rutherford, for over 20 years and maintains a passion for assisting those in need. Kerrie's current role is Parish Councillor and Welfare Coordinator. In particular, Kerrie is committed to providing a hand up to the marginalized, the homeless and indeed all who are seeking assistance. Kerrie is involved with the Samaritans Drop In Centre every Tuesday at St Christopher's, where help is available to those in need of food, financial counselling, haircuts or just to be able to spend some time in the vegetable garden. Kerrie believes that everyone should have access to help when they need it, and the fruit of that help will be more individuals feeling resourced and able to give of themselves to our community. I thank Kerrie for her years of community focused effort and congratulate her upon her nomination in the Local Woman of The Year Award as a recognition of her contributions.

**ANGIE USHER LWOTYA NOMINEE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Angie Usher has a strong belief that music is beneficial for mental health and she has spent a lot of time working on making her studio somewhere that people of all ages and abilities can access. Angie grew up in the Maitland area. She has stated that she has dedicated her adult life to learning as much as she can about how her passion and how music can help almost everyone. Angie is currently president of Maitland Musical Society as well as a Musical Theatre tutor at Maitland Repertory on top of her everyday job. Angie balances roles a mum, musician and performing arts teacher, as well as a volunteer for many community groups. Angie's thirst for knowledge hasn't stopped and she is currently studying for a Master of Education (Special Education) degree. Music is one of those joys that can spirit us to another place, or another moment in our lives with the first few notes and I thank Angie for sharing that gift widely throughout our community. I congratulate Angie on her efforts also being recognised with a nomination in the Local Woman of The Year Award.

**NORTH STEYNE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB NIPPERS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)**—I would like to acknowledge all the winners at the recent North Steyne Surf Life Saving Club Nippers awards held on Sunday 20th March. Particular congratulations go to Charlie Walker who won best Female competitor and to Felix Stephens who won best Male competitor. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the North Steyne Surf Club for their efforts to make Nippers such a successful sport for young Australians.

**MANDAEAN WOMEN'S UNION IN AUSTRALIA "TO GATHER FOR FUN" EXHIBITION**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Friday 25th February, 2022 I attended the "To Gather For Fun" Exhibition at the Fairfield Community Hall. The exhibition was organised by the Mandaean Women's Union in Australia and sponsored by Core Community Services and Western Sydney MRC. It was well attended by the Mandaean community, including Mandaean Community leader Rishama Salah Ginzabra Jabar. Also in attendance were members of the local community as well as Fairfield City Mayor Cllr Frank Carbone who participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The exhibition was extensive and included artworks by members of the Mandaean community which reflected their cultural roots and depicted aspects of their everyday lives. I congratulate the Mandaean Women's Union in Australia for putting together this wonderful display and acknowledge their efforts in supporting and encouraging Mandaean women with participation in the local community through artistic works.

**DELANY FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING DINNER**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Friday 18 March 2022, I had the honour of attending the Delany Foundation's annual fundraising dinner. The event was well attended by Foundation Directors, Patrician Brothers, Patrician link schools, former students and colleagues to raise funds for projects in Patrician communities in Ghana and Kenya. The fundraising efforts assist the foundation in making a difference in the lives of others. The Delany Foundation continues the work started by its founder Bishop Daniel Delany founder of the Patrician Brothers. Due to the pandemic the foundation was unable to hold events over the past two years, however in true Patrician fashion all attendees dug deep to contribute towards the fundraising campaign. I was drafted out of MC retirement to facilitate the live auction of the artwork designed and donated by Ms Tracey Esteves titled, "Yellow Crested Beauty in the Outback". I acknowledge the efforts of Brother Paul O'Keeffe, Dr Michael Krawec, Mr Patrick Elliott, Dr Zachariah Duke, Mrs Karen Gatt, Brother Aengus Kavanagh, Mr Daniel McInerney, Brother Thomas Rice and Mr Peter Wade and congratulate them on a very successful event.

**IRAQI AUSTRALIAN GRADUATES FORUM AWARDS NIGHT**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—The Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum (IAUGF) hosted the annual HSC High Achievers, University and Medical Practitioners Awards evening at Club Mounties on Sunday 27th February 2022. It was a pleasure and honour to address the gathering and present awards to the 2021 HSC High Achievers. The 2021 cohort are to be commended for their commitment and dedication despite the adversity faced over the past two years with interrupted learning due to the lockdowns. As part of the awards ceremony the Iraqi Australasian Medical Association presented health care workers from around the country with Awards of Appreciation for their efforts during the pandemic. A special tribute was given to the late Dr Luqman Jubair, who is regarded as a hero for his efforts in entering the surf at the Gold Coast to rescue a swimmer in distress. Dr Luqman lost his life whilst saving the swimmer. His tragic death sent shock waves throughout the Iraqi Australian community, the medical faculty of Queensland, family and friends. We give our heartfelt condolences to his surviving family members. Congratulations to the IAUGF for hosting another successful awards ceremony.

**PETER JORDAN**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Fighting for workers rights is a hard job, and after more than 45 years of dedication to the cause, Peter Jordan can now put his feet up for a well-earned rest. Peter commenced work at Liddell Power Station in 1975 and in 1986 he became a Union Official with what would ultimately become the CFMEU. In 2009 Peter was elected to the role of District President. In total, he has been a member of the Union for more than 46 years. Peter was involved in some of the biggest disputes the Union has ever seen, including the industrial battle with Rio Tinto that lasted for more than 20 years. That dispute delivered the biggest payout in the Union's history, with over \$25 million dollars for Members who were unfairly dismissed at Hunter Valley and Mount Thorley mines in the late 1990s. Thank you for your unwavering and inspired leadership, your fierce advocacy for the Union and Mining and Energy Workers, and your lifelong commitment to the working class. All the best in your well-deserved retirement. What a legend!

**CALLAGHAN COLLEGE WALLSEND CAMPUS STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Callaghan College Wallsend Campus on their appointment. Callaghan College Wallsend Campus is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. Led by Principal Paul Taylor, the outstanding staff at Callaghan College Wallsend Campus work alongside the parent and student body to uphold their motto "Collaborating to Empower Learners" by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind hearted students at Callaghan College Wallsend Campus never fail to approach every opportunity with positivity and diligence, helping uphold the wonderful culture that the school community shares. The 2022 leadership team is a group of amazing students who demonstrate the Callaghan College Wallsend Campus values. I congratulate the 2022 Student Leaders, School Captains Mia Ivory and Abigail Spannenberg

and Vice Captains Shaye Quinn and Aminah Azmat on their successful appointment. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement. I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities. I extend my best wishes to the new student leaders at Callaghan College Wallsend Campus.

