



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday 9 August 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Announcements .....	9043
Legislative Assembly Foyer .....	9043
Legislative Assembly Photographs.....	9043
Business of the House.....	9043
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Members.....	9043
Members .....	9043
Member for Drummoyne.....	9043
Suspension .....	9043
Bills.....	9048
Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022 .....	9048
Second Reading Debate.....	9048
Members .....	9051
Member for Macquarie Fields .....	9051
Visitors.....	9051
Visitors.....	9051
Announcements .....	9051
Legislative Assembly Photographs.....	9051
Independent Review into Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct In NSW Parliamentary Workplaces.....	9051
Members .....	9052
Ministry.....	9052
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party .....	9052
Representation of Ministers Absent During Questions .....	9052
Bills.....	9052
Bail Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9052
ICAC and LECC Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9052
Treasury Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2022.....	9052
Appropriation Bill 2022.....	9052
Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022.....	9052
State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.....	9052
Children's Guardian Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9052
Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9052
Disability Inclusion Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9052
Assent .....	9052
Governor .....	9052
Administration of the Government.....	9052
Question Time .....	9052
Hospital Emergency Departments .....	9052
Government Performance .....	9053
Healthcare Workers .....	9054

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Regional New South Wales .....	9055
Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner to the Americas .....	9056
Cost of Living.....	9056
National Centre for Indigenous Excellence.....	9057
Flood Recovery.....	9058
Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner to the Americas .....	9058
Flood Recovery Grants .....	9059
Member for Miranda.....	9059
Health Services .....	9060
New South Wales Agent General to the United Kingdom .....	9061
Sports Infrastructure .....	9062
Monkeypox Vaccination.....	9063
Multicultural Communities.....	9063
Documents .....	9064
Office of the Children's Guardian.....	9064
Reports.....	9064
Independent Commission Against Corruption .....	9064
Reports.....	9064
Law Enforcement Conduct Commission.....	9064
Reports.....	9064
Auditor-General.....	9064
Reports.....	9064
NSW Law Reform Commission.....	9065
Reports.....	9065
Ombudsman .....	9065
Reports.....	9065
Independent Commission Against Corruption .....	9065
Reports.....	9065
Committees .....	9065
Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.....	9065
Reports.....	9065
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety.....	9065
Reports.....	9065
Legislation Review Committee .....	9065
Reports.....	9065
Petitions .....	9065
Petitions Received .....	9065
Business of the House.....	9066
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Bills .....	9066
Petitions .....	9066
Petitions Received .....	9066
Responses to Petitions .....	9066

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Bills.....	9066
Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022 .....	9066
Second Reading Debate.....	9066
Consideration in Detail.....	9077
Third Reading .....	9078
Ombudsman Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9078
Second Reading Debate.....	9078
Public Interest Debate.....	9079
Housing Affordability.....	9079
Bills.....	9087
Ombudsman Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9087
Second Reading Debate.....	9087
Third Reading .....	9089
National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Reservations) Bill 2022.....	9089
Second Reading Debate.....	9089
Third Reading .....	9094
Casino Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9094
First Reading.....	9094
Second Reading Speech.....	9094
Second Reading Debate.....	9099
Consideration in Detail .....	9105
Third Reading .....	9110
Community Recognition Statements .....	9110
St Vincent's Care Services Heathcote.....	9110
Shellharbour State Emergency Service Awards .....	9110
St Mark's Anglican Church.....	9110
Svitzer Glenrock Emergency Response Vessel.....	9110
NSW Minerals Council Awards .....	9111
Chullora Public School .....	9111
Nepean Food Services .....	9111
Chief Inspector Peter Scheinflug Retirement .....	9111
Dubbo Theatre Company Performer Greg Markwick .....	9111
Fairfield Electorate Syriac Catholic Community.....	9112
South Coast Marine Rescue Units .....	9112
Bay Run .....	9112
Queen's Birthday Honours List Recipient Wayne Stuart .....	9112
Wrestler Jayden Lawrence.....	9113
Coast Shelter.....	9113
Grenfell Senior Citizens Welfare Committee.....	9113
VET In Schools Student of the Year Stella Cox.....	9113
Western Sydney 70.3 Ironman Competitor Julia Hammans .....	9113
Harman Foundation .....	9114

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Rachael Roach and Debbie Deasey .....	9114
Rotary NSW Emergency Services Award Winner Raymond Merz .....	9114
Dr Jack Hodges .....	9114
Athletes Tiffany Ho and Tracy Chunyi Feng .....	9115
Tuckwell Scholarship Awardee Finn Currie .....	9115
Woy Woy Runners .....	9115
Moorebank Royals .....	9115
3Bridges Community Centre .....	9115
Athlete Lachlan Wood .....	9116
Mosman Cricket Club .....	9116
Mary Mac's .....	9116
Private Members' Statements .....	9116
National Emergency Medal Awards .....	9116
Regional Seniors Travel Card .....	9117
Upper Hunter Electorate Flood Response .....	9117
Let's Talk Initiative .....	9118
Crescent Head Public School .....	9119
Port Macquarie Electorate Infrastructure .....	9120
Reproductive Health Care .....	9121
Tribute to the Most Venerable Sudhammo .....	9122
Tribute to Ross Rocca .....	9122
Tribute to the Most Venerable Sudhammo .....	9122
Regional Justice .....	9123
Blue Mountains Electorate Social and Affordable Housing .....	9124
Cessnock Electorate Flooding .....	9125
Bougainville Parliamentary Delegation .....	9126
Wagga Wagga Electorate Flooding .....	9127
Blacktown Electorate Education Budget .....	9128
Smithfield Italian Catholic Federation Anniversary .....	9129
Summer Hill Electorate Sporting Clubs .....	9129
Seven Hills Electorate Commonwealth Games Participants .....	9130
Western Sydney Academy of Sport .....	9130
Community Recognition Notices .....	9131
Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise Change Over Luncheon Event .....	9131
Gerringong Lions Club Change Over 2022 Dinner Event .....	9131
National Tree Day at Boongaree Bushcare In Berry .....	9131
Al Minia Charitable Association .....	9132
Australian-Syrian Businessmen Council .....	9132
Bankstown Bulls JRLFC .....	9132
Orcca .....	9132
Bronte Hendricks .....	9132
NAIDOC Week 2022 - Sutherland Shire .....	9133

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Camp Breakaway.....	9133
Central Coast Academy of Sport.....	9133
Zac Gay.....	9133
Khancoban Post Office.....	9133
RASF Scholarship Recipient.....	9134
Four Decades Tackling Blazes to Hang Hat on.....	9134
Jiahnna Ivey.....	9134
SEVA International Celebrating Positive Role Models Event.....	9134
Merrylands In Explore Magazine.....	9134
Lions Club the Entrance.....	9135
Natalie Mort.....	9135
Congratulations on Your 100th Birthday Marguerite Dibb.....	9135
Happy 100th Birthday Edward Grossi.....	9135
Club Marconi – 64th Anniversary.....	9136
Western Sydney Greyhounds As Pets Adoption Centre Opening.....	9136
Australian Christian Fellowship Church.....	9136
Dr Peter Benson.....	9136
Jasmine Seidel.....	9136
Fire and Rescue NSW Station 357 Lambton.....	9137
Charissa Smith.....	9137
Local Students Compete In NSW Cross Country Championship.....	9137
North Sydney Bears Finish As Minor Premiers.....	9137
Vale Roland Shelton.....	9137
Natalie Van Coervorden.....	9138
Matthew Levy OAM.....	9138
Northbridge Sailing Club.....	9138
Chatswood Roseville Rotary.....	9138
Youth Solutions – Annual Charity Event.....	9138
Grace Amos.....	9139
Macarthur Anglican School Dubbo Show Success.....	9139
Lorraine Taylor Reserve.....	9139
Retirement of Joanne Crawford.....	9139
NSW RFS Long Service Medals.....	9139
Vale Marcia Atkinson.....	9140
Manly Warringah Pipe Band – Basel, Switzerland.....	9140
Rotary Club of Chatswood International.....	9140
The Thirlmere Festival of Steam.....	9140
Alexander Codey.....	9140
200th Anniversary of Picton, Tahmoor and Bargo.....	9141
Toronto Men's Shed.....	9141
Carl Gibbons.....	9141
Max Bradbury.....	9141

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Sandon Gibbs-O'Neill .....	9141
Cudal Cricket Club .....	9142
Debbie Longmore .....	9142
Jane Judd OAM .....	9142
James Kahl .....	9142
Illawarra Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence Bellambi Surf Club .....	9142
Illawarra Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence Woonona Surf Club .....	9143
Unit Commander Camden Haven Marine Rescue .....	9143
National Excellence Awards .....	9143
Grace West Anglican Church .....	9143
Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital .....	9143
Emma and Chris Yopp .....	9144
Uts Haberfield Junior Rowers Become World Champions .....	9144
Henson Park Beer Footy and Food Festival .....	9144
Rail Safety Week .....	9144
Mr and Mrs Collier's 65th Wedding Anniversary .....	9144
Liverpool 150 .....	9144
Commonwealth Games Representation .....	9145
Eden .....	9145
Hunter Branch Surf Lifesaving Awards .....	9145
Go Gentle .....	9145
Dying with Dignity NSW .....	9145
NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Alliance .....	9146
David Lamb - Pierre C. Robert Precision Agriculture Award .....	9146
Ms Katherine Seers .....	9146
Ms Rebecca Allan .....	9146
The Shop - Gravesend .....	9146
Country Women's Association Bundarra Branch .....	9147
Jaylah Hancock-Cameron .....	9147
The Bay Pavilions – Nbrs Architects, Donovan Payne Architects and Eurobodalla Shire Council ..	9147
Club Malua .....	9147
Bankstown Bites .....	9147
Surf Life Saving NSW .....	9148
Community Support Services Incorporated .....	9148
The Starfish Store .....	9148
Col Berry .....	9148
Bob Harrow .....	9149
Kingsgrove Community Aid Services NAIDOC Week Event .....	9149
Oatley Seniors Morning Tea .....	9149
Social Brewers Small Business Visit .....	9149
Jett Liu - Leeton .....	9149
Brendon Gledhill - Coomealla .....	9150

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Scott Richardson and Di McQueen-Richardson.....	9150
Wagga Tenpin League Bowlers.....	9150
Peter and Trish Hilton.....	9150
Kellyville Anglican Church.....	9150
North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club.....	9151
Wanda Surf Life Saving Club.....	9151
NSW Government Community Service Award .....	9151
Riverview Vs Joeys Games .....	9151
Lane Cove Roads Forum .....	9151
Constituents at the Commonwealth Games .....	9152
Maria Doherty.....	9152

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 9 August 2022**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea)** took the chair at 12:00.

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

### *Announcements*

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOYER**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that during the July recess the Legislative Assembly's foyer area was renovated to create a larger display area to help engage visitors and convey stories of this place. The current display features some of the oldest objects in the Parliament's collection, which were unearthed during renovations and building works. QR codes have been installed to provide further information or context on the pieces. I urge members to take the opportunity to visit the current displays. Those displays will change from time to time and will make the entry to the Parliament a little bit more attractive.

The old front desk will remain where it is but, when they are not on duty, our wonderful front-of-house colleagues will work from their new, larger office in room 755 in the executive corridor between the lift lobby and Speaker's Square. I put on record my thanks to the Department of Parliamentary Services team and the Assembly's departmental staff for coordinating the work, and the Assembly front-of-house team for their cooperation.

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that a media representative has been authorised to take still photographs on a pool basis.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Business of the House*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: MEMBERS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I move:

- (1) That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving forthwith of a motion, of which formal notice has not been given, regarding the suspension from the service of the House of the member for Drummoyne.
- (2) That the House's agreement to this motion is not to be taken as a precedent.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE**

##### **Suspension**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, and Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology) (12:19):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that, in its report following its investigation into the conduct of the local member for Drummoyne dated July 2022, the Independent Commission Against Corruption made findings that the member for Drummoyne had engaged in serious corrupt conduct.
- (2) Suspends the member for Drummoyne from the service of the House (with the consequences set out in Standing Order 253) until Friday 25 November 2022 or until it is further ordered, in order to protect and uphold the dignity of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** There is potential for an unlimited number of members to speak in the debate. I understand the intention is to keep the speeches reasonably short. The member for Drummoyne may speak for 20 minutes.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I note that informal notice of this motion has been given to the member for Drummoyne, although he has not been given formal notice in accordance with the standing orders and the notice period there prescribed. Given the findings of the ICAC report on Operation Whitney, the House now has the

opportunity to suspend the member for Drummoyne from the service of the House. This is an appropriate action for the House to take in order to protect and uphold the dignity of the Legislative Assembly. While I commend the motion to the House, I will make my comments brief, given that legal proceedings as to this matter may be brought in the future, especially by the member himself, as was the case with Nicholas Greiner who overturned an adverse ICAC finding in the courts. Accordingly, I encourage all members to maintain appropriate restraint and decorum in the debate.

**The SPEAKER:** I appreciate the sentiment expressed by the Leader of the House. Indeed, the sub judice rule is an important rule. It does not preclude the ability of Parliament to address certain matters, but we must strike the right balance. Does the member for Heffron seek the call?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** No, not at this stage. I will wait for the member for Drummoyne.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:22):** I thank the House for the opportunity to speak on this motion that seeks to have me suspended from Parliament. Although I am saddened by the circumstances in which I find myself, I am glad to finally address matters that have impacted my life, my family members' lives and the community I serve. Firstly, serving my community as the member for Drummoyne and briefly as a Minister has been the greatest honour of my life. I have loved every day of the past nearly 12 years as a State member. My record as a member is one of achievement, service and care. I am incredibly proud of what I have done, and will continue to do, for my electorate thus far.

This motion follows the recent report of the ICAC and a finding of corruption against me. I will discuss that decision further, but at this point let me say that nothing that agency has reported on will detract from my record as a hardworking local member. My community and I will not allow that agency to destroy nearly 12 years of service and merit. Context matters. For completeness, I will start where the saga began. The premeditated attack on me started at budget estimates in September 2019. Nearly three years later I am still truly disappointed and embarrassed by the way that the budget estimates process was abused by Labor upper House members the Hon. Walt Secord, the Hon. Penny Sharpe and The Greens' Mr David Shoebridge. Those honourable members deliberately took pleasure in creating a fiasco, knowing that there was no foundation of truth. The committee referred me to ICAC.

What was the referral about? You may recall the allegations by the committee and the media frenzy that followed revolving around "whether confidential information about the land use, planning and zoning was made available to Mr Sidoti while he served as Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and whether declarations of pecuniary interests and disclosures were made in accordance with the ministerial code and the members code." Essentially, this committee alleged I had some inside knowledge that was then used to purchase property near metro station sites. They insinuated there were millions of undisclosed dollars in kickbacks from Rouse Hill developers. It is an array of absolute nonsense. Not one shred of evidence existed to support those allegations and they knew it. The media frenzy that followed was horrendous, but that was the point. The committee had only one goal—a scalp. The means was not an issue.

Unfortunately, baseless nonsense takes on a degree of legitimacy when presented by honourable members of an upper House committee of the New South Wales Parliament. The true intent of this non-Government-stacked hit squad was not to examine budgets or seek facts but to smear a new Minister in the hope of causing political damage. In fact, the Hon. Walt Secord stated the following in response to the Hon. Natalie Ward's protests at the abuse of powers:

Natalie, we are helping you out here. We are creating a vacancy for you ... you should be happy. We are creating a ministerial vacancy here.

What a disgraceful display of arrogance displayed by the Hon. Walt Secord and how he and his colleagues command so much power that they get to create vacancies. I say to the member for Kogarah, Chris Minns, if he wins government next year, that guy is not ministerial material. Let him gather dust on the backbench where he has been for years. So what was the result of this dramatic budget estimates referral to ICAC alleging Obeid-style behaviour and incredible wealth built through property acquisition from insider knowledge? What was the result of endless weeks of media coverage about metro station locations, development sites, property portfolios and millions in undisclosed wealth? After nearly three years and countless resources, ICAC found nothing—a big, fat nothing. In fact, during the entire ICAC public hearing, not one question arose about those matters. If you squint, you miss it, but the report clearly states that no evidence exists to support the allegations of insider knowledge or access to confidential information regarding station locations or hidden wealth. Better later than never, I guess.

