



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday 12 May 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 12 May 2022**

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

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

## *Announcements*

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that, when members exit the Chamber to come together and attend the joint sitting in the Legislative Council Chamber at 10.30 a.m. today, a staff member from the Department of the Legislative Assembly will be taking photographs of the procession for historical records and for use in departmental publications, including the annual reports.

### AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members that there will be a morning tea in the Fountain Court this morning to fundraise for Cancer Council and its cancer-related research. I am wearing a badge and tie, appropriately. The morning tea will commence at 10.00 a.m. and the formal proceedings will begin at 10.15 a.m. I hope to see as many members and staff there as possible.

## *Notices*

### PRESENTATION

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown will remove paragraph (3) of his motion. He must stick to the time limit of 30 seconds for giving a notice of motion.

## *Budget*

### BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2021-2022

**Debate resumed from 24 March 2022.**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (09:48):** The last time I contributed to the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2021-2022 debate, I spoke extensively about this Government's economic management and its approach to ensuring it has the capacity to fund the infrastructure and services needed for a brighter future for families across New South Wales. In my electorate of North Shore, there has been significant investment in local education and schools. When investing for a brighter future for our children and families, there is no greater investment than in education.

I am excited about the investment we are making in public education. I look forward to working with my community to deliver the range of projects that I have referred to, including major upgrades underway at Mosman High School and North Sydney Demonstration School. In coming years, work will commence on the major upgrade of Neutral Bay Public School. St Leonards will have its first ever school. We are looking to build a brand-new primary school in the Herbert Street precinct as part of an innovative, integrated, high-rise, mixed-use development. It will ensure that the kids in that dense CBD and surrounds have access to the educational facilities that every growing community needs. The budget also includes funding for an environmental education centre at Middle Head, which will offer a unique confluence of the natural environment, Indigenous history and unique military heritage. In particular I acknowledge the unique work of Julie Goodsir and Jill L'Estrange in advocating for that initiative over a long period.

Our metro renewal program is also ensuring that community-funded school-improvement projects are occurring across the North Shore. North Sydney Boys High School is upgrading its food tech space and North Sydney Girls High School is receiving an upgrade to its science lab space. Beauty Point Public School and Cammeraygal High School have funding for new covered outdoor learning areas. Mosman Public School is upgrading one of its heritage buildings to include flexible learning spaces; Middle Harbour Public School, its toilet facilities for students; and North Sydney Demonstration School, its staffroom and toilet facilities on top of the major upgrade of classroom and outdoor areas. Success in education is about much more than how money is spent. Further to providing additional resourcing, the New South Wales Government will drive quality outcomes

for all students by supercharging an overhaul of the New South Wales curriculum. Delivery of the new curriculum on a new, interactive digital portal will support teachers in implementing the classroom curriculum, which is a first for New South Wales.

I acknowledge the budget's spectacular investment in the environment and wildlife. Over the next four years we will invest more than \$1 billion to conserve, protect and promote our precious natural environment. The biodiversity budget bonanza includes over \$193 million over five years to double the number of koalas in New South Wales by 2050—a key and crucial goal of this Government; \$75 million over five years to continue the Saving our Species program to maximise the number of ecological communities and threatened species that we can keep secure in the wild in New South Wales; and more than \$26 million over two years to implement key actions under the Land Management and Biodiversity Conservation Framework, including implementing the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, and biodiversity mapping, assessment and evaluation.

In the 2021 budget we announced a nation-leading Electric Vehicle Strategy. It is the pinnacle of everything occurring in Australia across every jurisdiction and will see almost half a billion dollars invested in tax cuts and incentives for this future-focused industry. This year there will be a waiver on stamp duty fees for cars under \$78,000 and a rebate of \$3,000 for the first 25,000 purchasers of battery and hydrogen fuel electric vehicles. Road user charges will be deferred for six years or until the electric vehicle market reaches 30 per cent. That deferment, coupled with the stamp duty waiver and rebate, will push down costs and attract more buyers to the market. Our aim is for more than 50 per cent of new car sales by 2030 to be electric vehicles. The increase in electric cars will help New South Wales continue action on climate change by reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality. It will also ensure that we get the hip-pocket benefits for consumers and alleviate some of the incredible cost-of-living impacts, such as rising fuel costs due predominantly to the energy supply crunch resulting from the war in Ukraine and Russian geopolitical instability. We are seeing the impacts of that across the globe.

We are also investing more than \$80 million over three years to manage the recovery from historic bushfires and floods. We are investing in our national parks and experiences, and ensuring that we implement our policies and programs to reduce waste, eliminate harmful single-use plastics and create new economic and employment opportunities to protect our environment. Locally in my community we are working on investments in transport infrastructure, to not only increase services but also improve accessibility, engagement and interaction with our public transport infrastructure. We have \$8.2 million to continue work on the Wollstonecraft train station upgrade. I was there the other day, and it is very close to complete and looking fantastic. The station is well over 100 years old.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** Well done!

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** Thank you, Minister. The station will now be entirely accessible for those with disability or limited mobility, for parents and carers with prams, and customers with luggage. It has been done incredibly sympathetically to the local natural environment and the heritage of the station. We are also investing \$5 million to kick off construction on the North Sydney wharf upgrade, \$1.8 million for planning of the Taronga Zoo wharf upgrade and \$6.4 million to work on the South Mosman wharf upgrade. We are transitioning the Sydney bus fleet to electric buses by 2030 and allocating \$3.1 billion to continue construction of the Sydney Metro City and Southwest line, which will link Chatswood and Bankstown right through the heart of my community. New stations will be located at Crows Nest and Victoria Cross in North Sydney. Recently we announced the massive milestone of having laid 95 per cent of all tracks for that metro line. Those are the types of innovations that this Government has made in New South Wales—investments that are only possible from a strong economic position under strong economic management.

With those early enabling works already underway, last year's budget allocated \$6.3 million over four years for the delivery of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link, which is a hotly anticipated project. The Warringah Freeway upgrade works, which are already underway, will enable the delivery of that project. It will significantly alleviate congestion on the bridge and in our local streets, and will reduce rat-running. It is a commitment that I took to two elections. Our community is eager to see the project completed and opened in coming years.

We are forging ahead with our support for families. In particular I acknowledge the budget announcement that public sector employees will receive paid special miscarriage and pre-term birth leave. I can only imagine that the impact of losing a child in pregnancy would be profound. I acknowledge the Government's work in delivering that. We are also investing in domestic and sexual violence support, including additional magistrates and almost half a billion dollars for new refuges across the State. I recognise Minister Natalie Ward and the Attorney General—the former Minister—for their work on that. This budget recognises families, the cost of living and its impact on communities across the State. It invests in what we need for the infrastructure and services to make a difference to our communities. It will embed in our State what we need to ensure a brighter future.

When it comes to investing in families, there is obviously no greater commitment than the birth of a child. I acknowledge two things that happened in the past week. One is the recognition of the recent delivery of the 300,000th baby bundle to a family with a new baby. I have had two babies in the period that the policy has been in place. I know it has a significant impact, given all the stress, challenge and newness of the arrival of a new baby. Minister Geoff Lee is smiling and nodding at me because his little baby Mia also arrived during that time.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** I declare an interest.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** She is not such a little baby anymore. They grow up quickly. I also recognise yesterday's opening of the mother and baby mental health unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital [RPA]. In the past in New South Wales, for mothers who experienced acute psychiatric health impacts after the birth of a child—extreme levels of psychosis or illness beyond prenatal depression and anxiety—private services were the only services that enabled them to have their babies with them and build attachment from the first moments of life. Unless the mother was treated at the St John of God private facility, her baby would have to be in a different location while she received psychiatric care. Now we have RPA beds available for mothers and babies—up to two babies after a multiple birth—and for a partner as well. The new unit will transform the care and health services provided to those mothers and families and will assist in those crucial early stages of attachment formation between a mother and her baby or babies. We know how important that is, for not only parents and the continuing wellbeing of the mother and the family but also the wellbeing of the baby into the future.

On the Minister's patch, the Westmead mother and baby unit will open. This unit represents a crucial change in the way we deliver health services for families. It recognises that poor mental health requires provision of specialised, focused healthcare services to ensure that stigma is reduced and that people seek help rather than get lost in the miasma of trauma and harmful health impacts, particularly when a mother is in a fog from lack of sleep and dealing with the hormonal impacts of having a child. Particularly in the past couple of years, with the heightened sensitivity and concerns around wellbeing in relation to COVID, interactions with the healthcare system and of things like waitlists for service provision have had a huge impact on people.

The last thing I refer to on that note is the reopening just last week of the Gidget Foundation's North Sydney centre, expanded with new rooms and new services for parents and families. It is just another piece in the puzzle for perinatal depression and anxiety, ensuring that we are delivering services to people at that time, which can be within the first year of a child's life. Having those early intervention services and getting people the help that they need not only changes lives but also saves lives, for mothers, families and the children themselves. I am very proud of those health investments in the budget.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Business of the House*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: MEMBER FOR MURRAY**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:00):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on this day to allow, after the answering of 16 questions, the member for Murray to ask a question of the Minister for Lands and Water.

In question time yesterday I asked the water Minister a very simple question: Which foreign governments own New South Wales water, and how much water do they own? The Minister did not address anything even remotely to do with that question in his answer. He avoided the question like COVID. He talked about the drought and the New South Wales Government's wonderful water management record. He did not even say the word "foreign" in his reply, and he did not offer to take my question on notice.

Why is the Government so terrified of answering this question? I asked a similar question of the previous water Minister, and she also refused to answer. She implied the question was racist, but how is it racist? If the Government is letting foreign governments buy up our most valuable natural resource then shouldn't we, the public, have the right to know about it? The information should be on a public water register. The New South Wales Government should explain how letting foreign governments buy and sell our water benefits Australian farmers and Australians in general.

We already know that the New South Wales Government allows the Chinese Government to own 7,000 megalitres of water in the Gwydir Valley. The ABC revealed that information in 2020 after extensive investigations. The Government did not volunteer that information; investigative reporters had to extract it. But just let this sink in: Foreign governments, some of them hostile to Australia, can buy and trade our most valuable natural resource with no restrictions. In many cases they can dodge taxes that Australian farmers must pay, like the capital gains tax. Australia has a billion-dollar submarine program to protect us from the Chinese, but at the same time we roll out the welcome mat for the Chinese Government to buy our river water. The Australian public

deserves answers on why that is allowed, which is why I asked my question yesterday. The Minister refused to answer, and the Speaker of the House decided that was okay.

The Government has previously argued that we are in a globalised world and foreign trade benefits us all. I do not dispute that, but do Australian farmers really benefit when foreign governments buy our water? When we let Chinese government corporations buy our water, what checks are in place? Does the Minister do a background check on the company? Does he see if there are Chinese Communist Party links? Does he check for money laundering or criminal activity? It seems the answer is no, no and no—nothing, no background checks and no attempt to determine whether it is in the national interest. Water is in our national interest, even for the member for North Shore.

When I asked my question yesterday, former water Minister Melinda Pavey interjected that Brits own more water in New South Wales than the Chinese. What a relief! We are not discriminating; we are letting foreign companies from all around the world buy our water—the Americans, the Canadians, the Chinese, and maybe Russia and Saudi Arabia too. This is not about singling out any one country; we need transparency about all those foreign purchases.

We need to know why foreign companies do not pay tax on buying and selling our water. We know that during the drought foreign companies were making millions of dollars trading our scarce water entitlements while Aussie farmers were going broke due to low water allocations. That is why I want some accountability from this Government, and that is why I introduced a bill for a public water register listing all foreign companies that own our water. But the Government voted that bill down three times, and now it has claimed foreign ownership is a Federal Government matter. But I have done some digging, and the Federal Government does not check anything when it comes to water either.

We have something called a Foreign Investment Review Board, but guess what? That board is not interested in water and it does not screen our water purchases. Water is not part of its remit. The New South Wales Government approves all of our water licences and allows companies to buy our water. There is no oversight on that—none at all—and that is what worries farmers all over the State. It is disgraceful that the Minister was allowed to completely avoid answering the question and that the Speaker allowed him to get away with it. Today I want an answer to my question: Which foreign governments own New South Wales water, and how much do they own? All of Australia is waiting for the answer.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (10:06):** It is unfortunate that a new system for allowing crossbench members to move suspensions of standing orders is being abused, only weeks after it was introduced. The well-known mechanism for challenging rulings that are made by the Chair is under Standing Order 95. That standing order has applied in parliaments all over the world that have a Westminster system of government for decades, and we should not allow a well-known mechanism within the standing orders to be circumvented in the way in which the member for Murray is suggesting.

It is unfortunate that in all the matters the member for Murray referred to in the long speech she just gave, thumping the lectern, she did not refer to the mechanism within the standing orders that would allow her to challenge the ruling of the Chair yesterday in question time. She did not say why she considers that that well-known mechanism, which everyone in this House—including her—has endorsed through the standing orders, should now be departed from. It requires the giving of notice for a challenge to a ruling and sets a procedure for the hearing and determination of such a challenge. She did not say why that mechanism, which has been in place for decades in parliaments in the Westminster system, should now be departed from because she was unhappy with the way in which her question was answered yesterday in question time.

This is a great example of how the time of Parliament is being used in an unfortunate manner. We heard no justification from the member for Murray for not following the procedure set out in Standing Order 95. Not a word was dedicated to why the standing orders, which have been agreed on by all members of this House, should be departed from when they actually deal with the very matter that the member for Murray wishes to raise. It is unfortunate that members seek to put themselves ahead of everybody else in this Parliament and all the issues that other members wish to raise about their communities. It is unfortunate that the member for Murray considers that her issue should jump over the procedures that this Parliament has adopted for decades and should suddenly be the subject of a suspension of standing orders.

I remember when there was support for a change to Standing Order 365 that would allow suspension of standing orders. Those who supported it said that they would not allow an abuse or a frivolous use of the suspension of standing orders to take place. I would ask those members to back up their words—they are recorded in *Hansard*—and to not support this motion for suspension of standing orders for a matter that is expressly dealt with under Standing Order 95, through which there is a well-traversed mechanism for raising such issues.

Not one reason has been given to the House as to why that mechanism should be departed from in this instance. A huge shortfall in the way this motion for suspension of standing orders has been brought forward is that there has been no attempt whatsoever to justify why the existing procedures of the House ought not to be used in this case. There is a line in the sand that needs to be drawn here. We should not allow our parliamentary processes to be turned into chaos. There is order to this House under the standing orders and that should be observed. This motion should be opposed by the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (10:11):** By leave: I acknowledge the force of the arguments of the Leader of the House. I discussed the matter with him prior to the moving of the motion, and I can well understand why the Government has taken the position that it has taken. However, the Leader of the House drew my attention to some remarks that I may have made when we changed the standing orders. We are changing them on an ad-hoc basis. Firstly, this is the only Parliament in the Commonwealth that allows three or four days, or perhaps weeks, for the House to vote on a dissent from the Speaker's ruling. The member for Murray could not get a review on the matter promptly. Even if a dissent from the Speaker's ruling were carried at some stage next week, what would that mean? That would not mean that the member would get the information that she sought.

Secondly, which is a most significant point and has been raised with me by other members of the crossbench, one does not move motions of dissent lightly. A decision really has to be erroneous and of some consequence before a motion of dissent is moved, particularly at a time where the Speaker cannot rely on the support of the Government and needs to rely on the support of the whole House. It would be a terrible thing simply to carry a motion of dissent from a ruling at question time regarding a question that was asked in three parts in a noisy House and that the Speaker would have had trouble hearing. He made a ruling, and I agree with the member for Murray; the ruling was in error. But it is a new standing order. It is a noisy House. It was a three-part question, and those errors get made.

Could the matter have been resolved in another way? I suppose the Minister could have made a ministerial statement and provided the information sought, because the matter—which the member for Murray passionately believes in and which is of passionate concern to her and her citizens—is an issue that many of us in this House do not understand. Even Ministers of the Crown in various jurisdictions have trouble understanding it. There could have been a ministerial statement. This process is taking more than a seventeenth question in question time would have. The Minister could have given a three-minute written reply to that question.

For us all to stand on our digs and say "This is misused" is not really the solution to this problem. The member for Murray, who is an Independent member of the crossbench, desperately wants some information on one discrete matter. Before I came into the Chamber the Leader of the House said to me, "Well, why doesn't she ask a question on notice?" She could have done that or a whole range of other things, but she feels strongly about this matter. She wanted her say and she has used this process. While I understand why the Leader of the House has taken the position that he has—he has explained that to me—I think he is being a little bit harsh, bearing in mind all the circumstances.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (10:15):** By leave: I take the motion of the member for Murray for a suspension of standing orders very seriously. I am quite surprised that we have got to this stage—not that the Government does not support it, but that this is the solution to the problem that the member for Murray experienced yesterday. For the record, I agree with the proposition of the member for Murray that the answer she received from the Minister in yesterday's question time was not directly relevant. It is my personal view that the point of order she took was not properly determined. I believe that the Speaker had every opportunity to make sure that the Minister was directly relevant, in accordance with the new standing orders and the myriad discussions that we have had around that, including with the Leader of the House, the Manager of Opposition Business, members of the crossbench and the Speaker's team.

In this case, I think it would be an extraordinary proposition to support a suspension of standing orders to add an additional question in question time. If we do it today, I will tell you what: We will do next week, too, and the week after that, not because it is the member for Murray but because every member in this House should be able to take the same provision, if that is the case. There are methods that this House can use. In my time here, I have never seen a suspension of standing orders used in this way. Yes, we have made a requirement for questions to be directly relevant, but they should have been generally relevant in all my time here in the House. I have to say that there have been many times when I have been in the Chamber and the Minister did not even come close to answering the question, let alone being directly relevant.

Perhaps I was not quick enough to think that I should have moved a suspension of standing orders to add an additional question on the following day. I think this is unnecessary. I think it is a very unwise precedent for the House to accept. There are methods such as a motion of dissent from the Speaker's ruling, and I completely disagree with the Manager of Opposition Business on that course. That is what it is there for. That is the exact reason it is there in the standing orders, so that members do not have to come up with some clever way or

workaround to have an additional question. The Minister should have answered the question in a way that was directly relevant; I absolutely support the member for Murray in that. But I cannot in good conscience support this suspension of standing orders for the purpose that has been stated. The case has not been made.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (10:18):** By leave: I appreciate the democracy of the House; the way business gets done here; and the fact that everybody has a right, local members included, to state their case and fight for their communities. What I can say is that, as a Minister of the Crown, I am not another local member's research assistant and neither are my staff. The member for Murray has the ability to do her own research. For her information, details on foreign-owned entitlements are kept in a Commonwealth register that is freely available.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....39  
Noes .....43  
Majority.....4

#### AYES

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

#### NOES

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

#### PAIRS

Daley, M	Gibbons, M
Li, J	Crouch, A
Mihailuk, T	Upton, G
Watson, A	Bromhead, S

**Motion negatived.**

*Members***LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

At 10:30 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to elect a member to fill a seat in the Legislative Council vacated by Mr David Shoebridge, resigned.

At 10:49 the House reassembled.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I report that the House has met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber this day for the purpose of electing a person to hold the place in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignation of Mr David Shoebridge and that Ms Susan Higginson was duly elected. I table the minutes of the proceedings of the joint sitting of the Houses of the Parliament of New South Wales to choose a person to hold the place in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignation of Mr David Shoebridge. I order that the minutes be printed.

*Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2021-2022****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (10:49):** A funny thing about the budget process in this place is that, about six weeks from the handing down of the next budget, we are still involved in a debate to take note of the budget. People would be asking why members are still debating the budget, when the Government is about to hand down another budget in a few weeks' time and when the basic assumptions underpinning last year's budget have radically altered since it was delivered.

At the time last year's budget address was described as almost an ode by the Treasurer to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it was delivered only days out of an extended period of lockdown. For some of us, it was after even less time. The lockdown of more than 100 days divided Sydney and created some strange and unintended consequences in areas surrounding Sydney—in Newcastle, as Madam Temporary Speaker would recall, and for me and my constituents in Wollongong and Shellharbour. We had strange situations where even the Illawarra was divided, where you could cross the 230-odd metres of Windang Bridge and have a great deal more freedom and latitude to go about your business than you did in Wollongong, and those areas in Sydney in the harshest of lockdowns had even less latitude to do some things. There is no disputing that there were divisions within communities and groups when that happened.

The Government's response to that COVID-19 lockdown has shaped and will shape the next budget to be delivered in a few weeks' time. I look at the basic underlying assumptions and forecasts in *Budget Paper No. 1*. The Sydney consumer price index was forecast to be, this year, 1¼ per cent; next year, 2022-23, 1¼ per cent; 2¼ per cent in 2023-24; and 2¼ per cent in 2024-25. In the latest quarter, the March quarter, it was 1.7 per cent. Over the 12 months to March of this year, it was 4.4 per cent, which is a radically different assumption on the base cost of living. The half-yearly budget update has a deficit that has grown to \$19.5 billion for this year. Net debt is forecasted to hit more than \$100 billion in the out years. Wage growth is expected to remain relatively flat. I must admit that that forecast is in the budget papers, so the Government's continued effort to suppress wage growth continues.

At the same time, inflationary pressure is building up from a range of things. International supply chains are still constrained. The war in Ukraine is impacting on supply chains of agricultural products, putting greater demand on food throughout the world, and a lockdown in Shanghai is impacting on manufactured goods and products and holding back things there. Locally, we still have the impact of the Black Summer bushfires on the timber industry. All of these things are compounding upon each other to increase that inflationary pressure. In addition to that, we have workforce shortages. I cannot recall going to a business place in several months where people have not spoken to me about the difficulty they are facing with getting skilled labour. Why are they suddenly facing a difficulty with getting skilled labour? If you believe the other side, it is because we have this great economic recovery, there is low unemployment and all the labour is being soaked up. But the problem is a creation of many years of cutting back on TAFE and the training system that has been the driving force to create skilled labour in our country.

In addition to that, we have rising interest rates for mortgages and for public debt. Over the past few months, the interest rate paid on New South Wales Government debt has tripled. Housing prices went up around 30 per cent over the last year, and rents went up around 10 per cent, and the waiting list for social housing continues to grow. There are pressures on people actually getting into homes. Recently the figure for the Illawarra's vacancy rate in housing was less than ½ per cent. A proper functioning market, those in the real estate business will tell you, has a vacancy rate of about 3 per cent, which allows people to turn over. People have moved into newer

markets outside of central Sydney, which is putting pressure on housing markets right the way through. Rising fuel and grocery costs are impacting not only on businesses' but also on households' budgets. And, of course, we do live in the State with the highest taxing government in the country. All of these things are combining to suppress and decrease real household incomes by around \$6,000 over the next 12 months, if the forecasts be true. We are actually lowering living standards. That is the context in which the budget will be shaped for the next 12 months, when it is delivered in a few weeks' time.

As I said, this Government is one of the highest taxing governments not only in the country but also in New South Wales history. The Government does not like that being pointed out when it is pointed out on a per capita basis, but those listening on at home need only look at table D.1 of *Budget Paper No. 1*, where you have an increasing tax take as a percentage of gross State product [GSP]. You also have an increase in total revenue as a proportion of GSP. The current budget and next year's budget continue, based on the forecast in the existing budget, to increase to 5.3 per cent and 5.4 per cent of GSP as tax take, which is nearly a full percentage point higher than the last budget of the previous Labor Government.

When this Government talks about low taxes, it should be talking about how it is increasing the tax take of GSP. When it talks about cutting revenue, it should be talking about how it is increasing revenue as a proportion of GSP. Why? Because fines over the next four years are forecast to go up a staggering \$3.5 billion and tolls are now around \$2.3 billion each year. In nominal terms, 13½ per cent growth in the proportion of taxation revenue to GSP this year is the highest it has been in 20 years. This is the context in which the Government will shape the next budget, because the forecast and the basis of the current budget have largely been eroded by a series of events over the past six or so months, which will impact on things into the future.

In the context of this budget, I will reflect on a couple of things at a local level and lay out some markers for what I expect from the budget in six weeks' time. I was pleased to see that we finally got funding for the Unanderra station, at least in the past budget. This is something the member for Canterbury and I have spoken about many times, and she will be keen to hear this.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** That was your strong advocacy, member for Wollongong.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** That is right. We have been working on that one for a while. I always said in the 2016 by-election that I embarrassed the Government into finally funding it, and it is done. Work is underway—not nearly as quickly as I might like, 10 years overdue, arguably, but nonetheless there was \$12.3 million committed to the funding of lifts at the Unanderra station. There was money committed to lifts and the upgrade at the Towradgi station. Finally the access problems at those stations, which have plagued commuters and those communities for many years, will be addressed. That is welcome.

But, of course, there are a few things missing from last year's budget. I hope that they are addressed in the upcoming budget. Not so long ago, in question time, the Premier invited Labor members to come and see him to talk about issues and projects for their electorates if they wanted to. That was on 24 November last year. I wrote to the Premier on exactly that day, saying "Well, you invited this, and I will take up the opportunity because you have rarely taken an interest in Wollongong before over the decade of this Government." In fact, he has visited only once. Bob Dylan has been to Wollongong more times than the Premier has. Bob Dylan is pretty popular around the globe. Maybe the Premier does not come to Wollongong because he is not as popular there as Bob Dylan. The fact is that Dylan has visited more often.

I was hoping that, after the Premier extended a public invitation in question time for Labor members to come and see him, he would be true to his word. One of his staff sent me an email on 1 December saying, "Thanks. We got your letter and our office will be in contact with you once your request has been considered." I did not think my accepting a public request of the Premier would require considering. What has happened since that 1 December response? Crickets. The Premier is not genuinely interested in talking to members on this side of the Chamber about the pressures on their electorates. Wollongong is now part and parcel of the six cities in the Greater Cities Commission. That is an initiative of the Premier, but he is not particularly interested in talking to us about what we might need. I hope someone in the Premier's office is listening to this debate. I will give them some advice about some of the things I would like to raise with the Premier, should his office and he ever bother responding to me taking up his invitation for Labor members to meet with him. The Premier has an opportunity to address this issue in six weeks in the upcoming budget.

The Premier should consider funding the detailed plans and business case for the upgrade of the 23-year-old Wollongong Entertainment Centre. Labor built and opened that entertainment centre back in September 1998. It is a fantastic facility. It has hosted some great events, including Bob Dylan—twice, as I just said. Cher came to Wollongong before the Premier did when he was Treasurer. But the centre is pretty tired. Very few homes and facilities that do that much work last 20 years without an upgrade. The proposal has been before multiple Ministers and it is now again the responsibility of Minister Ayres. It is time he allocated in this budget the money that



Venues NSW has been requesting for years to do the detailed work and planning to assess the possibility of an upgrade, what can be done and how much it might cost.

When the roof leaked in 2020 the then Minister, Minister Lee, said that upgrading and dealing with the Wollongong Entertainment Centre was a priority for the Government. It is now 2022 and we still have nothing. Twelve months on, the Government kicked the can to Wollongong City Council and said, "You come up with a master plan and a precinct plan for that area." That has been done. That precinct plan was handed over.

**Mr Nathaniel Smith:** The mayor took a long time.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I acknowledge the comment by the member for Wollondilly. The mayor did take a long time. That plan should have been on the table the day after it was commissioned, because we have known for years what needs to be done to the entertainment centre. They delayed but they got there eventually. It took them a year, but in March this year they released that precinct plan. So the Government is left with no excuses not to fund in this budget the detailed plan and business case for the upgrade of the Wollongong Entertainment Centre. That is priority number one.

The second priority that should be addressed is Wollongong Hospital. Wollongong Hospital is a principal referral hospital. It is the biggest in the region and is under incredible pressure at the moment. One in two people do not leave the emergency department within the recommended four hours. We have increasing numbers of emergency department presentations. We have among the longest emergency waiting times in the State. This is the major referral hospital for the region. After working for many months in a bipartisan fashion, Labor and Liberal members were successful in securing promised upgrades to the new Shellharbour Hospital. That work has not begun and we do not know when it might start. The Government should commit to a detailed time line in its upcoming budget. But that is a good initiative because we need to work in with a network of projects. The ghost ward at Wollongong Hospital, which I have been talking about for some time, was upgraded and reopened. That has increased capacity. We also got a commitment of \$20 million for a Warrawong community health facility to replace the ailing and aging 60-year-old Port Kembla Hospital, which is now well and truly past its use-by date.

In fact, while we are talking about leaking facilities, during the recent rains they ran out of bed clothes and towels that were used to plug the leaking windows in virtually every ward. In this budget we need some additional funds for Wollongong Hospital to deal with increased pressures. Shellharbour Hospital is not built so Wollongong Hospital is carrying virtually the entire load of the region's healthcare needs. That must be addressed, and it can only be addressed with additional staff. I know this Government likes to put money into capital infrastructure so that its Ministers can cut ribbons all over the place. It has not done terribly much of that in Wollongong. But Wollongong Hospital is after staff. That is what we need. Some time lines around those new facilities and additional funding in the upcoming budget for staff at Wollongong Hospital would be a useful contribution from this Government to Wollongong as a city and the Illawarra as a region.

Of course, there are also considerable transport pressures in the region. Members may be unaware of this, but following the recent rains Wollongong was effectively isolated when Macquarie Pass had to be closed. A dam on private property at the top of Mount Ousley was expected to fail overnight, which closed the Mount Ousley access road in and out of Wollongong. Bulli Pass was also closed by those weather events. At the same time, a large rock slip closed the South Coast line and the Moss Vale to Unanderra line was closed to freight movements. So all the major arteries in and out of the Illawarra were closed. The member for Wollondilly, who is in the Chamber, is working with me and the member for Keira to see Picton Road upgraded to a dual carriageway as a matter of urgency. With 27,000 vehicle movements a day, the road is one of the busiest in and out of Wollongong.

But there are other things that must be dealt with. The Government has released its Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan. While it notes a couple of things that are happening, such as the lifts at Unanderra and Towradgi stations, it foreshadows that most of the big stuff we need addressed quickly will be subject to investment over the next 10 years—the next decade. Roads and rail lines are closing, the population of West Dapto is 60,000—which is the size of Wagga Wagga or Dubbo—and Transport for NSW's big plan is to think about it for a decade and then look into it. That is not good enough. This budget should contain a commitment and an allocation from the Government to do a few things in transport in the Illawarra and bring forward all those initiatives. The Government should bring forward examination of the duplication of the tracks south of Unanderra. Unless we duplicate those tracks we cannot put additional services onto the South Coast line and improve travels time and the availability of public rail transport through and within the Illawarra. We cannot get faster travel times to Sydney.

The examination of improvements to the M1 Princes Motorway between Figtree and Dapto, including detailed work on the on and off ramps at Kanahooka Road, has been foreshadowed for a decade. That work should be done sooner rather than later. Bring it forward; we do not need to wait for a decade. We do not need a plan to have a plan to look, in a decade's time, at things that are causing problems now. Anyone in Dapto and anyone who

uses the Princes Highway scratch their heads as to why there are not on and off ramps at Kanahooka Road to allow residents of Dapto to travel south and people travelling to Dapto from the south to get off at Kanahooka Road. The detailed planning, costing and construction should occur as a matter of urgency, and the Government could take the initiative in its next budget.

While I recognise that economic circumstances have changed, the Government is not only the highest-taxing government in this country at the moment but also, by its own record and budget papers, one of the highest-taxing governments in the history of New South Wales. There has been no higher tax take of gross State product for 20 years. The Government has the opportunity; it has the funds. As I said, I hope that the Premier's office will get back to me so that I can discuss these issues with him directly, as per his invitation to all Opposition members during question time way back in November. I hope that happens quickly and in advance of the budget. But I also hope someone in the Treasurer's office and the Premier's office is listening to this debate so they know a few things that should be progressed as a matter of urgency in the third largest city in New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** As a Bob Dylan fan, I am saddened to announce that the budget estimates debate is interrupted.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Today we welcome visiting students back to the gallery for the first time in two years. With us are students from Normanhurst Boys High School, who are observing Parliament as part of their legal studies program. I welcome them and their teacher, Mr Cusick. I understand that the students are going to meet with Minister Henskens later. I am sure he will enlighten them. I have a small personal beef with Normanhurst Boys High School, because in the very late 1970s my school, West Wallsend High School, played against Normanhurst Boys High School in the Tasman Cup—a very popular soccer competition. I thought that my school's team, "Westy", was the best team, but they lost to Normanhurst that day. I have not forgotten that, 30 years later. Welcome to the Parliament.

#### *Bills*

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

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Jamie Parker, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:11):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On behalf of The Greens, I introduce the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Climate Change Response) Bill 2022 to ensure that climate change adaption and mitigation is taken seriously and that it is embedded in our legislation. I acknowledge the students from Normanhurst Boys High School, who are visiting Parliament today. The Greens have introduced this bill and are working so hard on climate change in this Parliament, the community and the Federal Parliament because of future generations—who are represented here today by those students in the gallery. The Greens introduce this bill in the defence of nature, to ensure that our society, our economy and our environment can adapt to, mitigate the impacts of and deal with the climate future.

This bill could not be more urgent. At the beginning of 2022, the north-east region of New South Wales experienced unprecedented rainfall. Places like Lismore, Ballina and Mullumbimby were impacted by the worst flooding in modern recorded history—inundating houses, destroying businesses, killing livestock and, sadly, taking people's lives. The whole country watched, distressed, as residents who had become stranded on their rooftops by rapidly rising waters were saved in helicopters, dinghies and anything else that floated. We all came to admire the spirit of those communities. The true extent of the devastation of those communities was revealed only when the floodwaters subsided. I acknowledge my Greens colleague the member for Ballina, whose electorate suffered and continues to suffer greatly from those floods.

Catastrophic weather events like the floods were totally unprecedented, but not completely unexpected. This is the impact of climate change. We are experiencing more severe weather events more often, not only in our State and Australia but also around the world. The timing of the northern New South Wales floods coincided with the release of the United Nations' most recent assessment of global efforts to adapt to the changing climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report acknowledged that recent heavy rainfall events around the world leading to catastrophic flooding were "made more likely by anthropogenic climate change"—that is,

man-made climate change. New South Wales is not doing enough to mitigate the effects of climate change and we are not adapting to it effectively.

The Greens introduce this legislation to deal with the planning piece of the climate puzzle. That piece is important because, whether it is planning for the development of homes or of infrastructure projects, climate change adaption and mitigation needs to be at the centre of it. The Greens seek to deal with a small part of the climate change issue by addressing in the bill the fundamental failure of the existing Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to comprehensively incorporate climate change considerations into the planning and development process. The bill seeks—very simply, in a very sober and thoughtful way—to address the failings in our current planning system to ensure that climate change and how we address climate change is included in how we develop our communities, how we build infrastructure, and how we create cities and communities for the future.

The current law fails to address climate change adequately, despite the New South Wales planning system having a key role to play in reducing contributions to greenhouse gas emissions—that is mitigation—and planning how to live with the impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing and that are predicted for the future, which is adaptation. Without rules in place to ensure that decision-makers even acknowledge the climate crisis, we will see more developments that not only are unsuitable to cope with floods, heatwaves and bushfires but also will exacerbate those problems by speeding up climate change. When it comes to flood mitigation, in many communities the types of developments that have been allowed to be built are unsuitable for the location. The Greens want to make sure that our legislation reflects the facts of climate change and provides for mitigation and adaptation.

I acknowledge from the outset that many of the changes contained in the bill are drawn from a landmark report prepared by the Environmental Defenders Office entitled *Climate-ready planning laws for NSW: Rocky Hill and beyond*. The Environmental Defenders Office is the leading public interest environmental law institution in Australia. It is well respected nationwide as an organisation that fights to defend the environment and which provides legal advice and professional opinion on environmental law. I acknowledge everyone at the Environmental Defenders Office who worked on that significant and serious report. The report outlines a range of critical measures that government can take to address climate change. It is absolutely critical that reports such as this are taken seriously. That is why The Greens took the findings of the Environmental Defenders Office report and, with the assistance of Parliamentary Counsel, put them into the legislation that we now introduce to Parliament.

In particular, I acknowledge Rachel Walmsley, Rachael Chick and all the other lawyers who commented on the draft—which I circulated widely in the planning community. I acknowledge Sue Higginson—who, I am delighted to say, has just been elected to the Legislative Council of the New South Wales Parliament. Sue is the former Principal Solicitor and CEO of the Environmental Defenders Office. She is a leading public interest environmental lawyer and I am incredibly proud that she has today been elected to fill the vacancy in the Legislative Council that came as a result of the resignation of Mr David Shoebridge. Mr Shoebridge, a former barrister, resigned from the upper House of the State Parliament in order to stand as The Greens' lead candidate in the upcoming Federal election. Hopefully he will join our rank of senators in the Federal Parliament.

The bill enacts the majority of the recommendations of the experts at the Environmental Defenders Office through some very simple and clear mechanisms. It requires that the exercise of the functions under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act be consistent with the object of mitigating and adapting to climate change. It is that simple. It is necessary and it is urgent. We have used this mechanism through the proposed amendments to the Act in order to make very clear, transparent, workable changes to our planning laws to ensure that we can mitigate and adapt to climate change. We have done this work because by all indications not only does the Government intend not to make progress when it comes to adapting and mitigating climate changes but in fact it is regressing. It is going backwards and is the opposite of what our community expects and what the science demands.

It has been widely reported, as I am sure the Temporary Speaker knows, that one of the first acts by our new planning Minister, Anthony Roberts, was to scrap the requirement to consider the risks of flood and fire before building new homes, just a few short weeks after it came into effect. The former planning Minister, also a Liberal, had introduced a ministerial directive outlining nine principles for sustainable development, including managing the risks of climate change. But this was too much for the Government to take. The new planning Minister came in and swept away these important principals. They were not binding and they were not legislative; they were principles that should be considered, and that was too much.

One of our great challenges throughout the generations is the power of the development industry, which is significant. Why do they care so much about what happens in this place? Most people in the gallery here probably live in a house which is either owned or rented, and the value of that land is determined in no short amount by this Parliament. If this Parliament gets sufficient lobbying, sufficient cajoling and sufficient pressure it can look at

areas and rezone them from farmland, or rural and regional, or residential, from one-storey to 10-storey, 20-storey or 30-storey buildings. What happens to the developers who own that land? An enormous windfall profit comes to them. It is in their interests, the rent-seekers that they are, to come to this Parliament and demand through their lobbying and pressure that they have the lowest possible costs imposed upon them and they get the highest possible windfall profits. We see it every day in this place.

That is one of the reasons we are in a philosophical battle but also a political battle with the development industry. What does the development industry say? We need to make sure development does not happen in a range of circumstances where it is inappropriate and we need to take into account the future of our properties. We do not want to build hot boxes so that in our sweltering summers people have to use air conditioning. Developers say, "We do not want high design standards because that will impose a cost on us. We do not want to take climate change into account—that will impose a cost on us. We do not want to take any of these things into account because that will impose a cost on us. We want the cheapest and the most profitable buildings possible." And that is not compatible with addressing climate change.

We see the developers writing to the new Minister's office and him standing in front of a meeting of all the developers—Urban Taskforce, the Property Council of Australia and the Urban Development Institute of Australia—and saying, "We are scrapping the design and place State environmental planning policy [SEPP]," which was a planning policy that introduced some tiny measures. One measure which the developers opposed was a determination by the Minister in this new planning policy that in south-west and western Sydney, where all the new plots are being opened for housing, there has to be a backyard big enough for one mature tree. That was the requirement: one tree. The developers railed against it, "No, we can't have that. We can't have them telling us how to build our development." They argued against the minimum requirement of a backyard big enough for there to be one tree. And what happened? The developers won. The new planning Minister came in and said, "Hang on, if the developers are concerned about this, we will get rid of that, we will trash it, we will dump it."

The irony is that the developers put money into research about dark roofs. The research said that dark roofs make homes hotter and more expensive to cool. They make homes far more unlivable. So why don't we just have light-coloured roofs? The design and place SEPP said, "We will have light-coloured roofs to make sure that houses are more livable, less expensive to cool and reduce this heat island effect." The areas of new housing are fields of black, absorbing the heat during the day and releasing it at night, raising temperatures, sweltering. The Sweltering Cities group is doing a lot of work on this. The developers said, "No, no, no. Don't tell us what to do. You can't force us to do that. We will do what we want." What happened? The proposal to recommend that there be light-coloured roofs was dismissed as well. The new planning Minister got rid of that. He announced that in front of all of his mates in the development industry, who gave him a big clap. They are making unbelievable profits by inappropriate development which does not address the needs of the community or climate risk.

It is a very sad indictment on the weak nature of our political system that we can roll over so readily to an industry which is not serving the community. These developers say, "The reason we have to cut all of these regulations, all of these things which get us to build housing which is livable for people, is because we want to make it affordable." What a joke! Look at the bottom lines of these companies and see the enormous profits they are making. How about they cut their profits a bit? But that is too hard. They want to keep on increasing their profit, profit, profit and making their product as low quality and cheap as they possibly can to maximise the return.