#### **GLENDALE TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Glendale Technology High School on their appointment. Glendale Technology High School is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. Led by Principal Anthony Angel, the outstanding staff at Glendale Technology High School work alongside the parent and student body to uphold their motto "Educate For Life" by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind hearted students at Glendale Technology High School never fail to approach every opportunity with positivity and diligence, helping uphold the wonderful culture that the school community shares. The 2022 leadership team is a group of amazing students who demonstrate the Glendale Technology High School's values. I congratulate the 2022 Student Leaders, School Captains Sean Parkinson and Jameca Gill, Vice Captains Deezy Richardson and Chloe Anderson and Sports Captains Hayley West and Guinevere Leeman on their successful appointment. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement. I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities. I extend my best wishes to the new student leaders at Glendale Technology High School.

#### **SCHOOL LEADERS BULLI PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)**—Today I acknowledge Betsy, Claudia, Paxton and Lincoln who have been named as the 2022 Bulli Public School leadership team. Being named as a school leader after being elected by their peers is a testament to their dedication, hard work and demonstrated ability to be a leader. Each of these students works exceptionally hard and have been highly involved within their school community throughout their time at the school. I am confident that they always strive to do their best with their studies and extra curricula activities. Each of them will spend 2022 acting as role models for their peers. These students have thrived even though 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 Betsy, Claudia, Paxton and Lincoln on their achievement and wish them all the best for the year.

#### **SCHOOL LEADERS CORRIMAL HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)**—Today I acknowledge Trey Sawyer, Kalapu Jnr Teo, Tempaney Woon, Malekin Rix, Meripa Teo, Talia Duncan, Cruz Costanzo, Pিরerangi Chase, Tarnni Foster, Tiara Gresser, Kelly McLennan and Madeleine Devitt who have been named as the 2022 Corrimal High School leadership team. Being named as a school leader after being elected by their peers is a testament to their dedication, hard work and demonstrated ability to be a leader. Each of these students works exceptionally hard and have been highly involved within their school community throughout their time at the school. I am confident that they always strive to do their best with their studies and extra curricula activities. Each of them will spend 2022 acting as role models for their peers. These students have thrived even though 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 Trey Sawyer, Kalapu Jnr Teo, Tempaney Woon, Malekin Rix, Meripa Teo, Talia Duncan, Cruz Costanzo, Pিরerangi Chase, Tarnni Foster, Tiara Gresser, Kelly McLennan and Madeleine Devitt on their achievement and wish them all the best for their final year of high school.

#### **SCHOOL LEADERS CORRIMAL PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)**—Today I acknowledge Chanelle, Hunter, Tayissa and Mitchell who have been named as the 2022 Corrimal Public School leadership team. Being named as a school leader after being elected by their peers is a testament to their dedication, hard work and demonstrated ability to be a leader. Each of these students works exceptionally hard and have been highly involved within their school community throughout their time at the school. I am confident that they always strive to do their best with their studies and extra curricula activities. Each of them will spend 2022 acting as role models for their peers. These students have thrived even though 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 Trey Sawyer, Kalapu Jnr Teo, Tempaney Woon, Malekin Ric, Maripa Teo, Talia Duncan, Cruz Costanzo, Pিরerangi chase, Tarnni Foster, Tiara Gresser, Kelly McLennan and Madeleine Devitt Betsy, Claudia, Pax on their achievement and wish them all the best for the year.

#### **MR AND MRS FAULKNER'S FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—Today I wish to congratulate two of my Loftus constituents, Rowan and his wife Diane as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 8 January 2022. I hope they had a wonderful

day and enjoyed all the beautiful memories that come with the celebration of a golden wedding anniversary. I trust they were accompanied by their closest family and friends as they marked this special milestone. I take this opportunity to wish Rowan and Diane many more years of fun, enjoyment, happiness and good health together.

#### **CHARLESTOWN SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to Charlestown South Public School. It has been named one of ten "ambassador schools", high-performing public schools that will be studied by the NSW Education Department to see what makes it work so well. These schools have the "X-factor", they are achieving outstanding academic results well above the performance of other schools in similar circumstances. The schools were selected based on high performance across a range of measures like NAPLAN reading and numeracy targets. The Charlestown electorate is blessed with extraordinary public schools, and it's the staff and the communities that makes them so special—and this well-deserved recognition proves that Charlestown South is the epitome of that quality! Once again, I would like to congratulate to principal Colin Johnson, his staff, students and the whole Charlestown South school community on this recognition—and the hard work that has made it possible. I have been lucky enough to be in the classroom at Charlestown South to see how innovative teaching and learning is taking place, so I'm incredibly pleased to see this work being recognised.

#### **CHARLIE'S RUN 4 KIDS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Charlie Carr battled cancer for most of her life. Diagnosed with neurblastoma before she was nine months old, Charlie fought a courageous battle against the disease for nearly eight years. She passed away in 2015, but she has never been forgotten—and her memory is the guiding light of Charlie's Run 4 Kids, a 150km run over five days from Seal Rocks to Dudley. The 2021 Run—which was delayed until this year due to COVID-19—was held in support of Archer, a little boy now in remission from BCOR Sarcoma, and for the family of Ashah, who passed away last year after a battle with Pineoblastoma at just sixteen months old. Charlie's Run 4 Kids concluded this weekend in Dudley, with a family fun day at Lydon Oval. It was a fantastic event, with hundreds of people in attendance. I would especially like to acknowledge a young woman named Amber Hughes, who was diagnosed with a brain tumour and shaved her head to raise funds. My congratulations to Cheyne Waddingham, the event's director, all the runners, and everyone who supported this extraordinary endeavour. Together they raised \$131,000, an enormous help for Ashah and Archer's families.