What did ICAC say about errors in disclosures? Remember, the budget estimates committee and media insisted that the errors found were indicative of a deeper, sinister plan to hide enormous wealth, obviously acquired because of insider knowledge. Once again, after three years ICAC has found that errors of disclosure did not support any adverse findings. Any errors of disclosure that may have been made were due to reliance on incorrect

advice and were promptly rectified when I became aware of the errors. I have never knowingly or deliberately admitted to disclosing pecuniary interests, but innocent errors are not newsworthy. So together with those committee members, the gutter elements of the media created a story of misconduct. They alleged that any errors of disclosure indicated attempts to hide wealth acquired through illegal means, which is a complete fantasy. There is no extraordinary wealth.

Our disclosure guidelines are confusing and I found them complex. Unfortunately, my own accountant got it wrong, and I relied on that—end of story. In a nutshell, here are some of the facts: In 2014 my wife and I purchased a 10 per cent share in an investment group in Rouse Hill. This interest is on the public record. That purchase occurred three years after the official announcement of the Rouse Hill metro station, known as Tallawong Station. There is no insider knowledge. The whole of New South Wales was aware of the station. With respect to the Five Dock properties, my parents have owned property in Five Dock since the seventies, and I ran a reception centre there until 2008. My parents own property via their family trusts and superannuation funds, not mine—another fact that got in the way of a good story.

Much of the initial assault from the budget estimates committee was compounded by the media, but that was the plan, I guess. Ultimately, budget estimates committee members misused their privileged position to wreak havoc upon the Government and used me and my family as pawns. They did not care that their information was bogus. They created a fiction and then let the media run with it. That is reprehensible behaviour. The tabloid elements of the media played a critical role in spreading lies. They jumped on the fiction and created a snowball. The primary leader of the media pack was former Telegraph journalist Jennifer Sexton. She hounded me, my parents, my friends and my family, and authored the worst and most untrue nonsense. In particular, I was called the "Minister for ka-ching". That disgusting front-page article clearly played on the word "ching", thereby exploiting the racial stereotype of rich Asians.

Those reports in the Telegraph support the racist attitudes that are held towards our Asian community and should be condemned. Contrary to its lip-service to cultural diversity, the Telegraph continually relied on racial stereotyping in its reporting, with story after story covering the ethnicity of the subjects to demonstrate their obvious guilt. Any chance they got, I would somehow be inserted into those unrelated stories, as my Italian name suited their flavour. I call out this prejudice on behalf of the thousands of people of ethnic or minority backgrounds who are sick and tired of being stereotyped by the tabloid media as somehow criminal or dodgy if they happen to be commercially successful.

Continual mention was made that my parents would benefit from having property near the proposed Five Dock metro station. That fact alone was suggested as suspicious. The core property they own at Five Dock was purchased in 1992, some 19 years before I got into politics. Hundreds of property holders in that suburb, including my parents, may enjoy an increase in land value following construction of the metro station nearby. Lucky them. But it was not enough to throw envy-stained insults at my parents, so the Hon. Walt Secord and the media patronised my parents as elderly, insinuating they lacked the capacity to manage their business affairs and that somehow I was behind their commercial success.

Those "hapless oldies" are touring Europe as we speak. They are 84 and 77 and going strong. They have always been and continue to be in charge of their own business affairs. I cannot express how heartbroken I have been to watch them being vilified in the media through this process. They are the most inspiring, beautiful people. They came to Australia with absolutely nothing, and through hard work and love of the country they made good after looking after their family. It actually sickens me that their decades of contribution have been marred by this process. Shame on the Hon. Walt Secord and the Telegraph for their ageist attitudes. Shame on them for dragging innocent, hardworking people into their web of fiction.

As someone who has experienced it from the inside, I can comment on the evolution of our media over the past 15 years. Defamatory attacks on public figures are accepted as media sport in this country. They publicly convict with opinion, not facts. It is not right that the media and other individuals can act with complete disregard for their obligations under parliamentary privilege and face no consequences. I know that with public life comes a measure of necessary scrutiny, but hack journalists and "look-at-me" politicians typify the mob mentality of the modern media and political opportunism that we have become used to. Those people pound their chests as they express their noble aim to inform the public, but what they do is deliberately misinform. They invent the news, not report it. Australians deserve better.

This context is important to convey, because I was referred to the ICAC for sensational allegations in a frenzy of dramatic media coverage on the back of an official referral by a budget estimates committee. Despite the personal trauma, I had faith that ICAC would sort it out. I was wrong. I never expected to be sitting in limbo for nearly three years. ICAC would have spent millions of dollars and many man-hours to comb through my accounts, my parents' and my closest friends; to look through ministerial documents to find my connection or involvement in State planning decisions; on telephone taps, email tracing, phone text examinations and private

hearings. Having found absolutely nothing, ICAC did not pack up shop and go home, which could have been done within months of the referral in 2019.

I repeat: There were no Aldi bags, no secret meetings in parks for cash, no developer-funded overseas trips, no hidden bank accounts, no dodgy contracts, no insider knowledge, no dodgy property dealings, no deliberate undisclosed interests, no special gifts for mates, no heavying departmental heads, no pork-barrelling. There were no benefits whatsoever. Instead, in a demonstration of institutional pride, ICAC expanded the goalposts, dropped the bar and went after me for what would be an everyday event in our roles as MPs—that is, engaging with other levels of government, especially local councils. Like many members of this Chamber know, constituents come to my electoral office on a daily basis seeking advice or assistance on all sorts of local matters, which includes anything from broken footpaths to a proposed road closure. I am well known for advocating on behalf of my constituents on local matters. I have a good working knowledge and understanding of planning matters, and experience as a former mayor of Burwood.

In 2013 and 2014 the local council commissioned a report to look at changing the local environment plan [LEP], which would affect the Five Dock town centre. At that time the Five Dock centre was tired and unable to be developed, and businesses were dying. This was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to have lasting, positive impacts on the area. The business community, both individually and through the Five Dock Chamber of Commerce, advocated for increased density limits and ratio changes to allow for consolidation to occur. In the end the draft report came up short of community expectation. To summarise, there was concern that the proposed LEP would be inadequate to revitalise Five Dock.

There was also concern at the lack of involvement by the Liberal councillors in the proposed changes. They were asleep at the wheel. As the State member for Drummoyne, many business owners approached me to advocate for better changes regarding the proposed LEP, principally because the Liberal councillors were missing in action. Over four years, through a limited number of communications, I urged Liberal councillors to effectively represent their business base. I facilitated communications between constituents and councillors with the aim that the councillors would better inform themselves and their constituents. That was the extent of my involvement. At all times those councillors were aware that my family had property in Five Dock. They had all attended fundraising functions at our function centre. Most importantly, I even took them on a tour of more recently acquired property adjoining the function centre to ensure that they were fully aware of my family's property interests.

Any assertions that they were not aware of my family's property interests in Five Dock are just nonsense. It is inconsistent with common sense that I would disclose my parents' properties in my MP disclosures, which are public, but try to hide them from local Liberals who know me and my parents. In fact, I had known two of the Liberal councillors for over 30 years and the other since the early 2000s. At all times during all communications, the Liberal councillors knew I advocated for the business interests of locals. My parents had their own professional consultants representing them in council matters. Some proposed changes to the town centre had some serious anomalies that impacted the block on which my parents and their neighbours had properties, so they engaged their own planning consultants. The three Liberal councillors in question were not known for their planning knowledge, their work ethic or accessibility to the community. *[Extension of time]*

They struggled to understand the complexities of the town centre plan and ramifications. All of my communications with these councillors were done to advocate for the business community and the locals who asked me for help. Some of the communications were robust, demanding that the councillors do their due diligence and at least read reports and council papers before making decisions. It was disappointing and quite embarrassing, to be frank, to have Liberal councillors of such average ability. As we are members of the same party, I hoped to assist them to understand the issues and to lift their engagement with the community that they represented.

There had been rumblings even in 2014 that some other businesspeople would consider running at the next council elections, some three years into the future. I told the Liberal councillors of these rumours to warn them that their performance was important. ICAC classified that warning as improper pressure or as somehow threatening their position. These emails are on record and cannot by any reasonable person be interpreted in that way. I write the way I speak. I am no scholar and definitely no bully. I am gobsmacked that telling councillors to lift their game is considered an attempt to improperly influence. Remember, this communication was over a four-year period, from 2013 to 2017. It was a few emails, a handful of texts and casual meetings, yet it was claimed to be a sustained attempt to improperly influence. What a ridiculous assertion! It is completely ignorant of multilevel political relationships.

In our role as MPs, we advocate constantly for change. What ICAC has done is gag our ability to do our jobs in the future. Remember, these were my Liberal Party colleagues, who did not have the balance of power on council until mid-2016. ICAC has created an atmosphere where local MPs will be too scared to advocate. They will be too scared to upset an incompetent councillor. The ICAC report has listed a large number of recommendations. They relate to the local council's actions and behaviour, yet ICAC labels my actions as attempts

to "improperly influence". If any of the alleged pressure or attempts at improper influence had occurred, why was it not reported by any of the three councillors, as was their duty? It is because it did not happen.

Two of the three former councillors were upset that they did not make it back on the council in 2017. Councillor Mirjana Cestar failed to get endorsed and Helen McCaffrey failed to secure the mayoralty. ICAC provided them with a way to get revenge for what they claimed was my fault. Disgruntled, mediocre former councillors are ICAC's star witnesses. It seems to me that being a dynamic, hardworking and passionate advocate for my community does not fit well with local councillors who just want a part-time gig and the kudos of being on council. Former councillors Cestar and McCaffrey resented my communications for forcing them to put some effort in, hence they told the ICAC they felt "pressure" from me. Is the bar now so low—so low—that robust advocacy, which we do every day, is labelled serious corruption?

ICAC had to label the actions as "serious", otherwise they are not caught under the Act. Simply being robust or pushy or dynamic or even inappropriate is not enough. Is this what the founders of ICAC had in mind? ICAC has taken a microcosm of everyday politics and dissected it in a vacuum. It is a surreal process, devoid of reality and understanding. I say to the honourable member for Kogarah if you are the next Premier, be warned. This Frankenstein's monster is out of control, and nobody is safe. Reform the beast before it takes a bite out of you too. You do not have to look far to read the long list of people who have entered the ICAC process and come out beaten up and stained with the "C" word. Many of those people were later cleared by actual courts, where presumption of innocence and standards of proof and rules of evidence actually apply. To clear your name is a long, expensive process. I am lodging an appeal in the Supreme Court this week. I will be making an application to have the matter expedited.

The ICAC has taken nearly three years to finalise this matter. In March this year, the ICAC Commissioner said that my matter was receiving close attention to bring it to finality. He was already two months overdue at that point. It then took another four months to issue the report. That is an extra six months. If the ICAC had not taken so long to issue its findings, my appeal might have been heard before preselections for my seat. There is almost no chance of that happening now; I know I cannot contest my seat as a Liberal. The ICAC has robbed me of my dignity, career, reputation and future prospects. That is a disproportionate result.

My side of politics has not had the courage to reform the ICAC processes. I have no problem with increasing funding but it has to be tied to reform, for God's sake. All agencies have to justify their spending and so should the ICAC. I am all for a powerful integrity body but it has to be transparent, accountable and fair. The current model is better suited to a communist regime, where proof is incidental to allegation and rumour replaces burden of proof. The public think that the ICAC is a court and that its findings are verdicts. That impression has arisen because of the adversarial methods it uses and the public show trials it conducts, which are inconsistent with its own charter.

Commissioner Peter Hall has retired, having enjoyed a hefty \$750,000 per year salary. The ICAC has not changed for the better under his watch, following the Cunneen fiasco. The ICAC suffers from incredible institutional pride and will not let go of a matter, even when it is clear that the matter does not fit the definitions required under its Act. That institutional culture needs a clean-out. Hopefully new Commissioner John Hatzistergos, together with a brave government, will make some real changes. It is too late for me; I know that. But many others will follow.

Finally, I must thank some special people. This journey has been nothing short of awful, not just for me but for my entire family. The staff in my electoral office and former ministerial office have never wavered in their support. They have kept me positive and hopeful, and I will never forget that. In particular, Betty, Stephanie, Claudia and the whole Di Pasqua family, along with Jim, have shown true loyalty and commitment. I thank them. My former ministerial staff, especially Nicole, Nick, Maria and Berna, are still in contact with me. I thank them for their unwavering support. I thank my friends who have stood by my side throughout this ordeal. I am very lucky to have such wonderful people in my corner. Without mentioning names, I thank the members of the Liberals and The Nationals who supported me with calls, texts and comfort. I know that what they must do today is not a reflection of their support for me. I thank the members of the Opposition and the crossbench who have also shown kindness and support.

Ultimately, I would not be standing here today without the support and love of my family. My beautiful wife, Sandra, and my three amazing children have carried this burden with me. They have been my rock. I can never thank them enough for their resilience and love. Even on the darkest day, their love was bright and kept me sane. My extended family, my parents, my sister and her family, my cousins, my aunties and my uncles have blessed me with their kindness and love. Finally, I thank my constituents and my community for their overwhelming support. Until my last day in this job, I will advocate on their behalf. Thank you.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:48):** The Opposition supports the motion as moved by the Leader of the House, on the basis that it is necessary to protect and uphold the dignity of the House. I do not propose to deal with the subject matter at all, because I know that the Independent Commission Against Corruption has referred the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice, and I do not wish to make in this Chamber any contribution that might prejudice any decision that might be made, in fairness to any possible trial and the member for Drummoyne.

I make this observation, though. I understand the feelings and views expressed by the member for Drummoyne. But he has reflected on the Hon. Walt Secord and the Hon. Penny Sharpe and their discharge of their obligations in the budget estimates committee of the other place. Members of the other place sitting on those committees have constitutional duties to perform and are given matters to pursue. I know the people to whom the honourable member has referred. Neither of those honourable members would have pursued any matter they had not been asked to pursue and did not believe to be their duty to pursue. So the reflection made by the honourable member for Drummoyne about those members discharging their constitutional rights and duties is unfair in my view.

The other observation I make—and I make no reflection on the member's contribution—is that I attended the Macquarie Room at some point, when the member for Drummoyne was the Minister and when a number of those questions were put to him. Those allegations were put to him fairly and squarely, and he chose not to answer them. I have subsequently been told that he took a course as advised by the then Premier. With hindsight, that course may not have been the wisest course to take, but we can all be wise in hindsight.

But this House should be left in no doubt. The member for Drummoyne had the opportunity to answer the allegations put to him by those duty-bound honourable members of the other place. He chose not to. So, on behalf of the Opposition, I reject any assertion made about the Hon. Walt Secord, the Hon. Penny Sharpe and any other member of the other place about them discharging their constitutional and elected duty as the other place was considering budget estimates at that time. I support the motion moved by the Leader of the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **CRIMES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION ON DISPLAY OF NAZI SYMBOLS) BILL 2022**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 21 June 2022.**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (12:54):** I lead for the Opposition on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. I am certain that I speak for all members in saying that the fact that we have to discuss the contents of a bill like this, and the fact that in this supposedly enlightened day and age there is a need to put such legislation before the Parliament of the people, is disappointing beyond belief. It is disgusting, when one thinks about it. But, in any event, here we are. I say on behalf of the Opposition, and I know on behalf of all members, that when we pass this legislation we are saying in the starkest possible terms to the people who will offend against this legislation—who can do so freely now but will not be able to by the end of this week—that their behaviour disgusts us. With all of our hearts we wish that they would desist from their thoughts and deeds. The bill proposes to insert new section 93ZA into the Crimes Act 1900. As brief as it is, I will read the section into *Hansard*. New subsection (1) states:

A person who knowingly displays, by public act and without reasonable excuse, a Nazi symbol commits an offence.

Maximum penalty—

- (a) for an individual—100 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both, or
- (b) for a corporation—500 penalty units.

New subsection (2) states:

For subsection (1), the display of a swastika in connection with Buddhism, Hinduism or Jainism does not constitute the display of a Nazi symbol.