The Greens say that that is an inappropriate way to run what should be a human right. Everyone deserves a home. We live in one of the richest countries on the planet and we cannot ensure that people have homes that are affordable to live in. We know that the private market has failed when it comes to delivering housing and that we need more social and affordable housing. The Government needs to support that process. Rather than allowing developers to do whatever they want, we need to make sure that the Government has a role. That is why the bill is particularly important.

We have a duty to have these sustainability principles built into the planning system to give statutory protections—that is legal protections in law so they are not subject to the whims of the government of the day. One Minister should not be able to revoke sustainability standards because his friends in the development industry want him to. We should make sure it is in legislation, and that is why the bill is so important. We have a duty to make sure that, whether it is planners or developers—the decision-makers—if we are going to reduce emissions to protect the homes and livelihoods of everyone in New South Wales, it needs to be legislated, because that is the only way we will ensure that these changes can be made effectively.

The Government said that it has a target—everyone has targets at the moment—of halving emissions by 2030 and reducing net zero by 2050. We know that is not enough. The science tells us that we need to be reaching net zero by 2035. Halving it by 2030 is not enough. Our response to climate change needs to be urgent. If the Government is serious about its own emissions targets, it will support the bill. If it does not vote for the bill, it should at least take elements from the bill and incorporate them into the planning process.

The impacts of land use and development are obviously significant. New coalmines and carbon-heavy infrastructure are huge contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, whereas renewable energy and green buildings can reduce and remove emissions. They can be net contributors in the longer term when it comes to our built environment. The Environment Planning and Assessment Amendment (Climate Change Response) Bill seeks to right some of the wrongs to rebalance the equation by making sure development approvals consider the climate change impacts of new developments and that those developments are built to adapt to the changing climate.

That is simple. The bill will ensure that they have the guidelines to do that. When developers and planners think about projects and the climate change impact of developments and how to build them to adapt to future climate change, more floods, hotter weather, how do they do that? It is very simple. The reason it needs to be legislated is because it is not being done now. I have a family member who has moved into a new build in Liverpool. It is like a furnace in the house. Without air conditioning the house would be unlivable. How is it that in 2022 we are building houses like that?

This State, and Australia, have some of the biggest houses in terms of floor space in the world. They are enormous houses that require an incredible amount of electricity to cool and heat, but there are also simple design technologies to ensure that houses are kept cooler. Something as simple as having a light-coloured roof makes a difference. Developers are not using the technology, and the Government is not encouraging them to use it. This bill will make it happen. We must put the climate and its impact at the centre of planning decisions. It should not be about how much money developers can make or how significant the rezoning can be, turning two-storey buildings into 12-storey buildings. Climate change must be at the centre of planning decisions, exactly where it belongs.

The bill better integrates climate change considerations into planning decisions; strengthens strategic land-use planning, rather than developers' rent-seeking planning; requires climate impact statements for major projects; and provides guidance for decision-makers on how to assess whether a project will have unacceptable climate impacts. These are four very simple, straightforward mechanisms to put climate at the centre of the planning process. Schedule 1 [1] amends the object of the current Act to include addressing climate change and to ensure that development of land is done with the threat of climate change impacts in mind. The public would be stunned to know that the law that governs development in this State does not address climate change in the objects of the Act. Schedule 1 [1] will insert the following at the end of section 1.3:

- (k) to address the problem of climate change by ensuring that the development of land is consistent with the following—
  - (i) humans have caused and continue to cause changes to the Earth's climate,
  - (ii) climate change poses a real and serious risk to—
    - (A) the health, livelihoods, food security, water supply and security of people in New South Wales, and
    - (B) the natural environment and biodiversity of New South Wales, and
    - (C) the growth of the New South Wales economy,
  - (iii) failure to take action in New South Wales to mitigate climate change will contribute to similar risks arising in other parts of Australia and the world.

**Debate interrupted.**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (DISQUALIFICATION FROM CIVIC OFFICE) BILL 2020**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 24 February 2022.**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (11:33):** The Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020 was introduced in the other place on 25 February 2020, some two years and three months ago. The intention of the bill is to remove the conflicts of interest faced by real estate agents and developers serving on councils to ensure that the community's best interests are at the forefront of council decision-making. Furthermore, the bill requires that councillors who are engaged in property development after council elections resign from their roles as councillors; that councillors who are employed as real estate agents after being elected to council step down from their position as councillors; that council candidates sign declaration forms stating whether they have any close associations with property developers; and that council candidates sign declaration forms stating whether they have any close associations with real estate agents. The bill regards a "close association" as a relationship where the candidate would receive financial benefit from the development or any such transactions.

The bill was introduced in the other place 2¼ years ago, and members in the other place were frustrated by the very slow mechanism by which the Government is addressing substantial conflicts of interest that exist

throughout the local government space and the myriad of allegations of corruption that are being investigated by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I would have thought that this bill, having come from the other place, would have gone through the machinery of government and that there would have been a response by the Government about the conflicts and allegations of corruption that stem from local government. These allegations affect nearly all of the hardworking, honest councillors who are trying to do their jobs on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the council. This issue should be resolved. After all this time, despite a bill passing through one of the Houses of Parliament, the machinery of government has ground to a halt.

The Minister for Local Government is in the Chamber. I have no doubt that she will tell the Chamber why the House should not enact the bill and why it should not become law. She will likely raise a number of concerns, some of which are valid. If local government is the third tier of government in Australia and is a democratic institution, how can you say that a person cannot be democratically elected to office because of the nature of their profession? She may also say that this bill, if enacted, will infringe on the implied freedom of political communication and expression that exists in the Commonwealth Constitution, which would override this bill and make it unconstitutional. Those arguments have merit and substance if confined to those discrete areas, but there is a fundamental failing in local government that is not being addressed. Piecemeal planning panels meet behind closed doors and discussions between developers and councillors over rezoning and planning proposals continue in coffee shops around the matter that the Independent Commission Against Corruption is currently investigating.

Look at the Government's track record on how it addresses allegations of corruption about rezoning. I imagine it will be only a matter of time before the Minister for Planning wants to remove from councillors the power to vote on rezoning. Because a small percentage of councillors are there for an improper purpose, the solution always seems to be to remove their discretion from determining the very things they are elected to determine and taking away those rights. The reasoning behind introducing the bill is that someone who is engaged in property development and, in effect, the sale of land, could well be there for an improper purpose and have a conflict of interest. Therefore, they should not be elected to council to be part of council's decision-making process.

At some point we need a complete examination of the role and function of democratically elected councillors. On behalf of the community that elects them, it is their job to exercise their discretion in making decisions in the interests of the community. But there is constant interference. For example, the codes of conduct applied to councillors are being misused. That is not what they are for. The codes of conduct are aspirational documents designed to set a particular standard of council behaviour. They are not designed to be documents with statutory force that prevent a democratically elected councillor from making the discrete decisions that they are elected to make.

I give a tangible example to illustrate what I am talking about, which was the subject of evidence given only last week before the Joint Statutory Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I asked the Chief Commissioner a question about the local government code of conduct. If someone has a close personal relationship with a person or an organisation, they have a conflict of interest under the local government code. I posed the example of a very religious Catholic councillor who goes to mass every week and has a close relationship with their priest. One Sunday morning after mass the priest says to that elected councillor, "Councillor, we have a problem with a pedestrian crossing outside the church. Parishioners will get struck by cars unless you can do something about traffic movement or build a wombat crossing."

Under the local government code of conduct, the councillor should say, "I am a very religious Catholic. I have a close affiliation with this church and with you as my priest. That is a conflict of interest. I shouldn't do anything about the danger that exists outside the church. You will have to go to another councillor." According to the code of conduct, that is effectively the law. When I put that to the Chief Commissioner, he responded to me by saying, "Yes, but it shouldn't apply because the councillor is engaged in a noble cause." But when does a noble cause allow a councillor to breach a written code that has statutory force? That is an extreme example. Next I asked him, "What happens if, two suburbs away, the Catholic Church has applied to build a childcare centre on one of its sites, which the community opposes? As a religious Catholic, who has a great deal of belief in the church that needs to be funded, do I have a conflict of interest with respect to that development application for a childcare centre?" If the code of conduct requires that councillor to declare a conflict of interest, that would be an absurd result. May I have an extension of time? [*Extension of time*]

I draw the attention of the House to that example from the evidence given to the committee last week because for many years the solution was to take away the authority and discretion of councillors rather than address the instances when genuine conflicts or problems occurred and communities lost confidence because of the conduct of a handful of councillors. They were not allowed to decide development applications and so planning panels were created. Woe betide a councillor who should decide the impact a development has on the locality they

represent! So the action was to take away their discretion and appoint a planning panel with people who would come from outside the relevant local government area. Instead of determining applications in an open and transparent way, they would secretly meet behind closed doors with council officers or secretly inspect a site so the public had absolutely no idea of what transpired. After they heard public submissions, instead of deliberating publicly like councillors would be required to do, they would adjourn, meet behind closed doors and would tell people two weeks later what their decision was.

That is what we have done to local government because of a corruption risk. We take away the powers of councils. We take away their right to caucus and their discretion to respond to community needs. We dictate that they must do some costing before they move a notice of motion. We take everything away from them. Why? We do that because of a corruption risk. That leaves local government in this State in a terrible position. Mr Assistant Speaker, you also come from local government. You have probably never seen local government in New South Wales in its current state. Instead of blaming councillors, we should look at the legislation under which they operate, which is effectively their constitution. Some 2¼ years ago the Opposition in the other place introduced this bill on the basis that rather than continuing to take away the discretion of councils and denying them the ability to govern their areas, as well as accusing them of impropriety and having them tolerate unfair accusations of being shonks, we stop the people whose profession would benefit from holding a position on councils—that is, the developers and the real estate agents.

I grew up in Eastlakes. Everybody thought the Rosebery Racecourse was going to be a place with a shopping centre and houses, but it turned out to be three-storey walk-ups by Parkes Development, for which the mayor of the day had sole leasing rights and the deputy mayor had sole selling rights. I am probably a member in this place because their conduct caused me to run for council. To this day—55 years, 60 years later—the community is paying the price. To this day there is controversy about Crown Group and the way in which it has extracted an approval to redevelop that area. That can all be traced back to the days of the real estate agents, where the mayor and the deputy mayor, who effected the approval, had sole leasing and selling rights.

This bill is a cry for help on behalf of local government. No longer should councillors in every local government area around the State have to tolerate, week in and week out, allegations of impropriety from legitimately angry communities who are dissatisfied with the decisions of councillors who they suggest have conducted themselves improperly because of the unfair stench imposed upon them by a handful of people. So I ask the Government to carefully consider the sentiments that this bill is endeavouring to get through to the machinery of government in this State.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:48):** I echo the concerns raised by the Minister about the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020. It seems that, by introducing this bill, the Opposition is saying that voters are not smart enough to make their own choices when voting at council elections and that this Parliament should override their democratic rights. One of the strengths of our system of local government is its truly democratic nature. It does not discriminate and it allows all citizens in a local community to put their hands up to serve as its elected representatives. I put my hand up for 12½ years, because I stood at a community meeting that had a Labor mayor representing the blue-ribbon heartland of the Liberal area. I thought, "I'm not going to complain about this; I'll just put my hand up and run." With a lot of hard work and support from the good people in my community, I managed to be elected at several different elections and held 70.71 per cent of the vote. That was the biggest Liberal vote in any ward in any council in New South Wales.

If nothing else, local government taught me about the right of people to be heard and to be represented by anybody who wants to put their hand up for local government elections. As the community's elected representatives, councillors are required to make decisions on behalf of their community and in its best interests. Councillors are accountable to the community that elects them. If they are not accountable, they will get booted out at the next election because people will march with their pens. They will rightly be judged for the decisions that they make as well as their performance. If councillors make decisions that are not supported by the community, or if their performance or conduct falls short of the high standards the community is entitled to expect of their elected representatives, they will inevitably not be re-elected. The system works. Let us not start selecting the types of people local communities can or cannot elect to their councils based on what those people do for a living or some other random criteria.

This very dangerous, anti-democratic exercise can only undermine the strengths of our democratic, representative system of local government. The anti-democratic nature of the measures contained in the bill is amply demonstrated by the fact that the bill, if passed, will operate to remove from office councillors who have been democratically elected by their communities as recently as December last year, who had nominated for election in December last year in good faith and who were eligible to hold office in their local councils. People considered them and elected them. The bill removes the democratic rights of the voters back in December by saying, "No, you cannot support someone who you actually voted for, and who disclosed their occupation". I think

that is profoundly unjust. As parliamentarians, who are we to say that the electors who demonstrated their support for those candidates by voting them in last December got it all wrong? Electors have never been better informed about the candidates they elect to councils. Do not underestimate our voters and the base out there. The community has to have its say, and that is what we offer as a democratic right in voting in council elections.

Candidates are required to disclose in the candidate information sheets submitted with their nomination papers what their occupation is, whether it be a real estate agent, a property developer, a doctor, a solicitor or a teacher. That information is publicly available, meaning that electors can choose whether to support candidates in the knowledge that they are what they are in their occupation. If property developers are elected to councils then they are required to disclose that they are property developers in the returns of interests submitted with the council, together with information about their property interests, offices and interests held in corporations and trusts, and the sources of their income. I imagine that would be very tightly scrutinised. Councillors are obliged to keep that information up to date throughout their time in the position. The information is published on councils' websites, making it easily accessible by electors.

Ultimately, it should be left to electors to exercise their own judgments about who they want to serve as their elected representatives on their local councils. This Parliament should not be seeking to take that choice away from electors. How have electors exercised their choice? Data collected by the Office of Local Government indicates that only a small percentage of councillors are property developers or real estate agents. In the 2016-17 local government election cycle, only 1.5 per cent of councillors identified as property developers within the then applicable definition under the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. Just 1 per cent of councillors identified as real estate agents. That, in turn, begs the question: What is the problem we are trying to fix with the bill? Do electors really need this Parliament to exercise a choice on their behalf to prevent property developers or real estate agents being elected to their councils? It would seem to me on the figures presented that they do not need the assistance of the Parliament to exercise that choice. They are exercising that choice themselves when they vote.

I listened to the contribution by the member for Heffron to debate on the bill. He argued that councillors have had their right to vote on development applications removed, and yet the bill proposes to remove the rights of councillors to be elected—having fully disclosed their occupations before they put their hands up, before they get considered and before they are either voted in or out in the next council election cycle. The member for Heffron also talked about independent planning panels being tucked away in the dark of night, with the doors closed, and representatives of local community not being privy to any information. Two local government representatives can sit on the planning panel, and they are nominated by each of the local councils. The myth about naughty panels behind closed doors is an absolute furphy. Rather than taking away councils' discretion on decisions, let us take away voters' democratic rights and not give them the right to choose whom they want to represent them going forward—I think that is where the member for Heffron is heading, and I think that is a bad choice.

As I have mentioned, the voters are best placed to make their own judgments about which candidates will make suitable elected representatives on their local council. Having had 12½ years on council, I must say that if anything comes before council as an item then the councillors have the opportunity to raise their hand to declare a conflict of interest or a less than significant conflict, to put that on the record and to remove themselves from the chamber so that they cannot put their vote forward. We already have options in place in local government to deal with the measures that are being raised by the bill. When councils vote on applications, other councillors in the room are very aware and have the right to raise any concerns they have through the local government process. Let us leave that choice to the voters' good judgment and not take away their democratic right to make that choice as they see fit and proper.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (11:57):** Having been a councillor and mayor himself, Mr Assistant Speaker, the member for Lake Macquarie, is well aware of the good intent of the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill. Being from the Hunter, he is also very aware of the absolutely devastating effect of developers on councils up our way. The member for Hawkesbury was not in Parliament around that time but, having been a councillor, I am a bit surprised that she was not aware of the great sweep of ICAC through the Hunter and the Central Coast, absolutely taking out so many members of the Coalition.

I inform the member for Hawkesbury and the Minister that this legislation is all about protecting the Coalition from itself. So many members of the Coalition were wiped out as a direct result of a developer who was the mayor of Newcastle City Council. He called himself "the walking ATM", no less. He would walk around and get asked to provide some donations to local candidates and, lo and behold, we saw wads of \$10,000 in brown paper bags being handed out to Coalition members to help them with their election. No less than the member for Charlestown, in fact, was a vet who was operating on one of his dogs at the time. A Bentley drew up outside the veterinary clinic and a message was given to the member. The member was asked to go out, and out he went. He sat in the Bentley, and there you go; we all know the rest in terms of the money that has been handed over.



The member for Newcastle prior to me had a situation that prompted him to go before ICAC as a result of this as well. Lo and behold, we had some by-elections, and that is why I am here. That is why the member for Charlestown is here. Really, the bill is aimed at helping the Coalition, because it obviously cannot help itself in these sorts of situations. The Opposition is just trying to give them a leg-up and get a bit more integrity in the system so the Government can say, "Right, here is the legislation. This will help us. I can hang my hat on this." We will weed it out at the very beginning. We will stop these developers and real estate agents coming in. They will not have to worry about a conflict of interest and the terrible pressures that would seem to apply there, because they simply will not get to that point. We will not have to worry about any potential conflict. Throughout history we have seen the devastating effects of that, particularly in the Hunter, as I have referenced.

It is quite astonishing that the Coalition seeks not to support the bill, because it really is common sense. It allows reassurance for the community that councillors will not be conflicted, that the elected council will progress with great integrity and that there will not be any issues that the community will have to confront and worry about, such as elected candidates or officials having possible developments and possible information with regard to property that may be up for rezoning. All of these issues go before councillors. As I was a councillor for eight years, I am very aware of them. I am very aware of declarations that have to be made, should be made, and often are not made. There lies the problem. There lies the rub. That is why I am very happy to support this great piece of legislation that my colleague the shadow Minister for Local Government is spearheading. This piece of legislation will do the Government a favour, because it cannot help itself. This is us trying to help you help yourselves. Get behind it, support it, and let's clean up local government.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:02):** I reiterate the concerns raised by the Minister and Government members about the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020. I note with interest the comments from those opposite in relation to ICAC. They have gall and a hide raising such matters given that some of their former colleagues are presently in jail, having been through that very process. I suggest they think twice before bringing up those matters again. The Government is always open to hearing another point of view, but the line of reasoning used by those opposite is unsustainable and cannot pass the pub test. Let's make it clear: The current system works. We saw how well it worked at the local government elections in December last year. Voters had publicly available information about candidates running in their local government area, and those candidates were required to disclose whether they were a property developer on the candidate information sheet submitted with their nomination papers.

We do not ban classes of people based on their profession at any level of government. It is, and always has been, the democratic nature of our system of governance—a system which is the envy of the world—that our citizens can make a choice and cast a vote. But if we are to indulge and go down this slippery slope of banning people who choose how they make a living, perhaps we should ask the question, "Why not extend that prohibition to others?" What about those self-interested staff of trade unions, for example, who may be more content to bring services across this city to a halt, as we have seen far too often in recent times? Union staff are inherently interested whilst ever Labor and the unions are two sides of the one coin. They are presently putting commuters, parents, businesses and communities of this State under undue pressure with their self-interested strike actions.

When we go down this treacherous path of excluding professions, we are opening a floodgate that will not only have impacts for local government but is also inconsistent with the election of State and Federal representatives. Those opposite are saying that a person's profession is synonymous with their identity and the fabric of their being. I am a passionate advocate for my community and I recognise the immense privilege of representing my constituency, but that is just one aspect of a broader portrait of who I am as a person. I am sure this is equally true for members in and out of this House and for the nearly 1,300 councillors across this great State. Most importantly, if we are to deny ordinary voters their constitutionally entrenched right to vote—a voter's right to take part in public affairs and have access to public service—we act in direct defiance of our long-established democratic system of governance, which has operated successfully for centuries.

Those opposite believe that voters cannot be trusted, that they cannot make decisions for themselves and that legislators are better equipped to make decisions on their behalf. I take an entirely different view to those opposite. I believe that the citizens of New South Wales are smart and sophisticated enough, and more than competent enough, to make decisions for themselves. Those opposite obviously do not understand the importance of equality of opportunity—Government members do—nor the liberal democratic traditions which in fact saw them elected into this very House. It is time that those opposite get out of the way and stop dictating their views to the people of our great State and nation.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:06):** I make a contribution to debate on the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020. At the outset, I think we should go back to first principles. When we have a system of election to democratically elected positions of office, we are saying that the people choose who represents them. That is the foundational principle on which we work: The people choose.

The people are empowered to choose whomever they wish. The people are empowered to consider, to assess, to weigh up and to make their decision on basically whatever grounds they choose. But it is their call to make. That is what democracy is about. It is not about the right of some elite to shape that choice and to guide the voters because they cannot be trusted themselves. It is not about the right of some self-appointed elite to say, "You shouldn't make this choice or consider that person. You should only look over here." That is not democracy.

Democracy is when the people are sovereign, the people get to choose and their choice is unfettered. The only considerations we should have around eligibility are those that we have traditionally had in Acts like these that apply to places like this one, which rule out some inherent conflicts of interest. For example, an officer cannot profit under the Crown and be in this place. There is that kind of thing, and there are very few others. They have been distilled over the length of parliamentary practice over centuries, coming from England, in order to give voters the choice and to give the people the power. This sort of bill is just a grubby little populist attempt to make those opposite look better. The Labor Party is saying, "We are going to do something to protect you from yourself." It is just a populist stunt. It does not really achieve anything of any value. But if it did get up, it would limit the choice of voters, and it would do so on an entirely arbitrary and fabricated basis.

According to the member for Heffron, a big problem arises from the fact that this Government legislated to separate the power of councils to set planning policy guidelines in their communities and who would then assess applications against those policies. That was absolutely an anti-corruption measure. It was introduced to ensure that the people who wrote the rules were different from the people who assessed applications against the rules. Consider that in relation to this Chamber. This Chamber and the Legislative Council set the rules in New South Wales. We make the laws. The process to achieve that is quite elaborate and well thought through. Do we sit in judgment of people to see whether they have complied with those rules? No. A separate arm of government—the courts system—does that, again, with an elaborate, well-prepared process to assess whether somebody has complied with the rules when a charge is brought against them. We are not the people who do the two tasks. There is quite a deliberate separation of those tasks within our system of government.

Recognising the corruption risk that arose from councillors both writing the rules and sitting in judgment of them, a separation was made between them, particularly applying to areas where there was the highest risk of that corruption occurring. There are contexts—where there is more money involved and there is greater likelihood of applications that would enliven these provisions—that have more risk of corruption than others. But today's debate on the bill exists within the context of that change having been made. In metropolitan Sydney, councillors do not assess DAs. That is for the panels. Councillors set the policy for their local communities. They do so in consultation with their constituents through a public process, but it is those elected councillors who will then vote on a draft development control plan, local environment plan or other planning instrument that is appropriate for their area.

That being the case, what possible reason could there be to exclude some categories of people from that process? Why would you need to prohibit a real estate agent or a property developer or, indeed, a trade union official or anybody else from that process if they are setting planning policies for the district in a public way and in consultation with the community that they represent? Why would you need to ban them for holding a particular occupation? There is no logical connection or need there. No advantage arises from this bill. All it does, as I say, is fly a bit of a populist flag that says, "Look at us, look at us; we are doing something," but to no positive benefit and with no tangible gain. However, it would infringe on the basic democratic rights of the individuals in our communities who wish to choose their representatives. It would also infringe on the basic democratic rights of those people who would be excluded and who may, in fact, be very community minded, very interested in the future of their districts and very transparent and up-front about who they are.

That leads me to the other element of basic principles. The best way to protect against conflict of interest is to rely on transparency, to make people be up-front, and to shine the light of day on who is who and what they have. Whatever interests they might have that are relevant to the decisions they are making should be declared. They can be many and varied. I come back to the example of the trade union official who might be sitting as a councillor when a council is deciding procurement policies. For a very large council, big sums are involved in some of those contracts and tenders. It may well be relevant for that person to declare an interest in that situation. That is what they should do. That is the appropriate response: If there is an interest, declare it. If it is a pecuniary interest that is unresolvable any other way, they should remove themselves from the decision. Some interests are not pecuniary or can be resolved simply by declarations; others require somebody to take themselves out of that particular context. But as long as that is done in a public and transparent way, and the electors know, then in the end it is the electors who can decide. [*Extension of time*]

I am talking about the basic principle that the best antidote to conflicts of interest is to shine a light on people's interests. They should have them declared, tabled and out in the open, and the community should decide whether it wants that person to represent it in an elected role or not. They should be up-front, let everyone know

and then empower the community to make its democratic decision. Members of this Chamber should be concerned that the Opposition's bill seeks to blanket-ban professionals from the real estate and development industries, two significant and important occupations. We need them. This in some ways is a back-door attempt to demonise those people without admitting that that is the purpose. But we need real estate agents and land developers because we need housing. People need the opportunity to move into homes. Businesses need the opportunity to move into industrial premises and so on. Somebody has to fulfil those roles. They are quite reasonable, respectable and integral roles to our community. They should not be demonised, even in an indirect or unadmitted manner.

The shadow Minister has indicated that the bill is no reflection on the many professionals engaged in these legitimate enterprises yet in the same breath he is eager to target them and prevent them from putting up their hand and being democratically elected to hold civic office. Why is the Opposition singling out local government? The bill that it aims to introduce effectively establishes a double standard as to who can run to hold civic office, which is incompatible with other levels of government and denies electors their free choice of candidates. The bill clearly does not encompass a change of eligibility for this Parliament. Yet you could say that conflicts of interest exist in all levels of parliament, in many aspects of public life. They need to be handled in the manner that I have been talking about—through disclosure, transparency, probity and accountability to those who put people in those positions—not by denying electors a democratic choice.

This side of the House trusts the electors. We appreciate that every elector has the opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs through freely chosen representatives. We will defend the rights of real estate agents and developers to access roles in public service just as we would for anyone else. Over recent years the Government has adopted a more proportionate approach to ensure that councils and the Office of Local Government can take prompt and practical action against councillors who engage in misconduct so that the public can have confidence in the people they elect to represent them. The rigid regulatory regime under the Local Government Act and the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW sets rigorous standards of behaviour for councillors across the State's 128 councils to help ensure the ethical, accountable and transparent operation of local government.

The measures include requiring councillors who have a pecuniary interest or a significant non-pecuniary interest to disclose that interest and withdraw themselves from matters under consideration at a council or committee meeting. I hark back to the example that the member for Heffron gave about the member of the Catholic parish who was close to the priest and was involved in that particular church. There was a pedestrian safety issue outside the church. It is pretty clear that there is neither a pecuniary nor a significant non-pecuniary interest when you are dealing with a traffic or pedestrian safety matter outside of church premises. It would be sufficient for that councillor to declare their interest, tell the electors that they attend that Catholic parish and then deal with the matter in the normal course of events because it is not related in a significant sense to the financial benefit of anybody in particular. The code can deal with that kind of conflict. It is not impossible to find a way that is proper, appropriate and prudent.

The Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment or their delegate can also apply to the Supreme Court for an order against a councillor to repay the council the amount of the financial benefit received due to breaching their obligation not to participate in matters in which they have a pecuniary interest. That is the sort of example we are really interested in. We have put in place the measures to recoup that and to take action against the councillor who fails to do the right thing in that context. That is in addition to explicitly banning councillors from misusing their appointments to civic office to obtain a personal benefit for themselves or others improperly. Penalties for doing so can automatically disqualify a person from holding civic office in any council for five years.

Those measures send a clear message that the Government has zero tolerance for councillors who do not live up to the high standards of behaviour that residents expect from their elected representatives or who play petty politics over serving the local community. It is clear that the Government has moved to establish the regulatory framework for dealing with conflicts of interest and the earlier step of separating the roles of creating the planning policies and assessing the applications in large metropolitan areas to further reduce the risk of corruption occurring in the first place. The Government has taken these significant measures to ensure that the community can have confidence in the people whom they elect.

The Government opposes the bill and asks the Opposition to consider carefully the unintended consequences the bill will have for the democratic process. The Opposition's bill searches for a solution to an issue that does not exist and, in doing so, turns a blind eye to the free choice of electors to pick their representatives and the rights of candidates to stand for election. Local communities rightly expect that the representation they receive through their elected councils will observe good governance in local decision-making. It is easy to see that the Government is committed to ensuring that councils and the Office of Local Government are well equipped to take swift and decisive action against councillors who fail to match up to the high standards of conduct expected

of them. This bill will damage the democratic process. It is a populist attempt to gain partisan advantage, relying on a lack of awareness about recent legislative changes to the roles and responsibilities of councillors. It should not be supported.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:20):** What a remarkable turn of events this is. I wish that members opposite had been here 10 years ago, when the Government said that Clover Moore, by virtue of her job, was not allowed to sit in this place and kicked her out.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** That's one of my mayors.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** Yes, and they kicked her out. Now we have Liberal and Nationals members standing up in this place and saying, "We have seen the light. We couldn't possibly make a decision about what a class of people does. We couldn't possibly do that." Ten years ago, we were in this place fighting the Government on that issue. I sat next to the lord mayor for many years in this House. The Government did not want her here. So what did it do? It said, "Well, she is the lord mayor and she is the local member. Why don't we kick her out?"

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** They never thought she would stay as mayor.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** That is it. The Government said, "Why don't we kick her out? We have done everything we possibly can to win." Even Labor tried to gerrymander the boundaries. Everyone tried to get Clover out. Everyone tried but could not do it. So I do not take seriously this theatre of Government members saying, "Well, we don't want to make sure that a certain class of person can't nominate. It is affecting our democratic rights," and so on. We had a situation where a sitting MP was also democratically elected as a mayor. There was no barrier to her being elected; it was totally legitimate. She was elected lord mayor of the council and elected as an MP, and the Government said, "We don't want her", and introduced a bill to kick her out of Parliament.

Now Government members stand in the Chamber, wringing their hands, saying "We couldn't possibly have a class of people excluded." Not only did they exclude a class of people; they expelled someone from the Parliament. It was unbelievable. Everyone seems to have forgotten that now. If that is such a valid and critical principle, then it should have been imposed and enforced at that time. Of course, that did not happen because it was not politically expedient to do so and the Government wanted to find a way to attack the Independents. For all the criticisms the Government has made of the lord mayor, that council is run as a very tight ship. It is run very well and contains a real depth of experience and knowledge.

My electorate covers both the City of Sydney and the inner west, and they are like chalk and cheese. The City of Sydney has a very persuasive and thoroughly professional town planning and strategic planning area that we, as State members of Parliament, can call on. As I said this morning, the City of Sydney has done a lot of work on the design of the Blackwattle Bay project. It is something that Infrastructure NSW could and should learn from. It should collaborate with the council to develop the same capacity but in a way that is less oppressive, so that parks are not overshadowed and there is adequate public open space. The City of Sydney's people are experts at that.

I do not want to digress, but I highlight that we are in an important but tricky and delicate philosophical space. Who decides who sits in this place? What are the criteria for electing people? How far do our democratic rights and responsibilities extend? It is a real challenge. I spent 12 years in local government and saw the best and the worst of local councils throughout that period. This bill is not the most precise attempt and may have certain clumsy elements, but it sends a powerful message. Local government, as we know from the most recent inquiry of the parliamentary Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, is the most complained about level of government. There is an issue with local government. The chief commissioner said there is something in local government. Of course, some complaints are vexatious but some are real and legitimate. We are seeing now the fruits of the work of the ICAC when it comes to the former Labor mayor of Canada Bay, who is being investigated by the ICAC.

We know that a range of different councils have lots of issues with developers. At Lake Macquarie, at Burwood and at Strathfield the issues of development, how councils are run and whether people are property developers have been raised. Many tend to be directors and shareholders and own multiple companies. There is a whole range of issues the average citizen would be quite alarmed about. The political donations issue has been resolved in a positive way, and particular classes of developers are excluded. The ICAC, which supported their exclusion, and the court that determined that that was within the bounds of the Constitution have clearly identified the risk around conflict of interest and the nature of the relationship between developers and State Government, which is exclusive in so many ways.

We heard one member say, "Well, councillors don't determine DAs anymore." That is right. Appointed industry people now approve DAs or become the consent authority—to use the precise term. They now have delegated consent. But there are issues also with both of those bodies. They are not accountable to anybody. They

are not elected by the people. They do not reflect the views of the community. They reflect the views of the council at that particular moment and of the State Government. There are issues with those organisations. I note that the Minister is in the Chamber, and I thank her for being so diligent and engaged with this issue.

The lack of openness is important. When I was a councillor there were site inspections. You went to a site and people turned up and talked to you. That is when we were the consent authority. We would have a council meeting where different views were debated openly, and you would put up your hand and vote in public. None of that happens on these panels; everything is done in secret. I sat on a joint regional planning panel, which was their forerunner. You would have a big debate internally and sometimes people would be convinced. There was back and forth on the issues, but nothing was public. We would benefit from those panels being more open. The Manager of Opposition Business said that we need to look at how the panels operate because there is not a lot of confidence in them. The Sydney metro panels need more openness and accountability.

Then you have the State panels. Carl Scully—bless him—heads up our local panel. I have been part of it and there is open discussion and debate—at least on that panel. But local panels need openness and more debate. My sense is that we can do better than discussing things behind closed doors. What is wrong with people in the meeting putting forward their position and arguing, "Well, I don't support that. I support this for this reason"? Then we can see how the sausage is made. There is nothing wrong with that. It would promote more openness. Otherwise people hide behind a closed door and are not required to state their positions. A decision just comes out the other end.

This bill has some merit. We recognise that important issues need to be addressed when it comes to developers because the influence has shifted from the individual DA to the zoning. It is all about getting rezonings because that is where the rent seekers really come—"If we just flip a decision, we get a rezoning." In the Australian Capital Territory—I know it is a different arrangement—75 per cent of value uplift is taken by the Government, which then spends it on schools, hospitals and roads. What do we do here? We have a piecemeal approach. There is no legitimate value uplift sharing. The Victoria Government has introduced value-sharing mechanisms. But in New South Wales developers rule supreme. The developer and property owner capture every single cent of that value uplift. It is a remarkable state of affairs when people own a building worth \$5 million and the next week it is worth \$120 million, and the landholder developer walks away with all the money. If they are in the Australian Capital Territory, 75 per cent of the uplift is taken by the State. In Victoria, the uplift is taken by the State. We need to address developer influence in New South Wales. It is absolutely critical.

I notice that the Labor Party has rules around developers in their system, including rule N.9 (i). That has been a big issue. Even though Mayor Faker at Burwood Council has declared working for a property investment company and receiving rent from about a dozen investment properties in Croydon Park, he says he is eligible and is complying with the rule about not being a developer. The definition of a developer is critical as well. Lodging a few development applications is the threshold in many people's eyes. Someone can be a consultant, raking in all the money consulting and not be a developer, but they can still be a mayor or councillor. Those things need to be clear and transparent. That is why processes about transparency and openness for councils need to be improved. We think there may be some issues with the bill, but we support the intent of it. The Greens will support the bill.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:30):** I make a contribution to debate on the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020 and speak in opposition of it. I note the contribution of the member for Balmain and I will dwell on two aspects of it. Firstly, I draw upon the specific case of the Sydney Lord Mayor. I want to allude to a specific case as well, as I speak to the bill. Secondly, and I think the member for Balmain put it well, is looking at how we approach the issue of conflict of interest. The intent of the bill, as the member for Heffron said, is looking at conflict of interest, but it is looking to address it through the blanket ban of certain professions. The object of this bill is to disqualify real estate agents and property developers from holding a civic office. I have been giving consideration to this over several weeks.

The bill was before the House at its last sitting. Around that time I attended a deb ball at Urana, which is a beautiful little country town in the Riverina. That deb ball highlighted the sense of community in that township because the whole community was there with those young people. For me, that highlighted my sense that Urana is a great town. Actually, I will correct that. Urana is great community of people. It was around that time that my thoughts went to Denis Smith. I know Denis is a deeply valued member of the Urana community. I am aware of his situation. He has spent a significant time serving the community of Urana on Urana Shire Council. Denis is listed on Local Government NSW's Outstanding Service Award Honour Roll for 20-plus years of service to his community. So that got me thinking. I reached out to Pat Bourke, who is the current Mayor of Federation Council. I said to Pat, "Denis is a stock and station agent. Is he impacted?" Pat said, "Tell me about this bill. What are they doing?" I said, "They are looking to disqualify real estate agents. Denis would be affected by that, wouldn't he?" He said, "Yes, Denis is a real estate agent."

When you drive into Urana, you drive past the J. M. Smith Flora and Fauna Reserve. That alludes to James Smith who in 1935 set up J. M. Smith & Co. He was a stock and station agent in Urana. Denis, being the son of James, took on the business as a stock and station agent and a real estate agent—the lifeblood of a country town. He served that community for 20-plus years on Urana Shire Council. Pat told me about this and then said, "Don't forget James." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "He served 40-odd years on council. In fact, he was President of Australian Shires and President of New South Wales Shires, and he was a real estate agent." I said, "I didn't realise that." Pat said, "Yes, but Denis is my uncle." Pat does not work at J. M. Smith & Co but he has his own agribusiness. He said, "Justin, two years ago I got my real estate licence. Are they wanting to get rid of me?" So you have three generations of civic service. It was written up in the local paper in an article in 2017:

Three generations in the lives of new Federation Council Mayor Pat Bourke and his mother Anne Bourke (nee Smith) have played significant roles in Local Government. Pat was the last mayor of Urana Shire Council before it amalgamated with Corowa Shire Council ... to become Federation Council.

Speaking as a local in that country—it is my home country—people like the Bourkes and Smiths are genuine dedicated people. We will not see better people on the face of the earth. Urana is a great community. We have the Mallon and Dore families, and people like Kevin Martin at the local footy club. Standing in the midst of them is the Smith family and the Bourke family of J. M. Smith & Co. We have three generations of real estate agents and stock and station agents. You know what? The Opposition does not want those sorts of people to serve. They would just wipe them off. This is the issue, and it comes back to what the member for Balmain said. How do we approach conflict of interest? Do we just blanket ban a profession?

Pat has passion in his heart, and he said to me, "Justin, are they trying to vilify my profession?" That is what he and his family have been doing for generations. He is pretty proud to be a real estate agent because that is what his uncle does and what his grandfather did. That is the issue. How do we respond to conflict of interest? We all know that we need to respond to it, but do we do it by a blanket ban of professions, including those professions that can be the lifeblood of towns in the bush? What is the alternative approach? That is the point the Government is making. We already have strict rules in place under the Model Code of Conduct for local councils in New South Wales to ensure that we address conflicts of interest. The Model Code of Conduct identifies the different types of conflicts of interest as being pecuniary and non-pecuniary, and its simple but effective rules address them.

If a councillor, their relative, employer or business partner, or a company they hold shares in, stands to gain or lose financially from a decision that the council has been asked to make, they will have a pecuniary interest in the matter. They must disclose their interest, remove themselves from the meeting and take no part in discussion, debate or decision-making on the matter they have an interest in. Non-pecuniary conflicts of interest relate to other types of interests that councillors may have that are not pecuniary in nature. A councillor will have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter being considered by a council where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that the councillor could be influenced by a personal interest they have in the matter they are making a decision on. It is akin to the pub test. Where the interest arises from a close relationship the councillor has with another person, like a business relationship or a personal friendship, or a close affiliation with an organisation, then the councillor will need to manage that conflict of interest in the same way they would a pecuniary interest. They must disclose their interest, remove themselves from the meeting and take no part in any discussion, debate or decision-making on the matter they have the personal interest in. [*Extension of time*]

Councillors will also be in breach of their obligations under the model code of conduct where they try to misuse their position or try to improperly influence another decision-maker in the council to obtain a personal benefit for themselves or on behalf of a third party. What are the consequences for councillors who do not comply with these requirements? They can potentially be suspended from the council for up to six months or lose the payment of their fee for up to six months. In serious cases, they may even be banned from being a councillor for up to five years. If councillors are found to repeatedly breach their obligations and are suspended on three or more occasions, they will be automatically disqualified for five years. If a councillor is found to have financially benefited from their breach, they can be forced to hand over that benefit to the council to ensure that they do not profit from their bad behaviour.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to the bill. Like the member for Balmain, I have drawn upon specific case examples. Conflict of interest is something that should concern all of us as members of this Parliament, but introducing a blanket ban on certain professions that would disqualify from office people like James Smith, Denis Smith and Pat Bourke—who combined have given over 100 years of civic service to their community—and that would rule out professions which in small bush communities are often the lifeblood of those communities, is not the right approach. That is why I oppose the bill.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:41):** The Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020 would see all property developers and real estate agents disqualified from acting as

councillors or mayors in local government. It is important that this Parliament continually investigates ways to reduce opportunities for corruption at all levels of government. When people stand to gain massive windfalls from government decisions, their participation and influence in those decisions requires regulation and oversight. I understand why the Opposition has brought the bill to the House. The development industry creates significant risks around local government decisions, particularly around zoning, which can see property developers significantly profit at the expense of public benefit. But I am concerned that the step taken in the bill to ban every single property developer and every single real estate agent from ever representing their communities at the local government level goes too far.