#### **CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Once again, Charlestown Electorate locals have demonstrated their commitment to the environment and building a healthier, happier world. On 6 March, thousands of volunteers descended on seventy-five sites across the City of Lake Macquarie for Clean Up Australia Day—the highest number of locations registered in any LGA in the Hunter region. Amongst the 2.9 tonnes of rubbish collected were tyres, car seats and wooden pallets. Robin Simpson, a Dudley Public School P&C member and a committed environmentalist with outstanding organisational skills, led 30 volunteers in cleaning up a 1.4-kilometre stretch. They collected six bags of rubbish—mostly non-biodegradable products, such as plastic wrapping, cigarette butts and polystyrene. Paul Hubbard, a Redhead Sustainable Neighbourhood Group member who served as a site leader at Redhead Beach, had a similar experience, with lots of plastics in the area. Unfortunately, some events in the area were postponed due to the weather, but intrepid organisers have been working to reschedule. It's wonderful to see so many people coming together to preserve and protect our beautiful environment. My thanks to Robin, Paul and every organiser and volunteer for making the day such a success.

#### **SALVATION ARMY WILLIAM BOOTH HOUSE**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I commend The Salvation Army for the important alcohol and drug rehabilitation treatment they provide at their Surry Hills William Booth House. For more than 30 years, William Booth House has provided adults who experience problems with alcohol and other drugs with safe residential rehabilitation and support. I recently visited the centre to see the access upgrade to bathrooms and kitchenettes I was able to support through a NSW Community Building Partnership grant. Like other well-established inner city services, there are practical constraints in old buildings that don't meet current access requirements, and I commend The Salvation Army's work to address this. It was exciting to hear the Salvation Army is improving access and inclusion to alcohol/drug services with flexible client-centred programs and expansion into community-based, home and online support and as well as their longstanding residential program. Many inner city health and welfare services actively making changes to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of those people needing help to address problematic alcohol/drug use and get help to more people. I congratulate the William Booth Centre staff and managers for these important steps.

**JOANNA SHULMAN**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I thank Joanna Shulman for her 12 committed years of strategic leadership as Redfern Legal Centre CEO. Jo has provided strong and consistent guidance for Redfern Legal Centre, improving access to justice during times of funding cuts, stretched resources and upheaval. Her focus on specialist legal support, law reform and systemic advocacy has strengthened Redfern's role and ensured vulnerable people get expert legal help. Redfern now provides statewide legal practice in police accountability, and in partnership with other centres practice in financial abuse and employment for migrants and other vulnerable workers. There is a service for international students and linked multi-language interactive legal help app. With the health district, Redfern provides legal help to health service users, particularly First Nations people, and the centre now has a dedicated First Nations Justice Unit. Jo led partnerships with other organisations and diversified the centre's funding, and the number of staff and volunteers reflects strong and collaborative leadership – and a resilient organisation. I have valued the advice and support for constituents that Jo and the Redfern Legal Centre team has provided. I commend her work and contribution to justice.

**KATHERINE MCKERNAN**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to thank Katherine McKernan for her leadership and commitment as CEO of Homelessness NSW ACT. This work has been vital for the sector's advocacy and liaison with government, improving policy and service delivery for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Katherine has helped unite and strengthen the sector following major upheavals with the Going Home Staying Home reforms, bringing together disparate organisations with different clients. The Industry Partnership program has trained and upskilled the workforce and industry development has been a priority and Katherine has facilitated active NSW sector participation in national campaigns and made sure that homelessness is back on government agendas. Katherine's guidance has been critical during a long period when housing costs have soared, social housing supply has stagnated or fallen, and the number of people with complex health and welfare needs who cannot afford housing a home has been ever-increasing. I have personally valued Katherine's insight and focus on solutions, and commend her more than seven years as Homelessness NSW CEO. I'm pleased that she will continue to contribute her skills and expertise at the Redfern Legal Centre.

**PIXIE HANSON**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Pixie Hanson, a young Bowral local, has done the Highlands proud, coming first in the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships held last month in Manly. Pixie finished in first place in the under 11's one kilometre run, despite getting caught up in the initial stampede and tripping over. She was clearly determined to give it her all and pushed hard to win the race. Pixie also came third in the Female Beach Sprint and eighth in the Female Surf Race and Female Ironperson Race. Off the beach, Hanson competes in Bowral Little Athletics, and recently ran the second fastest 150m sprint for her age group in NSW. Her lightening pace qualify her to compete in the NSW Track and Field Championships in Homebush later this month. Well done Pixie on your outstanding dedication and performance. I wish you all the luck moving forward.

**BRUCE SHAW**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Local Colo Vale resident, Bruce Shaw, has been bringing joy and laughter with his "oddball" trailer. The trailer is a fantastic contraption, detailed with handmade nuts and bolts, water-bags, mud guards from a 1926 Chrysler, wheels from a 1927 Chevrolet, kerosene lamps and parts of a honey extractor. But the crowning glory is a proud and fashionably dressed sheep, "Dolly", riding along in the tray. The Dolly statue stands tall wearing a hat, shoes and even riding goggles, and a jacket made from a World War Two jacket. You can imagine that when Bruce and Dolly drive around the Highlands, they are quite the head turner! Mr Shaw not only delights locals with his novelty trailer, but also takes it to shows, from Bowral Holden Day to Cooma Fest, where he has placed first every time he has entered the famous trailer. I hear that Mr Shaw is planning on building another couple of trailers; I support him in this project. Keep up the good work, Mr Shaw, while putting smiles on many faces.

**THE FUSSY TART**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—There is a new and exciting store that has opened in the High Street Arcade in Bowral. Taking a very brave step in what have been very uncertain times, owner Natascha has created an impressive space in a wonderfully unique shop. The Fussy Tart specialises in contemporary artisan designs from both local and international artists, as well as offering a selection of beauty products and jewellery. The store is a textural oasis, where each piece is one-of-a-kind testament to the beauty and value of hand-made products. Natascha is passionate about supporting local artists and creatives, and through her shop has created a perfect space for showcasing local talent. I congratulate Natascha on her beautiful new shop and encourage residents and visitors alike to check it out, as well as the other interesting shops located in the Highstreet Arcade.



### **LISMORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY FLOOD RECOVERY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to thank the Lismore Chamber of Commerce and Industry for their outstanding efforts in assisting businesses affected by the devastating Lismore floods. In our darkest hours as a community the Lismore Chamber have been there assisting businesses with everything they need from information, to linking to services, to advice, practical support and cleaning out businesses. I commend President Ellen Kronen, Secretary Art Bevis, Treasurer Sharnette Josephs and Board Members Peter Ilic, Scott Jones, Ned Cain and Peta Tillett for their tireless work. Many of them have flood affected businesses and homes themselves but have persevered with dedication and strength to help others. It was fantastic to visit the Northern Rivers Business Hub and see many members of the Chamber in action helping businesses recently. Our small businesses are what makes Lismore such a vibrant, diverse and special place to live and work. Our CBD was thriving before the floods with news openings happening every week. It is so heart-warming every time a business reopens and more life is comes back in to Lismore. It will be a long road to recovery but I know our Chamber will be there locally.