New subsection (3) states:

Also, without limiting subsection (1), a reasonable excuse includes the display of a Nazi symbol done reasonably and in good faith—

- (a) for an academic, artistic or educational purpose, or
- (b) for another purpose in the public interest.

Finally, new subsection (4) states:

In this section—

*public act* has the same meaning as in section 93Z.

So it is quite clear. The legislation substantially replaces NSW Labor's bill, which was introduced in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Walt Secord in October 2021. NSW Labor has been advocating for this bill since April 2020, after a surge in racist activity in Victoria and New South Wales. Importantly, the bill takes into account almost all the constructive feedback obtained during a February 2022 committee inquiry and substantial consultations by a number of members of the New South Wales Opposition with the Jewish, Hindu, Jain Buddhist, and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities over the past two years. The New South Wales Opposition is the first in the country to introduce legislation seeking to ban the public display of Nazi symbols, and we are very grateful that the Government has decided to bring the bill before the House and make it law forthwith.

As a matter of historical record, in June this year Victoria was the first jurisdiction in the country to introduce a similar private member's bill in its Legislative Council; on 26 May Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk announced that Queensland would also introduce similar legislation; on 5 June Tasmania's new Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, said that Tasmania would similarly legislate; and Western Australian State Labor MPs are now examining the possibility of a similar bill. This says that from coast to coast the sun is setting rapidly on people who wish to promulgate hate and display these disgusting symbols.

Of course, we are not the first jurisdiction in Australia or in the world to formally debate the banning of the display of Nazi symbols in a public manner. Many European countries have had similar laws for decades, including Germany, Austria, France and Russia, and it is right that we should do the same thing. As I said, it is disappointing and, in fact, distressing that we have a real need to review the legality of flying a Nazi flag in New South Wales.

The discussion of legislation like this is always attended by toing and froing about free speech, the rights of citizens in a democracy and things like that. Generally, I would defend the right of people to say what they wish, and their right to display whatever symbols they see fit, unless it goes beyond an acceptable boundary. Often in this Parliament we are called to look at difficult issues. We exercise a balancing act between rights versus liabilities and freedoms versus responsibilities, but it is always under the careful umbrella of the question about what is best for the majority of our citizens in a civilised society.

An old adage is the standard you walk past is the standard you accept. If we are confronted by people who seek to deny the Holocaust, we will not walk past that. That is not a matter of faith; that is a matter of fact. It did happen. No-one has the right to say it did not. It is more than deeply offensive. If we are confronted by people who wish to fly the Nazi flag, we say quite strongly, "That is not okay." Why? For many reasons. Firstly, because it is an endorsement of a principle that says that white people, by simple virtue of the colour of our skin, are better than everybody else. That is repugnant in the extreme. It is also an endorsement of a regime in Nazi Germany that was the worst example of humankind.

The bill is a necessity because acts of antisemitism are on the rise. It is ironic that people who seek to fly these flags and display these symbols seek to ally themselves with the diggers of our country and the brave men and women who fought and died to defeat Nazism. After many years of sacrifice by those brave citizens of ours, one would have the right to be incredulous that any Australian community member would want to align themselves with a genocidal regime that would completely dishonour the veterans whom we absolutely revere in this country.

Secondly, it is a fact that acts and expressions of racism, acts and expressions of extremism and acts and expressions of antisemitism are on the rise. Earlier this year the Standing Committee on Social Issues held an inquiry into a bill of this type, and many people made worthy submissions. Submissions were made and evidence expressing broad support for the bill was given by the NSW Association of Jewish Service & Ex-Service Men & Women, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and Hindu Council of Australia jointly, the B'nai B'rith Anti Defamation Commission, the Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Descendants, and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, among others. It is worthwhile my taking a moment to read onto *Hansard* comments that were made in the joint submission by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the Hindu Council of Australia. The submission states:

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD) and Hindu Council of Australia (HCA) are making a joint submission in order to support the ban of the display of Nazi symbols while ensuring that the display of symbols of religion is protected.

The JBD, the representative peak body of the Jewish community in NSW welcomes this bill and the opportunity to comment on this important piece of legislation currently before the committee.

The JBD leads, speaks and advocates on behalf of the NSW Jewish community, including 56 major communal organisations as its constituents and the Jewish people living in NSW.

The HCA is a peak body organisation acting as a representative of the Hindu community in Australia in dealing with federal, state, and local governments, apart from reaching out to other Hindu organisations and institutions. HCA is working for a strong, cohesive, and active Hindu community in Australia, living in harmony with other religious and cultural communities.

The display of Nazi symbols—particularly the Hakenkruz which resembles the Hindu sacred Swastika symbol—is of great concern to members of the Jewish and Hindu communities in NSW.

...

Nazi symbols are a reminder of one of the darkest times in humanity, which involved the murder and attempted eradication of the Jewish people from Europe, amongst other targeted groups. By the end of World War Two, six million Jews and approximately 12.5 million other people were killed by the Nazi regime.

As we move further away in time from the events of this dark chapter in history, it is essential that we do not allow the lessons of history to be forgotten, as this brings us one step closer to the events of the past being repeated.

That is a good point. The submission continues:

We have learned from history that incitement to hatred through words, symbols and gestures is the precursor to violence. If it is not addressed quickly and decisively it can engender a contempt for the rule of law, encourage mob rule and the breakdown of social cohesion and democratic institutions.

Normalising hate symbols is the first step towards desensitising people to abhorrent behaviour. It can be the first step to forgetting, enabling and repeating history.

The submission also talks about protections against the rise of extremism. It states:

The return of antisemitic extremism has presented a significant concern to the Jewish community and to government security agencies of Australia.

Mike Burgess, Director-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, has noted that almost half the work that his organisation is engaged in is now to counter the rise of politically motivated violence from the authoritarian Right in Australia.

In August 2021, a joint investigation by The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and 60 Minutes revealed the growing threat of organised—

I repeat "organised"—

neo-Nazis in Australia.

White supremacist extremism and radicalisation is penetrating parts of mainstream Australia, making up 20% of counter-terrorism investigations. The investigation uncovered that teenagers were among those most at risk of being radicalised by neo-Nazi groups in Australia.

That is one of the most concerning things about the rise of these sorts of acts, that these boofheads who engage in this behaviour and who have convinced themselves that they actually believe the flawed principles that underpin it are now seeking to influence young people as well. We cannot allow that to happen. Above all, we have a responsibility to see that their ilk dies out with them and that no further young people are infested with their beliefs. I thank the Government for bringing the bill to the House. I thank all members who will support it. None will oppose it because it is an excellent piece of legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (13:09):** It is 77 years this year since the end of the Holocaust. Today, as Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors, I support the Government's Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. I have advocated for the bill for some time now. This incredibly important legislative reform reinforces that symbols of hate have no place in our society, and we join other jurisdictions around the country and around the world in the prohibition of display of Nazi symbols. Symbols associated with Nazism are a remnant of a dark and evil period in our world history. They are a painful reminder of what happens when evil goes unchecked, but that is where the symbols should remain—in the pages of our history. They do not belong in public view throughout our tolerant, multicultural society.

I thank the stakeholders whose advocacy played an important role in the introduction of the bill to this place. I acknowledge those who have raised this legislation directly with me over many months. I particularly acknowledge the Jewish Board of Deputies and its CEO, Darren Bark, who is in the gallery today, and the Hindu Council of Australia. Nazi symbols are a gateway to violence and vilification, and the bill will ensure that those who cause harm in our community will be dealt with. Those fringe elements of our society would use Nazi symbols to intimidate, scare, threaten and to rally others to a hateful ideology, and we have seen its impact.

In recent years there have been extremely troubling reports of antisemitic behaviour. According to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry's 2021 report, there was a 35 per cent increase in antisemitic attacks in Australia in the 12 months ending 30 September 2021 compared to the previous years. Research conducted by the Jewish Board of Deputies indicated that there were over 477 instances of antisemitic attacks reported to Jewish organisations during that same period. That includes physical assaults, verbal abuse or harassment, vandalism and graffiti. Just last week I was at the Southern Sydney Synagogue in Allawah, whose congregation told me about

how they were targeted by antisemitic graffiti only recently. There have also been a rising number of reports of people flying Nazi flags in public, increased displays and sales of Nazi memorabilia and reports of individuals wearing Nazi uniforms or Nazi symbols in public.

Those incidences and the symbols tied to them contravene the values of respect, freedom and inclusiveness that we hold as Australians and as a multicultural society. The bill underscores the New South Wales Government's commitment to those values and clear opposition to extremism and Neo-Nazism. The bill sends a clear message that the display of Nazi symbols and the hatred and bigotry that they represent will not be tolerated and sends a strong message to Neo-Nazis that their brand of hate has no place in our society.

However, the bill serves another very important purpose: It helps protect those who use a swastika for religious or spiritual reasons and enables them to safely use that symbol, which for thousands of years has been associated with peace, prosperity and auspiciousness for Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. The bill clearly states that the display of a swastika in connection with those spiritualities will not be deemed a Nazi symbol. That distinction is incredibly important for our multicultural society. For too long Buddhists, Jains and Hindus have been unable to publicly display a swastika for fear that it will be mistaken for the Nazi hooked cross. This provision ensures that there is a clear distinction between the two symbols to safeguard those communities and to make sure that this law is enforced appropriately.

**Debate interrupted.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR MACQUARIE FIELDS**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish a happy birthday to the member for Macquarie Fields, who celebrated his birthday during the break.

*Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** There are quite a number of people in the gallery to welcome to question time today. I welcome them all, but I make special mention of a number of visitors. I welcome the CEO of the Jewish Board of Deputies, Darren Bark, with directors Dane Stern and Yosi Tal; the former Israeli Ambassador to the United States of America, Danny Aydon; and also Tony and Carolyn Ziegler from the equivalent of the Red Cross in Israel. They are here today for the Jewish friends meeting in the Parkes Room. We warmly welcome them to the parliamentary sitting.

I welcome the guests of the member for North Shore, who are members of the Rotary Club of Mosman. We have the guest of the member for Maitland, Amara Henson; guests of the member for Orange, who are students and mentors of the Regional Development Australia Central West 2022 TEN4TEN mentoring and leadership development program; and guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, who are members of the Lake Macquarie Youth Council. I met them earlier today. I thank them for the work they are doing. I welcome the guest of the member for Gosford, Matilda Halliday, who is on work experience as a legal studies student at Brisbane Water Secondary College.

*Announcements*

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that media representatives have been authorised to take still photographs and videos on a pool basis from the Speaker's gallery. I also inform the House that a photographer from the Premier's office has been authorised to take still photographs of question time from the side doors of the Chamber.

#### **INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN NSW PARLIAMENTARY WORKPLACES**

**The SPEAKER:** I confirm to the House that, further to the notification circulated by email yesterday and after receiving a request and also further professional advice, the report from the independent review into bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct in New South Wales Parliament by Elizabeth Broderick & Co. will now be published in full on the parliamentary website on the morning of Friday 12 August 2022.

*Members***MINISTRY**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House that on 3 August 2022 the Administrator withdrew the commissions of Eleni Marie Petinos, MP, as Minister and as a member of the Executive Council and appointed the Hon. Victor Michael Dominello, MP, as Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading. On 5 August 2022 Her Excellency the Governor accepted the resignation of Stuart Laurence Ayres, MP, as Minister and as a member of the Executive Council and appointed me as Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Minister for Sport; and appointed Benjamin Cameron Franklin, MLC, as Minister for Tourism. On 8 August 2022 Her Excellency the Governor appointed David Andrew Elliott, MP, as Minister for Western Sydney.

**DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I inform the House of the election on 9 August 2022 of Matthew John Kean, MP, as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party.

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House that the Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney will be absent from question time today. The Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport will answer questions on his behalf.

*Bills***BAIL AMENDMENT BILL 2022****ICAC AND LECC LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****TREASURY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2022****APPROPRIATION BILL 2022****APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2022****STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN AMENDMENT BILL 2022****CHILD PROTECTION (WORKING WITH CHILDREN) AMENDMENT BILL 2022****DISABILITY INCLUSION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Governor and the Administrator notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages regarding the administration of the Government.

*Question Time***HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:23):** My question is directed to the Premier. The son of Kelly from Macquarie Fields was shuffled around from emergency to resuscitation to short stay and then back to emergency at Campbelltown Hospital after suffering anaphylactic shock. She told me that other parents and sick kids were waiting for emergency care while sitting on the floor or outside in their cars. Does the Premier acknowledge that under his Government emergency departments have never been under more stress?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. There is not a health system around the country or around the world that is not under pressure following COVID-19. And following the flu season we have just had, there has been substantial pressure on our health system in this State and around the country. I add, in response to the question of the Leader of the Opposition, that there is no better health system in this country than that in New South Wales. I know that all too well from sitting in National Cabinet, where I have seen the pressure on health systems during this pandemic.

It is very clear to me, with the rising COVID numbers that have occurred, that the New South Wales system is better than any other in the country. There is a reason Mark McGowan in Western Australia closed his border when COVID came. He could not trust his health system so he shut his border. We have kept our borders open here in New South Wales. We have been open and free. We have provided support right across the board. To the Leader of the Opposition's question, whilst I acknowledge that our health system and our health workers have been under immense pressure for the past two years—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —the investments that we made in the good times in our health system leading into this pandemic have laid strong foundations to ensure that people across this State got the help, the care and the support they needed in difficult times to get through this pandemic.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. The member for Rockdale will remain silent.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have built hundreds of hospitals since coming to office.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** From the city to the suburbs to the bush, everywhere you go the investment in our health system across this State has ensured that the people of New South Wales have had the best health care possible. We know it is hard, and I thank our nurses. I thank our doctors for the work they have done and for the efforts they have made during a global pandemic to give ongoing care and support to every single person across our great State who has needed it.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I thank them for that work, and I know that with the support we continue to give—including in this year's budget, when the Treasurer made the biggest investment in a health army that this State has ever seen—we will continue to have the best health system in the nation.

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

#### GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (14:26):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on how the Government is working to secure a brighter future for the people of our State?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:27):** I can. I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question, and for her advocacy for the people of Mulgoa and western Sydney since she came into this Parliament in 2011. Like all of us in this House, she knows that it is Liberal and Nationals values that have turned the fate of New South Wales around from the sinking days of Labor, when the economy was the worst in the nation.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

We'll get to that. The State was broke. We had the worst performing economy anywhere in the country. That was the Labor way. Since coming to office, the Government has made the tough decisions—opposed by every single one of those opposite—that have transformed our State. While they were closing schools, we have been opening them. From the city to the bush, everywhere you go, everywhere in western Sydney—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There are more cranes in the skies right here in the great State of New South Wales than there are anywhere else in the world. There will be a motion later today about home ownership and giving first home buyers the opportunity of the choice to pay stamp duty up-front or to pay an annual amount.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Once again, that is opposed by Labor, just like it opposed asset recycling that unlocked capital. We privatised the electricity assets—opposed by those opposite—unlocked capital and invested in roads, rail, schools and hospitals. It is no accident that the New South Wales Government is building \$110 billion of infrastructure over the next four years and has built \$178 billion over its time in office. Why? It is because we have made the tough decisions to unlock capital and invest in the future. As the member for Mulgoa knows, the tough times came—and the past four years have been incredibly tough for our State. We have gone through a drought in the bush. That was followed by bushfires that caused much pain, suffering and loss of life

across our State. Following that there were floods, which had a devastating impact across New South Wales. *[Extension of time]*

Then the pandemic came, causing health problems across our State and putting significant pressure on businesses across New South Wales. Over 300,000 people in our great State lost their jobs.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wollongong will come to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This year there were record floods again. But because of our strong financial management over the past 11 years, we were able to deploy every step of the way to help every one of our people get through those tough times. There was \$4.5 billion for the bushfires, \$4.5 billion for the drought and billions upon billions to help people keep their jobs during the pandemic. We sit here today with an unemployment rate in New South Wales that is the lowest on record, at 3.3 per cent. That is not an accident. That is what happens when you make tough decisions in the good times.