Healthy democracies encourage large pools of people to run for office. They do not legislate blanket exclusions based on broad definitions of industry and profession—as the member for Albury very eloquently put forward with examples from his community. I support bans on developer donations, requirements for candidates to publicly declare their profession and conflicts prior to going to the polls, and exclusion of anyone with a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest from participating in decisions that could see them personally profit. If existing laws are inadequate, it would be more appropriate to further tighten the rules around how property developers and real estate agents engage in local government processes as councillors and mayors, and as lobbyists. Therefore I do not support the bill but I thank the member for Campbelltown for bringing this important issue to the House for discussion.

The member for Balmain stole my thunder by giving the example that I was wanting to give. I listened, with a great sense of irony, to Government members argue that legislating the removal of elected officials based on their profession is undemocratic. It was 10 years ago that this same Government used its majority in this House to legislate the removal of a democratically elected Independent sitting member on the farcical claim that having two jobs somehow creates a conflict of interest. That sitting member was, of course, Clover Moore. She did not stand to benefit personally from her decisions at either government level, she always had the support of her community and she was democratically elected in both roles. She even donated her mayoral salary to the Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP Salary Trust to support charities within the City of Sydney local government area.

Under her leadership, the City of Sydney council has an enviable record of open, transparent, visionary, consultative and corruption-free government. As Clover always says, the attempt to get rid of her ended up with me getting here instead. There are now effectively two of us and I am proud to continue to represent Sydney in this place. I think it would be setting a dangerous precedent to introduce a blanket ban on people in certain professions being elected to any level of government, so I oppose the bill. However, I find the hypocrisy from some of the speakers for the Government quite breathtaking.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:45):** I speak against the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020. I will never stand in this place and pretend that there are not people, from either side of politics, who have done anything but the right thing in their time in civic office—whether that be at local, State or federal government level. There have been unscrupulous people elected at all levels of government, from all political parties, from all backgrounds and, sadly, that is a fact. History will show that. It has happened within the Liberal Party—we have had our faults, as have several other parties. But as I have previously stated in this place, if someone comes to this House with any intention other than to serve in the best interest of their community—and I put emphasis on their community, not themselves—then they have come to the wrong place. That applies to every level of government—to every place of representation, every local government area, every State Parliament and to the Federal Parliament. That has always been my belief.

I fully intended to raise the bar in terms of political representation when I entered civic office. I never intended to become a politician nor wanted to be referred to as one—I consider myself to be a representative of my community. That is what I was at the local government level when I was elected as an Independent in 2004 to the Baulkham Hills Shire Council, as it was known then—now The Hills Shire Council—and when I was proudly elected to the New South Wales Parliament in 2007. I have always lived by those particular principles. I believe that everybody in civic office should and that anyone who does the wrong thing deserves what is coming to them. I stand by that and I will always stand by that.

That is a message for every person who puts their hand up to run for elected duties; they need to have those principles intact. If they are here to do anything on behalf of themselves, their families, their businesses, their friends et cetera, then they have come to the wrong place. Ultimately, as members know, they will be flushed out. From time to time—and usually on a weekly basis—there are discussions in this Parliament about how investigative bodies in this State could do a better job of weeding out and flushing out people in representative office who are doing the wrong thing. If people look at media coverage over the past 20 or so years since ICAC was established, they may perceive that ICAC is only responsible for the oversight of politicians.

Ultimately, ICAC's role is to ensure corruption is stamped out across the public service. There are over 300,000 public servants who are employed by the New South Wales Government. It is the largest employer in

New South Wales. Sadly we as representatives of the State Parliament get notified from time to time by ICAC of the various investigations that are undertaken in the public sector. Some of the actions that are undertaken by public servants are reprehensible and abhorrent. Should that tag every public servant as being bad? No, it certainly should not, as it should not tag all representatives of parliaments or councils, because they are a small minority of people. We need to do whatever we can to ensure the integrity of our representatives and public servants.

I believe ICAC has done a good job in that regard. However, I have some concerns with how it diminishes careers through the publication of the names of people who are ultimately found not to be corrupt. Should those people have been investigated? I have no problem with that whatsoever. ICAC should investigate anybody it believes should be investigated but I believe the publication of names of people in public roles sometimes destroys careers, as we have seen in recent times with various Premiers from this side of the House. I believe those actions should take place in camera, behind closed doors, and that ultimately when decisions are made by ICAC then it should be made public and if people need to be punished they should be punished appropriately. That is the only fault I find with our integrity commissions. I believe we have some of the best. Can things be improved? Everything can always be improved, but ultimately the responsibility is up to those people who are elected to public office to do the right thing.

I do not support the bill for the various reasons raised by other contributors to debate. Good people have fallen into the categories that the bill seeks to address. They have appropriately served in public office, some for many, many years. As the member for Albury pointed out, to think that those people could not be elected to councils in the future is just wrong. Regardless of people's backgrounds, to say that people would not serve in the right and most appropriate way because they were a developer or a real estate agent is a slur on those people. Developers, like politicians, will get a bad rap.

Are there unscrupulous developers? Absolutely there are, in exactly the same way as there have been unscrupulous politicians. It is like saying there are no unscrupulous lawyers, teachers or religious leaders. That would be completely and utterly false, because there are. There will always be that small element of people, regardless of where they are, who will do the wrong thing. That is why we all need to be responsible for our actions. If they are attempting to represent people or undertake duties, in whatever capacity, they need to be doing so for the right reasons. That is primarily the reason I oppose this amendment. However, I can see that it is brought with the best intentions. Ultimately, it is a very blunt and savage approach to take on behalf of people from various backgrounds.

A lot has been said throughout the debate about democracy, about the choice that people have to make. People make choices on behalf of us as representatives, and on behalf of candidates for councils. A lot has been said about people's right to stand up and run for office, and they can. People can join political parties, put their hand up and stand for office. It is on that basis that I make a few comments about my council area. My council area is held in the highest regard. I proudly served on The Hills Shire Council for 4½ years. It has a long record of outstanding delivery of local services on behalf of the community, such as delivering playing fields and appropriate housing.

It is a council that provides many of the homes, if not the largest number of homes, within the north-west sector. It has done that by working through and sometimes arguing with various planning departments and governments to ensure that we get the most appropriate quality of housing and build great places for communities to live. I underline that. That is the importance in any development. I proudly have a background and a master's degree in development and planning processes, and urban development. I pride myself on the fact that my mentors were very much those people from the local government area of The Hills. [*Extension of time*]

It is for all those reasons that I continually praise the efforts of the people of The Hills Shire Council, from the general manager through to the elected body. It was with some regret—and I have raised this ever so slightly in previous debates in the House—unfortunately, to see my own party, the Liberal Party, overlook good people who had been elected to the previous council in The Hills shire and endorse a completely new group of people. Dr Michelle Byrne had one of the largest representative votes in the history of New South Wales. She is an impeccable person and a wonderful mayor. She served for two terms as mayor and three council terms. She was completely and utterly overlooked by our party and other people were endorsed over the top of her, together with councillors such as Brooke Collins, Sam Uno, Jacob Jackson, Mike Thomas, Liz Russo and Alan Haselden. Those people were completely discarded by our party.

When I say that people have a personal responsibility to do the right thing, political parties have a responsibility to ensure that they are electing appropriate people to serve in those roles as councillors, State members or Federal members. They also have a responsibility to do what is right, just and fair and allow appropriate preselections to take place when that opportunity arises so that good people, like the six people I have just mentioned and a popularly elected mayor in Dr Michelle Byrne, are not overlooked in the future. That is



something that has appalled me. There is not too much that I have been upset with about my party—there are probably a few things one could be upset with about my party—but that is certainly one thing.

When we talk about democracy, it applies to political parties as well. Democracy should apply to every person. If you are a signed-up member of a political party—and I do not care which one it is—you have the right to attend meetings and to stand up and put your hand up for any position that may be available to attest and ultimately have the rightful opportunity to be an elected member through the process of preselection. In this case that has been disallowed for the people who were on The Hills Shire Council. I do not blame the new people who have been endorsed whatsoever, regardless of the fact that some of them are not local members of the area. They have sadly been pawns in this entire facade that has taken place. Sadly it has not been done in the name of democracy and it has not been done correctly, and it needs to be pointed out.

Coming back to the bill, I oppose it for all the reasons that have been pointed out. I understand the genuine intent of the member who has brought the bill to the House to try to apply better standards to local councils. As I have said before, we need to have personal responsibility, good integrity and investigative bodies, and I believe we do. We will always look to improve those standards. I do not think this is a proactive move, therefore I oppose the bill.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** I move:

That the question be now put.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36  
Noes .....45  
Majority.....9

#### AYES

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

#### NOES

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

## PAIRS

Daley, M  
Li, J  
Minns, C  
Watson, A

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

**Motion negatived.**

*Motions***ANZAC COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM**

**Debate resumed from 31 March 2022.**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:08):** In World War I, Australia was one of the few nations worldwide that did not introduce conscription to send forces to fight. Newfoundland, which was not yet part of Canada, was another. The Government attempted to introduce conscription and put the issue to the public in two referendums, which were both defeated and which bitterly divided the public. But even without the Government introducing a mandatory call-up, certain social pressures made it hard for men to refuse to serve. Many men who did not volunteer were dubbed cowards, even if they had a legitimate reason not to volunteer. We hear stories of families losing two, three and even four brothers during the war. In some cases, in response to recruitment drives for sportspeople, members of a local footy or cricket team all signed up together only to see the heart ripped out of their team and their community in battle.

In Gilgandra 25 men—later known as the "Coo-ee Marchers"—responded to a poster titled "Call from the Dardanelles" in which a soldier beckons "Coo-ee - Won't YOU come?" and marched to Sydney to enlist. By the time they reached Sydney their number had grown to 263. Of those 263 men, 41 did not return. Four of those who joined the march in Gilgandra died. Inspired by the example of the Coo-ee Marchers, many more would enlist and dozens more would also die. While they may not seem like large numbers, compared with the tens of thousands from cities who enlisted and the thousands who died, it was a huge chunk of the community in a country town.

In World War II it was a similar story. Many country towns sent off sons and husbands, and daughters to see them off. Most who served were volunteers, but they were bolstered by a force of conscripts from the Citizen Military Forces, or CMF. Australians also sent troops to conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait and Afghanistan, among others. Those who fought or were part of peacekeeping operations made many sacrifices. They gave their time and effort, and they left their homes and their loved ones. Many missed out on what should have been the best years of their youth. In World War I alone, over 60,000 gave their lives. As I said, many came back different people, with physical and mental wounds that would affect them for the rest of their lives.

Can we ever do enough for our veterans? We owe it to them to remind people of what they did and how it affected them, both on the battlefield and when they returned home. We owe it to them to educate others about their sacrifices. Funding for memorials certainly helps. Some of the projects that have been funded, like the Baradine Spirit of Anzac Garden of Remembrance, are places where we can reflect and be reminded of everything that our service people have given. Also in Baradine, a small garden of remembrance in front of the Country Women's Association of NSW hall specifically reminds us of the sacrifices made by women. In Narrabri the project Respect Their Service Too will inform people about the men who were taken away from their civilian jobs to fight in Vietnam. Those are all worthy projects that go some way to repaying the sacrifices made by our service people, but can we ever really do enough? We can always do more.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (13:11):** I acknowledge those in my electorate who received grants under the New South Wales Government initiative to honour our veterans. The Anzac Community Grants Program is of great importance because it shines a light on one of the most significant dates in our calendar—Anzac Day. Recently we held ceremonies on Anzac Day. It is necessary to drive home how much 25 April means to all Australian communities, but particularly to our veterans. The 2021 grants program was open to individuals and not-for-profit organisations, including local government authorities, ex-service organisations, non-government organisations and educational institutions. It was hoped that by funding projects that honoured our veterans, Anzac Day would be commemorated in a way that was tailored to each community. In that way, the grants will uplift those communities and promote understanding of our veterans' past and ongoing contributions.

I am pleased to know that three projects in the Hawkesbury electorate received funding under the 2021 grants program. The Glenorie RSL Sub-Branch received \$750 for its Anzac Day dawn service. I was honoured with an invitation to speak and was very pleased to make a contribution in that way. The grant funding will provide

a safe venue with a proper audio system for those who attend the service, which seeks to honour the memories and the services of the community members who fought and died for our freedom. They are our local heroes.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR CAMDEN**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the member for Camden all the best for his upcoming birthday this weekend, and I hope he has a wonderful celebration planned.

*Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to the guests of the member for Lake Macquarie who are watching question time from the Cooper gallery. They are student leaders from Heritage College Lake Macquarie, and I had the chance to meet them earlier today. I welcome Rye Galbraith, Abbie McIlwhan, Ava Flint, Ruby Cowan, Gideon Ryan and head of primary Tom Russell.

I also welcome to the Cooper gallery the guests of the member for East Hills, who are school captains and vice-captains from East Hills Girls Technology High School and Georges River Grammar: Nora Pham, Rianna Libby, Ethan Foss, Alyssa Bullock, Blake Horsnell and Chloe Chea. Your names are all recorded in *Hansard*.

*Announcements*

#### **AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**The SPEAKER:** This morning we held a morning tea fundraiser for the Cancer Council. I thank all those who supported that fundraiser, which has raised \$1,500 and counting. For anybody who wanted to make a donation, the channels are still open. I appreciate all the members and parliamentary staff who supported the morning tea. The link for online donations is still available on our parliamentary Facebook page, and anyone who is watching online should feel free to make a donation to the Cancer Council.

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

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

*Members*

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

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

*Question Time*

#### **RAIL WORKER SAFETY**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:18):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Media reports indicate that the Minister has made significant progress in relation to safety concerns for the intercity fleet raised by rail employees, yet moments ago the Minister for Finance cancelled all talks. The Minister for Transport was not at that announcement. Why did the talks close?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans) (14:18):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for finally taking an interest in industrial relations, given the way he despises the union movement in this State and has treated them with contempt since his inaugural speech. As members of the House would be well aware, the rail negotiations have been going on for six weeks and we are very close to agreement on most matters. But I will certainly not be providing a running commentary to the Leader of the Opposition about how those negotiations are going, simply because I know that the Leader of the Opposition has been front and centre in every industrial action and industrial dispute that we have seen in this State. I know the Leader of the Opposition will rely on donations from Mark Morey and the union movement, and of course he has to—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Minister has been asked a specific question about a current industrial dispute, not about some historical analysis that he wants to give about an irrelevancy.

**The SPEAKER:** We are just over a minute into the answer. The Minister will answer the question more directly.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** To the point of order: It goes to intent and motivation.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** Those negotiations are continuing. Whenever governments and unions come together to have negotiations there will always be disputes and disagreements over what the outcomes could be. If the Leader of the Opposition had learned industrial relations when he was at Princeton, he might have been able to understand that negotiations require two parties with differing opinions to come together. I can certainly say that there has been good faith in those negotiations. The cost to the New South Wales taxpayer has to be first and foremost when it comes to making sure that we get industrial harmony in this State, and that is what will occur. I will continue to work with the unions to make sure that the welfare of their members and of the Transport for NSW workforce continues to be front of mind.

When I became the Minister for Transport at the end of last year, I said I would not be entertaining any unreasonable negotiations. I am quite comfortable that most of the negotiations have been reasonable up until now, which is why we have gone from a log of claims in the hundreds to literally under 20 or 30. But I also appeal to the union movement not to listen to its masters in the Labor Party. They will not do the commuters of New South Wales any favours by using their industrial disharmony for political purposes.

#### NEW INTERCITY FLEET

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (14:21):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Coalition Government is delivering a world-class railway fleet and any threats to its delivery?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The last part of that question is out of order. The member is using different words to infringe against a ruling that you gave, Mr Speaker, about the words, "Are there any other alternative policies?" It is another way to ask the same question to try to make relevant matters that are not directly relevant to the question. You gave a detailed and considered ruling about using the words, "Are there any other alternative policies?" because the answer will infringe against Standing Order 130 and will involve debate in answering the question. I ask that the last part of that question be ruled out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I will take the point of order on notice and reserve my ruling on it. While there are additional words and it might arguably be seen as two questions, I observe that it is more specific than "any related matters". I am torn and would like to think about the matter further. In the meantime, I will allow the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:23):** The greatest threat to the New South Wales travelling public getting access to the latest trains is the Leader of the Opposition. He is taking orders from his union bosses to stop the travelling public getting access to the latest train technology available on the network.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 130. This is precisely the basis of my earlier point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I have indicated my position. The Treasurer may continue. The member for Heffron will resume his seat.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** This Government has delivered a world-class train fleet, the New Intercity Fleet. It is \$2 billion worth of new trains that are locked up in storage because of the Leader of the Opposition, who takes his marching orders from the bosses in the union movement. He is a wholly owned subsidiary of the union movement. When he has a chance to stand on the side of New South Wales commuters, he stands on the side of union bosses. That's right, union bosses pull his strings. Union bosses call the shots. That is what will happen if Chris Minns is put in charge of running this State. The New South Wales Government has delivered new trains into the network, and where are they sitting? They are sitting in mothballs because the Leader of the Opposition and his mates in the union movement will not let the travelling public access them. They are the latest trains, which would mean commuters on the Central Coast and the South Coast could travel to work or to the city comfortably and in style.

What does the member for The Entrance have to say about that? Does he stand with his community getting access to comfortable travel, or does he stand with the union bosses? He stands with the union bosses. What does

the member for Gosford have to say about her community getting access to those safe, new trains to travel to work in style? Does she stand with her community, or does she stand with the union bosses? She stands with the union bosses. What does the member for Keira say about that? Does he stand with his community getting access to the latest train technology, or does he stand on the side of union bosses? He stands with the union bosses. When the Labor Party has a chance to stand on the side of the public, what does it choose? It chooses to stand with the union bosses, just like it is standing with them to oversee the year of the strike. We know who is in charge of the Labor Party. It is not Chris Minns; it is the union bosses. That is what is happening in this State. Members opposite are depriving the travelling public of access to the latest trains.

**Mr Nathaniel Smith:** I seek further information.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Minister is not being directly relevant. He should not be granted an extension of time because his conduct is bringing the House into disrepute and encouraging disorder. He should not be granted more time unless he answers the question directly.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order: Although the Minister was being directly relevant, he was only 15 seconds into his answer before a frivolous point of order was taken, which wasted at least half a minute of his allocated time. He has been directly relevant to the question and he ought to be granted an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time. I will take a moment to consider my ruling, because it will set a precedent. I have already indicated my position on the first point of order regarding direct relevance. The Minister was being directly relevant to the question. I reserve my position in terms of setting a precedent regarding the nature of the question. I have not indicated a position on that; I will do so in due course. My reading of Standing Order 131 is that granting an extra two minutes is at the discretion of the Speaker. I will exercise my discretion to decline an extension of time on the basis that the nature of the contribution on both sides—

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** On both sides?

**The SPEAKER:** On both sides. It was not conducive to the type of behaviour that is ideal for schoolchildren to observe. It is legitimate for parliamentary debate to be rigorous, vigorous and, to some extent, combative. But I will not encourage through extensions of time the kind of behaviour that schoolchildren have just witnessed members engaging in. That is my ruling. I am happy to hear from the Leader of the House on a point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: I am not seeking to flout your ruling. I point out, however, that when an important matter of public policy is raised—and we are talking about billions of dollars of taxpayers' money not able to be put to public use—

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is unfortunate if the behaviour of Opposition members deprives the Government of the opportunity to raise matters in question time. That behaviour ought not to be rewarded.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I do not invite any further comment. I am making a ruling and setting a precedent in terms of extensions of time. The contribution from the Treasurer was in order and directly relevant.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** Then why is he sitting down?

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is not sitting down. I am exercising my discretion not to grant an extension of time. Given the nature of question time—and what it should be like, in my opinion, as opposed to other parliamentary debates—there can be more direct attacks. The whole three-minute answer was an attack, which is in order. But, on that basis, I do not grant the extension. That is my ruling.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** Point of order: To your ruling—

**The SPEAKER:** I have made my ruling.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** —under Standing Order 129—

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to hear about Standing Order 129.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** The Treasurer was entirely relevant in his response. Standing Order 129 does not relate to the behaviour of members of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** No, it does not.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** Under Standing Order 129, surely if the Treasurer is being relevant to the question that was asked and the member for Wollondilly has sought additional information—

**The SPEAKER:** It is at my general discretion. In exercising that discretion, I have decided not to grant an extension. I have made my ruling.

### RAIL WORKER SAFETY

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:33):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. This morning *The Daily Telegraph* reported that negotiations have whittled the union's demands down to 18 major claims, mostly related to worker safety. Minister Elliott said he was "comfortable the two parties were close to an agreement" and pledged to continue meeting with them every week post-agreement "just to make sure the finer details are all agreed upon". Moments ago the Treasurer labelled those discussions a threat to the travelling public. What has happened in the past few hours to make those talks collapse?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans) (14:33):** Good to see some things never change, and that is that the Opposition Leader still gets his questions out of the morning edition of *The Daily Telegraph*, which is reassuring because I am a big fan of News Limited. I think that we should accept the word of Ben English as gospel in this town. If we did, everybody would be a lot happier. As the Leader of the Opposition stated—because of course he reads that newspaper—the negotiations have gone very well. There were some 306 logs of claims, which required a lot of work. Most of those matters were dealt with and, indeed, we have got down to the final one or two issues that need to be addressed. I am asking, and am very keen to engage continuously with, the union and the Fair Work Commission on behalf of the Government to make sure that whatever outcome we get in these negotiations is fair to the taxpayer, is in the best interests of the commuters and, of course, reflects the compassionate and responsible attitude this Government takes towards public administration in this State.

The Labor Party has been out of government for a long time, which is why we have had so long a period of industrial harmony. I am thrilled at the record that this Government is able to boast about when it comes to industrial harmony. Of course, nobody respects the work of frontline workers more than I have done over the course of the past couple of years, not just in transport but in all those other emergency services. They all deserve a fair hearing. That is what the rail workers are getting: a fair hearing. There is always going to be a dispute when it comes to negotiations. The very nature of that fact is the reason why we have a Fair Work Commission and why we have a modern, democratic industrial system today.

I am not going to be taking lectures from Chris Minns about how to deal with unions. I have answered his question. I am not going to be taking lectures from an Ivy League graduate who has never done an honest day's work in his life. I am not going to take lessons from someone who has never appeared in the Industrial Relations Commission on behalf of workers or, indeed, on behalf of employers. I am certainly not going to take any lessons from someone who has never had responsibility for a financial portfolio and who has never created a single job in his time in the workforce. I am not going to be taking lessons on fairness from Chris Minns, a man who stabbed a woman in the back just to get a pay rise, and who in his own shadow ministry has got people who have never had a job in their lives. I will continue to work on behalf of the people of New South Wales to get this matter resolved. But I ain't going to be doing it with commentary from the Leader of the Opposition.

### EDUCATION SYSTEM

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (14:37):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is working with communities across New South Wales to secure a brighter future for our children?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:37):** I thank the member for South Coast for her question. She is somebody who knows all too well the importance of giving our kids the best start in life. Being a mother and grandmother herself, she knows that very well. I welcome the school students in the gallery today from Georges River Grammar—

*[Interruption from gallery]*

There they go. I also welcome the students from East Hills and Heritage College Lake Macquarie, Bunnells Bay. I know they are enjoying question time. I could see them smiling up there. They are learning a lot today on excursion to the Parliament. That is why I think the time of the Treasurer should have been extended, because I could see them nodding their heads at him. They know too well the importance of public transport, and they have learnt today the perils of giving in to union bosses. They have learnt today that Labor supports union bosses.

This is a great education from a very early age for our young students. I know that one day they will be great members of the Young Liberal Movement. We are happy to sign them up afterwards. It is never too early to join.

This morning I met with the education Minister and teachers from across our State who were part of a new advisory body from the public school system, the catholic school system and the independent school system to share ideas and experiences about what is going well and what can be done better in our schools. I thought it was a great opportunity for our teachers to share their experiences, not just with us but also with other teachers. I thought it was a very fruitful discussion. It came off the back of our meeting last week with principals from some of the leading schools in our State. This meeting did the same thing: It gave the Government advice in relation to how the school system could be operating better.

We learnt various things in terms of easing administrative burden and making sure that teachers do what they do best and that is focusing on teaching and giving our students—like the ones in the gallery today—the best educational outcomes and the best start in life. This comes off the back of some of the reforms that we are looking at in the education system. We have spoken about reforms in relation to our student-parent engagement unit. We have also been getting advice from parents, which has helped inform some of the changes and trials that we are running. [*Extension of time*]

We know that our before and after school care vouchers have made a real difference. These are \$500 vouchers to parents, helping them balance work and family life. Those vouchers are putting downward pressure on family budgets. We are also running trials on school hour flexibility in eight participating schools. That is incredibly important. We bring together unions, students and multicultural communities in discussions to help ensure that we provide the best opportunities for our teachers and particularly our students. One of the most pleasing aspects of all of this is what we are seeing in our schools over what has been a very difficult time. Many school students have lost many hours of face-to-face learning during the pandemic. That has been a challenge for our teachers, who have done an amazing job in ensuring that our schoolchildren have been able to learn from home in those difficult times.

It is great to see so many students back at school at the moment. In particular, when we opened our schools again it was difficult for many students to go through rapid antigen testing and for many parents to administer it. But while there was caution at the start, we are now seeing very high attendance rates in our schools right across our State. What a positive thing that is. I know that the member for Keira, a former PE teacher, would be very pleased with the attendance rates at our schools. I do not know what he would do if, in his PE classes, 80 per cent of the students did not come to class or if they missed 80 per cent of their classes. He would be very disappointed. He knows too well the importance of being on a committee and attending those committee meetings. It is just as important for our students to be back in the classroom. I thank our teachers, some of whom are in the gallery today, and I particularly thank our school students for the sacrifices that they have made and the great educational outcomes that they have had during the pandemic.

#### RAIL WORKER SAFETY

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:42):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. This morning the deputy secretary of his department told transport unions, "We intend to continue discussions to collaboratively develop an interim approach which satisfies our combined safety, customer, operational and financial responsibilities." Moments ago, the Treasurer labelled those talks a threat to the travelling public.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: Standing Order 128 (2) (a) of this House requires that statements of fact will only be allowed if they are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible—so they have to be strictly necessary to understanding the question—and if they can be authenticated. Neither is the statement quoted by the Leader of the Opposition necessary to understand the question, nor can it be authenticated. The question should be ruled out of order. We need to stop these long preambles. The Leader of the Opposition can ask the question; he does not need the long preamble.

**The SPEAKER:** Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to speak to the point of order?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** To the point of order: Mr Speaker, I am happy to substantiate the letter and I am happy to explain why it is necessary to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not need the letter substantiated at the moment, but I would like to see a copy of the question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It is not written down.

**Mr David Elliott:** I am happy to take the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The question has not been asked yet. But, on the basis that the Minister has indicated he is happy to take the question, I will allow the Leader of the Opposition to complete the question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The deputy secretary told union officials this morning, "We intend to continue discussions to collaboratively develop an interim approach which satisfies our combined safety, customer, operational and financial responsibilities." Moments ago the Treasurer labelled these talks a threat to the travelling public. Why was the Minister not at the media conference this morning announcing the collapse of these talks?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Further to the point of order: That is a statement of fact that is unnecessary to understand the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is a heightened level of emotion in the House today. Members will please calm down. I will rule on the point of order on the basis that the member for Ku-ring-gai is maintaining it, despite the Minister indicating that he is happy to answer the question. It would be useful if I had a copy of the question before me, but I would like to hear the final sentence at least. It is not necessary to repeat the whole question.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** He will. Don't worry.

**The SPEAKER:** No, he will not. I have told the Leader of the Opposition not to do so.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I cannot remember the entire question.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not want the entire question. I want to hear the last sentence.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Why was he not at the media conference moments ago announcing the cancelling of talks between the rail unions and his own department?

**The SPEAKER:** I will take that as the question. We will strike from the record the earlier statements.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, and Minister for Veterans) (14:47):** I am just a suburban dad trying to right a few wrongs. That is all I am. I did not go to Princeton. I went to school in western Sydney. I do not live in a seaside suburb. I live out in Kellyville. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I have been involved in union negotiations before and I have worked on shopfronts. So I am going to give him a little bit of advice. He has probably forgotten how government works.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** Government works through the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC], which is ably chaired by the Treasurer, who makes decisions on government spending. That is why the Treasurer makes these announcements. But I am fascinated because the Leader of the Opposition, with all of his education and all of his time on the public purse working for politicians, did not once work out that that is the way in which the system operates. Unfortunately, he has put himself forward as an alternative Premier. I do not think that the people of the New South Wales will embrace that next year. Once again I will say that I am quite happy to take advice on how to engage in union negotiations from anybody, except for the Leader of the Opposition, who has a record that you could write on the back end of a stamp when it comes to management and executive authority. This man spent the entire Carr years on a good salary, making decisions on behalf of people he would never communicate with. You may recall that in his maiden speech he did nothing but criticise the unions. That was again—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** This is relevant to the point.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The Minister has been nowhere near directly relevant to this point. I ask him to come back to the specific question asked or to sit down.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Minister to refer to the media conference.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I have told the Leader of the Opposition that the press conference this morning was attended by two members of the ERC because this matter relates to an ERC submission. I will not provide a running commentary on that. I will let the House know that, in my negotiations with the unions today, they highlighted that the Leader of the Opposition has never even met with them. All of a sudden he stands up today, trying to negotiate on behalf of the workers of this State, and he has not even bothered to meet with them. I highlight that the unions have said that this will be the year of the strike. Why will it be the year of the strike? Because he thinks that is how he will get elected into the premiership. He ain't going to be elected to the premiership. This is the year of the strike because that is what Sussex Street wants.



### NORTHERN RIVERS SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:50):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is investing in sport infrastructure and community participation to support families?

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:50):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He is a strong advocate for his community when it comes to sporting facilities. Recently the member was at Lowanna, releasing around \$90,000 to upgrade that local facility through the Regional Sport Facility Fund. The second stage of the Coffs Coast Regional Sports Hub has received funding as well. Probably most important when it comes to supporting local communities, particularly through sporting infrastructure, is supporting many of those local communities that have been damaged by floods across the State. Many people have lost their homes. Community businesses have been destroyed. Many organisations have been displaced from where they normally operate. I was in Lismore with the Minister for Flood Recovery to announce that we have released \$55 million to allow community sporting organisations to repair—

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

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I was in Lismore, with the Minister. I met the mayor of Lismore, whom I see in the gallery today, Steve Krieg. While he is here in front of everyone, I thank him so much for his leadership of that community. The humility with which he has undertaken this role in the most traumatic and stressful time has been a statement of class. He should be able to go back to his community with his head held high. He is meeting Ministers. I know that the local member for Lismore is a strong, passionate advocate.

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

**Mr STUART AYRES:** Minister Cooke has been doing a fantastic job. This \$55 million is available for registrations of interest for sporting clubs across the State, in all of the local government areas that have been impacted by floods. It will take time for some of these organisations to get back on the ground. I was able to tour around some facilities with the representatives from local government. The memorial pool has been severely damaged. I had the privilege of seeing the baseball facility when it was fully operational. Now the cages are completely destroyed, nets have been washed away and lighting poles have been taken out because all the electrical works need to be replaced. These all cost a significant amount of money to be replaced. We want our communities to grow back stronger, which is why it is so important that, while we are getting businesses back on their feet, getting communities back together and getting people back into their homes, we are also starting to think about that critical community infrastructure. When you do that, you allow those strong sporting clubs to get back on their feet and help their communities get back together.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for The Entrance to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Coogee to order for the second time. Before I take the next question, I will clarify something because the member for Hornsby approached me in the appropriate way. I said earlier, when I declined an extension of time, that the behaviour of members on both sides was disruptive and inappropriate. I also said that the member's answer and his conduct were appropriate and that he was being directly relevant to the question. My comments were not a reflection on him; they were a reflection on the disruption from both sides. I just wanted to make that clear because he had a concern that he expressed to me.

### TENANCY HABITATION REQUIREMENTS

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:54):** My question is directed to the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading, who has responsibility for renters in New South Wales. I am sure the Minister would agree that it is unacceptable for anyone to live in damp and mould-infested properties. Given this, will the Minister commit to adding to the fit for habitation requirements in the Residential Tenancies Act to include mould free and waterproofing as minimum standards for all rental properties in New South Wales?

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (14:55):** I thank the member for Newtown for her question and recognise her ongoing advocacy for tenants in this State. This Government is committed to helping everyone in this State who is a tenant, but particularly people who are tenants in the Northern Rivers area who have been impacted by the unprecedented flood events. I assure the member for Newtown that this Government will always strive to do the best it can for all people in this State, including tenants. That is why this Government delivered the biggest change to New South Wales tenancy legislation since 2010, with the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Review) Act in 2018 and the subsequent

regulations in 2019. We legislated a prescribed set of minimum standards of habitation for rental properties, which started on 23 March 2020. That includes structural soundness and ensuring that the roof, ceilings and windows do not allow water penetration.

The balance between the needs and rights of tenants and landlords will always be a delicate one. That is why the changes arising from the statutory review were made following extensive stakeholder consultation, and they have modernised residential tenancy laws to increase protection and certainty for tenants, whilst ensuring landlords can manage their properties. The Department of Customer Service implemented broad ranging communication and educational material on the changes to support the sector. On the issue of waterproofing and mould—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. For those who need a recap, my specific question was in the relation to inclusion of the requirements of mould free and waterproofing in the Residential Tenancies Act. I appreciate that the Minister was talking about the minimum standards that were introduced in the last statutory review, but my question was whether the Minister would commit to adding mould free and waterproofing to those minimum standards.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Minister to address that specific issue.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order—

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Under Standing Order 77, it is not permissible to anticipate a matter that is already the subject of a bill by the member. There is a bill by the member on this matter. My respectful submission is the Minister has been dealing with this matter most appropriately.

**The SPEAKER:** Given the Minister has only 30 seconds remaining to answer the question, I ask her to continue. Those sorts of points of order should be taken earlier in the proceedings.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS:** On the issue of waterproofing and mould, I acknowledge that mould is a commonly reported issue in rental properties. Mould can also be caused by structural issues, which is why the changes to the Residential Tenancies Act set out clear obligations for landlords on what the minimum requirements are for a property to be fit for habitation. They require that a property has adequate ventilation, plumbing and draining; cannot allow water penetration; and cannot have significant dampness in its floors, ceilings, walls or any other supporting structure. [*Extension of time*]

Coupled with the new prescribed minimum standards, the reforms that commenced in March 2020 include new compliance powers for Fair Trading to assist tenants to enforce landlords' obligations with respect to the condition of the premises. Fair Trading can investigate complaints from tenants that their landlord has failed to carry out the requested repairs to meet the obligations under the Act. If Fair Trading is satisfied that a breach has occurred, a landlord rectification order can be issued. The maximum penalty for a failure to comply with a landlord rectification order is \$2,200. This Government will continue to consider all matters before the House.

#### NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RECOVERY

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:59):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery. Will the Minister update the House on the clean-up effort underway across the Northern Rivers following the recent devastating floods?

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (15:00):** I thank the member for Clarence for his question and reiterate my comments earlier in the week about how wonderful it was to join him in Yamba last week and to recognise his advocacy on behalf of his communities during what has been a really difficult time. I also acknowledge in the gallery the Mayor of Lismore, Mr Steve Krieg, and General Manager Mr John Walker, and echo the words of the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade in relation to his leadership over the past 10 and a bit weeks. From my perspective, it has been an honour and privilege to work with him during this really difficult time. I also acknowledge the member for Lismore for her advocacy during this time and the member for Ballina, whom I have had the opportunity to spend some good time with this week. We will continue to move forward.

I will start by updating the House on the weather conditions in the Northern Rivers region as we speak. Unfortunately, there is some more widespread rain occurring across northern New South Wales and just over the border in south-east Queensland, which is in the grip of further flooding. The Bureau of Meteorology has advised that there remains a degree of uncertainty about the rainfall amount in the region. On that note, we are urging people to keep up to date with forecasts and warnings. In the past hour flood watches have been issued for many rivers across the Northern Rivers and Central West. At this stage, they are for minor flooding. I acknowledge that

the prospect of any additional rain is daunting for communities across New South Wales and I let communities know that we will stand with them through this time.

Despite this ongoing weather situation, the clean-up effort continues to plough on. Indeed, I inform the House that, as of today, the clean-up effort is near on completion. To date, 22,000 truckloads of waste have been taken away, which is over 100,000 tonnes worth. There have also been 940 cubic metres of debris removed from local waterways and beaches. By the middle of May the bulk waste will have been cleaned up from our temporary transfer waste facilities at Alstonville, Coraki and Lismore. The clean-up is an incredibly emotional process. It is not just waste we are removing; it is the flood-damaged personal possessions of many thousands and thousands of people. I acknowledge their grief and pain during this time and let them know that we will continue to stand by them over the weeks, months and years ahead.

#### **DISTANCE-BASED TOLLING**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:03):** My question is directed to the Minister for Western Sydney. Yesterday the Minister spoke strongly against distance-based tolling. Yet the Premier is on the record saying that distance-based tolling makes a lot of sense, and yesterday said that it was under active consideration. Is the Premier right and is the Government really considering a new distance-based toll?

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:03):** How are you going, Ed? Are you still counting numbers?

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** You should be worried about your seat, mate.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** We are on your team. We are on team Mount Druitt.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Mount Druitt to order for the first time. I call the member for Prospect to order for the second time. The Minister has the call.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I think we covered this off yesterday. It was the Labor Party that introduced distance-based tolling into New South Wales, right across the M7. The Government also made it very clear yesterday that it has no intention of bringing in distance-based tolling. The Minister for Cities has rejected the report that was released and said it has not been considered by the Government or by the Executive. The Premier made that point very clear and I backed up that position yesterday. Nothing has changed.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:05):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. With today's announcement of the investigation into the former City of Botany Bay Council, will the Minister update the House on the importance of high standards of leadership and good governance in local government?

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (15:05):** I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her question. The member knows all too well the importance of high standards of leadership and good governance in local government, having served over a decade on council, including as deputy mayor. So I thank her very much. On this side of the House, we know the local community is entitled to—and indeed deserves—the highest standards of leadership and good governance from its elected representatives. That is why the Government has taken a measured and considered approach to launch an investigation into the former City of Botany Bay Council regarding Mascot Towers. Yesterday I wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment, Michael Cassel, in his capacity as the departmental chief executive of the Office of Local Government, requesting that he conduct an investigation under section 430 of the Local Government Act 1993 into the work and activities of the former City of Botany Bay Council in relation to Mascot Towers.

I have requested that he investigate the conduct and performance of the council with respect to the issuing of the occupation certificate for Mascot Towers in July 2008. Furthermore, he will have the power to obtain and consider all relevant documentation, including the development application, the development consent, any other reports in support of the development application submitted to the council by the developer and original construction certificates issued by the council, including the occupation certification and all component certificates. I look forward to receiving the findings of the investigation and any recommendations, once completed. It is important to remember that these are not just people's homes; they are also their life savings. I am advised that occupancy and completion certificates have gone missing. This type of mismanagement erodes confidence in our councils. This investigation will shine a light on how this occurred so we can work to prevent it from ever happening again.

I note that the member for Heffron presided over the former City of Botany Bay Council as mayor for more than 30 years—a considerable term. This was a council that ultimately became the only council in New South Wales with single-member wards, which was designed to destroy the proportional representation that was intended for councils and to ensure the Labor Party maintained total control. In 2017, ICAC publicly released its report on the investigation into the former City of Botany Bay Council. The commission made findings of serious corrupt conduct— *[Extension of time]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Prospect to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Prospect left the Chamber at 15:10.]*

I am sick of members continuing to make comments when I am on my feet. I will take such behaviour seriously from now on. When I am on my feet members will remain silent. The Minister has the call.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I draw the House's attention to the ICAC report handed down in 2017 in regard to Operation Ricco. The commission made findings of serious corrupt conduct against former City of Botany Bay Council officers, spanning an 18-year period from 1997 to 2015—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Point of order: The Speaker has generously given the Minister an extension of time, but if she has allegations to make they should be dealt with by way of substantive motion. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Minister has allegations to make she should move a substantive motion. Bring it on!