### **MURWILLUMBAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FLOOD RECOVERY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to thank the Murwillumbah Chamber of Commerce for going above and beyond to help businesses impacted by the floods in Murwillumbah and surrounding Tweed Valley communities. Murwillumbah businesses have been significantly impacted by the recent floods and the Murwillumbah Business Chamber of Commerce have been there with businesses in their darkest hour. President Rebecca Wahn from M Arts has provided outstanding leadership for the chamber both as an advocate for the Murwillumbah business community but also as a great support for local businesses who need everything from information, to linking to services, to advice, practical support and cleaning out businesses. I have taken both the Premier and Leader of the Opposition to meet with chamber members and I thank them both for listening to our community. Murwillumbah is a vibrant, diverse town which has become a real hub of activity. It is the Murwillumbah we love because of the many businesses that make up the town. Speaking to local businesses owners and workers there is a great resolve to make Murwillumbah even better. I thank the Murwillumbah Chamber of Commerce again for their work and for all they will do going forward.

### **NORTHERN RIVERS BUSINESS HUB SCU**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—It was great to attend on Monday the formal opening of Business NSW - Northern Rivers Business Hub located at Southern Cross University A Block on level 3 (there is a lift for access). With many local small business owners we toured the hub which is a one stop shop for local businesses to recover. There are many important supports available there from Service NSW, Rural Financial Counselling to banking and telecommunication. There are also seminars on needs identified by local businesses. A big shout out to Regional Manager Northern Rivers Jane Laverty and her Business NSW team who have put this all together and to SCU who as with so many things have provided the space and support. Everyone in our community from business owners, flood evacuees to school communities are saying what we would do without SCU. I was joined by Small Business Minister Eleni Petinos MP, David Harding Executive Director, Policy and Advocacy at Business NSW and NSW Small Business Commissioner Chris Lamont who were on the ground talking to our local businesses. I encourage all Lismore local businesses to use the hub as we start the long road to recovery together.

### **FUTURE WOMEN NSW RURAL SCHOLARSHIP AMEE DENNIS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—I want to congratulate Tomingley's Amee Dennis, who was recently named as a recipient of the 2022 NSW Rural Scholarship Program. Amee and her husband Shaun run the award-winning Quentin Park Alpacs and Studio/Gallery – which I've already spoken about in this place. Amee has worked hard to diversify their farming business into agri-tourism – which is a pretty hot topic at the moment. However, she has found it difficult to find support or guidance in what is still a niche industry. Amee says the opportunity provided by the Scholarship to connect with other regional business women, and the personal and professional development opportunities, will certainly help take her business to the next level. She also hopes to contribute to the development of the agri-tourism industry, and make sure that other women starting in the sector have better access to the information and support they need! Congratulations Amee, and keep up the terrific work!

### **TITAN MACQUARIE MUD RUN**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—I want to congratulate Titan Macquarie Mud Run committee president Rod Fardell, and his band of volunteers, on the success of this year's event. Now in its 9th year, the Mud Run incorporates 10 kilometres of obstacles, and, of course, plenty of mud, for participants to work through. This year saw over 1000 kids and adults

take part on the banks of the Macquarie River in Dubbo. Each year, the money raised is invested in community projects, including a Ninja Course, soccer walls, new trailer for Clontarf, special patient chair for the Dubbo Hospital kid's ward and a Liberty swing for the Adventure Playground at the Dubbo Regional Botanic Garden. Events like this are a huge positive for the community, attracting people from across the region and providing an opportunity for people to participate individually, as a group, a family, or just spectate. The Titan Macquarie Mud Run would not be possible without the amazing volunteers, business sponsors and committee that work tirelessly each year setting it up. I look forward to the 10th Anniversary celebrations and thank Rod and his committee for their contribution.

#### **ABBY AND EVA OSBORNE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—I want to commend Dubbo locals, Abby and Eva Osborne, who took part in the Starlight Super Swim throughout February. As a child Eva experienced some illness and the family were supported by the Starlight Foundation, so it's a cause close to their hearts. Eva said "I guess we kind of felt like doing our part to give back and being a part of it as well." No strangers to the pool, Eva and Abby both swim competitively and play water polo, however swimming 200 kilometres in 28 days was not without its challenges. Abby contracted COVID-19, which meant the young ladies couldn't train as they normally would, and instead took turns clocking up the kilometres in the family's 25-metre backyard pool. To put that in perspective, Abby and Eva swam the equivalent of driving from Dubbo to Bathurst, or 400 laps of a regular 50 metre Olympic pool, and raised \$3500 for the Starlight Children's Foundation. Eva and Abby thanked their coach Anthony Chapman, and everyone who donated. Well done, Eva and Abby, on a truly remarkable effort!

#### **ORCHARD HILLS VETERINARY HOSPITAL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to congratulate Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital, a local Vet business in my electorate who was the winner of this year's Local Business Award in the category of Pet Care businesses. After a strenuous 18 months, this award must be all the more special as businesses across the State and the country took significant hits to their operations and their ability to stay afloat. Like many businesses across the Penrith City area, Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital stayed resilient and can now take pride in the fact that their determination has paid off. They deserve to be recognised and I am very proud to recognise the hard work it has taken to stay afloat. It is always a wonderful thing to recognise the hard work of a local business and I am very proud of the businesses in my electorate like Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital and I wish them every success into the future as we all begin to recover from a tumultuous past 2 years.

#### **HEI WOK**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to congratulate Hei Wok, a local takeaway business in my electorate who was the winner of this year's Local Business Award in the category of 'Fast Food/Takeaway business'. After a strenuous 18 months, this award must be all the more special as businesses across the State and the country took significant hits to their operations and ability to stay afloat. Like many businesses across the Penrith City area, Hei Wok stayed resilient, they came back and did their best to remain in business to see customers in person again as restrictions eased. It is always a wonderful thing to recognise the hard work of a local business and I am very proud of the businesses in my electorate like Hei Wok and I wish them every success into the future as we all begin to recover from a tumultuous past 2 years.