The Government made its wages policy, opposed by those opposite. The debt this State would have been in and the deficits we would have been producing but for that change would have meant we would not have the funding to provide support to keep people in jobs, keep businesses open and keep people safe during the pandemic. That is the support and those are the values of the Liberals and The Nationals, which have ensured that New South Wales is a much better place today than it was under Labor. Given all those things, all those disasters that our State has faced, the people of New South Wales stand strong.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They stand strong because they are resilient. And because of our strong financial and economic management, we have been able to stand by them each and every step of the way through all those difficult times.

#### HEALTHCARE WORKERS

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:32):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given ambulance wait times are the longest on record, ramping time is the longest on record, emergency department waits are the longest on record and in the last quarter 55,000 people got up and left emergency departments without receiving treatment, how many of the 7,674 healthcare workers that the Premier promised have been recruited in terms of net new positions?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:32):** The Government had just handed down the budget the last time the Parliament was sitting. What a ridiculous question! We have allocated the funding to provide the biggest-ever investment in our health system in the State's history, and we can only do that because we manage money well on this side of the House. I say to the shadow health Minister, as I said in answer to the previous question, that the health system is under pressure everywhere in this country.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time. I call the member for South Coast to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** But I know, and the health Minister knows, that strong investment in our hospital system after we have built and upgraded over 100 hospitals since coming to office—and that is not just in metropolitan Sydney; that is right across regional New South Wales—

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Macksville, Kempsey—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The member for Oxley says "Kempsey".

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** And Macksville.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** And Macksville. She knows all too well; the member for Tweed knows. It is a hospital that Labor opposed. Members opposite ran on a record at the last election against the Tweed Hospital. I remember going up there in 2017 with the member for Tweed—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: I have deliberately waited.

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

**Mr Ryan Park:** It is under Standing Order 129. I have deliberately waited a long time, given your rulings last time, Mr Speaker, to see whether the Premier would outline the answer to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to rule on the point of order. The question was wideranging and related to health care. The Premier is speaking to health care. Given the breadth of the question, I am satisfied that he is being directly relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Some 170 new and upgraded hospitals since 2011—

**Mr Paul Scully:** How many workers?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** How many workers? We invested \$4.5 billion to recruit over 10,000 nurses and health staff—a record amount. That recruitment is happening now.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Not only that, since we came into office, thousands more people are on our front line—whether they are nurses, teachers or police officers. Never has a government invested more in frontline health work than this Government under the Liberals and The Nationals. That is not just in the city; that is in the bush and right across the State. Members opposite talk about it; we deliver it because we manage money well.

### REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:35):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what the Government is doing to support regional residents with the cost of living?

**Mr Geoff Provest:** A lot more than Labor ever did.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:36):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. Before I begin my answer, I pause and send my best wishes to the member for Londonderry. I know I speak for everyone in this place when I say that the member is in our thoughts, and we wish her all the best for her treatment and recovery.

It is no secret that the cost of living is rising. The Liberal-Nationals Government is stepping up and helping people ease those costs and pressures that impact on daily lives. Only a few weeks ago I was with the member for Coffs Harbour and the Minister for Hospitality and Racing, and we announced a number of fee-free courses for those wanting to kickstart their careers in the hospitality industry. It is a chance for them to attain some skills to undertake a job that they would like in the future. It is important that we provide a satisfying pathway for them in that career.

On the way, I also stopped at the community of Bulahdelah with the Minister for Education and Early Learning, and we announced that shortly the local central school would receive before- and after-school care. It is one of 35 small, regional schools that will receive a financial boost. It is important because it will establish before- and after-school care for those communities. It is a game changer for a community like Bulahdelah. Because of the size of that community, you would not necessarily expect to see a service like that being provided, but it is the Liberal-Nationals Government that is ensuring that some of our smaller, outlying communities are also receiving services that will support kids and, most importantly, families. The Liberals and The Nationals in government are investing in those services and giving mums and dads a helping hand. We are providing \$500 vouchers towards providing that service in those communities.

Across regional New South Wales 7,000 young people have enjoyed the largest winter break program on record. It has delivered 83 subsidised activities over the school holiday period. The events help alleviate cost pressures faced by regional families, and they also keep children active and engaged during the school holidays. That is why I am pleased to say that applications are now open for the next holiday break program for more events and more activities, thanks to our \$10 million commitment in the area. [*Extension of time*]

Service NSW vouchers cover everything from helping with the cost of swimming lessons to making it easier for people to go on a holiday. It is a useful reminder for people that they have only two more months to use their Stay NSW vouchers, which can be put towards the cost of accommodation bookings. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has been listening to me because I have been saying to him, "You need to get out into the regions." I have been encouraging him to go out west, and I must say that he actually listened to me because he did go west. He snuck out of Sydney, crept over the west of the range and made it to the township of Lithgow. I am glad he went there because he would have seen the investment that this Government is making in manufacturing and in tourism.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier is not close to being relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied that the Deputy Premier has been relevant on the whole. I am allowing him some discretion.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** As I said, this is cost of living. It is a bit of a shame and I was a bit disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition did not make it all the way to Bathurst. I could have shown him around; I could have been his tour guide and shown him the investments that the Government has made. He could have caught the Bathurst Bullet, a service that now has a connection back with the city. He could have spoken to those who use that service on a regional seniors travel card. He could have spoken to families who are using the Creative Kids and Active Kids vouchers. He could have also spoken to the Labor Party branch members—the whole three of them! There are only three of them left. I say to the member of Kogarah: I know you snuck out. Next time, let me know. I will put you up for the night and show you what is great about rural New South Wales, because the Liberals and The Nationals invest in our communities— [*Time expired.*]

#### SENIOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT COMMISSIONER TO THE AMERICAS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:41):** My question is directed to the Premier. It has been reported that the Premier enthusiastically encouraged John Barilaro in applying for the Americas trade role. Moments ago it was revealed that John Barilaro met with the former Minister for Fair Trading in June this year, despite his employer, Coronation Group, having a stop-work order issued by the recently resigned Building Commissioner. Given this, does the Premier still stand by his assessment of John Barilaro?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:42):** I have not seen the information that the member refers to. As I have said, it was a passing conversation. Mr Barilaro was a previous trade Minister and a previous Deputy Premier of this State. Clearly, in relation to this matter, as I have said publicly, concerns have come to light in respect of that process. That is incredibly disappointing because these roles are incredibly important and public confidence needs to be associated with them.

If we look at New South Wales' presence across the globe, it is incredibly poor. It has been for too long. The State of Victoria has 23 trade officers around the world, and New South Wales is falling behind. On my recent trip to Japan, Korea and India, I met many people who are now looking to take advantage of the opportunities of investment in this State, which will grow jobs and provide opportunity and prosperity. That is what these roles—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked specifically whether he still stands by John Barilaro, not to give a dissertation on Victoria's trade commissioners around the world.

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied that the Premier has been moving to answering the question, but I ask him to come more directly to it.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I will try to be more relevant. As I said, Mr Barilaro was a former trade Minister and a former Deputy Premier of this State. Yesterday even he stated that had he known about the process and its flaws, he would not have applied. The way it has occurred is disappointing. All members in this place know that I have commissioned an independent review of the process. Once I receive that review, I will adopt all the recommendations and I will make it public. I will ensure, along with the public service, that those processes are followed into the future. That is important because there must be confidence in these roles. Some 15 per cent of the economy is based on exports. Exports are worth \$96 billion to the New South Wales economy. We want to double that to \$200 billion by 2031. The best way of doing that and providing opportunity for the people of New South Wales is to have a strong overseas presence that will drive that investment into this State.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has concluded his answer.

#### COST OF LIVING

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:45):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer update the House on how this budget has brought in real cost-of-living relief to support families in New South Wales?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:45):** I thank the member for Camden. There has never been a more dynamic member for Camden in the history of the Parliament. Let me tell members about his dynamism. He is dynamically advocating for cost-of-living relief for the families and businesses of south-west Sydney. And this Government has delivered with \$7.2 billion worth of cost-of-living relief measures to help families not only in south-western Sydney but also across New South Wales.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** That is \$7.2 billion worth of cost-of-living relief not being offered by the Leader of the Opposition. While members on this side of the House come up with practical policies to help families deal with cost-of-living pressures, where has the Leader of the Opposition been? I do not know the answer. However, there have been unconfirmed reports of a middle-aged man in a raincoat lurking outside public hospitals in the dead of night, filming himself and then fleeing from the scene—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Heffron has taken a point of order. What is the point of order? The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** It is Standing Order 129. The Treasurer has now moved away from a very broad question that related to the cost of living, not the movements of the Leader of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Treasurer to come back to the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I will come back to the question. It has been confirmed by the police Minister that there have been reports of a gentleman loitering with intent around public places. Government members are not sure what the Leader of the Opposition is doing in western Sydney, but we know what we are doing. We are delivering for the families and businesses of western Sydney. We are doing it with things like our toll relief package—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Heffron has taken a point of order. I am satisfied the Treasurer did come back to the question, albeit with a three-second delay.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** It was a more than three-second delay. He has ignored your ruling. I want to be heard.

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied the Treasurer has returned to the question. The Treasurer may continue.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** One of the things the Government is doing for the people of western Sydney is our toll relief program, which is helping the families and businesspeople of western Sydney save up to \$750 per year. We are putting more money in their pockets more often. That is what a good Coalition Government delivers.

**Mr Peter Sidgreaves:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I will grant the extension of time strictly on the basis that the Treasurer sticks to answering the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It is \$750 back in the pockets of tradies, workers and the families of western Sydney. It is not happening in the future; it is happening right now. This Government delivers for western Sydney. It is not the only example of the Coalition Government helping families in western Sydney with cost-of-living pressures. Our energy policy is helping to lower household bills right now. Our Energy Bill Buster program will help families save up to \$600 per year on their energy bills. They can do so whilst upgrading their appliances to get new, energy-efficient appliances such as fridges, washing machines and air conditioners valued up to \$4,000. You not only get an upgrade on your appliances but you do so whilst lowering your household bills. That compares favourably with the only appliance being offered by the Leader of the Opposition: a policy vacuum. His backbenchers know it sucks. When it comes to cost of living, the Leader of the Opposition has no plans, no policies and no idea.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: You gave him an extension of two minutes conditional upon him remaining directly relevant. He has just departed from that.

**The SPEAKER:** I did. The Treasurer has concluded his answer. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time.

#### NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS EXCELLENCE

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:50):** My question is directed to the Premier. Following on from the announced closure of Redfern's National Centre for Indigenous Excellence [NCIE], what action is the New South Wales Government taking to keep NCIE open and ensure that its staff, services and facilities remain community owned and controlled in line with the views of the Redfern Aboriginal Alliance?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:51):** I thank the member for Newtown for her question, and particularly for her interest in Aboriginal Affairs. Today I am advised that the issue raised by the member has been the subject of ongoing negotiations between the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation and the

new owners of the property, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. I am further advised that the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council met today to discuss the future of the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence. Per a joint statement released by both groups, I am advised that it was reiterated that the fitness and aquatic centre will continue to be operated by the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation until a sustainable funding model is achieved. This will ensure that community access to the facilities continues.

I am also advised that Minister Franklin has been looking into this issue and discussing it with relevant stakeholders, including Minister Linda Burney; Minister Tanya Plibersek, who is also the member for Sydney; and representatives from key stakeholder groups. I am happy for the member for Newtown to continue to raise these issues with me, and I will continue to discuss them with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Ben Franklin, to achieve a resolution that is appropriate for all parties. Obviously those discussions are underway now. If there is any role that the New South Wales Government can play to assist a proper outcome being realised then we will do so. I note the member's interest in this matter and I will continue to engage with her in relation to it.

### FLOOD RECOVERY

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:53):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is supporting communities through recovery across Greater Sydney, the Central Coast, the Hunter and the South Coast after the June-July flood event?

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (14:53):** I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her question, her service to her community and her ongoing advocacy, particularly as people across western Sydney recover from yet another flood. For some people it is their fourth flood in two years. Unfortunately, since the Parliament last sat there has been another devastating flood in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, Greater Sydney, the Central Coast, the Hunter and the South Coast.

Many thousands of people were impacted, but it is a real credit to our emergency services personnel that the June-July flood event concluded without loss of life. Over 17 days there were 10,272 requests for assistance from community members, and 485 of those were flood rescues. Some 169 evacuation warnings and orders were issued by the SES over that time, and 17 evacuation centres opened their doors, hosting 1,345 people. As part of the recovery phase, 10,937 damage assessments have been completed on flood-affected homes and businesses. Of the 4,541 homes that were assessed as damaged, 2,276 had light damage, 1,260 had moderate damage, 737 had severe damage and 268 were destroyed.

I am pleased to say that the New South Wales Government has been working hand in hand with the Commonwealth, deploying Australian Defence Force helicopters and personnel during the response phase and now in the recovery phase to get funding support out the door. Some 42 local government areas [LGAs] across New South Wales are the subject of natural disaster declarations. That is one-third of all councils across the State. Declaring a natural disaster is an essential first step in the Commonwealth and New South Wales working together to unlock support and funding after receiving advice from local councils. Last month we announced the first phase of financial support, including \$1 million for every impacted council as well as \$50,000 small business and not-for-profit grants, \$70,000 primary producer grants, \$25,000 rural landholder grants, an \$80 million clean-up package and a \$36 million building assessment and demolition package.

Last Friday we announced that applications are open for the 16-week rental support payments for all impacted LGAs, and Back Home grants of up to \$20,000 are now available in the 17 most affected LGAs. I am pleased to say that we will also deploy our grants blitz team to new Northern Rivers locations in the coming weeks to ensure that individuals, families, farmers and business owners can get the face-to-face support that they need. To conclude, again I thank all of our amazing emergency services volunteers and staff, who continue to be there every day. As the responsible Minister, their efforts make me proud.

### SENIOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT COMMISSIONER TO THE AMERICAS

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (14:56):** I direct my question to the Premier. What action will the Premier take to investigate revelations from moments ago that Mr John Barilaro met with the former Minister for Fair Trading while representing his then employer, Coronation Group, after he told the parliamentary inquiry yesterday that no such meeting occurred?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:57):** I will get the requisite advice in relation to that matter. Obviously we as Ministers, unlike those opposite, disclose our diaries. My view is that everyone should be disclosing their diaries, but we will put that to one side. That would be interesting, would it not? That would be very interesting. I wonder what members on the opposite side of the House are hiding.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** You're the one in government, mate.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Maybe we should. I will seek advice on how all members of Parliament should be disclosing their diaries because it is an important part of the integrity measures of the Government. That was never in place under Labor, but it is in place under the Liberals and Nationals. I will take the requisite advice in respect of that matter and inform the House of the action that I will take, if any is required.

### FLOOD RECOVERY GRANTS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:58):** I address my question to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is cracking down on fraudulent flood grant claims whilst also ensuring that legitimate applicants receive their money expeditiously?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (14:58):** I thank the member for Terrigal for his question and his fearless advocacy for the people of Terrigal. As members of the Chamber know, the State has been devastated by severe floods over the past six months. When they first hit in February, the Government moved quickly to open a number of financial assistance programs, including the clean-up grants, small business grants, rental support payments and Back Home grants. The performance data is displayed daily on the Service NSW website, so there is complete transparency around the delivery of the grants programs. But nothing is ever perfect and we are always looking at ways to improve. For example, early on we identified an issue with the application process for sole traders that was causing delays. The Premier made personal representations to the Federal Government to amend the program guidelines to speed up grant applications for sole traders.

Service NSW is a world-leading, agile, customer-centric organisation. We have demonstrated that by constantly improving the delivery of grants. On average, grants have been paid into accounts within about five to 10 days. As we all know, with every disaster the angels come out in the community and make us all proud. But equally, there is a cohort of people who make us feel very displeased, to say the least, in the way that humanity works. For example, the Service NSW fraud team has done amazing work with the NSW Police Force, resulting in 1,317 charges being laid. Some 81 persons have been convicted of fraud in connection with \$5 million worth of grant applications. When one looks at the types of fraud involved one finds that they are systemic. In my view, organised crime is partly involved in those fraudulent applications.