**The SPEAKER:** I will listen intently to the answer to determine whether allegations have been made against a member. If that is where the Minister is going—a reflection of improper motives—I ask that she not do so. But I will hear further from the Minister. The Minister may continue. I am listening intently.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I do not intend for my comments to reflect on any member—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I am merely pointing out fact in regard to the report that was handed down by ICAC. If anyone wants to draw any sort of attention to the member for Heffron's period of—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Keira, but I have indicated my position. What is the point of order?

**Mr Ryan Park:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Minister is now referring to the member for Heffron. We on this side are happy to debate the matter but to do so by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira will resume his seat. There is no point of order. I am listening intently to the Minister.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: Both points of order taken by the Opposition—the one just taken by the member for Keira and the one before that—were statements in response to the answer. They were not raised under—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Mr Speaker, what is the point of order?

**The SPEAKER:** I am listening to the point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** There we go again. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 131 (9), which is the new standing order. Both points of order taken by the Opposition were making statements rather than drawing the Speaker's attention to the point of order that was being taken. It ought not to take place. The practice needs to be policed.

**The SPEAKER:** There was no point of order. I do not uphold that point of order. I ask the Minister to continue on the basis that I have indicated.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** It is those opposite who are making imputations, not me. I am only stating fact. As I said before, local communities deserve the highest leadership standards and good governance from their councils and councillors. There is no doubt about that. That is why the Government is also undertaking an independent review of the councillor misconduct framework in New South Wales. I am looking forward to receiving this review and seeing the recommendations that are made. The Government is committed to ensuring that councils across the State and the Office of Local Government are well equipped to take swift and decisive action against councillors who fail to match up to the high standards—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

That is why we are doing the review. We are trying to make those changes. If those opposite do not accept that— [Time expired.]

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:12):** My question is directed to the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading. Yesterday the Minister put out a media release congratulating herself on fixing her own mess for small skip bin operators. Today it was revealed that Jillian, who runs MCM Skip Bins, wrote to the Minister four times and was fobbed off four times. She was palmed off to another Minister, to her local member, to another Minister a second time—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** —and then had her final email, titled "PLEASE HELP", completely ignored. Why did the Minister leave small business operators in a state of extreme stress for months?

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear the point of order from the member for Ku-ring-gai.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Even as I raised the point of order, the member for Rockdale continued to speak. He knows what the point of order is.

**The SPEAKER:** What is the point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is taken under Standing Order 128. The member for Rockdale is making a statement and is in breach of Standing Order 131 (9).

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. I uphold the point of order. A number of statements have been made this week—some earlier in the week—and no points of order taken. There is a fine line between creating a context and making a statement. The member's question contained unnecessary detail and length. I will give the member for Rockdale the chance to ask his question at another time, unless he has a very succinct question that he wishes to ask now.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Why did the Minister ignore on numerous occasions all the small business operators who were crying out for help?

**The SPEAKER:** I will take that as a question.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:14):** I am really enjoying the confected outrage from the Opposition. The reality is that over the past few days this Government landed the right balance for all stakeholders in the State, and very importantly, small business. I am proud of the work of the Minister for Environment and Heritage, along with the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] and the Office of the Small Business Commissioner. We sat down together and made sure that we landed on the right balance for the skip bin operators. We have been in touch with a lot of operators. We have a press release from Tony Khoury. Perhaps the member for Rockdale is unfamiliar with who he is. In case other members in the Chamber are not familiar, Tony Khoury is the president of the Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association [WCRA]. He put out a media release yesterday, which stated, "Through our representations WCRA and our members were very fortunate to receive the support and assistance of the Minister for Small Business, the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for the Environment."

Clearly, industry recognises the work that members on this side of the House did to land on the right outcome. It is important that small business operators in the State who have been struggling for an extended period are now not being subjected to any further changes. They are happy with the outcome. The most important thing in this case is that we got the right outcome for small business operators in the State. Between the statutory regulators, being the EPA—and, remember, the EPA sits with the Minister for Environment and Heritage—the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, and my office, I am happy that the stakeholders—

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** —who are truly one of the core groups on the Government side of the House, got the right outcome.

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** The member for Rockdale should be saying thank you that the small business operators in the State have been cared for by this Government.

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

### **SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:16):** My question is addressed to the very hardworking Minister for the Environment and Heritage. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is investing in communities across New South Wales while also cleaning up the environment?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:17):** I thank the member for East Hills for her question and the recent visit to the Return and Earn facility, the second one opened at Padstow. Her community knows that the cleaner Georges River is an outcome of the Return and Earn that has been delivered there. Between the Return and Earn recycling scheme and our soon-to-commence ban on single-use ALDI plastic bags, we are leading the way in New South Wales. Each member in this place uses about 130 kilograms of plastic each year. Unfortunately, only 12 per cent of it is being recycled.

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Even more frightening is the fact that 130,000 tonnes of plastic finds its way into waterways and oceans every year. Thankfully, New South Wales is leading the country in reducing our reliance on plastic and reducing litter that is found in our communities.

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** More than 70 per cent of adults in New South Wales have used the Return and Earn scheme, benefiting the environment and their back pocket. The scheme reached a milestone with more than seven billion containers returned. That is \$700 million worth of refunds straight into the pockets of people in New South Wales and \$30 million to charities across New South Wales. Drink containers—once seen as trash, now seen as treasure—are providing a clean stream of in-demand recyclable material to industry. No matter where people are across New South Wales, they are making good use of Return and Earn. It is clear to all of us why we must break our evil habit with plastic. For example, an ALDI plastic bag full of cash takes about 20 years to break down—seemingly as long as it took for Labor to return the donation that was provided to them. That is why it is great news that our single-use plastic ban will come into effect in June, upsetting the ALDI bag cash donation business model that delivers for the Labor Party.

Members will recall that last November we passed the Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act. The legislation includes a ban on single-use plastics, which will help address the problem of plastic waste management. In addition to getting rid of lightweight plastic bags—which will royally stuff up the dodgy ALDI donation racket opposite—in November single-use plastics including cutlery, straws, plates, bowls, and cotton buds will all be banned.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea and the member for Hornsby will remain silent.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** By stopping the supply of problematic plastic in the first place, we are preventing it from entering our environment. This is nation-leading reform that will make a profound difference to our environment and the health of citizens across the State.

### **NORTHERN RIVERS SMALL BUSINESSES**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (15:20):** Before I ask the question, I acknowledge in the gallery Lismore City Council Mayor Steve Kreig, and General Manager John Walker. My question is directed to the Minister for Small Business. Almost two months ago, around the same time as the Minister's last visit to Lismore, she said, "We will be there to support small business throughout this State." Only 13 per cent of applications for flood support by small businesses have been paid. Many are going to the wall because the Minister is taking too long to process their claims. When will the Minister live up to her boast that she will support these mum-and-dad businesses, many of whom have lost everything?

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:21):** I thank the member for Lakemba for his question. I think for any member to dare talk about boasting supporting flood affected communities is looking at the issue completely in the wrong way.

**Mr Ryan Park:** He's referring to you.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** No, they're his words. Members on this side of the House have been going up, consecutively, day after day, making sure that the people in the Northern Rivers are receiving the support of this Government. The Premier has been there, the Deputy Premier has been there and the Minister for Flood Recovery has been there.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order: I was very specific.

**The SPEAKER:** It is not Standing Order 129. It was not specific. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. The Minister is being relevant to the question. The Minister will continue.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Mr Speaker, can you tell me how it could be more specific?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lakemba will not argue with the Chair. It was a wideranging question about support for small business. The Minister is being directly relevant. The Minister will continue.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** The point is that those opposite are doing political pointscoreing with people's lives and that is absolutely disgusting. Quite frankly I expect far better from the member for Lakemba than that.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order: It is only 13 per cent, 14 per cent.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. I place the member for Lakemba on three calls to order.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Many grants are available to the people of the Northern Rivers. There is the \$50,000 small business grant and it was only the other week that I was up there checking back in with businesses to make sure that they were getting the support they needed. I advise the House that over 15,000 applications have been received at this point. I acknowledge that almost 7,000 applications have been ineligible. As previous Ministers have explained, that is either because incorrect information was provided or further information was required to enable those grants to be processed. It is also important to recognise that nearly 600 applications are currently under fraud review. That is just related to the small business grant.

The priority for the Government has always been to put money in the hands of businesses and get them back up on their feet. That is why we eased the criteria for the initial \$15,000 from the \$50,000 grant to make sure that money got into the hands of those businesses without needing the invoice to be processed up-front. The Government will continue to work with people on the ground in flood-affected regions. I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Flood Recovery in this space. We have been there for small business and we will continue to do so, whether it be through a \$50,000 grant or a \$10,000 grant, or just being there on the ground to provide a listening ear, which is more than what those opposite have been doing.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** The sting in the tail.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the member for Lakemba to remove himself from the Chamber overnight.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Lakemba left the Chamber at 15:24.]*

## SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW

### PRIMARY INDUSTRIES INVESTMENTS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:24):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture. Will the Minister update the House about the 168th Royal Easter Show and how the Government is securing a brighter future for New South Wales by investing in primary industries?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:24):** I thank the member for his question.

**Mr Paul Scully:** There he is. It's sideshow alley himself.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** Bring it on.

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

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** A lot of MPs were excited about the Royal Easter Show, including the member for Upper Hunter. He was so pumped; I saw him with two dagwood dogs at the one time. It was a bit risqué, but he did it nonetheless. This year the Royal Agricultural Society [RAS] celebrated 200 years, which is fantastic. Plenty of people got to the show; pouring rain did not dampen the opening. A very special guest, Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, officially opened this year's bicentenary event. The Premier and the Deputy Premier were there. It was a fantastic opening. The show was a welcome return to reality and getting things back to normal, drawing 900,000 people over the two weeks. The Royal Easter Show has been a bounce-back event for the past 200 years, after floods, droughts, World War I, World War II and the Spanish influenza pandemic.

It is no surprise that the Royal Easter Show is one of the most important events on the calendar, which is why the Government thinks it is important to continue supporting it and all country shows. The Government has done that particularly well this year. It continues to invest in the community to make a brighter future for families in New South Wales. To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Royal Agricultural Society, I will run a segment today about how much members know about the Royal Easter Show. Play along. The first question is about animal

numbers. Did members know there were 8,240 horses, cows, bulls, sheep, alpacas, cats and dogs that called the grounds home for those couple of weeks? Agricultural produce was at the heart of things, with 900 kilograms of fleece shorn across the site, 12,000 litres of milk pumped at the Riverina Fresh working dairy—

[A Government member interjected.]

Plenty of sorghum. There were 30 tonnes of potatoes that were turned into chips on a stick. We can get just about anything on a stick these days, but that is a topic for another day. Did members know that we uncovered the next generation of rural and regional leaders? I congratulate Molly Wright from Peak Hill, who was crowned the winner of the Young Woman of the Year competition. I caught up with her at the Gilgandra Show last Saturday. Imogen Clarke from Nowra was the runner-up. The Department of Primary Industries' very own Jess Fearnley was awarded the 2022 Rural Achiever award. The young auctioneers competition was hotly contested, with Will Claridge from Inverell winning the national title, Jake Smith from Tenterfield winning the State title and Justin Oakenfull from Inverell coming second. Well done. Another fun fact is that it is the Country Women's Association's [CWA] 100th year of operation. Unbelievably, over 34,000 scones were baked and the CWA tea room was one of the more popular aspects of the show. [Extension of time]

Jam or cream first? If members go with cream first they have problems, but I will leave that there. It was great to see the CWA using Little Big Dairy cream on its scones. There were 400 different show bags, all of which were tested by the Minister for Fair Trading. One interesting bag I had a peek inside of was the Labor 2022 show bag—and, no, it was not in an Aldi bag. There were some intriguing goodies, including a petition to reboot Country Labor, which I signed; an interesting text book titled "Economics 101". I think that was in there for Albo. There was a Chinese flag—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister's answer is not funny, it is not relevant—it is boring.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further from the Minister. The member for Keira will resume his seat. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** There was a Chinese flag, which I think the Leader of the Opposition put in there. There was a cute little toy tractor and a 2023 how-to-vote card with the interesting heading, "Red and Green Should Never Be Seen". Finally, there was a book called *Labor People* by someone called Chris Bowen, which can be found in all good bins near you. I have some questions for the Minister about how that show bag got through, but it was there. I congratulate the thousands of volunteers, the exhibitors, the competitors, the Royal Agricultural Society staff and councillors for holding a fantastic show. The Government will continue to support industry and the community by securing a brighter future for the families of New South Wales. Here is to another 200 years of the RAS, and celebrating the past, present and future of our agricultural sector and regional communities.

### SNOWY VALLEYS SCULPTURE TRAIL

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:30):** My question is directed to the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney. Given the success of the recent launch of the Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail and its importance to rebuilding the economic resilience of that region after the bushfires, will the Government support the future development of this initiative?

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:30):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. It was a privilege to join the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Albury at the launch of the Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail, which has been funded through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund. There was a \$400 million allocation to create a 100-kilometre sculpture trail through the Snowy Valleys. It is one of the most beautiful locations in the State but, unfortunately, it has been devastated by bushfires over the past couple of years. The communities of Tumbarumba, Tooma and Batlow, which is one of the locations we were able to visit, have all been affected. It was great to see the team from Sculpture by the Sea, which is a great cultural organisation that creates a great event in Sydney. Through this fund, they were able to take their experience into regional New South Wales.

The funding was designed to build a strong sense of collegiality amongst community members by listening to what they want. The Sculpture by the Sea team work with local schools and communities. The three phases over the next 12 months will see over 30 sculptures built, which will stretch over 100 kilometres. I thank David Handley and his team at Sculpture by the Sea for all the work they have done, particularly for working with the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Albury. We must continue to invest in things like this to allow communities to recover. Whether it is supporting infrastructure in areas recovering from floods, like the Northern Rivers and north-west Sydney, or supporting local economic recovery in the Snowy Valleys, this Government



continues to help communities get back on their feet. It takes a long time for communities to get back to operating at full capacity after bushfires and floods. I have spoken with the member for Wagga Wagga and local residents at Batlow, and that community is only just getting back on its feet.

To ensure that we continue to support those communities, Regional NSW has a number of grants and support programs. I highlight to the member for Wagga Wagga our Reconnecting Regional NSW - Community Events Program. It is a great way for community organisations to take advantage of running local markets and events at the sites where the sculptures are displayed. A lot of the communities that we met with the other day can utilise that program. There is \$25 million available in that program, and it is part of a bucket of \$200 million. If they reach out to Regional NSW and look at the support programs, they will see plenty of ways for local communities to continue to leverage this fantastic investment in the Snowy Valleys.

#### *Documents*

### **OMBUDSMAN**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 27 of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the report to the Parliament by the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Strip searches in youth detention: a follow-up report under section 27 of the Ombudsman Act 1974*, dated 12 May 2022. I order that the report be printed.

### **UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 12 May 2022.

#### *Rulings*

### **STANDING ORDER 249A**

**The SPEAKER (15:35):** During question time I directed that the member for Prospect leave the Chamber for an hour. He should not return within that time. I clarify for the member that when the Speaker is on their feet, it is tradition that calls to order are not usually given. In those circumstances, if a member interrupts or otherwise transgresses, they are directed to leave the Chamber immediately. The member for Prospect was on two calls to order. When I am on my feet, sometimes I put members directly on three calls to order. Given that the member was on two calls to order, and that when I am on my feet I am reinforcing the seriousness of the conduct, the member was directed to leave the Chamber for one hour. He will stay out of the Chamber for that hour. The timing can be clarified by the Clerk.

#### *Committees*

### **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL**

#### **Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 11 May 2022 Scott Glynn Farlow was elected chair of the committee and Felicity Lesley Wilson was elected deputy chair of the committee.

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY**

#### **Inquiry**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety has resolved to conduct an inquiry into embedded networks in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

#### *Personal Explanation*

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:37):** By leave: During question time today, in answer to a question, the Minister for Local Government said she had ordered an inquiry. She made reference to the development consent for Mascot Towers and suggested some documents were missing. I inform the House that the development consent for Mascot Towers, which was issued about 14 or 15 years ago, was jointly given by the Department of Planning and the council. The New South Wales Government would have all documents and records relating to that consent. Any examination by it of those documents would be welcomed gratefully by the residents of Mascot Towers, who are engaged in litigation with respect to the neighbouring building, which they assert is the cause of

their problems. With respect to the examination by the Independent Commission Against Corruption of the former Botany Bay City Council, I was neither a person of interest nor was I involved in any way in that inquiry.

*Community Recognition Statements*

**HASTINGS VALLEY VIKING TALEI QALO WILSON**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:38):** The Hastings Valley Vikings Rugby Union Club's Helgas girls in my electorate are celebrating a momentous occasion in the history of the club since first entering the mid-North Coast competition in 1996. Talei Qalo Wilson became the first ever Hastings Valley Viking to represent her country in an international match against Japan, going down 28-14. On 1 May Talei travelled to Bond University and took to the field as fullback in her first appearance on the international stage. She set up one of two tries against the formidable Japanese Cherry Blossoms, who are renowned for being the strongest rugby union power in Asia. Undeterred by the loss, Talei is hopeful her performance against Japan will be enough to secure a position with the Fijian squad for the World Cup in 2023. Talei is described as a natural-born talent on the footy field, so it is not surprising that she was selected to play for the Rooster Chicken Fijiana 15s side. She follows in the footsteps of her grandfather, who represented Fiji against the New Zealand All Blacks in 1969. Talei joined the Helgas when she was 12, and was the only girl to make the Port Macquarie representative side in 2007. I congratulate Talei and wish her all the very best for the future.

**ELARA COMMUNITY STREET LIBRARY**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:39):** I acknowledge the terrific community spirit which continues to grow in Marsden Park and Melonba. Marsden Park is now the proud home of the first Elara community street library, located at 26 Barrallier Drive. The street library allows residents to donate and share books with their neighbours, which is particularly exciting for the many young families who now call Marsden Park and Melonba home. It is terrific to see the local community embrace the new street library with enthusiasm. I congratulate Jess Grima and all those residents who have supported the street library and offered donations. As the member for Londonderry, I feel privileged to represent such a caring and active community in Marsden Park, Elara and Melonba. From little things, big things grow. As that community continues to grow rapidly, it is a pleasure to see its community spirit shine.

**NARRANDERA YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (15:40):** I extend a huge congratulations to the 10 new and returning members of the Narrandera Youth Advisory Council for 2022. The members of the 2022 council include Wesley Bamblett, Madeline Fraser, Alyssa Sanders, Memphis Singh, Ruby Hewitt, Colby Irons, Alex Luck, Clare McDonald, Harrison Rowe and Mikalie Vearing, all of whom were inducted into the Narrandera Youth Advisory Council for 2022. Wesley was elected as mayor and Madeline as deputy mayor. I congratulate those members on stepping forward to be advocates for other youth within the Narrandera shire. The members of the Narrandera Youth Advisory Council have an amazing opportunity to have their voices heard and their interests attended to. It allows the members to create and be involved in activities and initiatives with other youth from the Narrandera shire. I look forward to working with the members of the Narrandera Youth Advisory Council to achieve their goals and objectives.

**SMITH FAMILY FUNDRAISING**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:41):** I congratulate the Smith family from Noraville—Ingrid, Chris and their children Vejune and Dusty—who recently raised \$1,400 for a charity in Lithuania called Vsl Pagalba Ukrainai which means "Help for the Ukraine". The organisation takes supplies to Ukraine for people who need them. Ingrid grew up in Lithuania, which inspired her to make borscht soup. The family set up their ute and camper trailer, then cooked and sold the soup to raise the funds. The Smiths are currently planning more fundraisers for the near future. I wish them all the best with them.

**GOTCHA4LIFE**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:42):** I wish the fantastic team at Gotcha4Life and its founder Gus Worland a happy fifth birthday. Gotcha4Life is a not-for-profit organisation with the goal of zero suicides. It delivers mental fitness programs to engage and empower local people and communities. In only five years the team has reached over 175,000 people through the more than 4,000 programs they have run. They have also been able to provide many people with the necessary skills to take care of their mental fitness, which is helping the organisation to get closer to its goal of zero suicides. I wish Gus and the team a happy birthday and wish them all the best as they continue the critical work of Gotcha4Life.

### **VOLVO OCEAN LOVERS FESTIVAL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:42):** I had the pleasure of attending this year's Volvo Ocean Lovers Festival, which combines two of the biggest passions of my community: a love for our beaches and oceans, and a deep care for their health. The Ocean Lovers Festival aims to use the power of entertainment, art and science to connect people and engage them in behaviour that positively impacts our ocean. The festival did just that, after being postponed due to the weather. The festival program was amazing. It was beautifully considered to match the ethos of the festival and included collective sunrise yoga for the ocean, a beach clean-up, science talks, Indigenous ocean care, live music, art installations, markets, swims, workshops and much more. I congratulate everyone involved in the successful event and thank everyone who attended.

### **NSW YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER MEIKA LINDSAY**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (15:43):** I recognise Meika Lindsay, from Royalla, an Aboriginal Biripi girl with strong connections to her mob. Sixteen-year-old Meika is a passionate young leader in both her school and broader community, and strives to advocate for the issues and concerns of young people. Meika is a member of the 2021-22 NSW Youth Advisory Council. The 12-member council plays an important role in advising the New South Wales Government on issues relevant to young people across the State. It provides advice on issues, policies and laws that affect children and young people in New South Wales. For Meika, the council is an opportunity to be a voice for her community. She works tirelessly to make sure that children's opinions are heard and considered. She uses the teamwork skills she has gained through sporting activities and as part of her school's peer-to-peer support program to assist her in working with her peers. I congratulate and thank Meika for her incredibly important participation and work in our community.

### **VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA NSW CHAPTER**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:44):** The local Vietnamese community commemorates the Fall of Saigon on 30 April each year with services to mark that significant occurrence in Vietnamese history. This year the Vietnamese Community in Australia NSW Chapter was unable to host the traditional commemorative events. I did, however, present a message to the president of the Vietnamese Community in Australia NSW Chapter in solidarity and to mark the forty-seventh anniversary of the Fall of Saigon. The capture of Saigon by the North Vietnamese regime caused so much heartache and trauma for the South Vietnamese people, sparking mass evacuation of the South Vietnamese people that resulted in the passing of many souls in the search for freedom. Many of those individuals now call Fairfield home, and I am proud to call many in the Vietnamese community dear friends. Over the past 47 years Fairfield has been enriched and blessed by the presence of the Vietnamese, who have made positive contributions to our society. On this sombre occasion, our thoughts and prayers are with those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the search for freedom.

### **KU-RING-GAI LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER KAREN PENROSE**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (15:45):** I am pleased to recognise Karen Penrose, who received the Ku-ring-gai Local Woman of the Year Award for her significant contribution to the community. The Local Woman of the Year Awards is an annual program celebrating and recognising the support that women give to their local communities across New South Wales, and Karen is an exemplary recipient. She is a director of Rugby Australia and locally is the president of Old Barker Rugby Club. Karen was instrumental in securing New South Wales Government funding that entirely upgraded the Turrumurra Memorial Park pavilion, and she has been a great advocate for participation by women in sport. On 9 March I attended the awards ceremony at the International Convention Centre to celebrate the achievements of Karen and other women. Karen's unflagging passion for making Ku-ring-gai a better place is inspiring. I again congratulate Karen on that well-deserved honour and thank her for her immense contribution to our community.

### **NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:46):** Two seniors who help the Coffs Coast thrive have been recognised with 2022 NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. Volunteer extraordinaire Margaret Bridgman embodies the true meaning of community. She is an inspiration to the team at Boambee East Community Centre, where she is renowned for her ongoing dedication to seniors. She organises the weekly Chin Waggers program, which includes activities at the centre and beyond. Dance teacher MaiToumbi Zammit-Ross is highly regarded for inspiring and motivating people of all ages to become healthier and fitter in body, mind and soul. She has introduced the rhythms and culture of West Africa to the Coffs Coast through her Afro cardio dance classes. I thank Margaret and MaiToumbi for their generous contributions to our community.

**WRITER ELEANOR ROBIN, OAM**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:47):** On behalf of the Bega electorate I congratulate Eleanor Robin, OAM, a resident of Narooma, on her recent publication of *The Quest for Eden-Monaro: A Core Sample of Australian Democracy*. This political history records the story of Sir Austin Chapman and Mr Allan Fraser, who contributed to political service at a State and Federal level in the south-east of New South Wales last century. Sir Austin Chapman served in this Chamber before Federation, holding the seat of Braidwood for 10 years. He shared this space with the first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, Sir Edmund Barton, and the father of Federation, Sir Henry Parkes. Ms Robin has donated an inscribed copy of her work to the Parliamentary Library. It is a significant contribution to the political history of New South Wales.

**TOONGABBIE LEGAL CENTRE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:48):** I acknowledge the Toongabbie Legal Centre for the terrific work that it continues to do in our local community. Toongabbie Legal Centre is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation that helps people in the western Sydney area with legal matters and advice. I was fortunate enough to attend the fourteenth annual community fundraising dinner and fundraising launch for the proposed Justice Margaret Beazley Centre. I recognise and thank Councillor Susai Benjamin for his leadership at the legal centre for many years and the great work he does serving our local community in this regard. I also thank all the solicitors who attended the Toongabbie Legal Centre fundraiser for the work they do serving our local community. The legal centre is known for helping persons who need financial assistance, persons from non-English-speaking backgrounds and youth in our community. I look forward to hearing about the progress of the Justice Margaret Beazley Centre over the coming months and cannot wait to see it in the future when it is built.

**SOMERSBY PUBLIC SCHOOL GENERAL ASSISTANT GEOFF WARD**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:49):** I thank Geoff Ward for the commitment and passion he has shown through his 28 years as a general assistant at Somersby Public School for the Department of Education. As a well-known and highly respected member of the Somersby community, he has recently been recognised and celebrated by Somersby Public School for going above and beyond to support both staff and students. Geoff's genuine love for the local school has been shown time and time again as he often would volunteer for projects for the school, ranging from mowing to plumbing to carpentry. That has been a godsend for Somersby Public School as it has not always received large allocations of funds due to its small enrolment numbers. I thank Geoff for supporting the young people of Somersby, and I am sure that all the staff and carers feel exactly the same way. His commitment has been inspiring, and he is a valued member of our community.

**TRIBUTE TO ROBERT WEIR**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:50):** I recognise the life of Mr Robert Weir, who sadly passed away in March at the age of 85. Bob was a dedicated club man who gave his heart and soul to the game of rugby league—20 years playing in both New South Wales and country jerseys, international clashes, three premierships as coach of the Narromine Jets and a lifetime of mentoring juniors. He was described as a brilliant football player and a stellar individual, and his name is synonymous with toughness, fairness and respect. He played for New South Wales and would have played for Australia but for a tackle that broke his shoulder. Bob later gave the game away after breaking his leg mid-game. Notably, he got up and played the ball before leaving the field for medical attention. Bob leaves behind his wife, Judy; their children, Robert, Heather, Wendy and Alison; and their families. He will be remembered as a hardworking family man with a fierce work ethic and good old-fashioned values and morals. He always made time for the community, and he was respected on and off the football field. Vale, Robert Weir.

**CAMPSIE POLICE AREA COMMAND**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:51):** I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the members of the Campsie Police Area Command. They are unwavering in their devotion, commitment and dedication to protecting and bettering our community. I was honoured to attend the Campsie Police Area Command awards ceremony at the Canterbury League Club, where we recognised the bravery and dedication of the incredible police men and women of Campsie police. It was fantastic to see their hard work and bravery being acknowledged, with many extraordinary acts of service being recounted to recognise the dedicated efforts of those men and women. I thank their families in particular for being there and for always being supportive of our men and women in blue. I also personally thank Detective Superintendent Kerrie Lewis for her hard work in protecting our community and her continued dedication to improving our local community. I congratulate all the award recipients. Their service is truly acknowledged and respected by our community.

**BEAUTY POINT AND MIDDLE HARBOUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:52):** I recognise Beauty Point and Middle Harbour Public schools for their significant donations to support other primary schools and students in Tonga. As members would all be aware, Tonga experienced a devastating volcanic eruption and tsunami in January of this year. Both of those local schools made the effort to donate and pull together old, high-quality school furniture, which was shipped to Tonga on 9 May. Those donations will go a long way in supporting the rebuilding of the affected schools in Tonga. I thank the school principals, Marion Walsh-Gay and Laura Barry, for supporting that initiative and organising the donations, as well as all of the school community involved. It also would not have been possible without the honorary Consul-General of Tonga, Louise Waterhouse, who is also a constituent of mine. Louise's dedication to supporting Tonga following this multi-disaster is truly admirable and reflects her family's contribution over generations. She has been working with my office and team in approaching schools to help organise the huge donation drive to Tonga. I am pleased to hear that they received an extensive amount of donations and that the shipping ran smoothly. I congratulate the schools and Louise on their efforts.

**ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF GODDESS MAZU**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:53):** On Saturday 23 April 2022 I was delighted to attend the Tien Hau Temple celebration of the 1,062nd anniversary of the birth of the goddess Mazu, who is known as the patron goddess of the sea, sailors and fishermen. Each year communities band together to indulge in celebrations dedicated to Mazu's birthday, as she was the most loved goddess in Chinese history. The celebrations were well attended. The festivities kicked off with blessings to the ancestors in the form of scriptures and lion dancing, followed by the official speeches and blessings from members of the community. I thank the NSW Indo-China Chinese Association president, Mr Henry Wu, and chairman, Mr Toha Huynh, OAM, as well as the Tien Hau Temple for their kind invitation to celebrate the day with them.

**CRICKETER WILLOUGHBY WATSON**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:54):** As a proud resident of Bowral—home to the great Don Bradman—and a cricket tragic myself, I am always excited to see young local cricketers excelling in their game. It is worth noting that an exciting up-and-coming cricketer with the Bowral Blues Cricket Club, Willoughby Watson, has had an incredible 2021-22 season. At just 16 years of age Willoughby is the highlands district's top first-grade run scorer. This is an impressive feat for the Chevalier College student, who has been playing with experienced first-grade bowlers and has managed to hold his own against some formidable opponents. The pandemic and the wet summer slowed the season somewhat but, despite this, Willoughby's time at the crease resulted in two centuries, two half centuries, 38 boundaries and a season batting average of 133.3. I congratulate Willoughby and look forward to following his future in cricket, in Bowral and beyond.

**JUNIOR SURF LIFESAVER OF THE YEAR BRIELLA GYLER-DIAL**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:55):** I acknowledge Briella Gyler-Dial, who has been named the female Newcastle Permanent Hunter Junior Surf Lifesaver of the Year for 2022. Briella is an outstanding young woman who is committed to her role as a volunteer lifesaver at Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Briella first got involved in surf lifesaving when she started Nippers at age five. For the past three seasons Briella has volunteered her time to assist younger Nippers squads each weekend and at carnivals. Briella is passionate about surf lifesaving and values the importance of Nippers programs because they teach children and their parents about water and beach safety. Briella is an inspiring young lady who I know will influence kids from across the region to get involved in the sport and become volunteer lifesavers. I congratulate Briella on her achievement and thank her for the work she does keeping our beach safe. In a quick update, she has been named the NSW Junior Lifesaver of the Year.

**GLENMORE PARK BASKETBALL CLUB**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:56):** I acknowledge Glenmore Park Basketball Club for its resilience during last year's lockdown and for patiently waiting in anticipation for the Penrith and Districts Basketball Association 2021-22 summer season to begin. Players took to the court on 5 and 6 November last year and the season continued into April this year. Glenmore Park Basketball Club, which began in October 1998, continues to grow each year. In the summer season over 220 registered players suited up for 24 teams for the local club. The secretary of Glenmore Park Basketball Club, Kathleen Burke, is looking forward to giving the kids an opportunity to be back doing what they love and having some fun. After a long break due to the pandemic, she said it was wonderful seeing so many smiling faces back on the court. I congratulate the Glenmore Park Basketball Club on its ongoing patience and resilience during this tough time. I look forward to seeing all of its achievements this season.

**NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER NURSE SANDHYA KANDEL**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:57):** I commend and congratulate Deniliquin local Sandhya Kandel on receiving the Deniliquin hospital's newcomer of the year award and for her work in our vital health sector. Since moving to Australia from Nepal five years ago, Sandhya, a registered nurse, has been a vital contributor to our ever-important healthcare sector. After practising in Sydney, Sandhya moved to Deniliquin chasing the country life and has stayed ever since. Starting in aged care, she worked during the height of the pandemic, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the residents in her care. In 2021 Sandhya decided to move to hospital-based health care, working at the Deniliquin hospital. Thanks to her hard work and dedication to her patients, Sandy was bestowed with the Deniliquin hospital's newcomer of the year award in January this year. I thank Sandhya for her work, especially during the pandemic, and wish her every success in her chosen career.

**HAWKESBURY POLICE LOCAL AREA COMMAND**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:58):** I was pleased to welcome four new probationary constables to the Hawkesbury police local area command last week. I was able to greet Mitchell, Tamaryn, Dylan and Timothy, who passed out from the Goulburn Police Academy just a few days before, on their first day on the job. It takes real commitment to go out to the front line every day, and I commend these new recruits for their bravery and dedication to the Hawkesbury community as they respond to incidents that may threaten our wonderful region. I wish them the best in their new role, and I am confident they will go above and beyond the line of duty to serve and protect the public and support our Police Force. I also note the vast intake of police recruits across New South Wales, with a significant number born overseas, including in England, South Korea, Iran and Iraq.

**SENIORS WEEK RECOGNITION AWARD WINNER LYNDA PHILLIPS**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:59):** Lynda Phillips is a prominent, kind and helpful member of the Blue Mountains community. She has been teaching animal care and horseriding for over 40 years. Lynda has been coaching at various pony clubs since the age of 17 and she is now an accredited coach with Equestrian Australia. She attentively helps to rehabilitate and assist with the recovery of her animals and is currently caring for six horses of all ages. Before COVID-19 Lynda offered her beautiful property and its facilities to give young people an opportunity to work safely around her horses and to volunteer to care of them. I thank Lynda for her compassionate work and for her instrumental role in maintaining a tight-knit community of young equestrians. She is very passionate about teaching others awareness of equine welfare. I also congratulate Lynda on her recent Blue Mountains City Council Seniors Week Recognition Award.

**SENIORS WEEK LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER SHYAM DHITAL**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:59):** Recently it was my pleasure to recognize Mr Shyam Dhital with a NSW Seniors Week Local Achievement Award for the electorate of Riverstone. Shyam Dhital is a senior member of the Northwest Nepalese Community, guiding the group in the role of an advisor and giving advice on every community-based activity. He assists the Northwest Nepalese Community as it strives to preserve Nepalese culture, language and traditions. Northwest Nepalese Community is a recent organisation, established only in 2020, that organises fundraisers and events showcasing Nepalese culture in the community of north-western Sydney. Shyam Dhital, as a knowledgeable and experienced member, has led and organised Diwali and new year programs. Additionally, he assisted in organising the COVID relief effort in 2020-21, leading the project team and helping more than 150 students and families. He leads the community as an exemplary person to motivate the community on health awareness, sports, preserving culture, language and traditional activities.

**JEWISH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:00):** I was honoured to attend and celebrate the Jewish International Film Festival at the Randwick Ritz Cinemas. The festival is a key event in the artistic and cultural calendar of the multicultural community I represent. Each year the festival presents a fresh and diverse selection of Jewish cinema from Australia and around the world, and each year it never fails to deliver truly exceptional cinema. This year the Jewish International Film Festival presented 55 feature films and a shorts package from 19 countries. A highlight for me were the two world-premiere screenings of Australian films. In fact, the Australian documentary *The Narrow Bridge* was announced as one of the Audience Award winners for 2022. The documentary tells the story of four individuals who have lost a child or parent to conflict. These members of the Israeli Palestinian Bereaved Families group turn from grieving families to peace activists who face opposition from family, community and their own governments. I congratulate everyone involved in organising and hosting such an amazing event, and I congratulate our Australian award winners.

### TALENT QUEST WINNER THEONI MARKS

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:01):** I congratulate Theoni Marks on the outstanding performance which has seen her pass through blind auditions on Channel 7's *The Voice*. Theoni is 19, lives in Revesby in my electorate of East Hills and attended my former high school, Picnic Point High School. She was a competitor in the "sing it, say it, play it" talent quest that I held in 2017, when I was the manager of Bankstown Auburn Community Radio, and I have heard firsthand her excellent vocal ability. She is a graduate of Bankstown's Talent Advancement Program [TAP] under the stewardship of Wendy Tierney, Helen Pain and Kerry Sebio. The TAP program has produced other amazing talent, such as Casey Donovan and Paulini, and Theoni is in great company there. Not only did Theoni collect the endorsement of all four judges on *The Voice*, but she did so singing a song by Adele—a singer's singer—that has a high degree of difficulty. I wish Theoni every success as the competition continues, and I know that everyone in East Hills is cheering her on.

### CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:02):** On Monday 25 April, Anzac Day, communities across our nation banded together in solidarity to pay their respects and remember those who have sacrificed so much for the freedom we cherish today. I had the honour of attending the Anzac Day services throughout my electorate, which took place throughout the day. The day began with a dawn service at Cabra-Vale Diggers, followed by a 7.30 a.m. service at Canley Heights RSL. The day continued with a lovely midday ceremony at Mounties and a solemn dusk service at Triglav Mounties. I was humbled to see so many proud faces in attendance at each and every service held throughout the day as our local community showed up to pay their respects and commemorate those who have served. I also thank the exemplary men and women who are currently serving our nation for their ongoing service. Lest we forget.

### WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:03):** It was wonderful to see life returning to a post-COVID normal at this year's Anzac Day services in my electorate. I pay my special acknowledgement to the 2nd/17th Battalion of the Royal New South Wales Regiment. The men of A Company were particularly noticeable at this year's services. A Company traces its lineage back to the New South Wales Scottish Rifles unit, which was affiliated with The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment). It is one of only a handful of companies across the Army Reserve whose members are entitled to wear Scottish kilts on ceremonial occasions. It was a pleasure being able to watch such a historically unique company participate in such a historically important day. The 2nd/17th Battalion can trace its lineage back to 1860 and has been actively involved in conflicts abroad as well as civilian operations at home. Its support during the recent bushfires and assistance during the COVID pandemic stand as shining examples of how diverse and valued our defence operations are. In true Anzac spirit, its members rolled up their sleeves and came to the assistance of the community. I thank the battalion for its continued service to our State and nation.

### ETTALONG BOWLING CLUB

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:04):** The Ettalong Bowling Club continues its support for Central Coast Kids in Need, an important organisation that supports families with seriously ill children. I am—as, I am sure, the entire community is—grateful for the ongoing commitment by the members of the club to support an incredibly worthwhile organisation. So far, after raising an additional \$850 in March, the club raised \$3,500 this year. The money will be used by families of very ill children with prolonged medical issues for travel, accommodation, equipment and medicine. Great stuff to all the members of the club. They are truly helping local families through incredibly difficult times. I also congratulate all of Ettalong Bowling Club for the completion of the excellent new alfresco dining area. I encourage all local Coasties to try out the new fantastic space one afternoon on a weekend soon. There will be live music and scrummy food.

### MOSMAN CRICKET CLUB SCORER TONI LORRAINE

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:05):** A fundamental part of cricket games are often the scorers. They can be unnoticed or unappreciated, but Toni Lorraine from Mosman Cricket Club has been scoring since the 1994/95 season at the Mosman Green Shield, when her son played for the Whales. As her son climbed the ranks, so did Toni, scoring for every grade, including premier grade cricket matches. Toni was asked to score permanently for first grade in 2001 and has been doing so ever since, contributing over 27 years of scoring for Mosman Cricket Club. Toni has scored for New South Wales several times and at the Sydney Cricket Ground for the Sydney Test match. Most recently, after Toni scored what she described as one of the most nerve-racking games, she was able to hold the Belvidere Cup after the Whales beat Northern District Cricket Club at Bankstown in April. I congratulate Toni on her many years of service to Mosman Cricket Club, scoring games but also being

an integral part of the Mosman Whales community. I look forward to seeing her continue with the club for many years to come.

#### **MOUNT ARTHUR RESERVE RANGER NORMAN SPRATT**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (16:06):** I recognise Mr Norman Spratt of Wellington and the 21 years he dedicated to being a ranger at the Mount Arthur Reserve. On 26 March a group of Mr Spratt's family gathered at the Burrunggee Trail to unveil a plaque honouring his service and care of the reserve. A recognised cricketer and sportsman within the community, Mr Spratt has always had a love of nature, wildlife and the great outdoors. According to Mr Spratt's granddaughter Kellsey, he used to spend most of his days on the mountain, often taking his grandchildren with him during the school holidays, walking and raking the trails, marking rocks with paint for walkers, wildlife-watching and keeping the natural attraction trash-free. At 96 years of age and no longer driving, Mr Spratt cannot now just visit Mount Arthur when he wants, so family members often take him to the reserve. Kellsey says he likes to look around and check out how it is being maintained now. I thank Mr Spratt. His passion and dedication to the presentation of Mount Arthur Reserve for visitors and locals alike is certainly worthy of recognition.