#### **GEORGIA YIANNARI**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—It is with great pleasure that I am able to recognise Georgia Yiannari who runs a local business in my electorate who has taken out the Local Business Award in the category of the Youth Award. Georgia Yiannari's business, "It's Georgia Y", is a local beauty business providing a range of services from teeth whitening to facials to makeup services. With over 9 qualifications in her field, Georgia has demonstrated a unique brand dedication and hard work that has paid off in the form of her very own business. Despite the struggles of COVID-19, Georgia remains in business and I wish her the very best going forward. It takes a lot of courage to start your own business, especially as a young adult, it takes a brave entrepreneurial spirit to set out and achieve what goals you set for yourself. I congratulate Georgia on her business and the Local Business Award she has been awarded with.

#### **BOOMI WAR MEMORIAL HALL COMMITTEE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Boomi War Memorial Hall Committee for its efforts ensuring the Memorial Hall was at its best presentation for its centenary year, taking place this year after the COVID delay. The Committee is responsible for the maintenance and management of the Hall which is the community hub for many occasions. The Hall with modern kitchen can host 100 + patrons for theatre, Australia Day, and community events. Typically, the Boomi Memorial Hall was erected to commemorate

those who served in World War One and carries great significance for the many locals whose forebears have served their country. Boomi is a close knit community and the Memorial Hall carries a nostalgic past which is why the centenary celebration this year will be a huge affair with people coming from near and far. I congratulate the Boomi War Memorial Hall Committee members, Cr Mike Montgomery, Peter Vukovich, Lola McDonald, Donna Adams and Chris Adams. I commend the Committee for their attention to the maintenance of the Hall and surrounds to ensure that the Boomi War Memorial Hall will be looking its very best for its centenary celebrations and beyond.

#### **TRIBUTE TO JACK MORROW**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I offer my condolences to Moira and family of Jack Morrow who sadly passed away on 15 December 2021. Founding partner of Roberts & Morrow Chartered Accountants, Jack became partner in 1954 at just 29 years of age. Roberts & Morrow started off as a small five-person operation, to now, one of the largest regional accounting firms in Australia. The firm celebrated its 70 years in business in 2021 paying tribute to both founders, Jack Morrow and Don Roberts. Jack retired at the age of 55 although did not completely give up his connection to the accounting industry. A professional interest in farm accounting saw Mick Boyce, founding partner of Boyce Chartered Accountants, and Jack become great friends. This friendship formed at the many Country Chartered Accountant conferences and Australian Farm Management conferences attended and led to the partners of Boyce inviting Jack to become the first Independent Chairman of the company. This extended Jack's professional career by thirteen years. I commend Jack for his contribution to Roberts & Morrow over his 26 years in the business and will be remembered for his brilliant personality and honest approach.

#### **SENIOR CONSTABLE VANESS KELSON**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Police Senior Constable Vanessa Kelson for her commitment to the Inverell community during the past thirty years. Vanessa joined the Inverell Police Station from The Rocks in Sydney where she was in the mounted police force. She faced a period of adjustment working in a country town but the most surprising to her was the distance she faced in attending to matters outside of Inverell. She learned to deal with situations without police back-up, depending on successful communication through authenticity and trust. Snr Cst Kelson has become a popular town identity and she will be missed. As she transfers to Lawrence Police Station she looks forward to fishing, kayaking, and enjoying the coastal life in her spare time. I congratulate Senior Constable Kelson on the friendships and respect she has earned during her tenure at Inverell Police Station with both her colleagues and the community. I commend Snr Cst Kelson for adapting to country policing and her successful and consistent police work ensuring the safety and well-being of Inverell residents.

#### **STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Given what has transpired throughout the state over the past few weeks, it seems like the perfect time now to recognise the tremendous members of the State Emergency Service – particularly those in Campbelltown. The floods that we have witness recently have ravaged many parts of the state. Parts of Campbelltown were impacted but nowhere near the scale compared places like our next door neighbours in Camden or parts in the north of the state like Lismore. Still, no matter the scale of the damage or where it occurred, there was never a shortage of SES members willing to stick their hand up and help those in need. I often say the thing that makes Rural Fire Service brigade members is the fact that they run towards the blaze, not from it. The same can be said about SES members and whatever emergency has occurred. The eagerness of SES members to sacrifice their own welfare in order to assist others is an admirable and inspirational quality. Thank you to every SES member throughout the state – particularly those here in Campbelltown. Your bravery, courage and selflessness has certainly not gone unnoticed or underappreciated.

#### **PAUL RICHARDS PLUMBING**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)**—I acknowledge Paul Richards Plumbing in Taren Point which was named Plumbing Service of the year at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards 2021. Founded by Miranda resident Paul Richards, this Plumbing Business is a "one stop plumbing shop" for many local homes and businesses. Paul and his team pride themselves on their professional, highly experienced and quality workmanship, along with their broad range of services including emergency repairs, renovations and installations and much more. As the Minister for Small Business, I am delighted to see local businesses in the Miranda Electorate like Paul Richards Plumbing receiving recognition from our community. When Paul isn't working on-site, he is busy running a blog through his website where he posts all sorts of useful tips for homeowners. Here, locals can learn about electric versus gas water systems, common causes of blocked drains and how to mitigate them and clarifying plumbing myths. Paul's blog also sheds light on reducing water consumption to help locals save money on their water bills and lower our environmental

impact. I congratulate Paul Richards Plumbing on winning this award at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL MIRANDA**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—**I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School Miranda ("OLSS") on their appointment. OLSS is a kind and caring community led by Principal Michelle Bourne and the wonderful teaching and support staff. Term 1 has kicked off with many exciting opportunities for the leadership team, including running their first zoom assembly to celebrate the achievements of their peers and update the school on new initiatives. I congratulate the 2022 leadership team on their successful appointment and strong start to the year. I acknowledge School Captains Alana Arrogonate and Matthew Forrester, Vice Captains Lara Mikkelsen and Samuel Regan, and Prefects Matilda Noon, Summer Soliman, Alessio Polimeni and Finn Wingchester. To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud, and I look forward to seeing them thrive in their roles this year. I commend the student leaders from OLSS on their success and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