When criminality is suspected, Service NSW reports the applications to the NSW Police Force for further investigation and it is pursued through the courts. The main three reasons for declining applications across the February-March flood grants program were, first, a lack of photographic or documentary evidence; second, a failure to confirm residential address; and third, the customer failing to respond to requests for further information. We are using modern platforms created through Service NSW to deliver money quickly to people in need, but those digital platforms will also identify crooks. [*Extension of time*]

We know that people use digital platforms to engage in criminal activity, but digital platforms leave a digital footprint. Those crooks will be found out because every time they try to take money from the system, they are not just taking money, they are taking precious time from those who are doing the great work and heavy lifting to try to get money to those who are really in need. My message to the people in New South Wales, particularly the crooks, is that if they make a fraudulent digital application they will leave a digital footprint and we will find them and bring them to justice.

### MEMBER FOR MIRANDA

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:02):** I direct my question to the Premier. We still do not know the reason why the Premier sacked the former Minister for Fair Trading. Will the Premier finally release the resignation letter from the recently resigned Building Commissioner, David Chandler?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:03):** I thank the member for Port Stephens for the question. I have not read that letter. I will seek advice. I can say to the member that that was not a factor in the consideration of that decision—clearly, because I have not read the letter. It is my job as Premier of New South Wales, in circumstances where I receive information, that I—

**Mr Chris Minns:** Surely you should explain that to the taxpayers of New South Wales.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let me discuss that. I am giving members the most relevant answer that they could possibly get.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The question has been asked. The Leader of the Opposition may ask another question later.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I received information from the department secretary in relation to the workplace of the former Minister. I took that on board and made my own assessment, as it is my right to do as Premier in respect of the make-up of the Cabinet. I made that assessment and decision and I stand by it. Later this week the Presiding Officers of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly will also be releasing the Broderick review. We have done work in relation to the Goward review. We must have complete confidence in complaints that occur in the workplace. They must be dealt with appropriately when they occur. In certain circumstances, complaints will be made anonymously. The role of this place and the role of the media is to respect the privacy of that complaints process. If we do not respect privacy, then people will not feel comfortable making disclosures or going through the process.

When the previous Premier instigated the *Goward Review of policies and procedures for Ministerial offices – bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct*, I received that review and implemented the recommendations. We established and put in place processes to ensure that people feel confident when coming forward to make complaints. We will undermine that process if people seek to expose or find further information relating to anonymous complaints. The decision that I made was based on a discussion that I had, after returning home, with the department secretary. She provided me with information, I considered that information as it related to the workplace and I made a decision about the matter. Ultimately, I am responsible for the Cabinet and my decision should be respected.

### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:06):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on how only the Liberals and The Nationals in government have a plan to strengthen frontline services and invest in our health system?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (15:06):** I thank the member for his question and for all the work he does for his community in and around Albury and the Riverina, ensuring that the health services are doing their best, although he and I have plans to do a lot more. When the Liberal-Nationals came into government, the New South Wales health system was in deep trouble. We had had 16 years of a Labor government that could not manage the economy and, therefore, could not build the necessary new hospitals.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** What about North Shore?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I just heard one member yell out, "What about North Shore?" One hospital in 16 years is pretty good. We had had 16 years of a Labor government that could not manage the economy. I remember one very senior Minister saying to me, "Hazzard, when you get to government, you won't be able to do any better. We couldn't manage the economy because it's just been so tough." Well, I have news for members opposite: We have managed the economy and, as a result, we have built or done up more than 170 hospitals right across the State. Tweed, Dubbo and regional areas were not touched by the Labor Government. Of course, there are all the new hospitals in Campbelltown, which the member for Campbelltown is very excited about.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr Ryan Park:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Emergency departments across New South Wales are in crisis and this bloke gives himself a pat on the back.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. It is not an opportunity for the member for Keira to make a mini speech. The Minister has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The budget has more than doubled in the time that we have been in government. Nursing staff numbers have increased by more than one-fifth. In fact, just recently—in 2019—an additional \$2.8 billion was put into the budget to employ 5,000 nurses and midwives, 1,060 doctors, 880 allied health staff, and 1,360 hospital support staff. A question was asked about that earlier. Some 45 per cent of funding is going to the regions and those opposite say that nothing much is happening there. Just recently in the new budget there was a \$4.5 billion investment over four years to recruit 10,148 full-time equivalent staff to hospitals and health services across New South Wales. The Labor Opposition thinks that it can do better, but every Labor jurisdiction in the country that I work with has come to New South Wales to find out how we have such a fantastic health system. They do not ask Labor; they ask us, "How did you do it? How did you make our health system so good and so strong?" [*Extension of time*]

The current budget for Health in New South Wales is almost one-third of the entire State budget—\$30 billion. I heard the Leader of the Opposition giving the benefit of his infinite wisdom after he had gone on his fleeting unapproved visits. He did not ask the manager of the hospital.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. While the Opposition leader is out there listening to the health workers in the middle of the night, the Minister is on holidays not listening to the emergency services workers.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. There is no point of order; that was a gratuitous comment. The Minister has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** One has to take this job seriously and one has to take the positions of leaders in the Opposition and in the Government seriously. The Leader of the Opposition snuck in without the approval that had been established by the former Labor Government in the 16 years it was in office in the interest of patient privacy and staff. I saw him on video sneaking in for about 15 seconds—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

The Minister will resume his seat. I take it that he could not hear me over all the noise, but when I ask him to resume his seat he should do so.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73, imputing improper motives. The Minister cannot suggest impropriety without a substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not satisfied that the Minister was in breach of Standing Order 73.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The only thing that has been breached are the guidelines that were put in place by the former Labor Government in its 16 years in office. If the Leader of the Opposition keeps that up he will be breaching the very guidelines that Labor put in place to keep people safe.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. If the member for Heffron has a point of order and not just a retort, I will hear it.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The Minister is now expressly infringing Standing Order 73, not even indirectly.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There is a reason the Health Services Union—the fifth biggest union in the country—stood with us when we announced more paramedics twice in the past couple of years. We are delivering and it knows we are delivering. It also knows that if this Labor Opposition ever got into government it would screw the health system in the same the way that it did for the 16 years it was in office.

#### NEW SOUTH WALES AGENT GENERAL TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:13):** My question is directed to the Premier. Does the Premier still have confidence in his agent general in London?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:14):** Obviously there were reports last night and the trade Minister is looking into those matters. What is most important in relation to expenses is that they are carried out appropriately within the guidelines that are provided and that, importantly, in addition to that, audits of those expenses take place. That is what is most appropriate. The trade Minister, as the responsible Minister, will look into it.

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The Premier is being very relevant.

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** My question was very specific, whether he had confidence—

**The SPEAKER:** I understand. The member for Macquarie Fields will resume his seat. I am satisfied that the Premier is being directly relevant. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** What is most important is that, as I said, processes are in place so that when expenses occur, they occur within the guidelines.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will resume his seat. I will hear from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Chris Minns:** We have changed the standing orders to "directly relevant" under 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, absolutely we have.

**Mr Chris Minns:** I will make my point.

**The SPEAKER:** You are the Leader of the Opposition. You do not often take a point of order, so I am happy to hear it.

**Mr Chris Minns:** I understand that. It is a very big deal if the Premier is not prepared to offer his confidence to the agent general in London. That was the question. There was no superfluous nature to it.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. I understand that.

**Mr Chris Minns:** We want an answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that, but I am satisfied that the Premier is being directly relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That is ridiculous.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House will cease interjecting.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Information has come to light last night. The trade Minister is looking into it. He will make those assessments and provide me with advice.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. The answer was directly relevant.

#### **SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:15):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to build a brighter future for New South Wales by investing in our communities?

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Minister for Sport) (15:16):** I thank the member for Vaucluse for her question—

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** —and for her great commitment to her community during her parliamentary career of three terms. One of the great things that has happened in her community has been the great infrastructure that we have built.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** There is absolutely nothing better than that brand spanking new 42,500-seat Allianz Stadium that we are about to open in the next few weeks. On 28 August the public will be welcomed into the stadium for a family day—

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** —so that they can come and have a look at the stadium. I am happy to advise the House that on 2 September there is going to be the first sporting fixture: The Rabbitohs and the Roosters will play—two foundation NRL clubs battling it out. On 3 September, get out your tweed jackets with the leather patches, the Wallabies and the Springboks are going to battle it out in an absolutely cracking game of rugby. And for those who like the round ball game, on 6 September Sam Kerr and the wonderful Matildas will be playing against Canada in a great international female football game.

The community is excited. The member for Vaucluse will be there on the family day. I know all members opposite are excited because they are badgering me. The member for Heffron wants to have a private early viewing. They are hitting me up for tickets. They want tickets to the Springboks. They want tickets to the rugby league. They want tickets to the Matildas. And don't start me on the concerts. The member for Swansea has got the "Bieber fever". The member for Liverpool wants to go to Bruno Mars. Chris Minns has already got his large sunglasses to see Elton John. The member for Summer Hill has dusted off her Iron Maiden T-shirt for the November concert.

They all want to be there. They fought like cats and dogs at the last election against this stadium and now they all want to come on board. They have all got opposer's remorse. What a great metaphor for the difference

between this Government, which builds infrastructure, and those over there—yes, you do, member for Maroubra. He owns a big smile. The member for Maroubra has the biggest smile on his face in three years, he's so excited about going to the stadium. You wait and watch. He'll be there. The first smile on his face since his campaign photo at the 2019 election. Come along, stop opposing and support building infrastructure.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Maroubra that he is on three calls to order.

### MONKEYPOX VACCINATION

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:19):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. How is NSW Health working to reduce the spread of monkeypox and protect the most at-risk communities through vaccination?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (15:19):** I thank the member for Sydney for the question. I also thank him for all the work he does for the people in his electorate, and for various other communities. This is a particularly significant issue in parts of his electorate, but also more broadly across New South Wales. I think that monkeypox was first identified in 1958 or so and then in a youngster in the Republic of the Congo in 1970. It is still endemic in those parts of Africa and, I think, also in Nigeria. Unfortunately, recently monkeypox has spread outside of those African origins and into European countries and the Americas—the United States of America and Canada. The index case was identified in the United Kingdom in May this year, so it hasn't been very long for the communities of the world to come to grips with it. Subsequently, it was also identified that before it got to Canada and the United States it was in Portugal and Spain.

NSW Health commenced targeted vaccination of high-risk groups against monkeypox on Monday 8 August. To date, 33 cases of monkeypox have been identified in New South Wales, two of which were acquired locally. So there has been local transmission as well. So far, an initial supply of 5,500 doses of the appropriate vaccine has been received from the Commonwealth Government. Given the relatively limited supply, the initial rollout of the vaccine will be prioritised, working with the community and NSW Health to determine that priority, obviously targeting those most at risk. People at highest risk for monkeypox are gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men who have multiple sexual partners. NSW Health expects to receive somewhere between 24,500 and 30,000 doses in September and another 70,000 doses in early 2023. I thank the Federal Government and the Federal health Minister, Mark Butler. Today we had an exchange of communications to confirm that, at this stage, it would appear to be 24,500. But, from what NSW Health is telling me, there is the possibility that it might get up to 30,000 doses.

Our initial target is to get 22,000 people pre-exposure prophylaxis vaccinated before WorldPride 2023. I am sure that we are all looking forward to that event. With monkeypox cases increasing internationally, it is expected that there will be further cases in New South Wales and local transmission may increase rapidly. *[Extension of time]*

NSW Health has been working with its community partners, including ACON, sexual health and infectious disease services, and doctors who have a special interest in HIV and sexual health to communicate the risks of monkeypox, promote prevention and support the vaccine rollout. Monkeypox and sexually transmitted disease prevention messages will be provided to all people receiving the vaccine, as I stress that the vaccine does not provide complete protection. It is important for people to protect themselves from other infections. Working with its partners, NSW Health will provide specific outreach to those people whom it has identified as particularly vulnerable. Vaccines have been distributed in Sydney and on the far North Coast. The 12 New South Wales public health units will continue to investigate cases' sources of infection and trace at-risk contacts.

I stress to the people of New South Wales that if they think they might have the symptoms of monkeypox, please treat it seriously. Call ahead to your GP or local sexual health clinic. It is important to wear a mask when attending the clinic. Symptoms of concern include headache, fever, chills, sore throat, muscle and body aches, fatigue, rash, and swollen lymph nodes. The rash may initially be minimal and look like pimples in the buttock or genital region. If signs or symptoms develop, isolate immediately and seek care by calling ahead to make an appointment with your GP or sexual health clinic. Symptoms will usually develop up to two weeks from exposure but can take up to three weeks. If you are advised on return from overseas that you are a close contact, isolate immediately and call your GP or sexual health clinic. If you have questions about monkeypox do not hesitate to contact the Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624. I again thank the honourable member for his question and for all the work he does for his community in the electorate of Sydney.

### MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:24):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is securing a brighter future for our multicultural communities?

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (15:25):**

I thank the member for Castle Hill for his question and acknowledge his outstanding support for diverse communities across the State, as well as being a former Minister for Multiculturalism. I also thank the Treasurer. The latest budget included a record investment in multicultural communities in New South Wales: an additional \$28 million over the next two years—which takes the budget to just under \$70 million—for community engagement, festival events and language services. We wasted no time in getting that money to community groups to help them celebrate their unique cultural identity through festivals and events. Recently I announced that more than 160 groups had received a share of just over \$1 million to host festivals and events in their communities. Our investment is about supporting community groups to share and promote their cultures, and to create a stronger, brighter future for the State. This was the first time the Government had funded so many local events at once.

The Government also stepped up its support for our State's most vulnerable communities. Earlier this week I announced that 15 non-government organisations had received a share of \$4.2 million to support temporary visa holders, in particular asylum seekers through organisations like the Asylum Seekers Centre in the electorate of the member for Newtown. That funding will fill the gap for those NGOs to continue to provide emergency relief essentials and medical support. This Government stepped up its support to help temporary visa holders and asylum seekers. We are making sure that no-one is left behind. But it does not stop there.

Minister Henskens and I recently announced that the New South Wales Government has invested \$11 million to create a new program to help asylum seekers find jobs—the Asylum Seeker Employment Skills Support program. That is in addition to the \$6.3 million to expand the Refugee Employment Support Program to December 2023. That is a fantastic achievement. It will give a much-needed leg-up to those people who come to our great State in search of a brighter future for themselves and their families. That is but a small part of what the Government has been doing to support our multicultural communities. The New South Wales Government is about putting people first.

*Documents***OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 97 of the Electoral Act 2017, I announce receipt of the report of the Children's Guardian entitled *Report under section 97(3) of the Electoral Act 2017 - Saturday 12 February 2022 by-elections*, dated June 2022, received out of session on 27 June 2022. I order that the report be printed.

**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 74 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Investigation into the conduct of the local member for Drummoyne*, dated July 2022, received out of session on 20 July 2022. I order that the report be printed.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 26 of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Covert Search Warrants and Preventative Detention Orders*, dated June 2022, received out of session on 1 July 2022 and authorised to be printed.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 52 of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following reports of the Auditor-General:

- (1) Financial audit report entitled *Universities 2021*, dated 27 June 2022, received out of session on 27 June 2022 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Special report entitled *Audit Insights 2018-2022*, dated 30 June 2022, received out of session on 30 June 2022 and authorised to be printed.

**NSW LAW REFORM COMMISSION****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 13 of the Law Reform Commission Act 1967, I announce receipt of report No. 149 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission entitled *Open justice: Court and tribunal information: access, disclosure and publication*, dated May 2022, received out of session on 12 July 2022 and authorised to be printed.

**OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 74 of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the following reports of the NSW Ombudsman:

- (1) Special report entitled *Modifying public housing properties to meet the needs of tenants with disability – issues identified through complaints*, dated 29 July 2022, received out of session on 29 July 2022 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Erratum to the special report entitled *Modifying public housing properties to meet the needs of tenants with disability – issues identified through complaints*, dated 29 July 2022, received out of session on 3 August 2022 and authorised to be printed.

**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 74 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Report on investigation into pork barrelling in NSW*, dated August 2022, received out of session on 1 August 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS****Reports**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of report No. 3/57 of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics entitled *Interim Report: Parliamentary Privilege and the use of investigatory and intrusive powers*, dated June 2022, received out of session on 24 June 2022 and authorised to be printed.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY****Reports**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of report No. 3/57 of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety entitled *Support for rural and regional learner drivers*, dated July 2022, received out of session on 5 July 2022 and authorised to be printed.