#### **AUSTRALIAN CHINESE BUDDHIST SOCIETY**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:07):** On 28 April I had the great pleasure of attending a very special event at the Mingyue Lay Temple, where the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society graciously raised and donated \$101,288 to support flood-affected communities throughout New South Wales. The horrendous floods that have occurred throughout New South Wales have wrought devastation on so many communities and left many families with nothing. I am incredibly proud of the generosity of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society, whose donation will be able to help many families who have lost so much. The broader Cabramatta community is incredibly proud of the society and its ongoing efforts to help those in need far and wide. I thank society president Vincent Kong and chairperson James Chan, who presented the cheque to State member for Lismore, Ms Janelle Saffin, and the St Vincent de Paul Society's regional director for north-east, Ms Clare Van Doorn.

#### **JUSTICES OF THE PEACE EMILE CHIDIAC AND JOHN BROPHY**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:08):** I congratulate Emile Chidiac of Bankstown and John Brophy of Panania, who have both been recognised for 50 years of service as Justices of the Peace. Justices of the Peace provide their services on a voluntary basis, and our community of East Hills is very grateful for the work that Emile and John do. They have donated countless hours of their own time to help our local people. I look forward to meeting them in the coming weeks with the Attorney General and holding a luncheon in honour of all of their service.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **CANTERBURY OLYMPIC ICE RINK**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:09):** I take this opportunity to address the enormous contributions that Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink has made to Canterbury, New South Wales and, of course, Australia. Wedged between a rail line, Cooks River, an aquatic centre and a modest playground, it stands as one of Sydney's most underrated sporting venues. Established in 1971, the venue has opened its doors to amateurs and professionals alike. To this day, the ice rink offers lessons to people of all ages, from children younger than five all the way to adults. Heartwarming, the ice rink offers inclusive skating lessons to help those with physical or intellectual challenges and impairments to learn to skate. Those lessons are run by a team of dedicated, accredited and nurturing instructors, who ensure a safe and enjoyable learning environment for all.

Offering a variety of disco music and freestyle skating, the ice rink has attracted a considerable number of recreational skaters too. It is a favourite of local schools that need a convenient winter-themed sport in the middle of the year as well as local people who want a cool reprieve on a hot summer's day. Because of this, it is unsurprising to many that the Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink—one of the very few ice rinks in New South Wales and in Australia—often features as one of the best sport venues in Sydney. Impressively, it is involved in training the best skaters in New South Wales for various international competitions and the Olympics. I am very proud that in the heart of Canterbury we have produced a number of Olympians, who come from all across New South Wales and Australia and even internationally to train at Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink.

The ice rink has also hosted domestic competitions, such as the Duke Trophy in 2017 and the national competition known as the State of Origin on Ice, where State teams compete for the coveted trophy in speed skating competitions. I am happy to note that New South Wales won in 2017 on home turf, seeing the Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink turn from competition centre to victory party venue. Since 1971 the ice rink has been a focal



point for community recreation as well as for Olympic aspiration. However, what should have been a momentous fiftieth anniversary celebration in 2021 was overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and, of course, the economic havoc that came with it. Since then, like many businesses, the Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink—which, mind you, is run as a cooperative—has struggled to remain financially afloat.

There is no doubt that the local communities across Sydney support the ice rink, nor is there any doubt that the ice rink provides an exceptional service to the wider New South Wales community. As I have already stated, the ice rink is extremely important to the State and national ice-skating community, to our winter sports, and for producing winter Olympians as well. However, with the entire nation facing incredible economic pressures from COVID, compounded by runaway rises in CPI, the board of directors is, unsurprisingly, anxious about the financial future of the ice rink. I acknowledge that the ice rink has received a number of grants from the Government over the past few years, which I support. Those include a major local grant of over \$700,000 from a big grants program.

An urgent concern has come to us in the past few weeks. I have raised it with Minister Ayres as well. He is all open ears and I am going to provide him with an official letter and an official invitation to come and visit. We need up to \$15 million. There is a massive issue in relation to the roof. The ice-skating community and the Winter Olympians will come together in a campaign. We do not want to lose this ice rink. It is not for profit and is run by a cooperative. We are producing our Olympians right in the centre. As everybody in this place knows, sometimes there are important venues. It is in our electorate, but it is in the national interest. We want to see more Winter Olympians, so we need to invest in this place. We do not want to see it close down, so I hope that my call is heeded.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:14):** I support the call of the member for Canterbury for the ice rink. It is a very important tool. As a 15-year-old I learnt to ice-skate there and played ice hockey, though not too successfully. It was a bit brutal for me. I travelled all the way from Cronulla in the Sutherland shire by train. I think of future Winter Olympians, so I strongly support the bid by the member for Canterbury to upgrade the facility.

#### RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE MINISTERIAL VISIT

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:15):** I inform the House of a visit made to the electorate of Riverstone and surrounds by the Minister for Multiculturalism, Mark Coure, a week or two back. We were able to visit three very important locations and community groups with which I have been very privileged to work over the years as the member for Riverstone. The first was the Ahmadiyya Muslim community at Baitul Huda Mosque at Marsden Park. "Baitul huda" means "house of guidance". Members may be aware of that community. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community is a small group within Islam. Sadly it has difficulties overseas and is persecuted in a number of countries, but it has found a safe haven in Australia, which its members treasure. They absolutely value the freedom, safety, security and rule of law we offer here and, because of those benefits, are very excited to become Australians as soon as they have opportunity.

The community there is led by Imam I. H. Kauser. The public officer, Mirza Sharif, is a friend of mine. They were there on the day to welcome the Minister and me. The Minister has visited this community on a couple of occasions previously but wanted more time to talk to them and learn more about them. This community settled in Marsden Park in the early eighties, at a time similar to when I moved out to the region, and I have seen the mosque grow over the years as I have driven up and down Richmond Road.

The second visit we made on the day was to Lankarama Buddhist Vihara, the temple of the Sri Lankan Buddhists at Schofields. We were hosted there by another friend, Prabhath Amarasinghe, and the monks who were in residence at the time. The chief monk, my good friend, whose name I must say carefully, the Venerable Pundit Meegahakumbure Dhammagavesi Thero, is the leader of the Theravada Buddhist community in Australia and a very learned and wise man, who has contributed a great deal to the community. He is currently back in Sri Lanka so, unfortunately, we were unable to meet with him on the day. I look forward to his return and perhaps bringing the Minister back again on that occasion.

I showed the Minister the Bodhi tree, which is growing in the grounds of the vihara and is an offcut from the original tree under which Buddha sat. Throughout the world, the tradition in the Buddhist community is to take a cutting from the original tree and plant it at the site of a new temple. That is very precious and important to the community and something I needed to elaborate on to the department of planning officials who were releasing a precinct in the North West Growth Area and had decided that they would simply rezone that land as environmental conservation and that the temple would have to move. You do not just pick up a Bodhi tree and move it. It is a very significant thing for the community. We were able to work around that and found a way for the temple to continue. I appreciate the cooperation of the departmental staff. We showed the Minister the stupa,

and the monks welcomed us into the meditation hall with the traditional Buddhist welcoming prayer, something which was very impressive, and very peaceful and settling.

Our third visit was to a group called Sri Om Care. This is a group of volunteers from the South Asian community, predominantly Indian, who formed in Australia to help their compatriots in a number of ways, particularly working with seniors, people who are housebound and ill, and so on. This is led by Guruswamy Jayaraman, who is a good friend I have worked with over a number of years. We were able to meet others on the day. I believe Aarthi Vasudevan, Srini Vasudevan and Shweta Sharma were among those who were there on the day.

We heard about the current programs and the future plans of Sri Om Care for that community. They run five different day programs for seniors, one each day across the week, in five different locations across northern and north-western Sydney. They provide home care to a number of people and are funded by the Federal Government, I understand, to work in that field. They provided absolutely invaluable support and outreach to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are planning a model of residential care that will be ideal for their particular community and they were keen to hear the Minister's input about how he might work with them to achieve their vision. All in all, it was a very productive and useful day. I hope that it was one that helps the Minister understand the communities of the north-west, and Riverstone in particular.

### WOMEN'S GOLF NSW OPEN

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:20):** I was delighted to welcome some of the best female golfers to Tweed recently, just over 70 of the world's best, for the Worrells Women's NSW Open 2022, which was held over two days in April and hosted by that great club, the Coolangatta & Tweed Heads Golf Club. We were lucky to have a number of special guests in attendance, including legendary Australian golfer Jan Stephenson, OAM, winner of three major tournaments, and the iconic sportswoman Dawn Fraser, who is a good friend of mine. Dawn is a very good friend of another famous swimmer, Linda McGill, who swam the English Channel three times. Both Dawn and Linda had the honour to be in the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964, when they stole the Japanese flag and were suspended from swimming for a lengthy period of time. But they are iconic sportswomen. Also in attendance was the phenomenal Karen Lunn, the CEO of the Ladies Professional Golf Association [LPGA] in Australia and winner of several tournaments, including a Women's British Open title in 1993.

This was an extremely special event, as Jan Stephenson was to be honoured by Golf NSW by having the Women's NSW Open championship trophy renamed the Jan Stephenson Trophy. Jan spends a lot of her time in America. Her brother ran as an Independent candidate on the Central Coast in the past two Federal elections. Another thing that impressed me is that she owns a distillery, called the Dented Brick Distillery, in Salt Lake City, which is quite unusual in a Mormon city. Jan is a real achiever. This recognition honours Jan's outstanding contribution to the game as one of the State's finest sporting talents. Jan began playing golf in metropolitan Sydney and claimed three straight New South Wales Junior Girls titles and three Australian Girls Amateur crowns as a member of Bonnie Doon Golf Club. Turning professional in 1973, Jan claimed the first of her Women's Australian Open crowns the same year, and in 1974 she joined the LPGA tour, taking the Rookie of the Year title.

Jan claimed three majors in a career that has covered almost five decades, along the way recording wins on most of the world's prestigious professional tours, including 16 on the LPGA, two on the Women's Professional Golfers' Association tour, two on the LPGA of Japan tour and one on the Ladies European Tour. In the late 1990s, Jan Stephenson was instrumental in establishing the Women's Senior Golf tour, now called the Legends of the LPGA tour, in the United States. Jan Stephenson has recorded four wins on the same tour, as a player. Her most recent success came last year alongside Laura Diaz in the BJ's Charity Championship. Inducted into the Sports Australia hall of fame in 2005, Jan Stephenson was also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2018 to recognise her contribution to the sport.

I was delighted to present the outright winner, Maja Stark from Sweden, with the trophy after she grabbed a thrilling five-shot win. It was a great event and highlighted women's sport, particularly in the game of golf. It was well attended. Many thousands of people came to see the best of the best. I would say that the average age of the 70 who participated was in the vicinity of the mid-20s to the mid-30s, and they are really good. If you were not 10-under on card, you were not in the race for the top medals. They are really, really good. They had just come from the Australian Open and had flown in from overseas. It was great to see local women being involved. The competitors freely gave their time in coaching clinics and the pro-am. I was going to talk about my success in the pro-am but I think I might leave that for another time, or leave it well and truly buried. I congratulate Golf NSW and Jan Stephenson on a great event.

### SPORT UNIFORM POLICY

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:25):** In Australia we know that women are more likely to be insufficiently active than men. We know that women are overall less likely to participate in sport. We also know that participation in sport dramatically increases mental and physical health outcomes. We know all of this. Then why are we not listening to women who ask us to remove gendered barriers to sport participation? I was contacted by a local mother who told me that her 10-year-old and 12-year-old daughters did not want to try out for the State beach volleyball team. This was not because of a lack of skills—in fact, both girls made the under-14s team. They did not want to try out because they were scared they would have to play in a bikini. In fact, according to local parents, only seven girls tried out for the State team because everyone else was too scared to play in a bikini.

The biggest drop-off for female participation in sport happens at about the ages of 14 and 15. Listening to stories such as this one, and to the experiences of high-profile national beach volleyball players and cricket players, it is so clear that uniform policy plays a major role. In 2022 there is no excuse for sporting organisations and authorities not to have removed gendered uniform barriers from their codes. All over the country, there are professional players, community players, young girls, parents and caregivers who are deeply concerned about the sexualisation and objectification of children, young girls and women. They are also naturally concerned about the consequences of those things—body insecurity, shame and stigma around periods and eating disorders. Australian women's national beach handball player Madeleine McAfee said on the issue that she had felt "constant pressure to look good in the bikini bottoms". She said, "I would be hard on myself if I thought I had too much cellulite." She added that it did not necessarily promote the best performance-focused mindset.

As my constituent said, defending her daughters' feelings, "This clothing is not required for the sport or boys would also be wearing a similar uniform, as per swimming or gymnastics where the uniforms are very similar. If you would not offer boys speedos to play beach volleyball in, do not offer girls bikinis. The change of the uniform for girls within New South Wales sport would set New South Wales apart in putting the wellbeing of girls ahead of the sexualisation of women's bodies". I agree. No athlete should be forced to wear a uniform they do not feel comfortable in. The issue of barriers to sport through gendered uniform policies goes beyond explicit inequalities and comes down to lack of understanding, resourcing and prioritisation of women's sport at a grassroots community level.

This is not an issue singular to beach volleyball or handball. Research and national cricket players have highlighted that young girls are less likely to continue with cricket due to the fear of their period leaking through their cricket whites. A community engagement program supported by the WA Cricket Foundation conducted a survey to understand the hurdles that prevented girls from participating in cricket. The survey found that the prohibitive barrier was white pants. It is critical that we address the barriers that stop women, and all people, from playing sport and exercising. Exercising is not only great for our physical wellbeing but it also does wonders for our mental health. Research from the University of New South Wales, also in my electorate, has demonstrated that exercising can reduce your chances of developing depression by up to 17 per cent.

It is our responsibility to eliminate as many barriers as possible that stop all people from exercising. As legislators it is our responsibility to listen to girls, young women and all women when they tell us what they need to reduce the barriers to sports participation. It is our responsibility to properly support community sports associations and advocate for the girls and women engaged in those sports. It is our responsibility to ensure funding to create the right facilities and to conduct surveys to understand gendered barriers to sport. And it is our responsibility to remove those barriers. It is our responsibility to solve these problems for future generations.

### CAMDEN ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:29):** I speak on the Anzac Day services held in Camden this year. On Thursday 21 April I attended the Barry Marsh House Anglicare retirement village in Oran Park. This was their first Anzac Day commemoration service. The residents and staff were very proud of their first ever ceremony and I look forward to many ahead. I acknowledge and thank vocalist Francesca Olsen who did a wonderful job of leading the singing of the hymns and the Camden Community Band for the music. On Friday 22 April I attended the annual ceremony held at Carrington Retirement Village. Again, Francesca Olsen led the singing. The residents of Carrington Retirement Village, many of whom are either returned service men and women or war widows, are very proud of their tribute to Anzac Day. Later that day I attended the Wivenhoe Village Anzac Day service. Francesca Olsen also led the singing and I thank her for assisting in ceremonies that day.

On Anzac Day I attended the dawn service in Camden. It is held at the rose garden outside the RSL Club and attendance keeps growing every year. The morning started with a light rainfall, which then eased off. The crowd arrived from 4.30 a.m. onwards, with a number of approximately 12,000. The Camden local government area is the fastest growing area in New South Wales, and it was great to be able to welcome everyone back to a

traditional Anzac Day dawn service. The sun rose as the last post was being played, and the scene had an eerie feeling about it. You could hear the kookaburras laughing as if to say, "It's nice to have you back." The traditional wreath-laying ceremony was held and an uncountable number of wreaths were laid. Francesca Olsen was again delightful in leading the crowd in the singing of the hymns, with the Camden Community Band providing the music. Without Francesca's renditions, the Anzac Day ceremonies would not have been quite as heartfelt.

I thank the speakers of the day, Mayor Therese Fedeli and keynote speaker Flight Lieutenant Benjamin Lindsay, who is an explosive ordnance engineering instructor at the Defence Explosive Ordnance Training School. I also thank the students from St Benedict's Catholic College, Tim Logue and Pastor Mike Smith. The whole event would not have been complete and so well run without the President of the Camden RSL Sub-Branch, Mr Iain Richard-Evan. I also thank special guest Mr Dave Thomas, the artist who painted the mural on the wall of the Camden RSL Club, which survived the most recent floods. The catafalque party was supplied by the Camden 303 Cadet Squadron, which is based at Camden Airport.

I acknowledge attendees the Hon. Angus Taylor, Federal member for Hume; members of the New South Wales police, ambulance, fire brigade and Rural Fire Service; RSL members both locally and from outside; Australian War Widows; Legacy; service clubs; Camden LGA schools; Light Horse Regiment, Menangle; and piper Laurie Woods. Finally, I thank the President of the Camden RSL Sub-Branch, Mr Iain Richard-Evan, a Vietnam veteran who works tirelessly to make sure all these ceremonies are successful. Iain's commitment to our local veterans and war widows throughout the year is invaluable. I know that people like Iain and the entire RSL sub-branch put in a lot of work, and I assure him that I have received many compliments from residents on the work put into making sure every year Anzac Day ceremonies are such a success.

### LAND TAX

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:33):** I speak of the quite severe and I think quite unintended impact of the surcharge purchaser duty and surcharge land tax upon residents. The surcharges concerned were introduced as part of the 2016 budget. Treasurer Berejiklian announced she was introducing "surcharges for foreign investors in residential real estate". The rates were increased in the 2017 budget but without reference to them in the budget speech. Those surcharges are applicable over and above ordinary transfer duty and land tax. In practice, the tax net has spread well beyond the intended policy position of imposing extra taxes on foreign investors buying residential land.

Mohammed and Fiona have lived in the Liverpool electorate for some time. They are not yet Australian citizens—they both want to be but do not fall within the various categories available. They have, at all relevant times, been in Australia legally and complied with all relevant immigration law. Next year, one of their children will turn 18 years of age and that means they can commence the process of becoming an Australian citizen. They have both lived in Australia for about 20 years. Mohammed has been working during all of this time and has paid all of his taxes. They have two children. Both were born in Australia and educated in Australia. The family are, in every meaningful sense, Australian.

Fiona is a New Zealand citizen. Mohammed is a British citizen and is in Australia under a temporary family visa, subsection 461. They live in a house in Liverpool, built in 2014. More recently, in 2020, Fiona's mother gifted them her house, while still living in it. All appropriate domestic duties were paid on that transfer. The legislation says that the surcharges are payable by people who are not Australian citizens. There are some exceptions—one is for New Zealand citizens who hold a specified type of visa. That exception includes Fiona. None of the exceptions include Mohammed, who is thus regarded as a foreign person. As a foreign person who owns residential property, he is liable to surcharge purchaser duty and surcharge land tax on his interest in residential property, which is both the family home and his mother-in-law's home. He is regarded as a foreign investor in Australian residential property, despite having lived in the country for 20 years, his children being born and educated here, and he and Fiona living in one of the properties and his mother-in-law living in the other. To suggest he is a foreign investor is just nonsense. It flies in the face of the clear reality.

It also represents a catastrophic failure of policymaking. This result is way beyond what was expressed to be the law's intent. The amounts of duty and tax imposed on this family are eye-watering. As people who regard Australia as their home, they never thought they would be taxed as foreign investors. The surcharge duty in August 2021 was over \$41,000. Then there is the land tax surcharge, which is charged annually. Mohammed is liable for surcharge land tax on both the home gifted by his mother-in-law and his family home. There is no exemption from surcharge land tax on the family home, presumably because they were targeted as foreign investors and it was expected none of them would have their home here. That means Mohammed is liable to pay a further \$25,109 in surcharge land tax as at August 2021, and continuing at over \$10,000 per annum. The impact on the couple has been catastrophic, with Fiona suffering from panic attacks and worsening depression.

A couple I will call John and Mary purchased a property in a new estate in early 2018. It was then vacant land. They signed a building contract in January 2019, when they were financially able, and practical completion occurred in 2020. In 2022 they were advised that they were liable for an additional purchaser duty as a foreign investor in the sum of over \$43,000. Neither are Australian citizens. However, they are both permanent residents here and have been for some time. They are New Zealand residents with the type of visa that would normally allow them an exemption. However, as well as fitting within the appropriate visa category, to be exempt they must also comply with what is called the "residence requirement". This labyrinthine and almost Kafkaesque legislative scheme means that within the first 12 months of purchase they must reside in the premises for a period of at least 200 continuous days.

Because they were not able to finance construction straightaway, they could not live in the premises for the first 12 months, so they got lumped with a foreign purchaser surcharge of over \$40,000. They have lived in the house continuously since it was completed. It is hard to imagine any couple more removed from being wealthy overseas investors than John and Mary. This is a policy failure where the people caught by the legislation are well away from the intended group. The presentation of the new laws in 2016 is instructive. An Andrew Clennell article in *The Daily Telegraph* dated 14 June 2016 had the headline "Tax hike on overseas property investors".

The instances I have referred to today are not overseas real estate investors but people living permanently in Australia owning their family homes. The Clennell article specifically said that the changes were to tackle housing affordability in New South Wales, which is somewhat ironic as the victims I have referred to today are precisely the sort of people the changes were supposed to help—people trying to get into their first home. The alternative view is that the surcharge was never intended to fix housing affordability, rather it was introduced to make up for revenue foregone by the abolition of business taxes. If that were true, it would be a perverse outcome. This is a policy failure but, with the best of intentions, the scope has just gone way too wide.

#### TRIBUTE TO JILL PERROTTET

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:38):** I pay my respects to Mrs Jill Perrottet who, sadly, passed away on 28 March 2022. Jill was a very dear friend of mine, who always took time out from her very busy schedule to inquire after me. There were very few dull moments in Jill's life. She was a travel enthusiast, a dental nurse, a mother, a partner in her husband Jim's real estate agency, and many more occupations filled her 92 years on earth. Born in Singleton on 8 August 1929 as Margaret Vera Mackenzie Baker, it was clear from her early years that she was not one to stick to tradition. She legally changed her name to Jill Margaret Mackenzie Baker in 1962.

Jill was blessed with a loving family which began when she met and married James Oliver Croaker Perrottet. The pair welcomed three children—Melissa, Hugh and Abigail—and, later, five grandchildren—James, Jacqui, Cooper, Charlie and Tiffany. Jill had many wonderful stories from her very colourful life, which included travelling through outback Australia, working as a dental nurse and with the Royal Flying Doctor Service. After leaving school, Jill became a Tresillian Mothercraft Nurse and then, in her twenties, in pursuit of her love of travel, Jill became a children's hostess on the cruise liners SS *Oronsay* and SS *Orontes*. After Jill and James—who was better known as Jim—had their first child, they moved to Newcastle. There they purchased a local real estate agency, where they worked together after Jill secured her licence in real estate.

Never one for convention, Jill continued to challenge the norm throughout her life, and worked to see what should be rather than to simply accept what was. One notable incident was her attempt to challenge gender barricades at the local pub. At The Great Northern in Newcastle East, only men were allowed in the front bar while women were confined to the lounge back bar. Jill's several attempts at crossing the line prompted the pub's management to request that her husband "Keep her under control." Her passion and warm-heartedness was plain to see throughout her life. I experienced it and know what it is to be cared for by Jill.

Jill's travels in outback Australia are a perfect example of her generosity and caring spirit, as she worked to ensure that remote farmers, communities and Indigenous missions had access to better health. Jill was also personally interested in our governments and the flourishing of our Richmond community in Hawkesbury. She hosted government ministers and even a former prime minister at her home, and assisted in a variety of organisations. She was a member of the National Trust, Royal Overseas League, Richmond School of Arts and the Ladies Auxiliary of the Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association, who put on a wonderful Hawkesbury Show last weekend. I again extend my deepest condolences to Jill's family, her children and grandchildren, and the many wonderful friends she made throughout her life. Jill was a true gem of the Hawkesbury and I know she will be missed, but we can take comfort that she has joined her loving husband, Jim, in rest. May God grant her peace.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:42):** When I disembark from my plane at Moruya airport, some 200 metres away there is a primitive public camping area. People are homeless, sleeping in their cars and tents. This is just one site in the Bega electorate where residents are sleeping rough as a consequence of the lack of affordable housing. This occurs in my electorate and across the State. It is seen but ignored. Affordable housing is an emergency in the Bega electorate. One thousand homes were lost in the 2019-20 bushfire disaster and many more were damaged. At the current rate of rebuilding, it will take a decade to fully replace these homes. Over 600 people are on the public waiting list, some of whom have been waiting for more than 10 years.

The number of homeless is difficult to quantify as they may be couch-surfing or relying on family and friends for shelter. The lack of affordable housing affects health care, education and employment. It increases the risk of domestic violence, divorce, lack of effective parenting, childhood abuse and neglect. It discriminates on the basis of race, age, gender, sexual orientation and disability. Its root cause can lie in drug and alcohol addiction and poor mental health. If not the cause, those issues may be the consequence.

The bushfire disaster was followed by the COVID pandemic, which resulted in viral refugees fleeing to the perceived safety of our rural communities and occupying the short supply of housing. It was also followed by a house price boom, with prices increasing by 30 per cent per annum and rental costs increasing by 14 per cent per annum. Building costs have increased by 30 per cent. Housing has become less available, less affordable, less stable and less safe. Our community faces a profound problem of a deep and prolonged housing crisis. It requires action at all tiers of government. Local and State governments need to make land available through rezoning and sustainable development while incorporating transport, employment and environmental needs. Priority needs to be established for very low and low income households and those members of the community with special needs.

The Bega electorate has below average social housing supply and a lack of emergency housing. There is an immediate requirement for a strategic asset management plan for social housing with redevelopment of existing stock. That will require urgent repair and maintenance of existing properties, including improvement of energy efficiency, which will result in saving money and reducing carbon emissions. Social housing workers are stretched and underfunded with difficulties recruiting and retaining staff. They have low pay and poor conditions. The pressure of lack of affordable housing contributes to the highly stressful nature of the work. Methodical consultation must take place regarding the problems and solutions surrounding affordable housing and homelessness. Consultation must involve residents, builders architects and planners and must focus on housing for key workers, aged-care workers, healthcare workers, teachers, council staff, retail and hospitality workers.

Consideration must be given to innovations to increase the options of housing, including a range of dwellings and smaller strata dwellings, providing members of our aging population and empty nesters with an alternative to residential aged care. As a result of our rural and coastal position, there is a high proportion of short-term rentals, accounting for 19 per cent of homes. Even worse, there is a vacancy rate of 0.5 per cent in the private rental market. A policy to provide affordable and accessible rental properties must be developed, and there needs to be an end to no-fault evictions. In conclusion, investment in housing provides a return by creating jobs, improving physical and mental health, and facilitating education. It is the responsibility of the New South Wales Government to work with local and Federal governments and act on this housing crisis.

## OZHARVEST

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:46):** Since 2004 OzHarvest has been feeding hungry people with good nutritious food that was headed to landfill. I congratulate the organisation for its amazing achievements and call on the Government to help it expand into the future. OzHarvest was started in Sydney by Ronni Kahn, AO, out of a concern over massive amounts of food ending up in waste. She started out with one van collecting surplus food from businesses to deliver to charities. Today, OzHarvest operates across the country with nearly 200 staff and over 2,500 volunteers. The organisation collects food from a network of 3,253 donors, including supermarkets, cafes, delis, restaurants, corporate kitchens, airlines, hotels and other food businesses. In Sydney 20 vans operate every day, each rescuing up to 1,000 kilograms of fresh produce, meat and dairy that would otherwise have been wasted. The food is made into meals the same night, providing vital food relief for those who need it.

Although Australia is a wealthy country, some people cannot afford to adequately feed themselves, such as people who are on low incomes, homeless or at risk of homelessness. Many are going without or foregoing other essentials. Often the food that people on low incomes can afford is not healthy. COVID-19 brought the problem into sharp focus, with people losing work on a large scale, including international students and migrants who had no access to income support. Demand for OzHarvest's hampers and meals skyrocketed as more people faced financial hardship. At the same time, events that donated food ceased and OzHarvest had to start purchasing

food. With the help of Federal, State and City of Sydney funding, OzHarvest was able to continue to feed those in need.

OzHarvest also plays a vital role in cutting food waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Globally, one-third of all food produced is lost or wasted; that is 931 million tonnes each year. The cost to the global economy is US\$1 trillion, while 690 million people still go hungry, and three billion people cannot afford a healthy diet. Australia's annual food waste is greater than 7.6 million tonnes per year, and we are the tenth most wasteful country in the world. I was horrified to learn from OzHarvest that bread is the number one wasted food and it never decomposes because it mostly goes into landfill still in plastic. The NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 aims to reduce food waste by diverting it from landfill. While the strategy includes great initiatives, we must also tackle the problem from the source and cut the amount of food waste being produced. OzHarvest has a goal to advocate, inspire and influence Australians to halve our food waste by 2030.

It is raising awareness through its Fight Food Waste program, which aims to reconnect Australians to the values of food and make food waste a thing of the past. It is also providing solutions by ensuring that food in oversupply gets used, rather than going to landfill. Its framework turns food waste into delicious and healthy food for those in need. OzHarvest is largely funded by corporate and philanthropic donations, but it is harder to secure donations in the current climate. State and Federal funding of OzHarvest is set to end soon and the insecurity is leading many to look for other jobs. Drivers working for OzHarvest need specialty skills. They play an important part in filtering donations to ensure that the most appropriate food is selected for the delivery clientele. They need to build relationships with loading dock staff to encourage them to save items for collection, rather than send them to landfill. Drivers prioritise fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat to ensure that people in need have access to food that is fresh and healthy. The job is physically demanding with drivers needing to lift stock in and out of vans multiple times a day. When drivers get sick—a common occurrence during a pandemic—food simply does not move and ends up in waste.

In April I spent a day volunteering with OzHarvest, including in a yellow van, and learnt how the organisation provides solutions to the serious challenges of health, hunger, poverty, food waste and climate change through its unique model. There is a clear role for government to help OzHarvest expand and divert more food away from waste while ensuring that people who cannot normally afford to eat nutritious meals can do so. We are currently experiencing record highs in food prices and the overall cost of living is impacting on more people's access to healthy meals. OzHarvest is building a sustainable food culture where everyone can access fresh, nutritious meals. I call on the Government to provide ongoing funding and support.

#### **BANKSTOWN-EAST HILLS HANDICAPPED ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT JOAN WAGSTAFF**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:51):** I pay tribute to the service of a remarkable woman, Joan Wagstaff, of Padstow Heights. Joan served for over 23 years as president of the Bankstown-East Hills Handicapped Association, or BEHHA as it is affectionately known in my local area. The list of her achievements and the contribution she has made to the association and many other worthy groups in our local area is immeasurable. Her daughter, Kylie Wagstaff, recently noted that Joan has such a strong sense of social justice that if she identifies a need, she cannot help but get involved. This level of commitment led to her meeting her husband, Allen, at a dance that she had organised to raise money to buy a few things for a nurses' home at Sutherland Hospital, where she lived and worked at the time.

Joan and Allen's marriage was to prove a wonderful partnership for which our community is grateful. Joan and Allen moved to Padstow from Sutherland in 1966 and she remained in the same house until this year. Joan was instrumental in establishing Padstow Preschool in the 1970s and as her own children grew from preschool age and entered their school years, Joan's attention turned towards Padstow Heights Public School. Her efforts over the years contributed greatly towards providing extra resources for the school and she was recognised with a life membership of the Padstow Heights Public School Parents and Citizens Association. When her two sons joined the 1st Padstow Heights Scout Group, Joan's expertise in mobilising people towards a common goal led to this scout group obtaining its own clubhouse.

However, her longest commitment by far has been with the Bankstown-East Hills Handicapped Association. Joan was headhunted by this committee as her fundraising prowess was widely recognised throughout the community. BEHHA was formed in November 1977 by a group of parents who were concerned that their children of school leaving age from the Carolyn Chisholm School were not eligible to attend the nearby sheltered workshops and were in danger of losing the skills they had obtained from the special needs school. Joan also revitalised the Queen of Bankstown Quest and coordinated this major event on the social calendar for the Bankstown local government area for over 20 years, raising nearly \$2 million. That was at a time when this sum of money was valued at considerably more than today. I remember this being the night of nights in Bankstown.

The recipients of those funds included the cancer and leukaemia unit at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Revesby YMCA, Bankstown Handicapped Children's Centre and the young adults who are part of BEHHA. The money enabled BEHHA to purchase one house, which allowed four mildly to moderately handicapped adults to move into a home and have the opportunity to live independently in supported accommodation. It was quite groundbreaking at the time. BEHHA now operates four group homes, accommodating 16 residents. Joan's work has had a lasting impact on the lives of these young adults.

Over the years, Joan's contributions have been recognised with a Bankstown citizen of the year award and, in 1991, an Order of Australia medal for her service to the community. She worked as a registered nurse throughout this time. She trained at St George Hospital in Kogarah and maintained her allegiance to St George Hospital as an active member of the St George Hospital Graduate Nurses Association, serving as both secretary and president. Their committee was tasked with preserving the history of nursing training at St George Hospital and bringing together old and new nursing graduates at the annual reunion luncheon. However, it was not all work and no play. Joan was an avid golfer. Both Joan and Allen were members of Rosnay Golf Club in Auburn, and Joan was the secretary of the ladies' golf club for 12 years. They joined the Probus Club of Menai in 2010, and Joan fulfilled the roles of both secretary and president. The majority of those committee memberships and the associated contributions overlapped. Joan rarely sat on just one committee at a time.

The opportunity shop has been a constant over the past 30 years and continues to contribute funds to BEHHA. It is about four doors from my electoral office in Revesby. Joan had worked there steadfastly until last year, when her health dictated that she end her service. She used her love of art and antiques to pick out the treasures from other people's junk and make extra money for the op shop, with regular trips to Sydney auction houses. That was not necessarily to Allen's delight, as he was tasked with the driving and heavy lifting. There would be very few residents of the Padstow, Revesby, East Hills and Picnic Point areas who have not bought a raffle ticket or lamington, been to a fete or fashion parade or bought a \$5 bag of books from the op shop that Joan had a hand in. Unfortunately, Joan is currently experiencing poor health. Everyone in East Hills wishes her well.

#### **BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:56):** Too many paramedics are working understaffed and fatigued. It is not unusual for most paramedics to work 13-plus hours without a break. Morale amongst paramedics is at an all-time low, and there is mass attrition. Despite many of them feeling that they have the best job in the world, they have the worst employer. Our paramedics need more resources, particularly an enhancement of crewing numbers. I am told by many paramedics each week that they need immediate change to save the ambulance health service, which is in crisis.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The clear convention of this Parliament is that private members' statements are used to deal with matters of local significance to a member's electorate. The member has spoken for one minute and has not mentioned her electorate. It is important that the conventions of this House—

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** There are many important issues in the community, but the purpose of private members' statements is to deal with local issues and matters of significance. That has always been the convention. The member should be observing that convention.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for Blue Mountains has the call.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Ku-ring-gai. All of this information comes on behalf of the paramedics of the Blue Mountains, so I am appalled by that interjection. Blue Mountains paramedics tell me that we need immediate change to save the ambulance health service, which is in crisis. I acknowledge Catherine Treloar, who is the organiser at the Australian Paramedics Association, and the many local paramedics in the Blue Mountains who have met with me recently. I am told by members of the We Deserve Better campaign that we are in an emergency health care crisis and that the pandemic has demonstrated how far into that crisis we are. Inadequate resourcing has led to forced overtime for years, and Blue Mountains paramedics are working up to 21 hours with no breaks and worsening response times. This has never been more clear than now.

Living regionally, as many of the paramedics in the Blue Mountains do, should not mean settling for a lower standard of health care. We must acknowledge the workforce that has to respond for that health care. Working regionally should not mean settling for inadequate resourcing or lower workplace standards. This January a formal submission was made to the parliamentary inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. That submission summarised six major recommendations for improving health care in regional communities. On behalf of Blue Mountains paramedics, I put those recommendations on the record. They need resourcing to match demand, specialist paramedic



resources, assurance that paramedics are available for emergency work and appropriately resourced local hospitals. I now give the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital a plug. They also need a review looking at which local hospitals would benefit the most from a range of diagnostic tools and technicians who can utilise those tools, and they need dedicated mental health facilities.

There needs to be a review of the triaging and referral services, and reliable communication networks must be built. I encourage all members in this place, wherever their electorates are, to read the submission by the Australian Paramedics Association. Patients are dying, and paramedics will die too if this is not fixed. I finish with some issues that were shared with me by a well-respected paramedic from the Blue Mountains, who tells me that he is broken. He has taken note of shifts allocated to him between September last year and April this year. He recorded 511 cases being allocated to him. In the Springwood area, he was allocated 190 cases, and in the Katoomba area, he was allocated 73 cases. That leaves 248 cases outside of the Blue Mountains that were allocated to him. He said that his biggest concern is that ambulances from the Blue Mountains are being used to cover other areas, so there is no cover for the residents in our area. He wanted me to let all of my colleagues in Parliament know that resources are being moved away from the Blue Mountains. It is absolutely heartbreaking. We are seeing unnecessary deaths because of these depleted resources. This Government needs to do better.

### KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (17:01):** On 25 April 1915, in the early hours of the morning, Australian and New Zealand soldiers first landed on the beaches of Gallipoli. On each Anzac Day since that war, Australians rise at dawn around the same time the Anzacs landed on the beaches over 107 years ago. We come together to honour and commemorate all the men and women who served our nation, many of whom tragically fell in battle. We awoke once more at the dawn of April 25 this year, 107 years after those soldiers landed. Despite the cold of the early morning, the Ku-ring-gai community gathered on Anzac Day this year in large numbers at the West Pymble Bicentennial Park. What followed was a dawn service that reflected the Ku-ring-gai community's respect for our veterans and their families. After two years of restrictions, it was a pleasure to see so many people come out on this occasion.

Another two local Anzac Day services took place at Wahroonga Park and Turramurra Memorial Park. All three events were organised by local scouts and guides, as well as the Rotary clubs of Wahroonga, Turramurra and Ku-ring-gai. Prior to Anzac Day, on 24 April, I was privileged to attend the Anzac march and commemorative service organised by the Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch at the Hornsby War Memorial. Each service was well supported by inspiring young people, including our local cadets, scouts and students. On 15 May Knox Grammar School will hold its annual Anzac memorial service, followed by the ceremonial cadet parade, where the young cadet unit will pay tribute to our fallen soldiers. I thank the Sydney North Region Scouts, Girl Guides NSW, our local Rotary clubs, Knox Grammar School and Hornsby RSL for organising the various services and ensuring that the memories of our fallen live on through subsequent generations. The *Ode of Remembrance* is read aloud during services, which I now read for the House:

They shall grow not old,  
as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning  
We will remember them.

I highlight a particular word: remember. If current tragic global events reveal anything, it is the importance of remembering the past. While the Gallipoli campaign was ill fated, it is the circumstances surrounding the operation that bring Australians out each year on 25 April. In World War I almost 10 per cent of Australia's population—400,000 out of five million people—volunteered to fight for the principle of freedom. By the end of the Gallipoli campaign, more than 8,000 Australians and 2,000 New Zealanders had lost their lives. Yet the Gallipoli campaign was only one of many battles in World War I and only one of many battles of the twentieth century, and over the course of our history to the present day, in which countless Australians have fought and lost their lives in battle. That is precisely why veterans, their descendants and current Defence Force personnel attend and march in services each year.

Anzac Day is about all those who fell, all those who served and all those who are still serving, and their families. It is a reminder that war must not be taken lightly, because those lost lives will never be returned. It is a reminder to value and cherish human life, and it provides us with a perspective on current events that is deeply rooted in our understanding of the past. As a descendant of a veteran myself, I remember and acknowledge the story of my father who joined the Dutch resistance as a 17-year-old during World War II. Later I learned that his main job in the resistance was to risk his life stealing guns from the Germans in broad daylight. My Dutch uncle,

Jacques Henskens, also fought in World War II and was made a prisoner of war by the Japanese on the infamous Burma railway. When the camp was liberated my six-foot uncle weighed only 40 kilograms. My father and my uncle never forgot their experiences, nor will I forget their stories. It is important that we continue to tell those stories and ensure they are remembered by future generations. Lest we forget.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:06):** This year I too attended three very moving Anzac Day commemorations in my electorate: the dawn service at Woolgoolga, the main service at Coffs Harbour and the main service at Sawtell. It has become apparent that as each year and each generation passes, more and more people are making the effort to commemorate the sacrifices of our Anzacs and our fighting men and women. We learn a lot about Gallipoli and the First World War in school. I learned the most about that campaign and that war through a podcast series called *Hardcore History* by Dan Carlin. I strongly recommend it to anyone who wishes to learn more about the First World War, its deadly horrors and what led to it. It is very informative. Lest we forget.

### COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:07):** Sport has the extraordinary capacity to shine through in difficult times to provide hope and exhilaration where they are needed the most. The past few years have been a challenge for us all. But we have always been able to turn to sport to lift our mood and spirits. Every day on the Coffs Coast, sports stars are shining brightly in their chosen pursuits. I pay tribute to some of our recent high-flyers. Coffs Coast Tigers centre back Daniel Campbell is in Barcelona representing Australia at the International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football [IFCPF] World Cup—an exciting adventure for the Coffs Harbour 19-year-old.

Last week Daniel flew from Sydney with the Pararoos and he competes at the IFCPF World Cup until 16 May. The Pararoos are currently ranked tenth in the world. They face rivals Iran and the United States in the group stages, who are ranked fourth and sixth. Coffs Harbour Surf Life Saving Club dynamo Quinn Evans—another outstanding athlete doing the Coffs Coast proud—won a national title. Quinn topped a field of 45 to win the Under 13 Male Beach Flags event at the 2022 Australian Surf Life Saving Youth Championships on the Gold Coast. That win was all the more special because it was the first time that his age group competed in that event at the nationals, making him the inaugural winner. In addition, Quinn finished sixth in the Under13 Male Beach Sprint. Our junior national champion is coached by his father, Phil, who is the beach coach for the Coffs Harbour Surf Life Saving Club.

Heading poolside, the Coffs Harbour Masters Swimming team has returned from the national masters swimming short course championships in Sydney with a spectacular medal haul. The team is still celebrating its three gold medal-winning national age-group champions. The team also excelled by winning silver and bronze relay medals. The club members' medal tallies are as follows: Grant Da Costa won two gold, two silver and two bronze; Paul Edwards, one gold, two silver and four bronze; Michael Stubbs, one gold and three silver; Louise Dam, three silver and three bronze; Richie Goddard, two silver and three bronze; Jodie Gordon, one silver and three bronze; and Leanne Da Costa, one silver and one bronze. Club members are setting their sights on the Pan Pacific Masters Games to be held on the Gold Coast in November. In the lead-up, they will watch out for other swim meets they can attend in preparation. Members of this House would be interested to know that many years ago I used to be a keen cyclist.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Many years ago.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Many, many years ago, there was a time when I could out-climb, out-sprint and out-ride young man Alex Beedie, but surely those days are past me now.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** I would think so.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** I acknowledge and agree with the assessment of my riding abilities made by the member for Tweed. Alex Beedie finished first in division 3 of the Grafton to Inverell Cycle Classic, which is perhaps one of Australia's toughest cycling events. It covers 228 kilometres from Grafton over the Gibraltar Range with 3,382 metres of vertical climbing. That is nearly halfway to Everest! Alex finished in seven hours, 12 minutes and 43 seconds. He out-sprinted a fellow rider from Newcastle to take the title. Alex is a wonderful young man. I have known him and his family for many years, and wish him every success in his future cycling career. What a fantastic achievement for Coffs Harbour cycling and the Coffs Harbour Cycle Club.

Last month, Coffs Harbour was fortunate to hold the thirty-fourth annual Australian Sikh games. The organising committee did a wonderful job under trying circumstances. In case members missed the news, we have not had a sunny day since about Christmas. The wet weather has made life very difficult for people trying to organise any sort of event. The event held over the Easter long weekend was a raging success. Some 190 teams competed in various sports—from the Indian wrestling sport of kabaddi, which attracted a lot of spectators, to

soccer, hockey, netball, golf, junior soccer, futsal, basketball and, of course, my own sport of touch football. My team was fortunate to win when the Sikh games were last held in Coffs Harbour in 2014 or 2015. Since then we have struggled to take the top step of the podium. But for the home games we lifted once again and were able to beat Sydney. It was not a narrow game at all; I think it was 6-1—we gave them a good shellacking. The boys played really well, and Woolgoolga-Coffs Harbour won the gold medal again over Sydney. "Let's trot over Sydney," as the Woolgoolga boys say.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** The Woolgoolga boys won.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Yes, the Woolgoolga boys won. Coffs Harbour has many sporting events. I congratulate everyone who has done well.

### WASTE INDUSTRY FEES

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:12):** I advise the House of the recent anxiety expressed to me by small business skip bin operators, home-owner renovators and builders in my electorate of Rockdale. In early April I was first contacted by a number of my constituents who were concerned and panicked at the effects on their businesses of the proposed new regulatory orders for the waste industry that had just been announced by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. My constituents inform me that the new orders have prompted the large vertically integrated operators in the waste industry—companies like Bingo that operate waste transfer stations and big tips as well as skip bin services—to change how they charge small independent skip bin operators for tipping, from a cubic metre rate to a tonnage rate.

Construction and demolition waste is usually quite heavy, so the result of that change will be to increase the fees for disposing of a skip bin from a building site by up to 500 per cent. Small operators, like my constituents, would face wipe-out if they have to tell their customers that their prices are increasing by 500 per cent. Some have pre-sold bins to builders based on the old rates and would be financially obliterated by the sudden changes. People who were building or renovating would have seen their construction budgets blow out enormously. In the end, the big, vertically integrated operators would have avoided much of the extra cost because they have waste transfer stations and own the tips—as Mr Temporary Speaker the member for Upper Hunter would know, being a person of the building industry—so they can absorb it all without having to cop that big hit. At the end of the day, the bigger operators would have wiped out all of the smaller skip bin operators overnight, and that is the dilemma we faced.

The proposed regulatory order should never have got past the first post. The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] clearly did not perform the proper research and consultation because, if it had, it would have realised how it was going to smash smaller skip operators and their customers. What is worse is that it was not that hard to work that out or to establish what the impact would have been. I met with dozens of skip bin operators at a public meeting in a Bunnings car park at Milperra, and they were very happy to make clear what the problem was in just a few minutes. If I could grasp the problem in one evening, why couldn't the EPA? I can only assume their consultation was flawed or they decided to ignore all small business and consumer impact.

Most disgracefully, the Minister for Small Business ignored small businesses when they screamed out for help. When they begged for a fair hearing, the environment Minister turned them away. Both Ministers were perfectly happy to see a regulation go through that would destroy many small businesses and hand an entire market over to a tiny number of large companies. Small operators were facing the loss of their livelihoods and the assets that many of them are paying off—their trucks, their yards and even their family homes—and those Ministers did not care.

Thankfully, after intense lobbying and some outstanding support from those who understood what was at stake, the EPA saw sense and yesterday announced a backdown. I will watch carefully to ensure that the vertically integrated waste operators reflect that in their fees and charges moving forward. I welcome that overdue decision and I put the Government on notice: I will make sure small businesses across New South Wales are protected from having their livelihoods destroyed by the Liberal Government's sloppy and lazy management. I thank Ben Fordham and his listeners for their support as well as all of the wonderful, hardworking small business operators who rallied and campaigned tirelessly on this issue over the past six weeks. Their efforts have paid off and the Government has been forced to backflip. Well done.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:17):** I agree with the beginning of the statement by the member for Rockdale that it was a shock to the industry and there was merit in some of the cases put forward. Where I disagree with the member for Rockdale is that I question if he actually made a submission to the Minister for Fair Trading and the environment Minister. I did, and I got a fairly positive response back. They were aware of the issue and it has been resolved. I would suggest the member for Rockdale, being fairly new in this place, make representations to the appropriate Ministers. That way he can look after his constituents, as I did in the Tweed.

## TRANSPHOBIA

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:18):** So much is being said about trans and gender diverse people at the moment. I have no interest in repeating the hateful, bigoted and straight up dangerous things that have been said and repeated in commentary in recent weeks. I will not name names or give any more oxygen to the people who are playing with the lives of others for their own gain, but I do have a message for them on behalf of the people of Newtown: Your words have consequences. They cause harm and lasting pain, and you are inspiring hatred, discrimination and in some cases even violence. We are seeing the consequences of your disgraceful words and actions playing out right now.

The incredibly hardworking advocates and service providers working with trans and gender diverse communities are telling us that as a direct result of the comments being made in the media and in politics over the past few weeks and months, they are being inundated with desperate pleas from people who are at breaking point. People are being screamed at on the street. They are having their hair and genitals pulled and grabbed at, and children in playgrounds are directly quoting members of Parliament as they harass and abuse trans and gender diverse young people in the schoolyard.

If that makes members feel uncomfortable, they might tell themselves that this is just the rough-and-tumble of politics. They might try to dismiss it as a tricky area that needs to be explored. To that I say: Sure, elections come and go, governments change and the public moves on. But what remains is the pain, the hurt and the trauma that is inflicted on individuals and communities whose lives and identities are questioned and invalidated for political gain, and it is a disgrace. Long after the headlines disappear, the damage remains and the abuse and discrimination continues. The harm inflicted cannot be undone with one meeting; there are long-term consequences for such actions.

What is never acknowledged in these discussions, however, is the enormous contribution that trans and gender diverse people make to our society. Despite what some would have us believe, trans and gender diverse people are people like everybody else. They work, pay taxes and contribute to our society. They are our friends, our children, our parents and our partners, who love and are loved. They are our teachers, our bus drivers, our favourite baristas or our favourite bartenders. They are artists and sports stars. They are not a punching bag or a political football, and they are certainly not to be used as collateral damage in a fight between warring factions.

Trans and gender diverse folks are also working on the front lines to support their own constantly attacked communities. The counsellors, advocates and support workers at the Gender Centre, ACON, Twenty10 and QLife—to name just a few—are working under enormous pressures, with very little resourcing to support their own community members who just cannot take any more attacks. Those services urgently need proper resourcing, and it is not acceptable that people in this Chamber and their colleagues feel okay about putting those communities at serious risk of harm in the interests of a few votes while refusing to provide the necessary funding and resources to save lives.

I say to anyone in this Chamber—whether the Premier, the Treasurer or others—who may be feeling a little guilty and looking for a way to be an ally to the trans and gender diverse community that there is a simple solution: Step up and fund those services properly. When a community is under attack, they need real allies. The recent Trans and Gender Diverse Swim Night hosted by the Inner West Council at Ashfield pool, with the Dykes on Bikes turning up as a welcoming party to make sure everyone felt safe as they entered the pool, is a clear example of real allyship. Transphobia affects and infects all parts of our society across the political spectrum, and it will take every single one of us to stay vigilant to stamp that out. It will not be simple and it will not be easy, but it is absolutely necessary. To the trans and gender diverse people right across the country, from all of my Greens colleagues and from the people of the electorate of Newtown, I say this: We see you, we hear you and we value you. You are not up for debate. You are valid, you are beautiful, you are loved, and you deserve to be treated with equal dignity and respect.

## CENTRAL COAST MARINERS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:22):** I have to declare a conflict of interest: I am a paid-up Central Coast Mariners member and season ticket holder. I was at the game last weekend where the Central Coast Mariners played in front of over 11,000 people at Central Coast Stadium as the F3 Derby closed out the regular A-League season. The Central Coast Mariners will feature in the finals series for the second season running, the only New South Wales team left in the A-League finals series—the little club with a big heart. A goal from Jason Cummings in the first half was added to in the second by Frenchman Béni N'Kololo. The Mariners finished off the season in great fashion with three points against their rivals from up the F3, the Newcastle Jets, condemning them to an Australia Cup play-off—so a doubly great result on the night. I apologise to all my Newcastle colleagues.

It was also a big night for the Mariners because they announced Richard Peil has joined the board of the Central Coast Mariners and Central Coast Mariners Academy as a director. Richard joins the club as a board member. He is set to be appointed as the new chairman, pending approval by Football Australia and Australian Professional Leagues. Richard will play a major role in the funding and strategic direction of the club. Mike Charlesworth will resign as director of the board once the approval processes have been completed. I thank Mike for his involvement with the club. Richard has an excellent track record in the sports industry through his company, Anytime Fitness, and that experience will help grow our club. As Mike Charlesworth has said, Richard's energy is infectious, and it is great that football runs through his veins. Mike went on to say:

The focus of the club for many years was unashamedly survival, but with a great team of people both on and off the pitch, I'm sure Richard can build on the growth we've seen these last couple of years.

I have to give a big shout-out to Nick Montgomery, who has taken over as head coach. On the night, Nick was quick to hail the ready-made Mariners Academy stars, given their miraculous season, as his squad ticked off the second of its two pre-season targets in style. At the press conference Nick said:

I'm delighted ... I've said it numerous times, we set ourselves a target at the start of the year: to get as far as we could in the FFA Cup – and we made the final... but also to get into the top six.

We have achieved that again. The big story this season has been the young players who have stepped up. Going through the list of the first-team players who have been playing regularly and looking at their ages, I think the rest of the A-League should have a good, hard look at how well the Mariners have done.

Starting at the back, there is Lewis Miller, who is only 22 years old. He will probably play for Australia one day; he is one of the best fullbacks in the league. Kye Rowles, who is already a Socceroo, is 24. Josh Nisbet is 23. Moresche, our Brazilian import, is only 24. Max Balard is 22. Jacob Farrell, who has had an absolutely incredible season, is only 20. Dan Hall, who has been an absolute rock at the back, is 23. My nephew Matt Hatch, who this year scored the fastest-ever goal in the A-League—the fourth-fastest in the world—is coming on as a substitute. I am very proud of that family connection. Harrison Steele, who is only 20, plays in the midfield. And the great success story is Garang Kuol, who has come on at 17 years of age. His older brother, who is now playing with Stuttgart and played with the Mariners last season, says that Garang is an even better player. He has come on in the second half of the season after recovering from injury and has made a huge impact on the A-League.

Combine that with some of the older players. Mark Birighitti is the number one goalkeeper in the league. Mark has had an absolutely incredible season. There is Nicolai Muller, Béni Nkololo and Jason Cummins. Marco Urena, who is my favourite player at the Mariners, just goes and goes. He is our Costa Rican import and a fantastic player. But I think it all comes down to Nick Montgomery, who has been able to mould together a squad of really young players with some experience. We lost Oliver Bozanic halfway through the season and, of course, that has been a loss. They stuttered for a short while, but they have come back. I think they have had eight wins, a few draws and only one loss in the second half of the season, which is incredible. I wish them well in the final series. They kick off against Adelaide. Whatever the result, they have had Central Coast Stadium rocking once again to our theme, "Won't Back Down", and that is exactly how the Mariners play every single game.

## **GYMEA JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB**

### **MIRANDA MAGPIES FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)**  
**(17:27):** Sport is at the heart of who we are in the shire. Today I acknowledge milestone anniversaries for the GyMEA Junior Rugby League Football Club—the Gorillas—and Miranda Magpies Football Club. The mighty Gorillas are celebrating 60 wonderful years this year, having been founded in 1962. Kids of the shire found a love for this great sport when it was played during lunch and recess, as well as on Friday afternoons, when students would play against other shire schools. The popularity of the sport was the catalyst for the formation of the first GyMEA team to play in the local junior league competition on Saturday mornings.

Originally known as the GyMEA Bay Junior Rugby League Football Club and affiliated with the GyMEA Bay sports club, four teams were entered into the Cronulla junior competition, with a total of 51 players. In that significant year, a meeting took place that culminated in breaking away from the GyMEA Bay sports club. The course of action was on the insistence of Ron Hathaway, Tim Allen and Lance Handley, and it is said that those three men brought about the formation of the GyMEA Junior Rugby League Football Club. The Gorillas have now grown to be one of the largest clubs in the Sutherland shire, with over 600 players. Ranging from under-6s to open age rugby league, girls league tag and men's over-35 league tag, the fantastic club has a strong community, promoting values based on respect, sportsmanship and family.

With a proud history, the Gorillas have produced many great rugby league players, including the late Greg Pierce, a former captain of the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks and the Kangaroos, and former

Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks captains David Hatch and Greg Nixon. Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedicated team of men and women who volunteer their time to ensure that players and their families are provided with the best possible experience. I commend the executive committee, including Shaun Dooley, Mark Hartley, Tony Ash, Steve Coffey, Chris Allen, Jeff Payn and Simone Payn, as well as Chris Brown, Lisa Coffey, Steve Hardy, Bev Herbert, Mark Smith, Sarah Catlett and Keith O'Grady.

Another great sporting organisation, which is celebrating its seventieth anniversary this year, are the fantastic Magpies. Officially established in 1952, the Magpies have a proud history that extends as early as the 1920s. As one of the first clubs to join the Sutherland Association—today known as the Sutherland Shire Football Association—the Magpies are the oldest football club in the Sutherland shire. During the first few years of the association's existence all junior soccer was conducted on two fields at Seymour Shaw Park, today the Magpies home ground. However, just prior to the 1957 season, by a slender majority, a resolution to decentralise soccer was adopted. By 1968 Miranda Magpies had 44 teams with 537 registered players. Over the past 50 years Miranda has changed significantly from being a semi-rural area to the commercial heart of the Sutherland shire, and the Magpies have embraced that change and continued to grow.

As of 2021, the Magpies have a proud 89 registered teams, with over 1,000 registered players, and continue to be one of the largest sporting hubs in the Miranda electorate. Today the Magpies are dedicated to creating an inclusive club for all players of all skill levels to socialise and develop their love for football. They are particularly proud of their success in building the number of female players and have been very successful in previous years, winning several State Cups and Champions of Champions competitions. Like so many great sporting groups in the shire, many players who have worn the famous black-and-white colours have gone on to higher representative levels, including Alex Gersbach, who is currently playing for the Socceroos, and Teigan Collister and Mark Natta, who are both playing for the Western Sydney Wanderers.

I had the pleasure of visiting the Magpies a few months ago to join them in celebrating the grand opening of new the clubhouse facilities. The much-needed upgrades involved a kitchen renovation, ensuring the health and wellbeing of all community members using the facility; three new changing rooms, with one changing room dedicated to females only; and an upgrade to the existing meeting and function room. These upgrades were imperative for the club's success as it continues to grow and support women's football and the development of the world game. I commend the Magpies' executive committee for its outstanding dedication and commitment, which has continued to shape this great club. I recognise Gary O'Riordan, Darren Smith, Luke Richardson, Craig Smith, Jo Milburn and Tracey Lentell. I extend my very best wishes to everyone at the Gynea Gorillas and Miranda Magpies and look forward to participating in their milestone celebrations this year.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:32):** I commend the member for Miranda for her ongoing support of sport in her local area. As an old shire boy from Caringbah, I know how deeply entrenched sport is within the electorate. I know from social media that the member for Miranda has supported both the young and the old grades, and the adult teams as well. With a dedicated local member like her, all the sports have a bright future. The State Government is committed to supplying first-grade facilities for all sports. Well done to the member for Miranda.

#### **BEVERLY HILLS TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (17:33):** I speak today about the Beverly Hills Town Centre Master Plan. Beverly Hills is well known for its bustling night-life and dining and entertainment districts. It has a wide array of small restaurants, cafes and eateries—and, of course, the longstanding Beverly Hills cinema. After the Coalition Government put a toll of \$7 each way on the M5 East in 2020, Beverly Hills has seen a huge increase in traffic, especially heavy vehicles travelling along King Georges Road and Stoney Creek Road, with motorists seeking to avoid tolls. Poor planning and a lack of parking has had a dramatically negative effect on the suburb of Beverly Hills and its shopping district. It is no surprise that residents in the community have long called for a revitalisation of the area.

The town centre master plan was created by Georges River Council in 2020. Its purpose was to "establish a new vision for the Beverly Hills town centre", which would guide the future of the suburb and "its ongoing transformation as a liveable and attractive place". The community remains concerned about plans for compulsory acquisition. To add insult to injury, Transport for NSW's current proposed car park in Beverly Hills—which went from 400 to 600 spaces after an announcement by the New South Wales Government—is just 200 spaces. And these spaces will be available only for commuters using their Opal Card. I have written to the head of Transport for NSW requesting that he meet my residents and explain what happened to the other 200 to 400 spaces that had previously been promised.

Beverly Hills needs revitalisation. We can all agree on that. I know that for many it is long overdue. But it must be done in consultation with the local community. We all need to endeavour to get it right. Beverly Hills is

a long-established suburb with families that have lived there for generations. These are not just houses; these are family homes, and this is, of course, a community. Recently I held a community forum at St Bede's Anglican Church with almost 140 residents in attendance. It was full to overflowing with locals having their say about the future of their district. Residents remain opposed to compulsory acquisition. They want to see appropriate development and they want to see the local shopping precinct revitalised. Eight councillors, including the mayor and the deputy mayor, were in attendance to listen to residents. I thank mayor Nick Katris, deputy mayor Kathryn Landsberry, and ward councillors Colleen Symington and Ben Wang, along with councillors Natalie Mort, Elise Borg, Christina Jamieson and Peter Mahoney for their attendance.

The forum demonstrated what real community consultation looks like. Residents had an opportunity to have their say, with the eight councillors providing feedback. Following two years of lockdowns, Zoom meetings and online submissions, it was certainly refreshing to get everyone together in the one room to hear their perspectives. I have lobbied the council to further extend the consultation period for the town centre in order to give residents another opportunity to have their views heard. We need to see appropriate development that will revitalise the shops and enhance the amenity of Beverly Hills. It can be done, but it needs to be done in concert with the local community and shopkeepers, and with an eye to the local environment. Beverly Hills is a wonderful community and we all want to keep it that way.

#### **MANLY UNDER-16S SENIOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAM**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (17:36):** I bring to the attention of the House the fantastic achievement of the Manly under-16s senior league baseball team. Last month, after making its way through the competition, it beat Cronulla Black to become the New South Wales State champions, having already secured a place in the national titles. I give a big congratulations to the team and also to the women's second grade team, which finished fourth this season. It is a fantastic achievement and one that I hope will shine a light on what is a great sport for young Australians and a lot of young people in the Manly area to be involved in.

The Manly Warringah District Baseball Association provides a representative pathway for players aged between eight and 16 years and competes in the State league. Formed way back in 1950, the club was invited to become a member of the NSW Baseball Union in 1960 and has fielded teams in competitions ever since, doing Manly proud. In 1976 the club was allocated grounds by the Manly Warringah Joint District Parks Committee to assist it with developing the sport in the local area. Over the years, with grants from the New South Wales Government and the Northern Beaches Council, it has built up facilities to become one of the best baseball clubs in all of the State. The Manly Warringah District Baseball Association proudly boasts two members who have played at Olympic level: Mark Doubleday in Atlanta and Rodney Van Buizen in Sydney and Athens. It has also contributed players to the professional leagues in the United States of America.

It is great to see baseball gaining such a strong following in Manly and indeed across New South Wales. It has continued to have one over many years. I give a huge congratulations to the committee, the team, the players and the coaches on what has been a great season. I acknowledge president PJ Patterson, secretary Stuart Hanrahan, treasurer Carly Clarke and the board of directors of the club, including Darren Kelly, Mark Lowe, Helen Wyatt, Joe Weller, Mike O'Neill and Ash Roberts. I wish the senior league team the best of luck over the weekend as it competes at the national titles at the Geelong Baseball Centre in Victoria. I am sure it will do Manly incredibly proud and bring home the trophy to New South Wales. I congratulate the Manly Warringah District Baseball Association on an outstanding season and I thank all the community members who have worked very hard to support them.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:39):** I extend my congratulations and commendations to the community of Port Macquarie Hastings on its robust and extensive engagement during the development of its community strategic plan [CSP], *Imagine 2050*. I also commend the staff involved in the development of *Imagine 2050* for providing a range of opportunities for the community to participate. In the end, nearly 1,800 people provided input over 15 months to help shape the draft plan, reflecting the community's vision, objectives, and strategies for the future and how we will work together to achieve those goals over the next 30 years. The document is a statutory requirement for New South Wales councils and is a part of a suite of documents that are required to be endorsed by council by the 30 June following a council election. The community engagement document notes that the CSP is "a culmination of extensive community input", "defines our community's vision" and "is one of the most important planning documents for the Port Macquarie-Hastings region."

I also note that the same document states on page 11 that:

Priority areas that the community would like to see Council take action within the next four years is more shared paths for walking and cycling, improve our road networks and traffic congestion, improve major infrastructure, address climate change and disaster mitigation, and protect the natural environment.

It should be no surprise then that these priority areas were reflected in the final CSP that was presented to councillors for endorsement at their most recent meeting. Page 11 of *Imagine 2050* noted that one of the community concerns was the impacts of climate change. On page 22 it further noted that the community said that it wanted to reduce its carbon emissions and respond to climate change.

Page 29 notes that, in order to be effective, the community must continually consider the question of how it best empowers its residents to prepare for natural disasters and the impacts of climate change. It is somewhat disappointing, therefore, that the views of the community following extensive consultation were ignored when the councillors resolved at their meeting on 28 April this year to adopt the CSP. The motion was resolved in the affirmative, but it included a request to the CEO to remove any references to climate change from the CSP.

In many ways, the community should not be surprised as the council has already resolved to rescind its climate emergency declaration and has flagged its intention to rescind its Climate Change Response Policy. This contradicts many other existing council policies and statements, including the key community theme of achieving a connected, sustainable and accessible community and environment through minimising the impact of natural events and climate change. I make it clear that I absolutely accept the differing views of those who reside in the Port Macquarie electorate, whether it be in relation to local roads, sporting fields, health services or climate change. What I will not accept is the blatant misrepresentation of others, including the New South Wales Government, by councillors during debate on this issue. During debate in the 28 April council meeting Mayor Peta Pinson stated in reference to climate change:

We should be a leader but we know that at local government level, we are unable to lead this from the bottom especially when we know the two tiers of government above us have not scripted what climate change action looks like.

The New South Wales Government's *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030* is the foundation of New South Wales' action on climate change. Its goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 clearly demonstrates that it is taking decisive and responsible action on climate change. In fact, it is leading the nation. Its plan outlines how we will reduce emissions by growing the economy, creating jobs and reducing household costs over the next decade. Furthermore, the Australian Government has developed a National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy, positioning Australia to better anticipate, manage and adapt to our changing climate. The words of Local Government NSW, which can be found on its website under the heading "Climate Change", are:

With increased incidents of heat waves, droughts, bushfires, rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns, and more frequent and intense weather events, Australia's climate is changing.

Along with state and federal governments, local government has a responsibility to adopt policies and practices that prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change ... and minimise the risks to the community through limiting carbon emissions ...

Climate change has the potential to damage council assets, cause serious disruptions to the delivery of council services, generate unbudgeted financial impacts, and affect the overall wellbeing of the community – particularly those most vulnerable to weather extremes.

In the almost 12 years that I have represented the people of my electorate I can certainly attest to the changing and increasing relevance of this issue to the community. In fact, this was vindicated in a recent *Port Macquarie News* survey, in which climate change was ranked as the number one issue in both the Cowper and the Lyne electorates. The community are well past debating whether climate change exists. They are well past debating who is responsible. I suggest that what they are seeking is leadership as provided by both the Commonwealth and State governments and by Local Government NSW so that we can achieve "a connected, sustainable, accessible community and environment that is protected now and into the future", as highlighted by the council in its own documentation.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (17:44):** In my capacity as Minister for the environment, I echo the words and the concern raised by the member for Port Macquarie with respect to the Port Macquarie Hastings Community Strategic Plan, which by all accounts seems to be a well considered and thought-out plan, aside from the shocking omission of anything dealing with climate change. New South Wales is leading the country with respect to our net zero plan and the strategies and work we are doing within the environment space. So I echo her concerns with this change to the community strategic plan being put forward by Port Macquarie Hastings Council. It is a terrible omission. The reality is, as she said, the community is looking for leadership, not people shirking their responsibilities when it comes to issues as important as climate change and our environment more broadly. I commend the private member's statement.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (17:45):** Across Pittwater, parents are grappling with the impact of social media on the lives of their children and the health of their families. Parents are telling me that they are literally losing their children to the addiction of social media. Younger and younger, children are exposed to technology that threatens their physical and mental wellbeing, their childhood freedom, their very innocence and their opportunity to grow slowly and safely, and to explore imaginary worlds in their imagination, not confected worlds on their screens. Young people are telling me that their experiences with social media are not liberating, but stifling, leading to disengagement, agoraphobia, loneliness, bullying, predation, anxiety and depression. This is not okay. The world created by social media is not a safe place.

The United States Supreme Court declared in *Packingham v North Carolina* the internet to be the modern public square, and Elon Musk recently reduced this metaphor to only social media, describing it as a de facto public square. The reality is that social media is less a public space and more a privatised shopping mall in a slimy part of town. These companies are private, not public. They are looking for profit, not acting in the public interest. They use massive amounts of data to influence you to stay logged on and scrolling for as long as possible because that equates to relevance, advertising and millions of dollars for investors. In *Stolen Focus*, Johann Hari describes the social media industry as an arms race to manipulate human nature.

Social media is not what its moniker suggests. It is exclusive, insecure, lonely and unsafe. Let us be real: Supporting genuine, reasoned and respectful debate on Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok is as likely as making friends or having a deep conversation in the gaming room of a casino. And, just as the gaming room of a casino is shaped to disorientate patrons, stimulate their senses and anaesthetise their scruples, social media is often designed by the same people who design gaming machines—and with the same principles in mind. Social media is deliberately designed to make it easy to enter but difficult to leave.

Philosopher Jürgen Habermas would not recognise social media as a public sphere, which he defined as one open to all citizens, not acting on behalf of private interests, where there is no intimidating force and where citizens assemble and unite freely to express their opinions. He did, however, recognise that the world was disintegrating into a public sphere in appearance only, as we retreated into our homes from the 1970s, the Fordist-welfarist system having resolved the major issues that required public engagement and activism. Technology may have re-engaged the community, but virtually not physically. Just as the images on a screen are ephemeral and intangible, the digital world is a shadow land. It is not real, and it cannot satiate our human appetite for human interaction, for nature and for engagement with our surroundings. Digital media emaciates humanity.

While social media may be an opiate for the vulnerable, it can be a weapon for the powerful. Donald Trump knew this and used Twitter to dictate his agenda. It is the reason Elon Musk bought Twitter. He recognises its power to curate the opinions of the decision-makers: media, politicians and other elites. Rather than inspiring the next phase of democracy, social media is a threat to democracy. For genuine democracy to flourish, we need to promote real public places over artificial ones: real parks and real paths and places where young people are not directed by profiteering and filtering, where families, friends, neighbours and strangers can meet together in a real environment to celebrate their shared humanity and not be separated by technology that creates secrets, guilt, judgement, risk and exclusion.

Of course, physical public squares have historically been designed to control or to exclude, just as social media does today. We need to be vigilant to design places that, unlike social media platforms, are safe, welcoming, inclusive and free from hidden obligation; places that, unlike social media, embrace rather than disclaim their duty to care for people and keep them safe; places that facilitate genuine connections to humans and nature, where people are free to express and learn about themselves and explore the world they live in. Social media is not the future of democracy. It is not a public place. It may make a useful servant, but it is a terrible master. It does not allow for reasoned debate between individuals but encourages anonymity that facilitates cruelty and hatred. It is time we call out social media and its bosses, and reclaim our democracy.

## WOODLANDS HOUSE

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:50):** Woodlands, a Victorian-era house built in the 1880s in what was then Lindfield, now Killara, in my electorate of Davidson, was recently awarded a blue plaque in recognition of its historical significance as the home of author Ethel Turner. Turner wrote the iconic Australian novel *Seven Little Australians* whilst living at Woodlands—which was then named Inglewood—with her family, in 1893. The house, together with the surrounding bushland, inspired 21-year-old Ethel to write her first and best-known novel about Australian life. Ethel was already an accomplished writer before *Seven Little Australians* was published in 1894, having combined with her sister Lilian—who later had five of her own novels published—to publish a regular journal called *Tales from the Parthenon*. Two stories singled out from that publication were

entitled *Gladys and the Fairies* and *A Dreadful Pickle*. I make no comment on those titles with respect to more modern times.

Ethel's debut novel started life with the working title "Seven Pickles"—a name that quite possibly would not have resulted in it being in constant print for well over 100 years if it had not become *Seven Little Australians* prior to publication. Turner was a prolific writer, with over 40 novels published, together with numerous short stories and several poems. Most of her novels, including *Seven Little Australians*, were written for children, and several continued the stories of the Woolcot family, who featured in her first novel. In 1896, at the age of 26, Turner married Herbert Curlewis, a fellow writer and later a judge in the NSW Industrial Arbitration Court, and she left her childhood home for the last time. She spent the last 65 years of her life in the Mosman home that she and Curlewis built, until her death in 1958.

Although Albert and Eva Lim, who had migrated to Australia from Malaysia in 2015, had been searching for a new home for two years, they were not househunting on the day in 2017 when they took Albert's brother-in-law to an open house inspection at Woodlands. However, they were immediately captivated by the character of the old Victorian house, which was included on the State Heritage Register in 2007 for its cultural, historical and architectural significance. A few months later, they took possession of the keys to their new home. Told briefly that Woodlands had been home to a writer, they decided to learn about Ethel Turner. Although her iconic novel was still well known, they realised that Ethel Turner had largely been forgotten so they immediately set about to rectify that. In conjunction with local historians and the local council, Albert and Eva set about restoring both house and garden to their former glory days.

Although keen to modernise the functionality of Woodlands, they renovated and furnished parts of the house to reflect its 1890s inspiration for Turner's imagination, complete with her complete works in their library. Its gardens have been carefully and thoughtfully planted in sections of English formal, English cottage and Australian native, as they had been in Turner's day. Albert and Eva now host regular Friends of Ethel Turner events at Woodlands. They are planning school educational excursions and, this coming weekend, will host two events in conjunction with the Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival, one of which I will speak at. A further event is in the planning stages, to be held when their blue plaque is installed later this year. I commend Albert and Eva Lim for their vision and dedication to preserving Ethel Turner and the home of her youth for all Australians. I will conclude with Albert's own words:

Woodlands has been around before I existed. It will be around long after I cease to exist. As its present custodian, if I do not do this that I am doing, who else?

#### *Bills*

### **ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (MINES AND PETROLEUM SITES) AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

#### **Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

### **THE GRAND MUFTI DR IBRAHIM ABU MOHAMMED'S IFTAR DINNER**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I congratulate our Muslim community on the important celebration of the holy month of Ramadan and I am pleased to acknowledge the Grand Mufti Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed's Iftar on Saturday April 9th at The Al Nawawi Centre in Chester Hill. This year Ramadan runs from April 1st to May 1st. My electorate of Bankstown is home to one of the strongest Islamic communities in Australia to which this special occasion is one of the most important celebrations of the year. Ramadan is a special time for many Muslims, it is a time for praying, spiritual reflection, family and community bonding. At the end of every Ramadan day after the sun has set, the fast is broken with the traditional Iftar dinner. The Iftar dinner is a unique cultural experience and an important community moment. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Grand Mufti, and his team, on a successful Iftar Dinner. I hope everybody observing Ramadan across my community had a happy and blessed month.

### **ISLAMIC CHARITY PROJECTS ASSOCIATION**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I congratulate our Muslim community on the important celebration of the holy month of Ramadan and I am pleased to acknowledge the Islamic Charity Projects Association's Iftar Dinner on Friday 8th April at Salamah College in Chester Hill. This year Ramadan runs from the April 1st to May 1st. My electorate of Bankstown is home to one of the strongest Islamic communities in

Australia to which this special occasion is one of the most important celebrations of the year. Ramadan is a special time for many Muslims, it is a time for praying, spiritual reflection, family and community bonding. At the end of every Ramadan day after the sun has set, the feast is broken with the traditional iftar dinner. The iftar dinner is a unique cultural experience and an important community moment. I take this opportunity to thank the Islamic Charity Projects Association on a successful Iftar, particularly the President Haj Muhammed Mehio, Manager Mohamad Thams, Treasurer Bilal Homaysi, Secretary Ziad Eldaoud and the entire Executive, staff and volunteers of this most prestigious community organisation. I hope everyone observing Ramadan across my community had a happy and blessed month.

#### **ST EUPHEMIA GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I take this opportunity to acknowledge St Euphemia Greek Parish at Bankstown on their Greek Orthodox Good Friday Service which was hosted on April 22nd. Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and is a day of mourning for those of the Christian faith. The St Euphemia Greek Parish has a large congregation and I was pleased to see many parishioners attend the service this year, following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. I thank the parishioners and the priests on undertaking such a wonderful service to mark the start of the Easter celebrations for not only the Greek Orthodox community but also the broader orthodox community in New South Wales. In particular, I wish to recognise Father Panagiotis Protosaltis and Father Peter Mavrommatis for their service. I hope all those observing the celebration in my Electorate of Bankstown had a blessed and safe Easter.

#### **WARATAH-MAYFIELD DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB AWARDS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—After a couple of COVID-19 impacted seasons, it was great to see local sporting teams get through a summer season. The Waratah-Mayfield District Cricket Club managed to get a season under its belt and recently held their annual presentation evening. Congratulations to Robert Redpath who was named Club Person Of The Year. Life Membership was awarded to Jake Lowe and the President's Mug went to Josh McTaggart. Other award winners were Kyle Faber for 1st Grade Batting, Lachy Taylor for 1st Grade Bowling, Josh Brackenbury for 2nd Grade Batting, Robert Hill for 2nd Grade Bowling, Grant Hines for 3rd Grade Batting, Jack Dundas for 3rd Grade Bowling, Michael Redpath for 4th Grade Batting, Robert Redpath for 4th Grade Bowling, Paul George for Div4 Bowling, John Slobodniuk for Div5 Batting, Arnold Bartlett for Div5 Bowling, Jake Morgan-Monk for Div6 Batting, Jackson Glasheen for Div6 Bowling, Craig Sharp for Dev League Batting, Josh Claridge who was the Summer Bash MVP and Josh McTaggart who was the Under 21 MVP. Well done to all the award winners on a great season. A huge thank you to all the volunteers in the Club for their tireless efforts.

#### **ADAMSTOWN ROSEBUD JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Adamstown Rosebud Junior Soccer Club was formed by like-minded amateur soccer enthusiasts in 1952, eventually becoming known as Adamstown Rosebud Junior Football Club. They wanted to promote soccer as a healthy pastime for young people. At their first meeting they agreed on the Club colours – Green, White and Red – and that their home ground would be Adamstown Park, where it remains to this day. The Club has grown immensely from those formative years and boasts players that have gone on to play in the A-League, W-League, Matildas and overseas clubs. Credit for much of the growth in the 1980's to 2000's must go to Club stalwarts, Margaret and Frank Toohey. Two of the Club's National Premier League Women's players, Imanee Burke and Georgia Thiveos, the "Face of the Buds", have spent their entire football career at the Buds, joining as MiniRoos at the age of five. The Club continues to field teams in community grassroots MiniRoos and inter-district competitions for boys and girls from five upwards. Adamstown Park is a hive of activity of Saturday's at Buds grassroots home games. Congratulations on 70 years and here's too many more.

#### **AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS LAMBTON**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Since 1990, the Red Cross Trauma Teddies have been a source of comfort and security for millions of Australian kids in crisis. Each colourful teddy is hand-knitted by a volunteer. The ladies from Australian Red Cross Lambton are a part of 75 nationwide groups who sew and distribute more than 50,000 each year. The twelve ladies, all in their 70s and 80s, deliver the 32cm tall stuffed friends to emergency services as well as hospitals and medical practices all over Newcastle and even as far as Singleton and Nelson Bay. Unfortunately, without more volunteers, the Lambton branch say that they might have to hang up their knitting needles, and have put the call out to attract more members. In addition to the teddies, the team began producing twiddle muffs last year for patients with dementia. The team is planning to host knitting lessons for all ages each Monday, beginning next month. I would like to thank Dianne Hellyer, Hunter Co-ordinator of Trauma Teddies, and the rest of her team, for the outstanding effort they put in for this great cause.

### HOO LEUNG 100TH BIRTHDAY

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—It is with great pleasure that today I acknowledge Mr Hoo Leung on his 100th birthday which he celebrated on the 5th May 2022. I am sure Hoo celebrated this momentous occasion accompanied by his closest friends and family. I take this opportunity to again extend my sincere congratulations to Hoo and wish him good health and happiness for the future.

### GUILDFORD WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL ANZAC DAY

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Wednesday 27 April 2022, I was delighted to join Guildford West Public School, Principal Ms Kerry Weston and Merrylands RSL Club Sub-Branch Members to pay our respects during the ANZAC Day Assembly. I congratulate all students for their reverence during the ceremony to commemorate those members of the Australian Defence Forces who lost their lives at Gallipoli, and at other battles in Australia's war efforts throughout history. I commend staff and teachers of Guildford West Public School for the organisation of the order of service and for their commitment to keeping the ANZAC spirit alive within their students.