#### **OYSTER BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)—**I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Oyster Bay Public School on their appointment. Oyster Bay Public School is an incredible community of bright students with big ideas. Led by Principal Wanita Bowles, the student voice is highly respected by the teaching and support staff. On 10 March 2022, the Student Parliament and Mini Ministers along with the Student Representative Council held their first caucus meeting of the year, presenting and discussing motions about their school community. To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I congratulate the 2022 Prime Minister Taylor Gorman, Deputy Prime Minister Harley Stubbings, Speaker of the House Taylor Malin, Minister for Sport Jasmine Jackson, Minister for Wellbeing Luke Walsh, Minister for Charities and Fundraising Claudia Ryan, Minister for the Environment and Technology Zoe Skelton, Minister for Arts Harriet Jones and Mini Ministers Olivia Villacorta and Douglas Anderson on their successful election. I commend the student leaders from Oyster Bay Public School on their success, and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

#### **AUSTALIA WESTERN SAHARA ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—**Today I would like to recognise the work of the Australia Western Sahara Association whose aim is to raise awareness and promote the Saharawi cause in Australia. The independence struggle in Western Sahara closely mirrors that of the East Timorese. In 1975 when the colonial power Spain withdrew, the neighbouring country, Morocco, invaded. Many Saharawi fled to desert refugee camps. A war ensued until a UN-sponsored ceasefire was declared in 1991 when a referendum was promised. Despite UN efforts and wide international support, Morocco still refuses to agree to a referendum. The association campaigns for a UN referendum of self-determination; protection of the economic and political rights of the indigenous Saharawi in occupied zones; safeguarding the country's natural resources for the Saharawi people; and UN monitoring of human rights, on both sides. It also contributes humanitarian aid to the camps. Recently the association commemorated Western Sahara's National Day with a flag-raising at Leichhardt Town Hall. On behalf of everyone in our community I would like to thank the Australia Western Sahara Association for their efforts and campaigning to bring about a fair and equitable outcome for the people of Western Sahara.

#### **BALMAIN LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—**Today I bring to the attention of the House an outstanding community sports organisation that does so much in our local area, the Balmain Little Athletics Club. Balmain Little Athletics has been operating for a remarkable 50 years and does a wonderful job of encouraging kids sport participation and enjoyment. The Club meets at King George Oval in Rozelle on Saturday mornings through the summer athletics season. I was pleased to support the Club's successful application through the Community Building Grants program to recently complete an upgrade to their facilities at King George Park. As with so many local clubs, Balmain Little Athletics couldn't function without the support of a remarkable group of volunteers and parents behind the scenes. I would like to acknowledge life members Kim Gane and Andrew Kohlrusch, as well as Peter Rand and Peter Boyle, all of whom have given many years of dedicated service to the club. I also want to make special mention of club President David Murphy. Thank you again to all the volunteers, parents and athletes that make Balmain Little Athletics such a wonderful club.

#### **HUMAN APPEAL GALA DINNER**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—**On March 6 I had the pleasure of attending Human Appeal Australia's 30th Anniversary Gala Dinner at Sydney Olympic Park. This occasion celebrated 30 years of history, in which Human

Appeal has improved the lives of so many disadvantaged people around the world. The night featured a number of prominent speakers and international guests including Imam Mufti Menk from Zimbabwe, nasheed artist Mesut Kuris of Macedonia and comedian Preacher Moss from the USA. Each speaker raised awareness about the mission of Human Appeal and demonstrated the organisation's international reach. Human Appeal provides immediate relief on the ground as well as initiating self-sustaining development programs where necessary and humanly possible. I would like to pay tribute to Bashar Al-Jamal, Director of Human Appeal, and the entire Board of Directors for the invitation. Their Australian Head Office is based in Lakemba. This has enabled me over the years to see up close the important and tireless work of Human Appeal. Their generosity is a testament to the community, their friendship is invaluable and they can rely on my continuing support.

#### **TEACHERS APPRECIATION AWARDS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—Educators are incredible people and I want to thank the Engage, Challenge, Grow Initiative team from the Lebanese Muslim Association for recently hosting their Teachers Appreciation Awards event at Bankstown. Teachers juggle many hats, including performing the role of educators, mentors, councillors and nurses. Throughout the tumultuous years of COVID-19, we have seen more than ever, the dedication and passion of teachers to their craft. During this time, teachers had to overcome low morale from not being able to regularly check on vulnerable students, and ensure that no child was left behind. We often do not thank the teachers enough but the Lebanese Muslim Association and our community believes recognition of educators is very important. This event offered meaningful acknowledgement of those working to improve our students' learning outcomes. Teachers are the lifeblood of our community; they are willing to give their time during and after work hours to help students. I met and congratulated teachers from all levels of education, including early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary. It's never about the accolades for educators but I am so glad to see schools, teachers and support staff, recognised and thanked for their commitment to our young people.

#### **SHINE FOR KIDS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—On March 14 I had the pleasure of meeting with Julie Horrigan Rouse, the new CEO of SHINE for Kids as well as April Long, the Acting CEO, to discuss their contribution to my community. SHINE for Kids, as an organisation, works to build a better future for and with children and young people. Their vision is to transform the lives of young people who have contact with the criminal justice system. They do so through education, support and mentoring to help these young people thrive. One such initiative enables inmates to create children's books for children of people incarcerated. This is an issue I care deeply about. Building better futures for young people is the driving cause of my life and I am so grateful to SHINE knowing that they are currently working with 303 children in my Electorate of Lakemba. We can all agree that the criminal justice system is not perfect. Any negative impact it might have on a young person is an abject tragedy. We must all strive to support organisations that support these young people. This is why I am proud to offer SHINE my support and thanks.

#### **MARDI GRAS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—On 5 March I had the privilege of joining with Rainbow Labor NSW to celebrate Mardi Gras! Sydney Mardi Gras is a wonderful celebration of the LGBTQIA + community from Sydney and right across Australia and the world, and all the incredible people, movements, communities and cultures within. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that pride celebrations have needed to be adaptable and flexible in their design. These events continue to be vital in ensuring visibility and celebrating diversity as we continue the march toward equality. I wish to congratulate the organisers of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras on once again running a fun and safe parade. I also wish to congratulate Rainbow Labor for their ongoing advocacy for the LGBTQIA + community and thank them for the opportunity to March alongside them.

#### **RANDWICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I wish to congratulate Randwick Historical Society on a successful AGM and thank them for the opportunity to once again attend proceedings. I am also honoured to be a patron of the society that has done an incredible job, over many years, of preserving and recording the rich history of our local area. Randwick & District Historical Society is a fantastic, local organisation that are dedicated to documenting the history of the local area and sharing our resources with members and visitors. I also wish to congratulate the Randwick and District historical Society President, Peter Kahn, who has become the longest serving president in the society's history. A wonderful achievement and I wish to thank Peter for his amazing service to our local community.