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 46/57*, dated 9 August 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 45/57*.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following electronic petition signed by 20,000 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Native Forest Logging**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly end native forest logging, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

**The SPEAKER:** I set down discussion on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

*Business of the House*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the Casino Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 to proceed through all stages this day.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions*

**PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following electronic petition signed by fewer than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Goulburn-Crookwell Railway Line**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly return the Goulburn-Crookwell railway line to adjoining landholders, received from **Mrs Wendy Tuckerman**.

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following electronic petitions signed by 500 or more persons have been lodged for presentation:

**Proposed Emerald Hills High School**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to build a new public high school in Emerald Hills, received from **Mr Peter Sidgreaves**.

**Proposed Wimbo Park Light Rail Stop**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly approve a light rail stop at Wimbo Park in Surry Hills, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Proposed Katoomba Public Hospital**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly ask the Government to fund and construct a new, modern hospital at Katoomba, received from **Ms Trish Doyle**.

**RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

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

The Hon. James Griffin—Waste-to-Energy Incinerators—lodged 17 May 2022 (Mrs Wendy Tuckerman)

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor—Rural Health Department—lodged 7 June 2022 (Dr Joe McGirr)

The Hon. David Elliott—Manning River Permanent Entrances—lodged 23 June 2022 (Mr Stephen Bromhead)

*Bills*

**CRIMES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION ON DISPLAY OF NAZI SYMBOLS) BILL 2022**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (15:31):** I continue my contribution in support of the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. As I mentioned previously, the bill sends a very clear message that the display of Nazi symbols and the hatred and bigotry that they represent will not be tolerated. The bill strikes the right balance in delineating between what is a Nazi symbol and what is a swastika and later has been associated with Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. While introducing this new law we need to continue raising awareness of why the Government is introducing the law in the first place. We need to raise awareness of the pain inflicted on Jewish communities by symbols and antisemitic hate and to remember the Holocaust. As I said previously, this year marks the seventy-seventh year of the end of the Holocaust. We need all communities to remain vigilant to any resurgence of Nazism here and internationally. The bill is a positive step in that direction. Undoubtedly, there is still more to do in combating

hate in New South Wales at the community level. The New South Wales Government will continue to stand united with communities against hate. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:33):** I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. I note that the bill amends the Crimes Act 1900 to prohibit the public display of Nazi symbols. Under proposed section 93ZA1 (1) a person who by public act displays a Nazi symbol is guilty of an offence that may carry a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units, which at the moment is \$11,000, or imprisonment for 12 months, or both for an individual, or 500 penalty units, approximately \$55,000 dollars at present, for a corporation. The Labor Opposition does not oppose the legislation. We introduced a similar bill in 2021, which was not supported by the Government at that stage. Since then, the Victorian Government has introduced legislation banning the display of Nazi symbols, as a consequence of an inquiry which occurred in that State.

This is an important piece of legislation, especially to the Jewish community, who were the target of hatred and persecution by the Nazi regime. Other groups were also persecuted under the Nazi regime, including diverse cultural groups, the LGBTIQ community and people with disabilities, as well as the ideological opponents of the Nazi regime. Prescribing these symbols is a statement by this Parliament of its view that those symbols represent hatred, which cannot be supported in any way. Symbolism was important to the Nazi regime. Members will recall the Nazi regime had State power in Germany from 1933 until 1945. The regime that caused World War II took symbols seriously. One of the first things the Nazi regime did—by act and otherwise—was to ensure that symbols of Nazism such as the swastika and other symbols were incorporated into all elements of German society, particularly the German army. Not included previously, the swastika was incorporated into all elements of the regalia of the German army.

It was reflected in the ideological imposition of rules of engagement by the German army that were an abrogation of the traditional rules of war followed by European armies and saw the endorsement of the execution of political opponents of the Nazi regime. The Commissar Order authorised the execution of prisoners of war who were members of the Communist Party or Commissars in the Red Army. The German army actively cooperated in the establishment of the elaborate death camps that were aimed squarely at the elimination of the Jewish people as a group. Over five million Jewish people were killed as a result of the acts of the Nazi regime and 25 million people were from countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union.

A statement by this Parliament that those symbols are to be proscribed as not to be used or displayed in public is an important statement of our view as to the evils of fascism and the evils of that regime. Those who display Nazi symbols as an illustration of their personal view of the world do so knowing full well that they are supporting a regime whose political foundation was based on hatred and fascism and acts which saw the elimination of opponents to that regime. I note that the Act recognises that the swastika is an ancient symbol that has been adopted by many religious groups and the use of the swastika by those religious groups will not constitute a breach of the Act. I also note that there is no offence where the display of the Nazi symbol is accompanied by a reasonable excuse as defined in the Act.

Many members in our community—I am familiar with many of them in the hobby that I pursue of wargaming—build scale models of all sorts, but very often they are scale models of military equipment. Military equipment from the World War II period is very popular amongst people who pursue that hobby. It is not uncommon for symbols of the Nazi regime to be included on those scale models. People who undertake the hobby of wargaming will have armies of toy soldiers and there may be symbols of Nazism included in those scale models. I hope that those groups do not fall foul of this legislation. I ask the Attorney General to address that in his reply speech. If the Attorney General does not address that in his response, I will assume that those groups who act innocently, in good faith and in no way support fascism or Nazism will not fall foul of the law. This is an important statement of belief by this Parliament and it is an important change to our criminal law. I commend the legislation to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:40):** I speak in support of the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. I commend the Attorney General for this excellent piece of legislation. I acknowledge Government members from the other place who took part in the inquiry in February 2022 to ensure that this legislation was fit and proper for the purpose for which it is going to be used. I acknowledge the contributions made by the Hon. Scott Farlow, the Hon. Shayne Mallard, the Hon. Don Harwin and the Hon. Peter Poulos, all of whom represented the Government during that inquiry in February 2022 with regard to this piece of well-informed legislation.

The Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022 will create a new offence for prohibiting the public display of Nazi symbols. It is an important reform that will ensure that individuals and corporations who knowingly display a Nazi symbol without a reasonable excuse are brought before the courts and dealt with accordingly. We saw between 1939 and 1944 the world rise up to condemn the Nazi regime to the trash

heap of history—which is exactly where it belongs—with its appalling treatment of those who did not follow its extreme ideology. As the world rose up to send it to the trash heap of society, so too does New South Wales.

This legislation means that New South Wales is a place where everyone can expect protection and safety from serious vilification and appalling hate crimes that are often perpetrated under the guise of a former Nazi regime or extremism. The display of a Nazi symbol undermines our shared values, and causes harm and distress to others in the community, including those from the Jewish faith. It also causes distress to many who were targeted during those dark days in Europe from before 1939 to 1945 by the appalling Nazi regime. They included people with disabilities, those recognised as being homosexual or those who simply had a different political ideology to the extremists.

The New South Wales Government also recognises that the swastika, commonly considered a Nazi symbol, has been appropriated from the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain faiths. To this day those groups are working towards rightfully reclaiming their symbol. However, the aim of the reform is not to punish those who unknowingly display a Nazi symbol or who display a symbol without knowing that it is a Nazi symbol. The objective is not to criminalise unintentional behaviour but to send a strong and clear message that this vilifying conduct is unacceptable to civilised society in New South Wales. I speak for so many people on the Central Coast who are nothing but disgusted with the behaviour carried on by people using Nazi propaganda and paraphernalia to extol extremist virtues.

The bill provides that a person only commits an offence if they knowingly display a Nazi symbol. There may be circumstances where an individual may not be aware that a symbol is associated with Nazism. Whilst some Nazi symbols like the hakenkreuz are well known, there is a risk that some people may share images of less well-known symbols without knowing what they are. As we have heard previously, the Nazi regime was fixated on adopting symbolism as part of its regime. It stole other symbols of ideology and falsely claimed them as their own.

The New South Wales Government is committed to raising greater awareness about how the display of Nazi symbols can cause harm in our community. It is vitally important that the bill is appropriately balanced in its objectives of targeting harmful conduct while not punishing unintentional conduct. The Government believes that the bill strikes the right balance and will produce the most just outcome. That emanates from the inquiry in February 2022. I thank all those members who took part and all those people who contributed, not least the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. So many people took part in that inquiry to ensure that this piece of legislation does exactly what it is intended to do.

The bill deliberately does not define the term "Nazi symbol". As the member for Vaucluse explained in her second reading speech, the words are to be given their ordinary, well-understood meaning and are intended to capture not only the more well-known symbols, such as the hakenkreuz or the Nazi flag, but also a range of other, lesser known Nazi symbols. This drafting will ensure that the offence is broad enough to capture all relevant traditional, well-known symbols associated with the Nazi regime, such as the hakenkreuz or the Nazi flag, as well as those lesser known symbols; to capture newer symbols adopted by Neo-Nazi groups; and to adapt to changing extremist practices.

They cannot hide. The world rose up and condemned the Nazi regime to the trash heap of history, which is where it belongs, and our world does not tolerate those sorts of extremist behaviours. I am proud to be part of a Government that is delivering the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill. It is so important that we send a clear message to those who think they can hide or get away with this sort of behaviour: Your day is done. You have nowhere to hide. This legislation does exactly that.

As outlined in the second reading speech, new section 93ZA (3) provides a non-exhaustive list of what may constitute a reasonable excuse for the display of a Nazi symbol. There are exceptions for academic, artistic or educational purposes, quite rightly, which would also encompass any material intended to promote those purposes. I think almost everyone in this place has made a journey to the Australian War Memorial, where they would have seen Nazi propaganda and paraphernalia on display. But it is also a reminder that we should never, ever forget the actions of the past that were carried out under the guise of the Nazi regime against millions of innocent people. It is important to strike that balance. It is important that we do not hide the history of the Holocaust and what took place, because people need to be fully aware of that.

A few years ago my wife and I had the privilege to travel overseas, and we attended the Holocaust museum in Washington, DC. If ever there was a confronting place, it is that museum. It helped us to understand and to get a brief inkling into the pain, suffering and torment that was lumbered on a completely innocent group of people because of extreme ideology. It was an emotionally draining place to visit. But, at the same time, everybody should have the experience of understanding what people were exposed to under the Nazi regime, and the disgusting behaviour and appalling symbolism that it tried to foist on everybody. Those who did not agree were

simply exterminated or eliminated. It is important that locations like those overseas and in Australia have the ability to show people what was done by that disgusting regime.

It is important that things such as posters, propaganda films and flyers for art galleries are not captured by the bill and fall within an exception, providing that the display of the material is done reasonably and in good faith. Whether an act falls within those exceptions will be a matter for the courts to determine by applying the words of the legislation and the exercise of their own discretion. It will also be a matter for police and prosecutors to determine whether they consider that they can disprove that the act falls within the exception. I am pleased that this State took the time to hold an inquiry in February 2022 to get the details and the important issues right in this legislation. A number of protections against vilifying conduct already exist in New South Wales, and the bill complements those and ensures an appropriate criminal law response to the targeted conduct. [*Extension of time*]

Currently the law in New South Wales does not directly prohibit the public or private display of the swastika or other Nazi symbols without further protections. For example, it is an offence under section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 to intentionally or recklessly threaten or incite violence on grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex or HIV/AIDS status. That provision was enacted in 2018 and is an important part of the Government's response to hateful vilification being conducted in our community. There are many situations in which the public display of Nazi symbols could constitute an offence under section 93Z, such as at a public rally where a Nazi flag is displayed along with chants exhorting violence, or in a video posted online where the display of the symbol is accompanied by wording or text containing that same disgusting incitement of violence.

However, while clearly intended to express and incite hatred, the display of the symbol without anything more, such as a Nazi flag hanging on someone's property or a swastika spray-painted on a public wall, would be unlikely to contravene section 93Z. The display of Nazi symbols may amount to civil vilification under section 20C of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. That provision covers any public act that incites hatred, serious contempt or serious ridicule of a person or group of persons on the ground of race. However, that provision does not carry any criminal sanction. The New South Wales Government's reforms will fill those gaps. The bill reaffirms the New South Wales Government's strong commitment to abolishing serious vilification and hate crimes that are knowingly undertaken by individuals or, even worse, corporations. The potential consequences of the bill have been well thought out, as I articulated earlier, after careful consideration and thorough community and stakeholder consultation.

The member for Vacluse is in the Chamber. I note her passionate advocacy for this legislation and her thoughtful contributions to debate. The Government's approach is measured and will target the obscenest acts of displaying Nazi symbols in our community. It is time to act on extremism and ensure the safety of our wider community. The reform represents a significant step in combating the display of Nazi symbols in New South Wales and will send a strong message that intentionally displaying such symbols is unacceptable. As I said before, the world rose up between 1939 and 1945 to condemn those who propagated and promulgated that sort of disgusting behaviour in Nazi Germany. They are relegated to the trash bin of society, which is exactly where they belong. I again thank everyone who contributed to the inquiry. I thank the members who participated in that inquiry; some of the contributions were incredibly confronting for them. I again thank the member for Vacluse for her passionate advocacy on this issue. I know that I speak on behalf of so many people on the Central Coast when I say that we welcome this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:53):** I contribute to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. The bill should be recognised as one of the more historic pieces of legislation to be considered by the Parliament of New South Wales and follows the first precedent set by the Parliament of Victoria, which enacted legislation banning these hate symbols. I note that similar legislation was adopted some decades ago in Europe, in some States in the United States and in other parts of the world. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to ban the display of symbols associated with Nazism and to punish those who publicly display and promote those symbols.

As the member for Prospect, one of the most multicultural electorates in the State and the nation, as a proud advocate of multiculturalism and as a fierce opponent of fascism, far-right ideologues and racism in all its forms, I strongly support this bill. The banning of these symbols by Parliament, which represent the most evil of ideologies, is long overdue. Adolf Hitler and his Nazi followers are the most extreme personification of hatred, racism and genocidal mass murder. We must always condemn any favourable memory of the Nazi Party and the Third Reich whenever we can and cast out this terrible legacy.

There is a clear urgency to legislate banning the display of Nazi symbols. Antisemitism perpetrated by Neo-Nazis is on the rise around the world and particularly in New South Wales. In 2020 the NSW Police Force recorded 112 reported incidents of antisemitism, including 31 Nazi flag incidents spanning across a two-year period. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation [ASIO] stated that in February 2020 violent far-right

extremism accounted for one-third of counterterrorist operations by ASIO and the Federal Police—an increase from 10 per cent to 15 per cent since 2016. ASIO also advised that it has observed small cells of Neo-Nazi terrorists meeting across the country, espousing antisemitism and racist beliefs, saluting Nazi flags and symbols, and undertaking weapons training. That includes within New South Wales.

The bill will have a critical impact by ensuring that Neo-Nazis are unable to promote their ideology in our State via the public display of Nazi symbols. The bill will also ensure that individuals and groups who promote Nazi symbols will be punished for doing so. Proposed section 93ZA (1) stipulates that a person who publicly displays defined Nazi symbols will be guilty of an offence. The maximum penalty for an individual is 100 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both. Corporations that are guilty of publicly displaying the symbols will receive a maximum penalty of 500 penalty units. Those punishments are just and sensible. But, personally, if it was up to me, the length of the imprisonment periods and the penalties would be much higher. The described punishments must deter individuals from publicly displaying Nazi symbols.

The ideology of Nazism is spread through its use of symbolism. In order for us to contain its spread, the symbols associated with the ideology must be banned. Law enforcement officials are able to identify Neo-Nazis through their public display of those symbols, but they must be granted the power to arrest them to affect real change. The criminal justice system must also have the power to prosecute Neo-Nazis who are brought to justice for the display of those symbols of hatred. The bill will provide law enforcement and prosecutors with such powers. The bill shows indiscriminate punishment of individuals who publicly display Nazi symbols. However, the bill must ensure that individuals who have legal consent to publicly display symbols, such as the swastika, without malicious intent are not prosecuted—namely, I speak of those in the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain faith communities. Proposed section 93ZA (3) states:

- (3) Also, without limiting subsection (1), a reasonable excuse includes the display of a Nazi symbol done reasonably and in good faith—
  - (a) for an academic, artistic or educational purpose, or
  - (b) for another purpose in the public interest.