### MAISOON SAMIR YALDA

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I commend the efforts of Mrs Maisoon Samir Yalda of the Chaldean League of Australia in running the Australian Citizenship Test classes program. Mrs Yalda has devised an "Understanding Citizenship" program to assist aspirants achieve their Australian Citizenship. As can be appreciated sitting a test in a foreign language would be a daunting task for any person, especially those suffering from the trauma and stress of displacement. Mrs Yalda is delivering an eight week course for citizenship candidates which explains the requirements of the citizenship test and outlines Australian ideals and values. The course has become so widely regarded and popular that Mrs Yalda has participants via Zoom from Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and other parts of Australia. The program is not confined to Chaldean speakers but open to Arabic speakers regardless of religion or ethnicity. Mrs Yalda and the Chaldean League are proud of their achievements in relation to the Citizenship program. I congratulate the Chaldean League of Australia President Mr Laith Alchinno and Citizenship Program Coordinator Mrs Maisoon Samir Yalda for the outstanding success of the program.

### MOUNTIES ANZAC DAY SERVICE

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—Mounties group annually pay their respects on ANZAC Day with commemorative ceremonies at their sites in Western Sydney, Northern Beaches and the Central Coast. On ANZAC Day 25th April 2022, joined in with ex-service personnel, current serving men and women, club members and local residents at the midday service at Mounties Mount Pritchard. It was a pleasure to listen to the winners from local schools in the ANZAC Memorial essay writing competition. The contributions were heartfelt and moving. Mounties Sub-Club Triglav hosted the traditional sunset service. This service is held as the sun sets on our lands but also coincides with the rising of the sun in Slovenia, Europe. It was an honour to have participated in the service with the reading of the prayer. I congratulate Mounties CEO Mr Dale Hunt, Western Site Manager Mr Jason Woods and staff for the organisation of the memorial services across the Mounties group.

### SUTHERLAND STRIKE TEAMS ALPHA AND BRAVO RECOGNISED IN ST FLORIAN'S DAY AWARDS

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—Sutherland Strike Teams Alpha and Bravo were acknowledged at an award ceremony coinciding with St Florian's Day on Wednesday 4 May 2022. They received the Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service award. They were part of just 64 volunteers, staff and teams from the NSW RFS and FRNSW to be recognised with awards and commendations. On 31 December 2019, Sutherland District deployed two Strike Teams Alpha – Group 3, Bundeena 1B, Maianbar 1B, Engadine 1B Sandy Point 1B and Illawong 1B; and Bravo – Group 1, Waterfall 1A, Heathcote 1A, Engadine 1A, Grays Point 1A and Sandy Point 1A to stage at the Goulburn Police Academy. The crews received urgent redirection instructions to assist the Bateman's Bay community. All members performed above and beyond expectation in extremely horrendous fire conditions, providing assistance with protecting life and property under direct fire threat. I commend the Sutherland Strike Teams Alpha and Bravo members. They displayed exemplary professionalism and standards of service to the community, going above and beyond the call of duty. They are extremely worthy recipients of this commendation and I thank them for their selfless service to the community.

### HARDEN ART PRIZE INC.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—Congratulations to Harden Art Prize Incorporated, including President Rob Provan, Secretary Greg Sanderson, Treasurer Jan Ryan and committee members Hugh Pavitt and Geoff Orchinson. This

fantastic team put together the inaugural Harden Murrumburrah Bendigo Bank Acquisitive Art Prize and Exhibition held over the 6th, 7th and 8th of May at Old Murrumburrah Court House. With over 120 entries from across Australia taking part in this year's showcase, it was wonderful to have so many talented artists involved, embracing the Landscape Painting Prize and the chance to win the Major Prize of \$10,000, plus the People's Choice Award. Congratulations to Mr Domenyk Eades who won the Major Prize with 'Rain-soaked Outcrop' and to Mr John Sharman who took out the People's Choice Award with 'Murchison Gorge WA'. I also wish to thank key sponsors of this event, Harden Murrumburrah Community Bank and the Kruger Trust, for their generosity and support which is very much appreciated by all involved. It was my pleasure to have been in attendance and I look forward to returning next year. Congratulations once again.

#### **SUNFLOWERS FOR UKRAINE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I wish to commend the incredible efforts of the Coolamon Rotary Club on their fantastic initiative, Sunflowers for Ukraine. The Coolamon Rotary Club launched their initiative as a result of the devastating events occurring within Ukraine with the Sunflower being their national flower. Collingullie farmer, Mr Doug Bruckner, owner of Gnadbrow Pastoral Company, heard of the fantastic initiative and at the time currently had a field of sunflowers growing in his front paddock. Doug donated 500 kilograms of sunflower seeds to the initiative which is currently being distributed to Rotary clubs right across Australia for them to then further distribute to local residents. The Rotary Clubs are only asking for a donation for the sunflower seeds with all proceeds raised going to the Rotary Australia World Community Service Project. The Coolamon Rotary Club are working closely with the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations whom are extremely supportive of the project and would like take it worldwide. Congratulations once again to the Coolamon Rotary Club and I will definitely be 'sowing a seed' for the people of Ukraine.

#### **COWRA EISTEDDFOD**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—The 68th Annual Cowra Eisteddfod is in full swing and I wish participants and organisers all the very best of luck over coming weeks. In addition to participants from Cowra and nearby villages, there are people taking part from across the Cootamundra electorate, and many from further afield including the Orange and Wagga regions, as well as Sydney and the ACT. This is fantastic for Cowra. Of course an event with this many moving parts, and a program which runs over many days, takes a considerable team behind the scenes to make it the successful event that it is. Congratulations to the 2022 Committee comprising: Mandy Charnock, Jan Munday, Mary Anne Wright, Jenny Friend, Lois Foster, Cheryl McAlister, Richard Neate, Hayley Barker, Helen Johnston, Yvonne Bell and Jessica Irwin. Thank you all for the time and effort you put in to pull the Cowra Eisteddfod together. It is also important to note the amazing sponsorship and support of the Cowra Business community, too many to name in the time that I have, but they are certainly appreciated and a huge part of the Eisteddfod being a special feature of Cowra's community calendar.

#### **LEGACY LODGE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise the outstanding community work undertaken by the Legacy Lodge Committee of Goulburn. The Legacy Lodge Committee is responsible for the upkeep of the Legacy Lodge Independent living facility. The Legacy Lodge Committee were named runner-up in the 2022 Senior Group of the Year at the recent Goulburn Mulwaree Senior Festival Awards. The Festival is held annually to identify and recognise seniors that enrich the Goulburn community with their life skills, wisdom and knowledge. The Legacy Lodge Committee have undertaken an incredible service and the work they do makes life safe and comfortable for those who live in Legacy Lodge. In addition to supporting residents independence. The Goulburn region has much to be proud of and the work of The Legacy Lodge Committee and they are to be recognised today. I sincerely congratulate The Legacy Lodge Committee on this very well deserved nomination.

#### **DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PETER THURTELL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I would like to offer our community's and my personal congratulations to Assistant Commissioner Peter Thurtell APM for his appointment as Deputy Commissioner, Regional NSW Field Operations on Thursday 31st March 2022. Deputy Commissioner Thurtell joined the NSW Police Force in 1985 and was stationed at Redfern Police Station. During his career, he has held numerous positions and appointments as a criminal investigator and as a Commander of both regional and metropolitan police commands. As Commander of Mid North Coast Police District, he co-led the largest policing operation ever undertaken in regional NSW searching for wanted murderer Malcolm Naden, for which he was awarded a Commissioner's Commendation for Service. In 2020, Deputy Commissioner Thurtell established and led the NSW Police Force's COVID-19 hotel quarantine and repatriation operation for returning international travellers. Deputy

Commissioner Thurtell is a recipient of the Australian Police Medal, National Police Service Medal, National Medal and the NSW Police Medal. He is also a registered legal practitioner with the Supreme Court of NSW. Thank you to Deputy Commissioner Thurnell for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. Congratulations again on your appointment.

#### **PROBATIONARY CONSTABLE MEKISHA LEE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I would like to offer our community's and my personal congratulations to Probationary Constable Mekisha Lee who has been awarded Blacktown Police Area Commander's Certificate of Merit presented at the Zone Police Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14th April 2022. Probationary Constable Lee is a very deserving recipient of this Certificate for her consistent efforts in performing to a high standard during her first year of Police Service. During her first three months of service, Probationary Constable Lee was nominated for her involvement in three separate high-risk incidents. This included two incidents of an offender being armed with knives and threatening both self-harm and to assault attending Police. In both instances, Probationary Constable Lee was able to de-escalate the incident to achieve a successful outcome. The third incident involved Probationary Constable Lee locating a male who had committed self-harm. Probationary Constable Lee immediately began CPR with the male regaining consciousness. Probationary Constable Lee's ability to remain collected under pressure should be commended. Thank you to Probationary Constable Lee for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. Keep up the good work and I wish you all the best in your policing career.

#### **SENIOR CONSTABLE NATHAN COSSTICK**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I would like to offer our community's and my personal congratulations to Senior Constable Nathan Cosstick who has been awarded the Blacktown Police Area Commander's Commendation Award and North West Metropolitan Region Certificate of Merit presented at the Zone Police Awards Ceremony on Thursday 14th April 2022. Senior Constable Cosstick was presented with these Awards for his efforts following the successful investigation, charging and prosecution of multiple male domestic violence offenders. Senior Constable Cosstick worked diligently to review and transcribe hundreds of phone calls which led to identifying breaches of existing apprehended violence orders. Senior Constable Cosstick was also responsible for rolling five separate investigations from multiple Police Area Commands into a single investigation. Thanks to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of Senior Constable Cosstick, we have seen the prosecution of 126 charges for one offender and the prosecution of 43 Domestic Violence offences for another offender. Senior Constable Cosstick has also secured apprehended domestic violence orders for victims and their families. Thank you to Senior Constable Cosstick for your outstanding service and dedication to our community. Congratulations again on your achievement.

#### **JACK CRESSWELL FARMS ADVICE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—Congratulations to Dubbo's Jack Cresswell, who has been named one of the winners of the ABC Heywire 2022 Trailblazers program for his podcast 'Farms Advice'. The podcast came from strange beginnings. Jack was living and working in London in 2016 when he lost his job. So he started a podcast. Now back living and breathing Australian agriculture, Jack's podcast now has more than 90 episodes and he reckons each one brings something different. Some episodes explore a new technology or techniques farmers can implement, while others are more philosophical in nature. Whatever the topic, the goal is the same – to bridge the divide between generations and geography, and help farmers keep learning without having to leave the comfort (or not) of the tractor, header or ute. As a Heywire winner, Jack will have the opportunity to address the federal Parliament down in Canberra. This trailblazer now has an even bigger stage to share his passion for agriculture – it's a passion I share! Congratulations Jack, and best of luck in your future endeavours!

#### **MUDGEES OLIVE OIL**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—Mudgee is well known around the globe for its award-winning wine – but did you know the region also produces a stellar drop of another kind? I'm talking about olive oil, Speaker! It's a natural combination! Both wine and olive oil require a distinguished palate, both have distinctive varietals, and both are important to serving the perfect meal! And you can't go wrong with Mudgee Harvest Olive Oil! The firm recently claimed bronze in its category at the 23rd Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil competition. Congratulations to firm principals David Sargeant and David Swansson, and the whole team behind Mudgee Harvest olive oil! Way to keep putting Mudgee fresh produce on the map!

**MS ERNIE ROY AND "THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL"**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 4 May the "The light at the end of the tunnel" book curated by Ms Ernie Roy was launched at Bowman Hall, Blacktown. The Book was supported by the Community Migrant Resource Centre, SydWest Multicultural Services and Blacktown City Council. It is a collection of reflections from 50 people about how we in Western Sydney coped and survived all that we went through during the COVID-19 pandemic. The book features anecdotes, reflections and experiences from lockdown as well as hopes for a post-lockdown future. Amongst the many stories, one that resonates is one titled "Living through COVID" by Bob Fitzgerald and the final paragraph encapsulates many of our experiences: "Honestly, I can't wait for the days when we will be able to go out on the streets, talk to and smile at strangers without a mask. Travel without quarantine rules. That's when the pandemic ends in my mind." I know Ernie has thanked everyone she worked while the book was in the making. It was the result of ten months of work and I congratulate Ernie on her persistence and commitment in bringing the stories to life.

**'RAMADAN AT BAYSIDE' COMMUNITY IFTAR**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)**—On Saturday 30 April I had the very great privilege of attending the 'Ramadan at Bayside' community Iftar celebration held in Waltz Street, Rockdale. This outstanding event was last held in 2019, before the pandemic forced its unfortunate cancellation in 2020 and 2021. This year marks its triumphant return and, may I say Speaker, that it was well worth the wait. Bayside Council's excellent Mayor Dr Christina Curry and I had the absolute pleasure of seeing our community come together to share and celebrate this joyous occasion. Speaker, Waltz Street was packed with people of all religions and cultural backgrounds, enjoying the excellent food and community spirit of Rockdale. It was a living example of all that is good about our area, and yet another example of how multiculturalism strengthens our state and makes it a great place to live. Speaker, I wish to recognise and thank every single person involved in organising and running the 'Ramadan at Bayside' 2022 event, and I look forward with great anticipation to seeing it return bigger and even better in 2023.

**RECOGNISING JANE BESLEY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge local McMahons Point resident and artist, Jane Besley. While many in our local community might not have met Jane, they will know certainly recognise her painting which is a large outdoor artwork depicting a pastoral scene that brings pleasure to everyone who passed her Blues Point Road Studio. Jane describes her work as very eclectic and enjoys painting scenes of everyday life, and natural scenes that usually include grass and dogs. Jane is a self-taught artist who is continually adding to her extensive body of work with a new exhibition of 35 pieces titled Inside Out, that opened at the Ruby Blue Studio on Blues Point Road in April. From a very young age Jane always wanted to draw, and said that it was an escape that brought her great pleasure. I would also like to acknowledge Jane's passion for the local Blues Point community, for adding a little bit more character to our already much loved area. Many might notice there is a new painting in pride of place at 132a, and I am sure locals in my community of North Shore are enjoying Jane's excellent new work.

**LOCAL ARTIST OPENS BEN BOYD ROAD GALLERY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—A new art gallery and studio has opened in my local community on Ben Boyd Road in Neutral Bay. The gallery is owned by local Deane Russell who is the resident artist who hopes that the gallery will grow into a wider community-based social hub. Deane has been painting since the early 2000's and has had a number of successful exhibitions. The new gallery is used as his studio and Deane paints in the space most days with his current works including a number of pieces from his recent sojourn into the Northern Territory, while also reflecting previous canvasses and work living near the beach. Deane is also a sculptor and is exhibiting a few of his works from clay firings using native timbers and earth materials from the outback in the Northern Territory. In addition to painting and sculpting, Deane is an avid fiction writer as well as poet. One of his aims is to grow gallery into a community artist hub and feature local poetry nights. There are no fixed opening hours but if the gallery is open, Deane is happy for you to stop by and have a chat.

**KIM BYRNES – WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Ms Kim Byrnes for her attributes in farming and for her active participation in the industry as vice chair of the Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association and as a participant in the 2022 Future Cotton Leaders Program. Kim made a decision at University that she was ready to work on the family farm at Rowena where she takes part in any and all jobs. She takes great satisfaction at the end of a harvest knowing her contribution to planting, nurturing and harvesting the product. Kim is witness to her message that women are more than capable of being successful farmers. Kim's ambition is to promote and ensure that the future of agriculture is viable through sustainable practices and the important roles of women in agriculture is recognised. I congratulate Kim on her choice of career and her commitment to the

agricultural industry. I commend Ms Byrnes for encouraging other women and working to break any bias in relation to women choosing a career in the industry.

#### **MR JOCK AND MS TINA CAMPBELL-SIBLINGS SCORE FOR THE QLD REDS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise brother and sister rugby act, Jock and Tina Campbell, who presently play for Queensland but we nonetheless claim them for the Northern Tablelands. Growing up in Inverell the pair loved competition and playing junior rugby together for the Inverell Highlanders. Now they play with the Reds in the GPS Rugby Club, home of one of the oldest and largest Rugby clubs in Australia. Jock has just been selected to join the Wallabies training squad next month while Tina is excited to play in the SuperW in Queensland. What they are both experiencing is the great culture in the women's and men's teams as they cheer each other on. Jock is obviously proud to watch his big sister on the field and I'm sure the feeling is mutual. And it all started in Inverell. I congratulate Jock and Tina on the success they enjoy through their careers in Rugby. I commend Jock and Tina on the hard work they have put into achieving their dreams.

#### **SYDNEY HERITAGE FLEET**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the work of the Sydney Heritage Fleet in preserving maritime heritage for the benefit of all through community education and the restoration, operation and maintenance of heritage vessels. I recently had the opportunity to see firsthand the incredible work of the Fleet in preserving the Kanangra vessel, Sydney's last double-ended ferry, which has now been placed on the Sea Heritage Dock in Rozelle for restoration. I want to acknowledge the team of 30 volunteers who worked to restore the Kanangra's upper decks funded by two Community Building Partnership grants. I further want to acknowledge the 450 dedicated volunteer workers and 1200 members who give their time and resources to ensure everyone has a chance to share in our maritime heritage. It's community members dedicated to preserving the living history of our area that make Balmain such a special place.

#### **ANZAC DAY BALMAIN-ROZELLE SUB-BRANCH**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the community groups who came together to commemorate ANZAC Day on Sunday, 25 April. I would like to particularly acknowledge the Balmain-Rozelle Sub-Branch of the Returned and Services League and its Secretary Graeme Finney and Honorary Secretary James Park who organised a service and wreath-laying at Loyalty Square with the participation of Trinity Grammar School, Leichhardt Celebrity Band and the 1st Balmain Scouts, the NSW Police, SES, the NSW Fire and Rescue, the local Woolworths and Unity Hotel. The work of communities to remember those who perished in war reminds us all of our responsibility to work for peace and justice.

#### **ANZAC DAY UNITING CHURCH ULTIMO**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the community groups who came together to commemorate ANZAC Day on Sunday, 25 April. I had the honour of attending the ANZAC Day service of Uniting Church Ultimo and would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Reverend David Gore, Peter Carter and the whole congregation that made this commemoration happen. The work of communities to remember those who perished in war reminds us all of our responsibility to work for peace and justice.

#### **WOOLLOOWARE SHORES RETIREMENT VILLAGE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)**—I acknowledge the importance of Anzac Day and the commemorations held by Woollooware Shores Retirement Village ("Woollooware Shores") in Taren Point. Anzac Day goes beyond the anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli in 1915. The Anzac spirit continues to shape our identity as a nation, embodying the values of courage, mateship and sacrifice. On 25 April 2022, Woollooware Shores hosted a beautiful Anzac Day service allowing its residents to come together and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. I commend those involved in the facilitation of the service including service leader Reverend Garry Dawes, Woollooware Shores Resident's Committee President and Chapel Committee Chair Fya Willson along with Village Manager Colin Smith. I also recognise Ron Jones who led the Anzac Dedication, Bruce Lawton who shared memories of his father's service in an interview, Major Ron Hack who led the prayers, Sylvia Smith who led the Commemoration of the Fallen, Reverend Andrew Nixon who conducted the Anzac Address, Brian Loomes who led the Ode, flag bearers Geoff Kneeshaw and David Clayton along with musician Adrian Jackson for their contribution. I recognise Woollooware Shores Retirement Village for facilitating a beautiful Anzac Day Service for our community.

#### **GYMEA NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)**—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of GyMEA North Public School ("GyMEA North") on their appointment. The GyMEA North student leaders have been busy this year, launching 2022 with many fantastic



initiatives. The Gardening Club enjoyed Easter Carrot Craft Day where students made little carrot people. These inspiring green thumbs were also hard at work planting native plants to be sent to regional communities affected by fire and floods. The wonderful GyMEA North students also raised \$545 for Down Syndrome NSW on Lots of Socks Day, and welcomed a new mural painted by Saltwater Dream Time artists. The 2022 leadership team truly embody the values that make GyMEA North such a wonderful place to learn and grow. I congratulate School Captains Joel Glasson and Jenna Richardson along with Vice Captains Dominic Purkiss and Marley Reynolds on their successful appointment. To be elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud, and I look forward to seeing the opportunities they embrace throughout the year. I commend the student leaders from GyMEA North Public School on their success, and extend my best wishes for the 2022 school year.

#### **SYLVANIA BOWLING CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda—Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading)**—I acknowledge the importance of Anzac Day and the commemorations held by Sylvania Bowling Club on 25 April 2022. Anzac Day goes beyond the anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli in 1915. The Anzac spirit continues to shape our identity as a nation, embodying the values of courage, mateship and sacrifice. Sylvania Bowling Club hosted a beautiful Anzac Day Service allowing our community to come together and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Organised by Keith Howell and facilitated by the Salvation Army, the service was held at the Club's war memorial. One of the highlights was having personnel from the Royal Australian Navy participating in the service. I take this opportunity to recognise Captain Ben Hurst and Lieutenant Samuel Hobby. I also acknowledge the individuals who contributed to the service including Sylvania Bowling Club Executive Committee members Kay Makin and Andrew Jones, Salvation Army attendees Lieutenant Colonel David Godkin, Andrew Hill, Steve Cugley and David Hosking. I recognise Sylvania Bowling Club for facilitating a moving Anzac Day Commemoration Service for our community.

#### **NAN AND MARY-JANE BETTS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise the work of the Nan and Mary-Jane Betts of Yass. Nan and Mary-Jane Betts are the 2022 recipients of the John Betts Award. Nan was John's wife and Mary-Jane John Betts daughter. These determined women have been working tirelessly since John Betts death to regenerate the native grasslands and landscape on their Cowridge property on Black Range Road. Nan and Mary-Jane are currently working to have the Derringullen Creek waterway on their property join the nearby Rivers of Carbon project. They have a goal to protect this natural waterway for future generations and preserve the large number of mature Box Gum Woodland trees which form a 30 year old tree lane. Mary-Jane and Nan hope to see the property eventually open for bird watchers, poets and photographers or just day dreamers. I am delighted to recognise the work of Nan and Mary-Jane and their preservation of the many biodiverse varieties located on their land for current and future generations to enjoy.

#### **RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Armidale and New England Centre for the joy it brings to both riders and volunteers. The Armidale group is well established having operated for many years giving participants living with a wide range of intellectual and physical disabilities a fun experience while improving developmental delays. Horse owners are happy to loan their steeds for the day when they see the enthusiasm of the participants, riders and volunteers. It takes three volunteers for each rider to ensure their safety. Special mention is for Coach, Robin Cameron, without whom the program could not run. I congratulate RDA Armidale and New England Centre Executives, Angele van den Heuvel, Maxwell Wayte, Carmel Perrott, Lorraine Jenkyn, and publicist Jennifer Kennedy together with Anna Bullard for raising funds. I commend the Executive and the many volunteers who contribute to this wonderful program for their service to the community.

#### **KINCOPPAL ROSE BAY SOD-TURNING EVENT**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)**—I visited Kincoppal Rose Bay School on Tuesday 5 April for a "Turning of the Sod" ceremony to mark stage one of the Junior School Masterplan. The masterplan includes a new drop off and pick up facility accessed from Vaucluse Road. The project will alleviate traffic on our local roads and increase student safety during school pick up time. Future stages of the masterplan include new classrooms, an assembly hall and a rooftop garden to create a more collaborative learning environment for the students. School Board Chair Dr Mark Sinclair was first to turn the sod with the help of his grandson Kingsley and we were joined by Deputy Chair Linda Quatermass. Local project supporters in attendance included Buildcorp Managing Director Tony Sukkar AM and his son Jordan. The School's junior brass band also treated us to an amazing music performance. Thanks to the School leadership including Deputy Principal Elizabeth Clark and

School Director Mary Cook for hosting me. It is so gratifying to be able to visit a local schools and speak to the students who were in good spirits, despite a challenging time with COVID. I do look forward to my next visit.

### **CROWDED HOUSE**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—On Easter Saturday night, the iconic Australian/New Zealand rock band Crowded House played to an audience of 10,000 at Centennial Vineyards in Bowral. Locals and visitors to the Southern Highlands were treated to hit after hit - 'When You Come', 'Into Temptation', 'Don't Dream It's Over', 'Better Be Home Soon' and 'Four Seasons in One Day' – and both danced and sang the night away. The open-air concert was sold out, the car park at full capacity due to the muddy area after the rains. The wine was superb and there was even a pop-up restaurant amongst the mix of food trucks serving an array of Southern Highlands cuisine. What a beautiful atmosphere, to be surrounded by the grape vines just outside of Sydney. Some of us remember Crowded Houses' epic farewell concert back in 1996 on the steps of the Sydney Opera House attracting 150,000 people. It's good to see Neil Finn, his son's Elroy and Liam, Nick Seymour, Mitchell Froom and the rest of the crew are simply getting better with age, like a good fine wine.

### **CWA CELEBRATES 100 YEARS**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Women from across the Southern Highlands came together last month at Leighton Gardens in Moss Vale to celebrate 100 years since the establishment of the Country Women's Association. A plaque acknowledging their contribution was unveiled, as members of various branches took a moment to reflect and appreciate the legacy that they are now a part of. 100 years ago, the CWA in NSW was established in Sydney by Dr Richard Arthur, MP for North Sydney, and Miss Florence Gordon, with the aim of combating isolation and the lack of health facilities for rural women. A century on, it is fitting that we should take a moment to say thank you to all the CWA members throughout history. A special mention goes to the Bowral branch, which was one of the first branches to form in the Highlands, over 90 years ago, whose members have quietly served the needs of the community and families over many generations. I especially thank all the CWA members in Wollondilly, past and present, for generously giving of your time and talents as well as proudly advocating for your community.

### **MELISSA PERRINE**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Mittagong's very own Melissa Perrine represented Australia at the Beijing Winter Paralympics, and despite missing out on a medal, she did us proud by her outstanding efforts. Ms Perrine has a vision impairment, but that does not seem to inhibit her tearing down the slopes at terrific speeds as a para-alpine skier. Even though she can only see blurred shapes and colours, with the help of her sighted guide Bobbi Kelly, Melissa competed in the downhill, giant slalom, slalom, super-G and super combined disciplines. Ms Perrine had the added honour of being named co-captain of the Australian team and participated in the opening ceremony. Among her many other achievements, Melissa was Young Australian of the Year in 2007, Ski and Snowboard Australia's Athlete of the Year and Female Athlete of the Year at the AIS Awards in 2019. She is also a dual bronze medallist and holds a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and a Masters in Exercise and Sports Science. Ms Perrine gave more than 100 per cent at the Paralympics and has done us all in the Wollondilly Shire, Southern Highlands, and Australia, very proud!

### **NAN TIEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to draw attention to the spiritual and cultural importance of the Nan Tien Buddhist Temple in my electorate of Willoughby. Located in the centre of Chatswood, the Nan Tien Temple is a sacred place of worship for the sizeable Buddhist community in Willoughby. The Venerable Miao Ee is the Superintendent of the Nan Tien Temple who ministers to the spiritual and educational needs of her community. Each year, the Temple organises an annual community event known as the 'Buddha's Birthday and Multicultural Festival'. As well as celebrating the birth of Buddha and his message of peace, love and compassion, the event showcases Buddhist culture for the community to experience and enjoy. Based at the Chatswood concourse, the Festival features artistic performances, cultural and educational stalls, as well as free Tai-chi and Tea Meditation demonstrations. For the 2022 event, the theme was 'spiritual and environmental preservation' which highlighted the link of Buddhist virtues to the preservation of the environment. I was privileged to take part in this year's event where I commended the Buddhist community for its contribution to our spiritual and cultural life.

### **CASTLECrag MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to acknowledge some of the young talent in my community at Castlecrag Montessori School. On 5 May 2022, I was delighted to acquire two fine prints produced by the School which will hang proudly in my Electorate Office. With each one created by a young artist of the School, Lachlan and Isabela, the prints feature sketches of leaves on a blue background. These prints are but one example

of the young talent and creativity nurtured by the community of Castlecrag Montessori School. Attracting students from across Sydney's Lower North Shore, the school offers a Montessori education to boys and girls aged 3-6 years. Developed by the Italian educator, Maria Montessori, in the early 20th century, the Montessori philosophy of education is an alternative approach to schooling that seeks to harness the natural interests and activities of children rather than use formal teaching methods. Montessori education proved popular and soon spread throughout the world, including Australia, which of course, features a school in my electorate. As Liberals, we support a diversity of educational options for our children, and the Castlecrag Montessori School adds to that rich variety of choice for parents in Willoughby.

#### **CHATSWOOD CROQUET CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to commend the Chatswood Croquet Club for the contribution it makes to the recreational life of Willoughby. Founded in 1910, Chatswood Croquet Club boasts a long history with a new clubhouse opened by the Mayor of Willoughby in 1996. For many years, the Mayor has also served as the Club's Patron. Passionate about the sport of croquet which originated from England in the 1850s, the Club provides players with a great balance of gentle outdoor exercise and use of playing strategies to exercise the mind. New members are welcome and provided with support and training to quickly enjoy social games. Open to men and women of all ages, the Club attracts players of all abilities from beginners to State competitors. Located conveniently near the centre of Chatswood, the Club features three excellent full-size grass courts surrounded by trees and shrubs. On 27 April, the Club welcomed me for morning tea where I had the opportunity to meet members and enjoy a hit on its beautifully manicured greens. Chatswood Croquet Club has a great community spirit and I wish it every success as it builds upon its proud history.

#### **TRIBUTE TO TOM KIRSOP AM**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I pay tribute to a pioneer of Pittwater's surf and environment movement, Tom Kirsop AM, who recently passed at the age of 92. Tom and his late wife Margaret worked as volunteers for many decades and raised their family at Narrabeen. In the National Parks Association from the 1960s, Tom was significant in establishing the Myall Lakes National Park and later in enlarging the Mimosa Rocks National Park. Tom was a member of North Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club since 1969 and in 1991 established the Northern Beaches Surfrider Foundation, a powerful local voice for environment action which most recently successfully campaigned to quash the PEP-11 offshore gas exploration proposal. Tom was salt of the earth and sea, a true gentleman. I am privileged to have known Tom and will remember him as a passionate advocate, always sincere and respectful – yet unyielding and uncompromising in protecting NSW's coastal environment. To Tom's family: know that future generations in Pittwater and NSW will benefit from Tom's efforts. He will be missed.

#### **NAVORINA FUNDRAISER**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to commend the Navorina fundraising team for their work in organising the Navorina Nursing Home fundraiser. Navorina Nursing Home is a community run Aged Care Facility in the town of Deniliquin, and are currently fundraising to assist in undertaking extensive upgrades to the facility. This group organised a function with over 250 people, prizes, raffle items and more; all for the benefit of Navorina. Thanks to this group's dedicated efforts, over \$270,000 was raised, all of which will go towards supporting the vital Aged Care sector and allowing the best possible facilities and care for our elderly residents. I would like to thank all those involved in the fundraiser, and for their care and commitment to their community.

#### **EMILY JONES - BARHAM**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to congratulate Emily Jones of Barham, a newly qualified pharmacist serving the health needs of the Barham community. Emily grew up in Barham, and since high school aspired to become a pharmacist, being the only one in her school to pursue physics and chemistry classes in year 12. Emily has worked at her local pharmacy since high school, becoming the general manager during her 4 year university course. Despite the adversities she faced during last year of her course, with COVID-19 resulting in distance education, Emily persisted and began her internship last year. Emily is now a fulltime pharmacist in Barham, a much needed addition to the rural health sector and now vital part of the Barham health community. I would again like to congratulate Emily on her new role and I wish her the best in her future career.

#### **EQUINOX DRIVE PLAYGROUND BOX HILL**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend the opening of the new Equinox Drive Accessible Playground in Box Hill. The many high growth areas within my electorate of Castle Hill are well served by a mass of green spaces and playgrounds, giving an opportunity for families to escape the hustle of suburban life. We are very fortunate in my electorate to have a Council, State Government and Federal

Government whose aims align with regards to this matter, and nowhere is this more evident than Equinox Drive Reserve. The council-owned land was benefitted by a \$275,000 grant from the NSW Government, and a \$150,000 grant from the Federal Government, both of which aimed to create vital jobs and boost the economy during the Pandemic, with the contemporaneous aim of ensuring community playgrounds are accessible to all. I was delighted to be joined on the day by then Mayor of the Hills Shire Council Michelle Byrne, and Federal Member for Mitchell Alex Hawke.

#### **FAIR COMPENSATION FOR CASTLE HILL TAXI DRIVERS**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the many owner/operators of taxi plates within my community who have approached me seeking fair compensation following the introduction of rideshare services to the NSW transport framework. In response to the advocacy from many taxi drivers within Castle Hill and the Community at large, the NSW Taxi Council and NSW Government have worked together to ensure fair compensation can be delivered to drivers, who saw their plates devalued from over \$400,000 to under \$70,000. I recently had the pleasure to welcome Martin Rogers of the NSW Taxi Council into my Office at the behest of local taxi drivers, most notably Mr Mike Burrage. In response to this meeting I was delighted to be the first Government MP to sign the 'NSW Taxi Industry Pledge', stating "I support fair and proper compensation for all Taxi Licence Owners". My thanks goes out to all those in my community for making me aware of this issue, and I'd encourage the government to continue to work with the Taxi Council to ensure a suitable arrangement is found.

#### **MAKERSPACE & CO. MARRICKVILLE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I acknowledge MakerSpace & Co, based in Marrickville, for their efforts in promoting the sharing of creative skills and knowledge with all of the community. MakerSpace & Co was founded by a group of design graduates who had a desire to continue their practices, and is now an invaluable community asset. Their social impact mission is to make an impact through "employment pathways, community building, social networking and skill sharing". They certainly do this in many ways; their many markets and workshops are open to the public, and their facilities ensure that as many people as possible have access to design tools and affordable spaces through shared use membership arrangements. In recent months, they've held some wonderful events like the Mother's Day Market, which saw handcrafted creations from the MakerSpace tenants, including everything from ceramics to furniture, have been a real hit. So, too, have their classes and workshops, which take the practices that experts have got down to a fine art, and offer them to the community at large. I congratulate the MakerSpace & Co team for your tremendous effort in sharing the practice of creation and design with the whole Inner West community.

#### **FUTUREPROOF YOUTH MUSIC FESTIVAL**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Congratulations to everyone involved in the FUTUREPROOF Youth Music Festival, held as part of the Inner West Fest. Over the last two years, COVID lockdowns have delivered tough blows to Inner Westies involved in the music industry. It's been especially difficult for those just starting out, who have lost many connections and missed so many opportunities that they otherwise wouldn't have. That's why events like this one are so important. FUTUREPROOF is a not-for-profit event run for young, school-aged musicians to get a taste of what it's like to perform in serious gigs, while still gaining the support to have their performance and production skills developed. Their Youth Music Festival event last month was held at Pratten Park Bowling Club, and saw sets from Pastel, Sienna Langenheim, the After Thoughts, Midnight Bliss, House of Monkeys, The Tinheads, Dial Denial, Sophiiaa, Blind Eliza, The Laces, Isy Cappel, and other brilliant acts. It's crucial that we continue to support events like these, not only for these kids to get a shoe in the door of the music industry, but also to make sure that our state is one which supports the arts for generation to come.

#### **ZAMBI WILDLIFE RETREAT**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Today I want to recognise the important work being carried out by Zambi Wildlife Retreat. They are non-profit organisation with a vision to create the only animal welfare sanctuary of its kind in Australia. Zambi Wildlife Retreat ensures that animals have a home and are not neglected after life in the circus, entertainment industry and zoos. Ultimately, their mission is to provide world-class care for retired, rescued, surrendered, injured and orphaned wildlife. Their work is challenging and can sometimes be heart-breaking. However, everyone at Zambi Wildlife Retreat take comfort in the fact that their efforts help what were once neglected animals live their best possible life. I want to once again acknowledge Zambi Wildlife Retreat's contribution to the welfare of animals who make up a critical part of our natural environment.

#### **ANDREW MOODY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Andrew Moody, Secretary of the St Clair & District Men's Shed is a tireless advocate for the organisation and was recently awarded the Seniors Festival Local Achievement Award.

The citation read that he has been awarded for his irrepressible commitment and drive to see the permanent, purpose-built St Clair & District Men's Shed built. As Patron of the Shed, I am an avid supporter of the St Clair & District Men's Shed and I can personally testify to the fact that it takes the hard work and dedication from people like Andrew to keep up the good work that the Men's shed does by bringing members of the community together to support one another. Congratulations on a well-deserved award Andrew. It is a testament to the good work you carry out and I look forward to your continued service for our community.

#### **OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SHEPHERD CENTRE ORAN PARK**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—It was an honour to attend the opening of the new Shepherd Centre in Oran Park with my parliamentary colleagues Tanya Davies MP, Melanie Gibbons MP, Camden Mayor Therese Fedeli and councillors Usha Dommaraju and Russell Zammit. I commend The Shepherd Centre community on this wonderful new centre and on the valuable work they have done for over 50 years assisting children with hearing loss learn to listen and speak. The specialist multidisciplinary service that will be delivered through this new centre will enable and support children over the coming years who are deaf and hearing-impaired to develop spoken language so they may fully participate in the world and reach their full potential. Congratulations and welcome to our community.

#### **NATIONAL HERBARIUM OF NEW SOUTH WALES OFFICIAL OPENING**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—A precious collection of plant specimens valued at more than \$280 million has found a new home in the brand-new Herbarium at the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan. I was thrilled to be there to see the herbarium opened by the Hon. Rob Stokes MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities and Minister for Active Transport, the Hon. Stuart Ayres MP, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney and domain Trust Chief Executive Denise Ora. After close to 170 years at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney the new Herbarium will provide a modern state-of-the-art home for 1.1 million specimens dating back to 1770. This is a fantastic addition to the over 400 Hectares of natural woodland, stunning gardens and wide, open spaces as well as the existing Plant Bank making the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan an even greater asset to the Camden and Macarthur region.

#### **GREATER CITIES SPORTS FACILITIES FUND**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—It was fantastic to introduce the Hon. Stuart Ayres MP, Minister for Enterprises, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney to Camden's recipients of the Greater cities Sports Facilities Fund at Kirkham Sports Ground in Elderslie last month. Congratulations to Camden Rugby League Club who received \$1M towards their new grandstand, Camden Rugby Club who received \$552,000 towards a new field and Camden and district AFL Club who received \$330,000 towards new flood lighting. I thank all members of our local sports clubs who volunteer their time and efforts in advocating for funding to give the Camden community better sporting facilities. Congratulations once again, and I cannot wait to see the improvements this funding makes to our facilities within Camden.

#### **BELLE GOODACRE'S 104TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—Today I acknowledge a very special member of my local community, Belle Goodacre. Speaker, late last year I had the pleasure of attending Belle's 104th birthday celebration event at the Oatley Seniors Centre. It was a fantastic event which celebrated the long and eventful life that Belle has lived thus far. Belle is an inspiration to the St George Community as she has been an active volunteer throughout her life, helping those most in need in our local community. I also had the privilege of recognising Belle's outstanding contributions to our local seniors' community with a Lifetime Achievement Award as part of the New South Wales Seniors Week Awards. Speaker, it is so good to see that members of our seniors' community like Belle are doing so well, as they continue to bestow their wisdom and experience upon our younger generations. I would like to congratulate Belle for reaching this important milestone and also thank David Suba the president of the Oatley Seniors Centre for organising such a wonderful event.

#### **MULTICULTURAL CARE'S OPEN AGM AND 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I congratulate Multicultural Care on their 30-year anniversary, which was celebrated at their Annual General Meeting, which I had the privilege of attending. Together, attendees celebrated 30 years of Multicultural Care which provides essential in-home support services to culturally and linguistically diverse frail aged people, and people with disability of all ages. Speaker, it was touching to see members of the community join to celebrate and learn about what has been achieved since they began in 1991. Speaker, Multicultural Care had humble beginnings, with modest aged care support services providing ethno-specific centre-based day care services for frail aged or

older people with disability from culturally diverse backgrounds. I was impressed to hear that Multicultural Care now supports over 1,300 clients, who speak around 42 different languages. Their growth can be attributed to having qualified, bilingual care staff that are dedicated to providing personalised, linguistic and cultural care to each client so that they can remain independent at home and connected to their community. Speaker, I would like to thank Dr Rosy Walia, CEO of Multicultural Care, for the invitation to such a special event.

#### **JUBILEE COMMUNITY SERVICES' 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—Late last year I had the opportunity to visit the incredible team at Jubilee Community Services to celebrate their 50th Anniversary. Speaker, JCS is by far one of the most impactful organisations in the St George area. JCS provides services for people residing in the St George area with everything from information provision to referrals and other matters relating to community development. Particularly with the recent COVID-19 pandemic, JCS has never been more needed in our local area. None of their work would have been achievable without their amazing team of over 70 volunteers. Areas of work include social visits, shopping and sitting with an older person, helping with social activities, English tutoring and much more! Speaker, JCS is committed to providing high quality, affordable and accessible services to people of all ages in the local community. JCS has run as effectively as it has for the past 9 years due to the watchful eye of its General Manager, Lance Rickards. Lance has an extensive background working in disability services and has aptly led JCS during his tenor. Congratulations to JCS on 50 wonderful years, I wish you another successful 50 years.