### WAVERLEY SKY GARDENS

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I wish to congratulate Waverley Council on the opening of their SkyParks concept at Westfield Bondi Junction. As part of the program, car parks, terraces and other urban spaces will be transformed into thriving gardens in a Waverley Council led project to increase green cover across the local area. With limited ground-level space in the Eastern Suburbs, SkyParks will harness the space available on built structures to grow plants and make Waverley a greener place to live, work and play. SkyParks will see gardens planted on key sites in the East such as Westfield Bondi Junction and The Entertainment Quarter, Moore Park to better understand and measure cooling benefits, energy savings, improved air and water quality as well as broader community benefits. Congratulations to Mayor Paula Masselos and Waverley Council on a fantastic new initiative.

### BRIAN RUDDER

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge Brian Rudder who was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) at this year's Australia Day honours ceremony. Brian received the honour for his services to the local community and rugby union. Over the years, Brian has been heavily involved within the rugby union community. This includes his former role as President of Hunter Rugby, where he is now a life member. Brian's contribution to rugby union had had a significant impact with the success of the sport within the Hunter region, with a number of locals getting involved in the sport to this day. It is fantastic to see such an appreciation for rugby union across the region, which has been influenced by Brian's involvement in the sport. Brian is a deserving recipient of the OAM. I congratulate Brian on being awarded this honour and thank him for his service to the local community and rugby union.

### DENIS GORDON

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge Denis Gordon who was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) at this year's Australia Day honours ceremony. Denis is a long-serving Lake Macquarie doctor, who received his medal for his dedication and service to the Belmont community. Denis consistently worked to uphold the health and wellbeing of the local community and strived to provide his patients with the best-quality care and treatment. Throughout his career, Denis delivered hundreds of babies, and treated tens of thousands of patients who attended his Belmont surgery. Denis retired from his doctor duties at the end of March 2018, after caring for Belmont residents for 53 years. I have no doubt that Denis is well-respected by members of the Belmont area for the assistance he provided to them throughout his career as a doctor. Denis is a deserving recipient of the OAM. I congratulate Denis on being awarded this honour and thank him for his efforts in caring for the local community.

### FIONA MITCHELL

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I acknowledge Fiona Mitchell who is Swansea's Local Women of the Year for 2022. Fiona has consistently worked over the years to uphold the health and wellbeing of Hunter and Central Coast residents through her role as a nurse. Fiona commenced her career at the Royal Newcastle Hospital. Fiona was involved in the opening of the Cardiac Ward at John Hunter Hospital, has managed the Belmont Hospital Emergency Department Nursing Unit for the past 7 years and also completes shifts for the GP Access after-hours service of a weekend. In addition to this, Fiona was one of the Hunter New England Local Health District staff involved in developing an innovative swabbing model designed to prevent people from contracting COVID-19. Fiona also consistently advocates for better working conditions for her colleagues, including reduced nurse to patient ratios as an active member of the NSW Nurse and Midwives Association. It was a pleasure to nominate Fiona to be Swansea's Local Women of the Year for 2022. I thank her for caring for the Hunter and Central Coast communities.

### CRONULLA SURFING ACADEMY

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I commend Cronulla Surfing Academy owner Blake Johnston and his team for their ongoing work to raise money for charities and community causes. Blake heard from friends who were impacted by the recent floods in northern New South Wales of the need for money to be donated to help communities get back on their feet. He organised screenings of extreme surfing documentary Facing Giants and raised more than \$5,300 to support victims of the floods. This came just after the efforts of Blake, his coaches, students and friends to raise money for innovative cancer research and treatment by participating in SurFebruary. The Cronulla Surfing Academy team surfed or swam each day during February to raise \$17,800 to support the work of the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. The Cronulla Surfing Academy supports a range of fundraising campaigns every year and I acknowledge Blake and his staff for their commitment to giving back to the community.

**NEWTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE - ALBERMARLE ST FIRE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Over the last week, our news feeds and TV screens have been flooded with the horror of the fatal boarding house fire on Albermarle Street, Newtown. The fire has rocked the inner west community and shone a light on the too-often appalling standards in boarding houses across NSW. On behalf of the inner west community, I extend my condolences to the families and communities of those who died and best wishes to residents who survived. The Boarding House Outreach Service (BHOS) provided by the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre is an invaluable program, supporting boarding house residents with wrap-around support and ongoing casework management. The Service is a lifeline for the many vulnerable people living in boarding houses across our communities. Following the tragic fire, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre provided critical support for residents and is now running an appeal for surviving residents. They are currently accepting donations through their website and social media channels to support residents with housing, clothing, food and basic needs. I thank the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre for their commitment, compassion and expertise to assisting residents of Vajda House and of boarding houses across the Inner West.

**INNER WEST BAKERIES FOR UKRAINE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Bakeries across the Inner West have been busily and generously fundraising to support communities in Ukraine. Nutie Donuts in Balmain have run a cake auction, supported by countless local bakeries including Ruby Lonesome and Brooklyn Boy Bagels in Marrickville. All proceeds go to Voices of Children Foundation, supporting children impacted by armed conflict in Ukraine. Over the last few weeks, Goodwood Bakeshop in Marrickville have also been doing their bit, donating part of the profit from their medovik and vanilla slices to the Red Cross Flood and Ukraine appeals. They've since raised over \$700 for each appeal. On the back of their stellar effort, they've done it again this weekend, donating \$2 from each vanilla slice to Hawkesbury's helping hands and \$2 from each medovik to IFAW, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, who are helping keep animals safe amid the crisis in Ukraine. Thank you Goodwood and to all the bakeries across the Inner West doing their bit to help support residents impacted by the terrible conflict in Ukraine.

**FERN COURT PUBLIC SCHOOL - 100 YEARS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—This year marks the 100th anniversary of Ferncourt Public School, Marrickville. Generations of young Marrickvilleans have been educated at Ferncourt and the school is as central to the South Marrickville community as ever. The main building at Ferncourt was constructed by a Polish artist named Gracius Broinowski in 1886 with sandstone from the stables of the historical Warren Estate. The Warren was sadly demolished in 1922, however thanks to a successful community campaign, the building that now houses Ferncourt was saved. It has had many uses over the years, including being the site of the first registered addiction treatment centre in NSW. Since being established as a school a century ago, Ferncourt Public School has become a proud and thriving hub of diversity and inclusive education, where all are welcome. This milestone was celebrated with a special history talk at Marrickville Library this past week, conducted by local historian Rebecca Jones, and with events at the school. Congratulations to the current staff, students and families of Ferncourt Public School and thank you to the families and educators who have contributed to the rich history of this special school community over the past 100 years.

**RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE, ORANGE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Ronald McDonald House at Orange, on their recent milestone of having cared for their 1000th family at their Bloomfield Campus-based facility. This milestone represents the tremendous support they've given families from the region, at a difficult time in their life when their child needs life-saving and specialist treatment at the Orange Hospital. Ronald McDonald House at Orange is unique to others, in that the most accommodation nights from the 8,096 provided so far have been for families who have a child or adolescent experiencing a mental health crisis requiring lifesaving treatment in the specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit (CAMS) at the Orange Hospital, which is situated close-by the House. The second highest category is for women experiencing a high-risk pregnancy. Women and their family support members are provided with free accommodation for as long as required in the lead up to the birth of their baby, as they are monitored close to Orange Hospital before they go into labour. I congratulate the staff, volunteers and the benefactors who've made it possible for Ronald McDonald House at Orange to support country families. Well done on this milestone.

**C2G MENTAL HEALTH FUNDRAISER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise the mental health fundraising event C2G, which is a three-day 100 kilometre walking event from Cargo to Grenfell. The walk organiser Tobie Barons partnered with the Rural and Remote Mental Health for this fundraising initiative, which was created with the purpose of assisting people suffering with mental health related issues. The money raised will be used to fund community programs

and workshops which are sourced from mental health organisations, and presented by accredited trainers across the Central West of NSW. The plan is to fund local facilitators to run mental health workshops for sporting teams, businesses, community groups and schools. Rural and Remote Mental Health develops, tailors and implements mental health awareness, prevention and intervention programs Australia-wide, with three key programs culturally tailored for rural and remote communities. More than 30 registered walkers set-off from Cargo on 10th March 2022 for their three-day long walk and mission to raise more than \$15,000 for this great cause. I congratulate Tobie Barons and Rural and Remote Mental Health on their collaborative effort to benefit the country communities across the Central West of NSW. Well done to all involved.

#### **HAYLEE REDFERN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Haylee Redfern. Kettlebell world record holder Haylee Redfern was named Forbes' Sports person of the Year for 2021. Haylee claimed two firsts in the IKMF World Championships in her sport, set seven Australian records and placed first and third in national championships in the past year. Her achievements were acknowledged locally when she was presented the Forbes Advocate trophy at the annual SOYA presentation by Jessica Pascoe, previous winner and champion runner. In February, 2022, Kettlebell is a weightlifting sport and Haylee's wins were in the marathon style of competition: no gloves, no rests, just a solid 30 minutes of lifting. She took out first in her class in the long cycle - a clean and jerk action - completing 327 repetitions, and first in the short cycle - straight shoulder to overhead jerk - completing 423 repetitions. The world titles were contested by athletes from 16 nations but Haylee and the Australian team had to compete remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions. For Haylee, a personal trainer and Eugowra's Active Farmers coordinator, it's the fruit of countless hours of early morning training sessions in the home gym. Congratulations, Haylee.

#### **BANKSTOWN SPORTS GROUP - DISASTER RELIEF EFFORT**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I take this opportunity to recognise the Bankstown Sports Group for pledging \$200,000 to assist Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) with their ongoing efforts to rescue and support local communities and businesses impacted by the recent floods. Over the years, the incredible work of Disaster Relief Australia has left a distinct impression on the Bankstown Sports Group, inspiring Bankstown Sports Club CEO Mark Condi to provide a substantial financial contribution to the organisation. The generous support from Bankstown Sports Club will provide Disaster Relief Australia the necessary funds to mobilise and assist flood affected communities for at least four weeks. As patron, I am immensely proud of the Bankstown Sports Club's generosity and eagerness to champion a countless number of charitable causes and major fundraising initiatives. I wish to acknowledge Bankstown Sports Club CEO Mr Mark Condi, Chairman Mr John Murray, as well as Directors Mr Jim Hanna, Mr Richard Phillips, Mr Vern Falconer, Mr Martin Klumpp, Mr Jim Ronis, Ms Carolyn Campbell, and Ms Clare Pearson, for their commendable contribution during this challenging time.

#### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was delighted to attend Bankstown Sport Club's International Women's Day event at the Lady Banks Rooftop on Tuesday 8th March 2022. The event honoured many of our diverse and inspirational women who work or hail from Western Sydney, and are making a difference in their respective fields – including sport, fashion, business, media and the arts. This year's theme for International Women's Day was 'Break the Bias'. The event was hosted by award-winning journalist, author and diversity advocate, Antoinette Lattouf. I wish to acknowledge the wonderful panel members for their insightful contribution to the event; Carolyn Campbell, CEO Scouts NSW, Chairperson of Sport NSW and Director at Bankstown Sports Group, Madison de Rozario, OAM and Paralympic Gold Medallist, Wendy El-Khoury, Founder of Wedded Wonderland, and Clare Pearson, CEO of Little Wings. The event was also attended by some of our corporate and community women leaders. I thank Bankstown Sports Club CEO Mr Mark Condi, and the Board for sponsoring the event. I also acknowledge the team at Speak Communications for their efforts in organising the event. I wish the all the women in my electorate of Bankstown a Happy International Women's Day!

#### **BANKSTOWN DISTRICT AMATEUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION 2022 SEASON LAUNCH**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—On Saturday 5 March 2022, the Bankstown District Football Association (BDAFA) launched its 2022 season. Despite the recent flooding and the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions, BDAFA has led the way in ensuring that football in Bankstown will persevere and retain all of its member clubs for the 2022 season. BDAFA is home to 19 clubs and runs over 40 competitions, catering for players aged six to over 35. This season, to encourage continuing players to resume their participation in competitions, the BDAFA board established a fund of over \$100,000 to discount registration costs for participants seeking to play in this year's winter season. I am delighted to be a Patron of BDAFA. I would like to extend a special thank you to BDAFA Chairman Dimitri Hursalas, Deputy Chairman Laurie Warner, Directors James Bowmaker, Andrew Skaltsounis and Marianna Konidaris, and General Manager Leanne Millar for their terrific



contributions to promoting sport in our local community. I would wish all the teams the best of luck in this year's competition.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:31 until  
Thursday 24 March 2022 at 9:30.**