The words "the public interest" should be noted. No doubt Neo-Nazis will try to say it is something for artistic or educational purposes, when we know hatred, antisemitism and racism are behind it. This is crucially important, as it allows the public to still have access to these symbols for the sake of educational purposes. The public must be able to have access to knowledge of why the Nazi ideology is evil as well as to the symbols associated with it, so that they may never be glorified in public. Proposed new section 93ZA (2) states:

- (2) For subsection (1), the display of a swastika in connection with Buddhism, Hinduism or Jainism does not constitute the display of a Nazi symbol.

I applaud this provision. It is important the public understands that there is a huge difference between the perverted Nazi swastika and swastikas that are spiritual symbols in those three religious traditions. The swastika symbols used in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism have been part of those religious traditions for thousands of years. They predate the perverted use of the swastika in the comparatively brief history of Nazism. Hindus, Buddhists and Jains should be proud and are proud to display their versions of the swastika, which have nothing to do with the vile hatred that the Nazi swastika represents, nor should they have to fear prosecution for doing so.

I am glad that this bill has been proposed and I am proud to support its passage. I reiterate it is long overdue. The concerns consistently raised by law enforcement agencies—for at least six years—about the ever-increasing rise of terrorism carried out by Neo-Nazis in New South Wales should have been warning enough for this Liberal Government to act long ago. But the Liberal Government has done nothing to curtail its spread until now. It was the New South Wales Labor Opposition that first raised this issue to enact legislative reform, not the Liberals in government.

I acknowledge my NSW Labor parliamentary colleague the Hon. Walt Secord, MLC, shadow Minister for Police and shadow Minister for Counter Terrorism, who originally introduced the Crimes Amendment (Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2021. That bill is far more specific in defining Nazi symbols. It includes the Nazi flag and the hakenkreuz, the Nazi hooked cross, which was the official emblem of the Nazi Party and the Third Reich. They are the two Nazi symbols that should be banned from display. The Crimes Amendment (Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2021 is also more comprehensive in defining public display of these symbols through three separate methods:

- (a) any form of written or visual communication to the public, including writing, displaying notices, playing of recorded material, broadcasting and communicating through social media and other electronic methods, and
- (b) the wearing or display of clothing, signs or symbols in a way that is observable by the public, and
- (c) the distribution or dissemination of written or visual material to the public.

It is my belief that things such as tattoos and other such symbols should also be enough to warrant prosecution.  
[Extension of time]

The Crimes Amendment (Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2021 also has more detail concerning the avoidance of doubt about civil liberties. Proposed section 93ZA (6) (a) states that any act may be public even if it occurs on private land. This will ensure that the display of these symbols anywhere is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by our community, law enforcement or the criminal justice system. Provisions defining "Nazi symbols" and the method of their display are notably absent from the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022, which I find very disappointing. There is a danger that the vagueness of this bill, in comparison with shadow Minister Secord's bill, will leave the display of Nazi symbols too open to interpretation for those who display these symbols to be punished.

In addition to the advocacy of shadow Minister Secord, I acknowledge the contribution of Stephen Kamper, MP, shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, and Daniel Mookhey, MLC, shadow Treasurer, in drafting the original bill. At a meeting with the Hindu Council of Australia concerning the drafting of shadow Minister Secord's bill, shadow Ministers Kamper and Mookhey expressed a strong view that individuals who are flying the Nazi hakenkreuz pose the same threat to all communities in a multicultural civil society. All members should be able to agree on this sentiment. I applaud shadow Ministers Kamper and Mookhey for expressing this view on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition.

I am pleased that shadow Ministers Secord, Kamper and Mookhey have actively engaged with the subcontinent community through their consultation with the Hindu Council of Australia. The protection of the rights of Hindus, Buddhists and Jains to publicly display their versions of the swastika, sacred to their religious traditions, without fear of prosecution is a key component of the original bill that we need to get right. I am pleased that the New South Wales Government has made the sensible decision to include this feature of the bill protecting those religious communities. However, it is rather ridiculous that the Liberals have been in government for almost 12 years and it has taken the advocacy of the NSW Labor Opposition to finally push it to act, through the introduction of our own bill. However, this is not an issue for partisanship. Despite the Liberal-Nationals Government delaying the process of legislative action by not supporting shadow Minister Secord's bill, I am glad we are now finally acting.

To conclude, I reiterate my strong support for the bill. Combating the spread of Nazism in New South Wales is an issue that we need to urgently act on. Law enforcement has repeatedly raised concerns that this is a consistently growing issue. One of the best ways we can combat the spread of Nazism in our State is by preventing the public display of the symbols of Nazism. Law enforcement and the criminal justice system need the power to punish those who spread the Nazi ideology through those symbols. If all members of this House support the bill, we will be on the right side of history. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:06):** I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. I am very pleased to support this important bill. The bill will create a new offence of prohibiting the display of Nazi symbols. It represents an important message on denunciation and condemnation of this abhorrent conduct. However, I will speak about some of the reasons why we need exceptions. It is important that the law is able to effectively punish and deter criminal conduct without inadvertently also capturing conduct which should not be criminalised. That is why it is important for criminal laws, where necessary and appropriate, to contain suitable exceptions or defences in the interests of fairness and justice.

To ensure an appropriate balance, the bill provides that no offence is committed where the display of a Nazi symbol occurs with a reasonable excuse. The bill provides that a reasonable excuse includes the display of a Nazi symbol done reasonably and in good faith for an academic, artistic or educational purpose, or for another purpose in the public interest. This is a broad and non-exhaustive definition of "reasonable excuse". It does not preclude other grounds being relied on to establish a reasonable excuse. That is important to ensure that the bill does not unduly encroach on the freedom of speech or other activities in the public interest. For example, it is important that the bill does not impact on a teacher or an academic teaching a class on World War II and the Holocaust, a bookstore owner displaying historical textbooks, or an artist or a gallery owner displaying artwork that depicts a Nazi symbol in a way that protests against or opposes fascism or extremism.

It is also important that the bill does not inadvertently impact on fair reporting in the media of matters of public interest. A free and independent press is vital to an open democracy such as ours, and the criminal law should not impede the fair reporting of events in the public interest. By including an open category of acts carried out in the public interest, courts will be able to strike an appropriate balance between the protection of free speech and the need to protect individuals and the community from hateful and vilifying conduct. However, by limiting the exceptions to acts done reasonably and in good faith and, where applicable, in the public interest, the bill ensures that those exceptions are not treated as loopholes by people with malicious intentions who wish to spread

hate while avoiding the reach of the law. The bill has been drafted and consulted on to make sure that it strikes the right balance between criminalising abhorrent conduct and protecting free speech. As such, I am pleased to commend the bill to the House.

I pick up on the member for Prospect's comments about the bill. The Government bill differs from the Opposition's bill in key respects, including the Government bill doubling down on the maximum penalties provided under the Opposition's bill for individuals. It deliberately does not define the term "Nazi symbol" to ensure that the offence is broad enough to capture all traditional, well-known symbols associated with the Nazi regime that are adopted by Neo-Nazi groups and to adapt to changing extremist practices. The bill adopts the same definition of "public act" as in section 93Z for consistency. The bill provides that a person only commits an offence if they knowingly display a Nazi symbol. While any display of a Nazi symbol may cause harm and distress to others, a person should not be punished for conduct if they do so without knowledge that they are displaying a Nazi symbol. Again, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:11):** The Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022 is long overdue. The bill should have been dealt with by this place and passed long ago. The bill seeks to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to create an offence of knowingly displaying Nazi symbols by public act without a reasonable excuse. The bill is almost a carbon copy of the NSW Labor bill introduced by the Hon. Walt Secord in October 2021. As I said, this could and should have already been law in New South Wales. NSW Labor has advocated for laws like this since April 2020, after a surge of racist activity in Victoria and New South Wales. NSW Labor was the first party in the country to introduce draft legislation banning the public display of Nazi symbols. The bill NSW Labor proposed was a result of feedback obtained from working with the Jewish, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and other communities.

The member for Camden pointed out some differences between the bill currently before the House and that introduced by NSW Labor. In my view, those differences were not of enough substance to prevent Labor's bill being debated, amended and passed. As with so many other matters that NSW Labor has led on, the Government decided it did not want to support or amend our bill, instead opting to draft its own legislation and inevitably delaying the introduction of this ban. Despite the delay, Labor will not oppose this bill, although we will seek an amendment in the other place.

The legislation before members is the culmination of a long-running campaign following a number of incidents in early 2020, including someone attaching a Nazi flag to a water tower in Wagga Wagga and flying a flag in a Newtown backyard a few hundred metres from a synagogue. Nazi symbols, particularly the Nazi flag, are among the most offensive symbols that can be displayed. The Nazi flag is an affront not only to Holocaust survivors and their families but also to veterans who fought to defeat fascism in Europe, the LGBTIQ community and people of German descent whose relatives survived the Nazi regime. The Nazi flag is a symbol of genocide, racism and hate. Nazi symbolism has wideranging negative impacts, and a ban on public displays of this hateful symbolism should be supported in this place with considered exemptions.

It is because of what the Nazi flag represents that it has been unlawful for a very long time to fly the flag publicly in many European countries including Germany, Austria and France. In 2020 documents obtained under freedom of information laws recorded that over a two-year period the NSW Police Force reported 112 incidents of antisemitism, including 31 Nazi flag-related incidents. More recently, incidents of right-wing extremism have been on the rise in Australia. Perhaps people have been emboldened by events in Europe, including the war in Ukraine and the underlying tenets of that conflict; perhaps it is a nod and a wink to a former senior US leader who showed similar behaviour; or perhaps people have been emboldened by those who have embraced COVID conspiracy theories.

The number of those incidents is on the rise in the Illawarra. I do not intend to name the group or those who are believed to be involved because they do not deserve the notoriety they seek to gain by being named in this Parliament. In my view, they do not deserve any notoriety, twisted praise or glory that they might desire to gain from having their names recorded in the Parliament. But a Neo-Nazi cell is allegedly operating in Wollongong. In April they swapped their online meetings for face-to-face meetings. That same cell has spent time trying to recruit people in Wollongong by posting Neo-Nazi propaganda such as stickers and posters around town. It has been a clear attempt to recruit young people, but, worse still, it made deliberate and offensive suggestions of hate towards local migrant communities.

I make it absolutely clear in my contribution to debate on the bill that that sort of behaviour and those attitudes are not welcome in Wollongong. We consider them to be unacceptable. They do not have broad support in the Wollongong community, nor should they. Those attitudes and ideology do not have support in Wollongong, and nor should they. No matter how many posters they try to put up, no matter how many people they try to recruit, they will be unsuccessful in Wollongong. That is because in successive waves of migration, particularly since World War II, people moved to Wollongong to find a safe and accepting community where they can live

their lives and raise their families in the absence of attitudes that they moved far away from and left behind. I do not want to see that behaviour, those attitudes or that twisted ideology creep in under the guise of alleged free speech, a COVID conspiracy or anything else.

Wollongong is an example of how successful a community can be when it is made up of people from all parts of the world. Wollongong is a demonstration of the strength of a multicultural community. Neo-Nazi cells that display Nazi symbols and share Nazi hate through social media and other means have no place in Wollongong, nor should they have any place in New South Wales. That is at the heart of the reason that the bill is before this place and it is the reason that I support it. It is time to say, "Enough is enough". We must nip that behaviour in the bud and we must not let it fester. We must not let that ideological behaviour or those views take root in our communities. I take a strong view against it because I believe there is no place for that sort of behaviour.

In recent reports in the local media, mistaken reference was made to the use of the swastika. I was contacted by members of the Hindu community, who pointed out that the swastika is a sacred, pure and pious Hindi symbol which is very different from the meaning appropriated by the Nazis. I want to break the connection between the swastika and the Nazis and stop the idea that they are one and the same, because they are not. We want to restore the strength of the swastika in the Hindi community and other communities that respect the symbol of peace and harmony and for whom the swastika plays an important role in their religion and way of life.

As I have said before, in Wollongong and New South Wales there is no reason to display the symbols of hate and twisted ideology of the national socialist regime, which breed hate, racism and contempt for other people. While Labor will seek to move an amendment to the bill in the other place, we do not oppose the bill in the main because it largely replicates Labor's bill and it deals with behaviour that should be stamped out in all its forms, in all places and with every opportunity and with all the power that this place can give to the law enforcement authorities.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:19):** On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. Neo-Nazism, far-right extremism, ultranationalism and racism are all on the rise in Australia, and it is time to confront that reality and take steps to counter it. The bill is a step in that direction and The Greens support it. It is important to recognise that changing the Crimes Act is not enough and will not end the problems that underlie the display of Nazi symbols in our society. In 2020 frightening figures from ASIO showed that cases involving far-right violent extremism constituted up to 40 per cent of its counterterrorism casework. That is a huge increase from the 10 per cent to 15 per cent in 2016.

In November 2021 a similar bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Issues for inquiry and report, with support from individuals and organisations who made submissions to the inquiry. I appreciate that Labor initiated this discussion, and while the Government has acted differently, we can all agree that it is absolutely critical to act now in a consensus way to ban Nazi symbols. During the inquiry the Deputy Commissioner of Investigations and Counterterrorism of the NSW Police Force outlined the violent historic and current use of Nazi symbols. He said:

I think I speak for our entire organisation when I say that we have no tolerance for Nazi symbols and that the majority of mainstream Australia find it abhorrent and disgraceful. This not only relates to their historical use but also their current use by some of pathologically violent extremist groups, which are used to spread hate and incite hate crimes.

The bill is an acknowledgement that the crimes of the Holocaust and Nazism will not be forgotten. The harm and distress caused by Nazi symbols and actions towards Jewish people and other minority groups that were targeted by the Nazi regime, including the LGBTIQ community, will not and should not be tolerated. But the bill is also an acknowledgement of the alarming fact that this ideology has been allowed to grow in this country for decades, especially while extreme right-wing politicians shamefully whip up hate, demonise Muslims and create fear about refugees and asylum seekers for political gain. That has gone under the radar—or perhaps it has not—and there has been very little focus on the concerns that were raised by ASIO about the frightening growth of right-wing extremism.

I also acknowledge that last year the home of my friends Paddy Gibson and Nat Wasley was attacked by Neo-Nazis. Paddy and Nat are Sydney activists and socialists who are prominent in the Aboriginal rights and trade union movements. The attack on their home was in retaliation for organising and being involved in Black Lives Matter rallies outside this Parliament and in the city centre. On 4 December 2021 three white men with short, cropped hair and right-wing nationalist insignia on their clothing bashed on the front door of their family home prior to sundown, calling out for Paddy by name. The men subsequently ripped a security screen off a front window and smashed the glass. Paddy and Nat believe they were Neo-Nazis trying to force entry into their house. The men responsible were well known to police. One of the three had been charged for allegedly travelling from Western Australia to New South Wales to set up a Neo-Nazi chapter. A police media statement at the time of the attack stated:

Police will allege in court that the men targeted the Arncliffe home due to the occupant's political and ideological beliefs.

I am advised that one of the perpetrators recently pled guilty and was given a community corrections order. I am not saying that increasing penalties and putting more people in jail is the solution, but I ask all members who support the bill to consider whether it is acceptable to issue a community corrections order to a known Nazi who has pleaded guilty, while climate activists who are engaging in non-violent, peaceful protests are being imprisoned.

It is critical to recognise the real and horrifying reality of far-right extremism in this State. Paddy said, "I have received a large volume of threats, including death threats, due to my role in the Black Lives Matter protests in Sydney. Since the attack on our house, we have found more violent and threatening rhetoric directed against me on the internet, including the listing of our home address by someone with the pseudonym "Commie Killer" on a website associated with the Australia First Party. This is all amongst horrific online racism directed at Aboriginal activists and people who have died in custody." Let us be clear, that vile ideology has been stoked by the actions of politicians and commentators, including the current Federal Leader of the Opposition, Peter Dutton, and others who hold positions of power in government and the media. Years of demonising refugees and First Nations people and tacit support of flag-waving nationalists has made the growth of right-wing extremism and nationalism in this country a shocking reality.