#### **CAMDEN HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL WINGHAM SHOW RESULTS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate the Camden Haven High School students who achieved outstanding results in the cattle competition at the annual Wingham Show held on 26th March. Hours of training, grooming and preparation were invested for the agricultural show season with Camden Haven High School students leaving their mark and taking home a swag of ribbons in the cattle judging events. I acknowledge the following award recipients; Addison Shaw for achieving a 1st P2 in the Young Judges competition and a 3rd P2 in Parading; Luca Pensini for scoring 1st P3 in the Young Judges Champion Judge; Maddison Murphy for placing 2nd P3 in the Young Judges competition; Ellyse Haladane for claiming 1st P4 in the Young Judges Reserve Champion; Madelyn Lenehan for securing a commendable 2nd P4 in the Young Judges competition; Cody Rutten and Izzac Gaskin-Hogan for receiving a Paraders Encouragement Award. Camden Haven High School offers a wide range of courses and extracurricular activities for students interested in pursuing a career in the agricultural sector. Congratulations to all students who participated and those who received medals.

#### **JESSICA FUSSELL**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I commend to the House today Jessica Fussell from Port Macquarie who was the 2022 Mother's Day Classic Ambassador for Port Macquarie who championed this year's breast cancer fun run fundraiser at Westport Park on 8th May. Jessica Fussell has experienced the hardships associated with a breast cancer prognosis. In 2019, Jessica was diagnosed with Triple Negative Breast Cancer which spread to her lungs in 2021. A brave, formidable woman that has fought every step of the way to overcome her adversities, Jessica set her sights on fundraising for the Mother's Day Classic event in an effort to achieve better treatment options and outcomes for breast cancer patients. Honoured with the Ambassador role, Jessica hopes to raise awareness and play her part in an inclusive community that has a genuine understanding and empathy for those managing a breast cancer prognosis. The Mother's Day Classic Foundation is a nationwide fun run that seeks to raise money for the National Breast Cancer Foundation to improve the survival rates of women while inspiring generations of Australian families who wish to show their support to a cause that affects so many. A worthy charity, I thank Jessica for her inspirational efforts.

#### **ANDREW TEBBIT – BRONZE MEDAL INVICTUS GAMES**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise bronze medallist Andrew Tebbit from Port Macquarie who recently competed in the Australian Wheelchair Rugby team at The Invictus Games held in The Hague in April 2022. Andrew is a real inspiration in the way he lives life and challenges himself to succeed despite the serious setbacks he has endured from active military service. Now an Australian Bronze medalist, Andrew returned home jubilant in the Steelers success after defeating France 27-12 to secure an Invictus Game third placing. Prior to this, Australia had beaten Canada 22-7 and Italy 20-4 to contest the Bronze Medal event. Andrew also achieved 26th in archery from 44 competitors. Andrew joined the Australian Army in 2000 as a combat engineer and served in East Timor in 2002 and 2006, providing critical support in explosive ordnance disposal to the Tactical Assault Group in Australia. In 2015, Andrew was medically discharged after a serious injury resulted in a below knee amputation. Today, Andrew trains with wheelchair Paralympian's and is a member of the Port Macquarie Rowing Club. I congratulate Andrew on his sporting achievements and wish him all the success for the 2023 Invictus Games in Dusseldorf.

### EVENT TO ENCOURAGE FEMALE SURFERS ON THE SOUTH COAST

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Some of the best female surfers on the South Coast took part in the recent first and only all-female surf series, the 'Challenge Her Teams Classic' in Kiama. The event was hosted by Surfing NSW in conjunction with Jones Beach Boardriders Club with a total of 12 teams of eight surfers competing. Along with the surfing competition, these young women all participated in various surf-inspired workshops including the 'Longboard Technical Clinic' and a 'Train Like a Woman' workshop. Local musician Penny Hartgerink was also playing live. The event was also broadcast live on the Kayo iPhone sporting app. I would like to acknowledge Jones Beach Boardriders Club Secretary Jo Collinge and Surfing NSW with did such a fantastic job in hosting this event which was all about increasing participation for women in sport and building a more inclusive female surfing culture and presence on the South Coast.

### KIAMA LOCAL ALI DAY HAS IRON MAN SUCCESS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Congratulations to Kiama local Ali Day has taken home the trophy for this year's prestigious Australian Surf Life Saving IronMan event for the second year in a row. It was in the final ski leg that Ali got ahead of the pack and made it past the break to leave his competition well behind. Ali's Australian IronMan win caps off a remarkable season after he won his seventh Coolangatta Gold in November 2021 as well as this year's Nutri-Grain Ironman Series for the fourth time. Ali grew up in Kiama and is the son of locals Ross and Kim Day. Ali Day is a wonderful local success story and a great sporting Ambassador for our region having begun his surf life-saving career as a junior nipper at the Kiama Surf Life Saving Club. Congratulations and well done to Ali Day.

### KIAMA LIGHTHOUSE ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—On ANZAC Day, I was very pleased to attend a special dawn service commemoration service hosted by the Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub Branch on Monday 25th April 2022 at Kiama Lighthouse. There was a solemn and respectful crowd in attendance at the Kiama Dawn Service who came to reflect and remember all of those service men and women who served and to appreciate and commemorative the spirit of the ANZAC's on this solemn occasion. I thank the Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub Branch for hosting such a wonderful event. And I thank the local community for showing its strong support. I also acknowledge and sincerely thank the Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub Branch President Lindsay Delamont, and Secretary Peter O'Brien for their significant and ongoing commitment to our local community.

### NOWRA VELO CLUB

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the Nowra Velo Club riders at the Australian Junior Championships and Masters Track Cycling Championships. Adrian McMillan and Alex Verdi enjoyed a gold rush at the NSW Masters Track Cycling Championships, while Curtis Trkulja received a bronze medal in the Australian Junior Titles. What an outstanding result from Curtis Trkulja of the Nowra Velo Club, with Curtis securing his bronze medal in the under 19, 100-lap points race at the Australian Championships which was held in Brisbane. Also a grate result from Adrian and Alex securing their first gold medal of the series, with Adrian winning his gold medal in his 500 metre time trial and an outstanding job by Alex being the only starter in his age division, standing on the podium alone. So again a huge congratulation to the Nowra Velo Club for their participation in there races, what a great result for you guys and something to be very proud of I hope future competitions are just as successful.

### SHAUN WESSEL

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate local man, resident of Kings Point Shaun Wessel for his spectacular 'blind audition' performance on The Voice Australia, where he performed 'Whipping Post' a song by The Allman Brothers. It is amazing to see locals on TV representing there communities doing what they love and for Shaun that is singing, Shaun is part of a band called Tall Shaun & The Resolution Blues. One day the singing song writer decided to audition for The Voice Australia where he was then called back to take part in the next step leading up to performing in front of the judges for the blind auditions. Shaun's dream is to make a living as a singer song writer and having watched his blind audition I believe he can absolutely succeed at his dream career. So again a huge congratulations to Shaun, your performance was outstanding and I know the South Coast and local communities can't wait to see what this experience brings you.

### KYOGLE LIONS CLUB AND RITCHIES IGA

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Kyogle Lions Club and Ritchie's IGA have gone above and beyond to help flood affected communities across the Northern Rivers region. In the immediate aftermath of the flood, IGA have donated \$1,000 to the Kyogle evacuation centre, \$500 in drinking water and \$1,000 of buckets and

mops which were distributed by Kyogle Lions Club members. Throughout our recovery Kyogle Lions wonderful and infamous foodpantry has given out over \$10,000 in food vouchers, meals, cleaning supplies, petrol vouchers and portable gas stoves. They have gone as far as Woodburn and Broadwater to help. I give a special shoutout to IGA manager Brendan Alvos, Foodpantry Coordinator Roz Knights, Kyogle Lions Club President Tony Lickiss, all the IGA staff and Lions volunteers for their outstanding work. Our community has been magnificent in these floods. The story of Kyogle Lions Club and Kyogle IGA is one of many that is rightly acknowledged in the parliament.

#### **THE 41ST BATTALION**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—The 41st Battalion of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in Lismore and have done an outstanding job helping flood affected communities across the Northern Rivers. From day one the 41st Battalion were on the ground doing rescues and helping with the clean-up. So many have said to me how proud they are of our locals. How they were there for us. They have stood out. Lieutenant-Colonel Susana Fernandez has provided outstanding leadership of the unit. Lismore is just so proud of our locals. I saw this on display recently when I was honoured to join the 41st Battalion at our ANZAC Day dawn service at the Lismore Memorial Baths. I thank them for their service and outstanding efforts.

#### **SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I place on the parliamentary record my sincere thanks and appreciation for Southern Cross University (SCU) and the pivotal role they have played in Lismore's flood rescue and recovery. Many locals comment to me 'where would we be without Southern Cross University?' and they are right. When the Northern Rivers needed SCU opened their doors and their hearts to all who needed help including many family animals. They have set up an evacuation centre which house nearly 1000 flood evacuees from across the Northern Rivers region. They still today host a recovery centre which acts as a one stop shop for people who need help. They opened their kitchens to cook meals, their indoor sports centre and classrooms to house people and their sports ovals for helicopters to land. SCU also had a health centre which was vital in the rescue effort. They are still housing much of Lismore's offices and businesses. Including mine. I particularly want to acknowledge President Professor Tyronne Carlin, Vice President (Engagement) Ben Roache and Vice President (Operations) Allan Morris for their strong, calm and continued leadership of SCU and their role in our community recovery. Thank you SCU.

#### **HUNTER IMAGING GROUP OPENING**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—People in our regions often face complex health decisions trying to balance the need to be diagnosed and treated against the distances, access to facilities, financial considerations, employment, study and family support needs. On April 21st it was great to see some of these issues addressed with the official opening of Hunter Imaging's flagship branch at the Genesis Oncology Centre at Metford. A poignant smoking ceremony opened the official ribbon cutting and opening, followed by a tour of the centre. I commend Hunter Imaging Group for improving access and availability to health services for those in our city of Maitland and the surrounding regions. They have introduced some of the world's best technology and diagnostic imaging to our city, improving access to diagnostics, treatment and care across our region. I hope that they are successful in getting their MRI machine licenced through Medicare as well as the machine at the new Maitland Hospital. The technology has fundamentally changed the options available to patients and their treating doctors, and has resulted in much earlier diagnosis which massively improves treatment outcomes. Congratulations to all concerned!

#### **RUTHERFORD TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS GO ABOVE & BEYOND**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—We have been having many issues with bus cancellations in Maitland in recent months, which I constantly raise with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. However I would like to congratulate the teachers from Rutherford Technology High who stepped up to fill the gap when buses failed to turn up to pick up students yesterday afternoon. Ben O'Leary and Lexi Fitzgibbons, supported by Craig Trotter, David Connaughton, Lidija Nenad, Leeta Campbell and a number of other staff who worked at the school answering parent phone calls were the heroes of the day. Ben and Lexi actually drove back to school, collecting the school's two buses to ferry students back to school, and then waited with them while they got more buses to get the students safely home. Under the leadership of Principal Simone Hughes, these teachers demonstrated the positive can do attitude of all the staff at the school in going above and beyond to ensure the safety and security of the students. I thank everyone involved for your tremendous display of dedication and care for our students!



### 100 YEARS OF THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION [CWA]

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—One hundred years ago, on 21 April 2022, the Country Women's Association [CWA] of NSW formed. As a member of the Maitland Branch of the CWA, I am proud to join with my sisters across Maitland, the rest of the state, and indeed our nation, to celebrate CWA of NSW's centenary. Some of the CWA's earliest campaigns were to secure reduced train fares to the coast support for a seaside home and maternity wards in country hospitals. Their advocacy now covers a broad range of issues including agriculture, environment, disaster relief, health, education and level rail crossing and road safety. I joined the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Regional NSW, Agriculture and Western NSW at the CWA's AGM opening last week. It was amazing to see the energy of some 700 women representing regions across the state coming together to debate policy for our regions and our state. I was pleased to initiate the first Parliamentary Friends of the CWA Group, with co-chairs from a wide variety of parties across this Parliament, representing the importance of the largest women's group in our nation to all of our communities.

### AUSTRALIAN JORDANIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION IFTAR

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—The Islamic holy month of Ramadan has just concluded. It is a time in which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. It is a month of spiritual reflection, empathy with the less fortunate and togetherness, as families, friends and the community gather to break their fast, known as iftar. I had the pleasure of attending several iftars that celebrated our unity as a community as well as our shared humanity. In particular I would like to acknowledge the Australian Jordanian Community Association for hosting me at their iftar on 18 April. The food was amazing, the sweets divine and the company even better. The Australian Jordanian Community Association was inaugurated by a group of Jordanians seeking to promote Jordan as country of peace and stability. It was an honour to join their community and I thank them for the invitation. Regardless of a person's religious background, the coming together of people, rekindling old friendships and making new ones whilst breaking bread, is something that we can all appreciate. We are better as a society when we are together and when we respect and value our differences. Eid Mubarak.

### BANKSTOWN PAC MEDALS & AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—On 5 May 2022, I had the pleasure of attending the Bankstown Police Area Command Medals & Awards Presentation Ceremony. Being in the police is never easy and there have been times, particularly over the last few years where the police have been required to go above and beyond the call of duty. I also welcome and thank Acting Commander, Superintendent Adam Johnson and Bankstown Police Area Command, for his work in building strong community ties. At the ceremony, it was great to witness a recognition of service, courage and dedication to the protection of our state and local community. I thank each officer and congratulate all 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. Whilst police do not serve us for the awards, or promotion this was a wonderful way of saying thank you to members of the Police Force, sworn and unsworn. I look forward to continuing my work with Superintendent Adam Johnson and Bankstown Police Area Command to ensure our community continues to be safe.

### BAYT AL ZAKAT AUSTRALIA HSC HIGH ACHIEVERS

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—Bayt Al-Zakat is a non-profit organisation that looks after the welfare of families and orphans in unfortunate circumstances. In my community, one of their focuses is to encourage youth to attain excellent academic results. As a result, they have for the last twenty-four years held a dinner to express the community's appreciation and recognition of their students' achievements. I thank Bayt Al Zakat Australia for allowing me to attend the 24th annual recognition of HSC high achievers. These students, against so many odds last year, all scored above a 90 ATAR through hard work and the support of their family and schools. I had the opportunity to share my pride in the students and encouraged them to use their knowledge and success to do the best they can for others in the future. A true measure of success is to give back to others. I offer a special shout out for Hurraïn who achieved 99.4 and has chosen to study teaching. She could have chosen anything with that grade and decided on the most noble of careers.

### KELLY MCNEIL

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—When Kelly McNeil first joined Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie in 2016, not even she could have predicted how integral she would become to that outstanding organisation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kelly took on the role of membership officer and has worked incredibly hard over the course of the pandemic, bringing on twenty-four new trains and three transfer members. This commitment above and beyond is why she was nominated as the Lake Mac Volunteer of the Year at the 2022 Lake Mac Awards. Kelly was named one of nine finalists for the award, which is given for outstanding community contribution. By organising catch-up calls with new members and those experiencing stress or

difficulties during the pandemic, Kelly has shown her extraordinary commitment to her members and to Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie. Her nomination was well-earned, and she more than deserved his spot amongst the finalists. Congratulations, Kelly and the entire team at Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie.

#### **XAVIER NEIL, LAKE MAC YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Xavier Neil was named Lake Mac Young Citizen of the Year at the 2022 Lake Mac Awards. Xavier is an extraordinary and incredibly generous young man, who has served as an ambassador for charities SurFebruary and Charlie's Run 4 Kids, helping to spread the word about these amazing charities. At just eleven years old, he has raised \$70,000 to help treat cancer patients. On Xavier's first foray into fundraising back in 2019, he was able to raise \$12,500 for a fundraiser called SurFebruary, after being introduced to it by a friend and cancer survivor. Wanting to do even more to help those in need, Xavier teamed up with his mum started making soaps and lip balm, which are now stocked in more than 25 businesses and online. The passion project, known as 'Good X Karma', donates all profits to Chris O'Brien Lifehouse to treat people with cancer. It was my pleasure to meet Xavier at the awards ceremony. Over 90 nominations were received for the 2022 Lake Mac Awards to recognise and celebrate the city's sporting greats, accomplished artists, environmental warriors, volunteers and ambassadors—and Xavier's award is very well-deserved!

#### **BRYCE HAM, LAKE MAC YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR FINALIST**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Bryce Ham has emerged as one of Lake Macquarie's most active young citizens, and this was recognised when he was named a finalist for Lake Mac Young Citizen of the Year at the 2022 Lake Mac Awards. I am always overjoyed at the commitment and dedication shown by young people on the issues that matter to them—and Bryce has proven time and time again that he's willing to put in the work to bring about change. A resident of Gateshead, he organised local "School Strike 4 Climate" demonstrations, and his commitment to positive environmental policies saw him stand for Lake Macquarie City Council last year, even as he was sitting his HSC! I have mentioned Bryce before in reference to his efforts to make COVID-19 information in Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and the Hunter available and accessible online. His COVID data-based Twitter account was an incredible resource for the community. Bryce is hoping to take his passion for the environment and data-driven design to his university studies in architecture and town planning. Congratulations, Bryce!

#### **SCONE HORSE FESTIVAL PARADE 2022**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—The Upper Hunter has celebrated the return of the popular Scone Horse Festival Parade following a two year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 Horse Festival Parade was held on Sunday May 8th and featured floats representing Upper Hunter schools, businesses and community organisations. Spectators lined Liverpool and Kelly streets for the event which showcases the importance of horses to the Scone community. The 2022 Scone Horse Festival VIP, James Belfe, and the festival's Young Achiever, Tyler Kelly, a talented equestrian rider, took pride of place in the cavalcade. Awards were presented for the best entries in the parade:- Arrowfield (best stud), Scone Pony Club (best horse entry), The Yellow Cottage Scone Grammar Preschool (best float) Charlotte Betts & Bebe (best individual horse and rider). Highly commended awards were also given to Scone High School and the Scone Thoroughbreds Junior Rugby League for their parade presentations. Congratulations to all who participated in this wonderful Parade, a featured event of the Scone Horse Festival, which was enjoyed by many.

#### **MERRIWA ROTARY SKATE PARK CELEBRATION**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Celebrations were held on Saturday 2 April 2022 to mark the completion of the Merriwa Rotary Skate Park. The multi-stage development on the eastern side of the township commenced in 2005 as a Rotary Centennial project with the final works completed in June 2021. Congratulations to Merriwa Rotary for its vision which has delivered not only a skate park but a range of community facilities. Among the features is a new Driver Reviver rest stop allowing Merriwa to continue its support for road safety. Merriwa Lions Club initiated Driver Reviver 30 years ago in the town's Lions Park. Today, coordinators Allen Reed and Rose Medway supported by about 15 local residents open the Golden Highway rest stop during public holidays and the start and end of school holidays. I thank the volunteers who give their time to keep the roads safe by providing hospitality for travellers in a bid to reduce driver fatigue. In closing, I'm pleased the NSW Government was among the many contributors to this project through the Stronger Country Communities Fund, the Community Building Partnership Program and NSW Government Sport and Recreation grants.

#### **AL AMANAH 2022 GRADUATES RECOGNITION AND CAREERS DINNER**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I recognise Al Amanah College who on 14 April held their Graduates Recognition and Careers Night Iftar Dinner in the Grand Hall of their Liverpool Campus. The event, held during Ramadan, recognised the achievements of their graduates, especially those doing the HSC during the pandemic.

It also featured a panel of Alumni students who discussed their career paths and journeys beyond Al Amanah. The various principals should be acknowledged: Mohamed El Dana, Ayman Alwan, Bassam Adra and Wissam Saad. Also present were Cheikh Salim Alwan Al-Hussainyy and Cheikh Fawaz Abboud. The evening started with a recitation from the Quran by Muhammad Hazarvi. The Alumni panel consisted of Omar El Hawat, Hani Skaf and Jasmine Hasha. Mr El Dana was also recognised for 24 plus years of service to the school. This was an impressive and interesting night that celebrated the achievements of the school and students and looked forward with great promise to the future.

### **THE BARBER WHO READ HISTORY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I wish to recognise two significant historians, Rowan Cahill and Terry Irving and their recent publication "The Barber Who Read History" (the title referencing a poem by Bertolt Brecht). They previously authored another book I was impressed by, called Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes. Their latest book deals with important issues for those of us interested in history and social change. History should not be reserved for the Academy – which is just as well given the parlous state in which the Academy finds itself. Historians outside the Academy range from Bob Walshe to Rupert Lockwood. Such writers believe that ideas are not just to be thought about but acted upon. The essays in the book reference impressive historians and writers, such as Eric Fry, E.P. Thompson, V.G. Childe, William Morris, Peter Linebaugh, and Marcus Rediker. One's politics can only be improved by reading such figures – and by acting on them. I also found the history of the surveillance by ASIO of the Labour History Society sobering, if not unsurprising. These are writings and essays in radical history. They deserve to be read widely.

### **UNCLE WES MARNE**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I wish to congratulate Uncle Wes Marne, on reaching his 100th Birthday. A Bigambul man, Uncle Wes has resided in my electorate of Mount Druitt for more than 45 years and is well known throughout the community for sharing his traditional knowledge of indigenous culture, as well as his work on behalf of the Indigenous community. Uncle Wes is a founding Member of the Mount Druitt and Districts Reconciliation Group, as well as establishing "Kwinnies Garden", where he can tell his stories to the community as they listen and connect to country. Uncle Wes has dedicated his life to helping children and adults who have been incarcerated to get their lives back on track, assisting them to regain their self-esteem and confidence to advocate for themselves and become productive members of society. Despite reaching the grand old age of 100, Uncle Wes continues to contribute to the Mt Druitt community where he is much loved, respected and valued.

### **CRAIG LITTLE**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—It is always a sweet feeling to be officially recognised for a talent of skill. For Craig Little, that's exactly what happened during this year's Royal Easter Show. Like many of us, Craig decided COVID-19 lockdowns were the perfect time to discover a new hobby. However, what started as a hobby quickly turned into an in demand product. The Bradbury resident's foray into the world of honey harvesting saw him walk away with the second place prize at this year's show. Craig's success story was featured in the Campbelltown-Macarthur Advertiser – where he quickly acknowledged the true workers behind the honey production. "The bees do all the work, I just harvest it and clean it up," he said. The importance of bees to our environment and ecosystem is well known but not necessarily appreciated by all. Craig's willingness to set up a hive in his backyard and harvest the honey is certainly something many of us could replicate. Keep an eye out for Craig's honey at various locations around Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur. Once again, well done Craig on a wonderful result at this year's Royal Easter Show.

### **WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Western Sydney University has not only made an incredible contribution to Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur, but to all communities throughout West and South Western Sydney. The university is far more than simply a tertiary education provider. It has embarked on a number of initiatives and projects that have made a difference to the lives of many who have never even enrolled in a course. The Macarthur Clinical School in my electorate of Campbelltown is one example. Recently the university received a number of awards in the Times Higher Education impact ratings. The rankings assess universities on their commitment to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The accolades included: First worldwide for clean water and sanitation; Second worldwide for responsible consumption and production; Third worldwide for gender equality; Fourth worldwide for reduced inequalities; Fifth worldwide for partnerships and goals; Ninth worldwide for life below water; 10th worldwide for life on land; 15th worldwide for good health and wellbeing; 15th worldwide for sustainable cities and communities. Congratulations to everyone at the university on such an incredible achievement. It certainly is well deserved and a reward for your dedication and commitment.

**CHERYL DEVINE**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—I would like to acknowledge Mrs Cheryl Devine as the newly elected President of the Emu Plains Lions Club for 2022/23. Her commitment to our community is unwavering and I have no doubt she will take on the role of President with zest and enthusiasm. Cheryl is also a Life Member of Emu Plains Little Athletics Club and Emu Plains Netball Club. I extend my sincere thanks to all members of the Emu Plains Lions Club for the invaluable work they do to support our local community.

**ALSTONVILLE SWIMMING CLUB**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today, I recognise the achievement of two young Alstonville Swimming Club swimmers who competed in the Australian Age Swimming Championships in Adelaide last month. McKinley Arnison, 16, was first in the 100m freestyle age event (15-16-yr-olds), second in the 400 free (16-18), third in the 200 free (12-18) and fifth in the 400 free open. A swimmer with Olympic potential, McKinley also acquitted herself well in three other events. Alastair Miller competed strongly in four events and achieved personal bests in two of them. The pair were part of a 13-strong team from the club who competed in the NSW Country Championships in February. Aidan Arnison, Thomas Bowker, Will Hensley, Ellen Miller, Lachlan Miller, Coco Robinson, Finn Robinson, Poppy Robinson, Izzie Rowe, Lochie Trease and Felicity Walker and coaches Graham Walker and Clayton Fettell travelled to Sydney Olympic Park for the event. McKinley took out gold in the multi-class 100m freestyle and picked up a bronze medal in the 16-18-year 100m backstroke. Thomas, Finn, Lachlan and Aidan took third place in the Boys 13-14yr 4 x 50 Freestyle Relay. Congratulations to the young swimmers and their club for their commitment and hard work.

**RACHNA SONI**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections)**—I would like to recognise the great work of Ms Rachna Soni who was a recent finalist for the IJ Fellowship Award at the 2021 Rotary Clubs of NSW Police Officer of the Year Awards announced on 29 April at the Hyatt Regency, Darling Harbour. Rachna has been a Multicultural Community Liaison Officer (MCLO) at Parramatta Police Area Command (PAC) since 2021. Prior to her transfer to Parramatta PAC, Rachna has held the position of MCLO at Auburn and St George PACs where she commenced work with the NSW Police Force in 2013. Together with two other MCLOs from Bankstown PAC, Rachna's nomination for the IJ Fellowship Award resulted from the creation of a visual resource which addresses the growing concerns about dowry abuse in sub-continent communities. In the role of MCLO, Rachna develops and maintains strong and effective working relationships between police and local communities and has a keen interest in specifically working to reduce domestic and family violence. Rachna speaks both Punjabi and Hindi and although the MCLO role is not ethno-specific, she has been a tremendous asset to Parramatta PAC working with both internal and external stakeholders to achieve the Commands priorities.

**LYDIA AND RAY LAKE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Last month people from all around Australia gathered together to remember the bravery and sacrifices of our ANZAC soldiers. After two years of the pandemic it was wonderful to see traditional memorial services resume and seeing so many people attending memorial services to pay their respects. ANZAC Day is a deeply important event for all Australians but particularly for the families of our veterans. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Mrs Lynda Lake from Peakhurst. Lynda Lake is a war widow; her husband Ray Lake was a national service conscript who served in Vietnam from the 12th of November 1967 to the 1st of June 1968 before finishing his service in 1969. Ray passed away in 2010 aged 65. Lynda Lake has been an active member of the local community. She has been Kingsgrove RSL Club member for the last 28 years. During this time she has been a member of the Club's Sub Branch Auxiliary since 2003 and the Club's Community Group since 2005. She has also been a member of the War Widows Guild of Australia since 2010. I acknowledge and thank Mrs and Mr Lake for their service.

**KOGARAH'S GREEK ORTHODOX PARISH**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I would like to take this time to recognise Kogarah's Greek Orthodox Parish and their generous donations of Easter eggs to local organisations and kids in hospital. Over a thousand Easter eggs have been delivered to the young patients at Sydney Children's Hospital, St George Hospital Children's Ward, Ronald McDonald House Randwick, along with the Bayside Women's Shelter, Pantry for the People and Street Buffet, which provides meals for the homeless. This donation was thanks to Saint Eles Food Initiative and their annual 'Chocolate Easter Egg Drive' where local businesses and members of the community donate their eggs and bunnies. These donations are not just a nice Easter gift, but also let children and families in need know that they are constantly cared for and supported. It is always important to support those most vulnerable in our

community and put a smile on their faces. Thank you to Kogarah's Greek Orthodox Parish, Bishop Christodoulos, and all those who donated and supported this wonderful initiative.

### ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I would like to acknowledge the Australian Israeli Community as we come together to celebrate Israel's 74th anniversary of independence. Australia has had a long, warm and close relationship with Israel. Our relationship dates back to the First World War when Australian forces fought in the Sinai-Palestine campaign against the Ottomans. Australia was the first country to vote in favour of the United Nations 1947 partition resolution, which ultimately led to the creation of Israel as a nation state. In 1949, Australia and Israel established diplomatic relations. Australia's bilateral economic relationship with Israel continues to grow. In 2019-20, Israel was Australia's 45th largest two-way trading partner and 50th largest export market, with trade ties worth \$1.3 billion. Australia is home to vibrant Australian-Israeli community and I thank them for the rich contributions to Australia over the years. I was privileged to join fellow State and Federal parliamentarians, diplomats, business leaders, and NSW Jewish Community leaders at Israel's 74th Independence Celebration event. I would like to acknowledge Lesli Berger, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies President, Rodney Naumburger, Zionist Council of NSW presidents and Darren Bark, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies CEO, as well as all Israeli Australians.

### LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to the Little Company of Mary, one of the first 17 publicly nominated Blue Plaque recipients. The Little Company of Mary was founded in 1877 by a 30-year-old Englishwoman, Mary Potter, and came to Australia in 1884. Calvary Hospital in Wagga Wagga was founded in 1926 by the Sisters, after they were invited to establish the hospital by Bishop Joseph Dwyer, who had received nursing care at their hospital in Lewisham, Sydney. For nearly 100 years the Sisters of the Little Company played a vital role in providing compassionate health care to the people of the Riverina and beyond. As one of the sisters, Sr Bernadette Clear, recently wrote to me: "The strong bond between the hospital and the Riverina community was one of the things I always found so encouraging, that sense of being connected to the people in their bounty and their need, as the vagaries of the seasons dictated." It's wonderful to see the Sisters recognised for their contribution to NSW. The Blue Plaques will be added to sites during the second half of 2022. I hope to see more of these markers around Wagga Wagga in the future.

### WAGGA WAGGA BASE HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I congratulate the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital Auxiliary, which has recently been recognised for its impressive fundraising efforts. The auxiliary has been awarded the Sir Norman Nock Rose Bowl for raising the most money per volunteer out of any auxiliaries in regional NSW in 2021. The current auxiliary was formed in 2008 and since that time has raised more than \$2 million for the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, with most of that money coming from the organisation's incredibly popular op shop. This is an extraordinary achievement for the auxiliary, and its core band of about 30 volunteers, who devote countless hours every year to raise money for much-needed hospital equipment. News of the award comes at an exciting time for the auxiliary, which has recently opened the doors of a new shop in Wagga Wagga's Baylis Street. I commend auxiliary president Rodney Parsons, secretary Gloria Mason and treasurer Elizabeth Parsons and every single volunteer who has given their time to help out. The hard work of this small group has made an enormous difference to the staff and patients at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, who have benefitted from the additional equipment funded by the auxiliary.

### FARMHOUSE INDUSTRIES

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I wish to congratulate the Farmhouse Industries Craft Store at Tarcutta on reaching a special milestone, its 50th anniversary. This wonderful community-based enterprise was created in 1972 at a time when dry conditions were impacting farming incomes. In a bid to help their families, several farmers' wives decided to start selling craft items. As their efforts continued, the group needed a shop and settled on a location in Tarcutta. In the years since, the craft store has gone from strength to strength. Today, the store offers a range of handmade items including soaps, wood carvings, pottery, clothing and children's toys that have been made by members within a 100-kilometre radius of Tarcutta. All items are priced to ensure crafters are compensated for their time and effort, with a small percentage retained to keep the shop running. Any additional funds have been donated to local charities and since 1991, \$89,405 has been donated to organisations including Riding for the Disabled, Lilier Lodge, Country Hope, Angel Flight and Ronald McDonald House. I commend the craftspeople and volunteers on keeping this enterprise running, particularly president Fay Belling, who has been in her role for 29 years. Well done to all involved.

### **ANNIE KENYON HORNSBY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)**—Annie Kenyon is the current President of the Hornsby Chamber of Commerce which has been active for over a century. Through Annie's energy and leadership the Chamber is widely respected and dynamic, whose members meet twice monthly to support each other. Their key values are connection, growth, support, innovation, development and community, with these underpinning every decision they make. Since the pandemic period, they have flourished, growing their membership by over 150 per cent making them one of the fastest growing Chambers in NSW. They have also signed a Memo of Understanding with Hornsby Council which is resulting in more exciting opportunities for collaboration. This year the Chamber was awarded a grant from the NSW government for Small Business Month and they collaborated with both Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Councils to host a hugely successful event that provided effective training for small business owners to achieve better results from their digital marketing. There were over 180 people in attendance. Their goal over the next 3 years is to continue to grow and expand the offerings their members, and through President Annie Kenyon and the new Chamber executive I am certain they will achieve this goal.

### **ROTARY BEROWRA**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)**—Rotary Club of Berowra is one of the best service clubs in my electorate. This year they are celebrating 45 years of serving their local community. Their first meeting was held on 25 May 1977. Since its inception Berowra Rotarians have been involved in many activities. This includes the local ROTA-RUN, annual Art and Craft Exhibition, graffiti removals days and popular bi-annual Plant Sales. They support local youth through international Youth Exchange Programs, Youth Leadership Awards and school Citizenship Awards. Most of those very first members have passed away or are no longer active in the Club. The longest standing member is Trevor Bailey who joined as a young man in 1983, and has since been President of the Club seven times. Another long-time contributor to the club is their first female President was Jan Childs. She joined in 1995 and is still a Club Director. While over a number of years the Club had a membership in the 30s, it is now a small Club with a dozen members, but still active and greatly respected in their community. They seek to continue to aspire to their motto, "Service Above Self".

### **GRAYS POINT RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—Sutherland Shire Strike Team Bravo recently received the Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service in recognition of "outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties". The citation reads: "On 31 December 2019, Sutherland District deployed two Strike Teams Alpha—Group 3, Bundeena 1B, Maianbar 1B, Engadine 1B, Sandy Point 1B and Illawong 1B; and Bravo—Group 1, Waterfall 1A, Heathcote 1A, Engadine 1A, Grays Point 1A and Sandy Point 1A ... Arriving in Batemans Bay from 0900hrs, crews were confronted by the Clyde Mountain fire, .. at Emergency Warning level... Both Strike Teams were deployed immediately to the Batehaven and Surf Beach areas... Faced with horrific fire conditions the crews managed to save numerous properties...Strike Team Bravo were deployed to Nelligen...Veteran NSW RFS members described the fire conditions as the worst they had seen. All members performed above and beyond expectation in extremely horrendous fire conditions, working as a team to assist the Batemans Bay community during its time of desperate need." I thank members from Grays Point Rural Fire Service - Captain Ian Kemp, Craig Mulley, Craig Smoothy, Sien Tiauw, Josh Howes, and Rob Trinnie - for their selflessness and service.

### **WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Last month the Water Polo NSW State Championships were held at Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre. The Central Coast was represented by several teams at the Championships with the Under 14 and Under 16s Girls teams heading off to Brisbane for the Water Polo Australia, Australian Youth Water Championships just two days later. The Under 16s team came away with 4th place after going head-to-head with Sydney University Water Polo in the finals. The Under 14s team were pipped in their final game against St Rita's College but came away the highest ranked regional team in the division and 10th in the country. Congratulations to both the teams and coach Matt Allen. It is fantastic to see the Central Coast represented by such strong teams showing incredible sportsmanship on the national stage.

### **CENTRAL COAST SPORTS AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—In March Sport Central Coast held their awards evening at Gosford RSL. Mister Speaker, these awards highlighted the incredible sporting feats from across the Central Coast throughout 2021. Nicola McDermott was awarded sports person of the year after her fantastic efforts winning silver at the Tokyo Olympics alongside her coach Matt Horsnell being awarded Coach of the Year. Another Olympian recognised at the awards was Kayaker Dylan Littlehales who received Sportsperson with a Disability of the Year. Young talent that was recognised included Young Sportsperson of the Year Declan Squire for Martial

Arts and Young Coach of the Year, Tamira Cohn-Hedges from Central Allstars in cheerleading. Other people recognised included: Community Sportsperson of the Year – Jocelyn Kelleher in Rugby League. Team of the Year – Central Coast Roosters Women's Team. Masters Athlete of the Year – Hayden Smith from Terrigal SLSC. Event or Initiative of the Year – Central Coast Masters Hockey. Club or Association of the Year – Mariners Academy. Volunteer of the Year – Jenny Cameron for her work with Central Coast Riding for the Disabled. It was great to see all this fantastic sporting talent and initiatives from across the Central Coast celebrated at the awards.

#### **DARREL AND KERRIE EDDY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It is an honour today to recognise Darrel and Kerrie Eddy, who operate a coach touring company aimed at helping seniors on the Central Coast, with the 2022 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award. 'Scenic Horizon Tours' offers seniors a range of quality tours around Australia, with the duo working hard to ensure the best experience possible for their customers. Darrel has over 40 years of professional experience driving coaches and goes to great lengths in maintaining the coach in first-class condition. He is up bright and early every day, working late to ensure the coach remains pristine. Darrel is often seen assisting other coach drivers and motorists with are faced with mechanical and driving issues. Kerrie works closely with customers in itineraries, bookings, commentary, inquiries and general customer service. Many of their customers are elderly and have disabilities that require various forms of additional assistance which the duo always accommodates in a friendly and patient manner. I know many of their customers would not be able to travel comfortably without this level of attentiveness and care. I commend them on their dedication and care for our local seniors and thank them for their commitment.

#### **JUDITH HOSTE LOCAL SENIORS AWARD**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It is an honour today to congratulate Judith Hoste on receiving the 2022 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award for her contributions in supporting the local art community on the Central Coast. As a highly respected arts advocate and teacher, Judith has been exhibiting art since 1983 and has won many awards over the years. With her works on display in the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, and even North Korea, Judith continues to enter her art in local, country and interstate exhibitions. In 2019, she was awarded first place in the 'Small Paintings Section', for Red Gum Blossom by the Central Coast Art Society, and her watercolour painting, 'Tranquility' was highly commended at the Central Coast Art Society Summer Exhibition this year. Teaching others how to paint has been a real passion of Judith's ever since she first began teaching in 1985. Judith is now President of the Central Coast Art Society and continues to teach watercolour classes at the Ettalong Beach Arts & Crafts Centre every Friday. I thank Judith for her commitment to the Arts and our local community.

#### **BOSTON SMITH**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I congratulate 17-year-old Boston Smith from Rathmines who has achieved his Queen's Scout Award – an achievement which requires determination, tenacity and a tremendous amount of effort. Boston is a highly regarded member of the 1st Byattunga Scout Group at Morisset and currently attends Toronto High School. Boston has had a long journey with Scouts, beginning with 1st Rathmines Scouts as a Joey Scout, then Cub Scout and Scout. He achieved his Promise Challenge in 2012, Grey Wolf in 2015 and Australian Scout Medallion in 2020. Boston attended both the Australian Jamboree and the World Scout Jamboree in 2019. He transferred to the 1st Byattunga Scout Group in 2020 and impressively completed his Queen's Scout Award in 18 months, all while navigating the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic and having to complete many of the challenges via weekly meetings online. After lockdowns were lifted, he then turned his attention to completing his outdoor challenges, including bushwalking, Frisbee golf and alpine activities. At all times Boston demonstrates great leadership skills and his growing confidence has seen him become an effective unit chairperson. I congratulate him on his latest achievement.

#### **JACINTA GOMEZ**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I want to congratulate 18-year-old Jacinta Gomez from Morisset Park on obtaining her Queen's Scout Award. Achieving this accolade is no mean feat as Scouts must complete many arduous and gruelling tasks including a two-day bushwalk expedition which Jacinta was determined to complete despite living with a health condition. This was made all the more difficult by having to complete 'badge work' during the COVID-19 pandemic along with her HSC at Morisset High. Jacinta has had a long and accomplished journey with the Scouts. She joined the 1st Byattunga Scouts at Morisset as a joey scout in 2009, and since then has achieved her Promise Challenge in 2011, Grey Wolf in 2014 and Australian Scout Medallion in 2017. Most notably she received the Scout of the Year Award in 2019. Jacinta is a confident, well spoken, polite and determined Scout who never gives up. She has just completed her three years as a Venturer Scout and

is now a Rover, having also served as a cub youth leader. Jacinta is a wonderful young lady who is an asset to the Lake Macquarie community, and I congratulate her on her latest achievement.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:57 until  
Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 12:00.**