My Greens colleague and friend Senator Mehreen Faruqi has been a leading voice in calling for more action to acknowledge and combat far-right extremism in this country. She has pointed out the insidious nature and growth of the far right in Australia and its links to international extremist groups. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, far-right groups grew in strength by appealing to anti-lockdown sentiments. Some of those groups and individuals openly praised the Christchurch terrorist attack and were rabidly Islamophobic and antisemitic. When it comes to issues of racism and far-right extremism, The Greens call for a zero-tolerance approach. We want to strengthen our laws on extremism and hate speech and ensure that they are enforced. We also want to recognise that anti-racism education from the top down—from politicians to schoolchildren—is absolutely essential so that individuals and groups who are targeted are not subjected to the racism and violence that this ideology spawns. It also creates a sense of fear for activists and for members of different communities to ever speak out, or if they do speak out, to feel nervous about doing so because of the repercussions.

The Greens want and need a commitment to truth-telling in this State and country. Just as the bill goes some way to acknowledge the hate, racism and long-lasting impacts of the Nazi symbol and far-right extremism on some communities, we must too acknowledge that we live in a colonial State that was founded on extreme racism and dispossession, which continues in various forms. We need to tell the truth about this country, our past, and the ongoing and continued impacts of invasion and dispossession to this day. The Greens support the bill but urge the Government to recognise that it is not enough just to change the Crimes Act. We need more education, resourcing and recognition about standing up against extremism and racism when it comes to Neo-Nazis, fascists and those who are advancing a radical right-wing, dangerous agenda. The Greens support the bill and urge the Government to do more.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:27):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022, which is well and truly overdue. The bill is an Act to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to create an offence for knowingly displaying Nazi symbols by public act and without reasonable excuse. The bill makes it an offence to knowingly display publicly a Nazi symbol, noting that an offence is committed only when there is no reasonable excuse, including displays of Nazi symbols done reasonably and in good faith for academic, artistic, educational or other public interest purposes; and that swastikas displayed for genuine Buddhist, Jain or Hindu purposes are exempted entirely.

This legislation replicates Labor's bill introduced by the Hon. Walt Secord from the other place in October 2021. NSW Labor has been advocating for this bill since April 2020, after a surge in racist and antisemitic activity in New South Wales and Victoria. In 2020, documents obtained under the freedom of information laws showed that in a two-year period the NSW Police Force had reported 112 incidents of antisemitism, including 31 Nazi flag incidents. Other reports have shown that antisemitic incidents hit record global highs in 2021. Those horrific acts are sadly present in my own community, which has one of the largest Jewish communities. I welcome the overdue introduction of this legislation. Banning the display of Nazi symbols without reasonable excuse will shine a light on all forms of antisemitism and address this age-old hate.

Sadly, right-wing extremism is on the rise in Australia and across the globe. It now accounts for one-third of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's [ASIO] counterterrorism work. In doing its work, ASIO has observed small cells of terrorist meetings across the country, which include saluting Nazi flags, inspecting weapons, and training. The Nazi flag is deeply offensive to all Australians and Allied veterans who fought and sacrificed their lives to defeat fascism. The Nazi flag is an emblem of genocide and racism. When someone chooses to fly a Nazi flag, it is an expression of hate.

The Nazi swastika represents a regime that murdered six million Jews, including more than one million children. It represents a regime that has sought nothing less than total fascist domination of Europe. Nobody has the right to spread racism, hate or antisemitism. The Nazi symbol glorifies one of the most hateful ideologies in history and its public display causes further pain and division. Publicly flying the Nazi flag is already unlawful in many European countries, including Germany, Austria and France. Banning it in New South Wales sends a message that the dissemination of Nazi and Neo-Nazi ideology through the public displays of Nazi symbols has no place in our State.

I note that there has been significant consultation in the formation of the bill. The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies worked jointly with the Hindu and Jain communities to present a historic joint submission to the inquiry into Labor's original bill. Those communities hope that banning Nazi symbols will enable Hindus, Jains and others to use the swastika more openly in the ancient and sacred ways that constitute their traditions. It must be noted that in a historic agreement the Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities came together to highlight the need to ban Nazi symbols and protect the eastern religious symbols appropriated by the Nazis. I acknowledge the Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities for their contributions to the bill. Labor will not oppose the bill. We must have consensus on this issue and in this Chamber; it is critical.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:32):** I contribute to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022 and support the bill. New South Wales was the first jurisdiction in Australia to introduce a bill to make it an offence to publish a Nazi symbol or swastika. It was occasioned by the Hon. Walt Secord when he introduced a private member's bill in the other place. Since then, other jurisdictions around Australia have introduced similar bills that have either passed through those parliaments or are in the process of proceeding through their parliaments. The bill in this State is a product of the determination of the Hon. Walt Secord in pursuing this issue. I pay tribute to him for that.

In discussions about this bill or the other bills in the Commonwealth of Australia, there is always reference to the rise of ideological extremism. There were talks as late as October last year by senior Federal police officers that indicate a 750 per cent increase in the number of right-wing extremists in this nation. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation [ASIO] in its reports as far back as 2019 indicates that one-third of its work seems to involve terrorist-type activities and ideological extremism. As we speak, ideological extremism is permeating the entire Western world. In what was once the world's most successful democracy and certainly the world's superpower, the United States are struggling deeply with the right-wing ideological extremism that is occurring in their midst. I wonder how a bill like this, which will impose a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment for displaying a Nazi symbol, will deal with the very difficult, complex and secret nature of some parts of ideological extremism.

This bill, like those in other jurisdictions in Australia, is not necessarily about dealing with ideological right-wing extremism. It is about sending a signal to all of Australia and the world that never again will these symbols and their public display, which glorify one of the most hateful ideologies in the history of humanity, be tolerated. There are still some survivors of the Holocaust, many of whom are reaching the age where they will not be with us for much longer. The Holocaust touched a substantial portion of European Jewry in this country, who understand and regard it with considerable passion and concern. Unfortunately, as generations move on, it becomes a footnote in history. The Holocaust is viewed as one of those dark periods in human history that cannot repeat itself. First, history has a habit of repeating itself. Secondly, we need these laws to ensure that it never happens again and that these symbols of hatred are never tolerated.

My family was touched by the Holocaust. I will tell the House part of my experience of growing up with a mother who was a survivor of the Holocaust. Two generations of her family were exterminated during the Holocaust. She never told me her story; I was oblivious to it. During her lifetime, she gave an oral history to the Spielberg foundation. I was aware of that, because I remember when my children were little coming towards the end of it and having something to say, but I was not there during her interview. She had never spoken about it in her lifetime. Probably the most difficult thing for me was finding the videotape after her death. It made for horrendous watching. I have subsequently put it on YouTube, if anyone is interested. It is horrific to hear her describe what happened to her and when she last saw her parents. The feelings of guilt that I had as a son not knowing what my mother went through even to this day sometimes make me believe I would have been a better son had I known. In the video she explains that she took that course because she did not want to burden either me or my sister with that knowledge.

I was never aware of the extent of her persecution or where she was during the war until after her death. I worked out her movements and a few years ago went to Europe and followed her path and that of her parents. I will tell the House what it is like to grow up with a mother who was a Holocaust survivor. She would forbid war pictures or anything of that nature appearing on television and she would not have been able to stand the sight of any sort of Nazi uniform or paraphernalia. I remember on one occasion as a relatively young boy—I was not that

young because I think I was 10 or 11 before we had our first TV—I was with my father and we were watching a black-and-white war series on television called *Combat*. My mother walked into the lounge room as a Nazi soldier appeared on the screen and she ran from the lounge room into the bathroom. She closed the door and I could hear her being physically ill. That was quite a shock, even to an 11- or 12-year-old—however old I was at the time. I did not know her history, other than that she was a Holocaust survivor and my grandparents were murdered during the Shoah.

That experience is not unique and would be shared by children of other Holocaust survivors. The impact on them of Nazi symbols of hate is deeply entrenched in their psyche. Most Holocaust survivors never spoke about it. Those who do are very rare, and include survivors who donate their time to the Jewish Museum. Even though I did not particularly understand them, the impact on my mother of those symbols of hatred impacted me and her other children. When I see, as I do from time to time, a swastika painted on the walls of Maroubra Synagogue, I think, "Who would do such a thing?" Similarly, a few years ago a neighbour of the synagogue said to the rabbi, "They didn't kill enough of you during World War II." [*Extension of time*]

We must continue not just to speak out but also to introduce laws such as this, to send a signal to our society that these symbols of hatred will not be tolerated in our democratic society, that we turn our back on these symbols of extremism and on the dreadful, hateful ideology that is a part of human history. So seriously do we regard the symbols of this hatred that people will go to jail if they display them publicly. As somebody who has been impacted very remotely and protected from the real hatred that my mother and her entire family went through, I say that these symbols are deeply hurtful to those who experienced that hatred and misery. We must educate our community to ensure that this part of human history does not repeat itself. By enacting this bill into law, as a Parliament we say unanimously "Never again".

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Heffron. I echo the sentiment of the Government in expressing my appreciation of that contribution.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:44):** I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. I acknowledge that the bill makes it an offence to knowingly display a Nazi symbol publicly, and rightly so. An offence is only committed when there is no reasonable excuse, which includes displays of Nazi symbols done reasonably and in good faith for academic, artistic, educational or other public interest purposes. Swastikas displayed for genuine Buddhist, Jain or Hindu purposes are exempted entirely. The legislation substantially replicates NSW Labor's bill, introduced by the Hon. Walt Secord in October 2021. NSW Labor has been advocating for the bill since April 2020, after a surge of racist activity in Victoria and New South Wales. It takes into account almost all of the constructive feedback obtained during the February 2022 committee inquiry and consultations with Jewish, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities over the last two years.

In 2020, documents obtained under freedom of information laws showed that in a two-year period New South Wales reported 112 incidents of antisemitism—which is hard to believe—including 31 Nazi flag incidents. I have visited Yad Vashem. My father passed away in Israel, so I had all the reasons in the world to visit there. When I made that visit, I felt the deep, intergenerational grief and trauma within the Jewish community. I have seen the undisputed evidence—there is no doubt—of the industrial-scale efforts by the Nazi regime under its symbols. I have seen the maps of Europe where there is an effort to identify the number of Jewish people in particular countries. I still cannot understand how people can be of a mindset of targeting a little island in Greece that has 2,000 Jews and wanting to go there to destroy those people. It is a depth of hatred that is inconceivable to all of us here. I cannot forget the atrocities or the stories that were told to me, even by Greeks, of Nazi soldiers coming into towns and threatening the lives of its citizens if they did not give them a list of Jewish people in their communities.

When I visited Yad Vashem, the main theme that emerged, which is the same theme that is projected by Jewish communities in Sydney, is that we should never, ever forget. When we stop reflecting and remembering what this Nazi regime did is when we open the door to that behaviour occurring again. It is extremely important that our laws should always discourage any thinking that would ever promote any form of activity directed at any people or minority groups. I acknowledge the excellent work of my colleague the Hon. Walt Secord. He has been relentless in his pursuit of this legislation. I thank Darren Bark from the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, who is always there to give advice when it is needed. He is a fantastic representative of his community. To the survivors who are still with us, I am sorry it has taken so long, but I am encouraged that we finally got here. I strongly commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:48):** In reply: I thank members for their contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill 2022. I thank the members representing the electorates of Maroubra, Oatley, The Entrance, Terrigal, Prospect, Camden, Wollongong, Newtown, Coogee, Heffron and Rockdale for their advocacy on the bill. I thank the member for

Vaucluse for her steadfast and consistent advocacy on behalf of her community for these important reforms and her ongoing communications with key stakeholders. I thank the Minister for Multiculturalism, who is in the Chamber, for his strong advocacy on this important bill on behalf of culturally and linguistically diverse communities right across New South Wales, particularly the Jewish community. I thank the member for Vaucluse for delivering the second reading speech on my behalf when I was absent with COVID. There is no room in our society for what Nazi symbols represent—hatred, abject racism and genocide. The bill reaffirms the New South Wales Government's powerful opposition to extremism and Neo-Nazism and its powerful commitment to abolishing serious vilification and hate crimes. I commend the bill to the House. I request that the bill be considered in detail.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Mark Speakman.**

### Consideration in Detail

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedule 1 be agreed to.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:51):** I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-141D:

#### No. 1 Review

Page 3. Insert after line 19—

#### [2] Section 584

Insert after section 583—

#### 584 Review of Part 3A, Division 9

- (1) The Minister must, from time to time, review Part 3A, Division 9 to determine whether—
  - (a) the policy objectives of the Division remain valid, and
  - (b) the terms of the Division remain appropriate for securing the objectives.
- (2) A review under subsection (1) must be commenced—
  - (a) for the first review—within 3 years and 6 months after the commencement of the *Crimes Amendment (Prohibition on Display of Nazi Symbols) Act 2022*, and
  - (b) for subsequent reviews—at intervals of not more than 5 years.
- (3) A report on the outcome of each review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the last day by which the review must be commenced.

The Government is pleased to move this amendment. We understand that the Hon. Walt Secord, MLC, has signalled his intention to move an amendment in the other place that would have the effect of creating a requirement for a statutory review to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of two years from the commencement of the Act, with the review to be tabled within six months after the two-year period ends. In recognition of the intent of the member's proposed amendment and to ensure passage of the bill through both Houses of Parliament this week, the Government is moving the amendment on sheet c2022-141D in this House to propose a statutory review mechanism whose review time periods align with those that the Parliament supported recently in relation to the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Consent Reforms) Act 2021.

This amendment would have the effect of requiring a review to be undertaken within three years and six months after the commencement of the Act and subsequent reviews of not more than five years. An outcome of each review is to be tabled in each house of Parliament within 12 months after the last day by which the review must be commenced. These time frames will seek to ensure that in undertaking the review there is sufficient case law and court matters to have regard to. What can happen is if we have a review too quickly—and this has happened—the review and report take place but it is too soon to form any recommendations about reform or the Act—whether it is consistent with its objectives and the detail is appropriate—because there have not been enough activity or operations or case law to evaluate the progress of the new legislation. The Government proposes a longer review period to get that evidence base as to how the amendments are working and also to align with the precedent that we have already enacted and had support in this place in relation to the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Consent Reforms) Act 2021.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:54):** The Hon. Walt Secord was right to move a review of this groundbreaking legislation to ensure that this Parliament has oversight of the policy objectives of the provision as

to not only whether they remain valid but also whether they are working in effect. Having regard to what the Attorney General has said and given what we all said about this proposed legislation today and the reasons for its requirement sooner rather than later, the Opposition is happy to agree to the amendment moved by the Attorney General.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-141D be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **OMBUDSMAN LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 21 June 2022.**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:56):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Ombudsman Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. Given the time, for the purpose of those who will read this debate with interest in another 40 or 50 years, I have two minutes to get through what I have to say, so I will truncate this very quickly. I apologise to Hansard for speaking so quickly. The NSW Ombudsman's Office is an independent integrity agency that oversees the New South Wales public sector and investigates complaints regarding most New South Wales government agencies, local councils and community service providers.

The NSW Ombudsman has requested amendments to the legislation governing the functions of the Ombudsman's Office. There are 24 proposed amendments to the Ombudsman Act 1974 and three proposed amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993. The bill is focused on achieving the following key outcomes. First, schedule 1 [3] makes it clear, for the avoidance of doubt, that the Ombudsman's powers in relation to a public authority extend to a former public authority. Second, schedule 1 [4] ensures that a detailed person is able to make an oral complaint about the conduct of the public authority in a way that is not recorded or monitored.

Third, schedule 1 [5] enables the Ombudsman to refer a complaint about the conduct of a public authority to the public authority for investigation. That might sound strange, but I particularly welcome that amendment because attendant with that ability are enhanced mechanisms for the Ombudsman to assist the public authority with complaints handling through the introduction of systems to make the work of the Ombudsman more streamlined and efficient. I am always a big fan of getting the public authorities to have a look at themselves. I recall Commissioner Scipione saying to me when I was the Minister for Police that there were more complaints about police by police than by the public. What does that mean? It sounds bad but it is not. It means that people within the public authority, which in that case was the Police Force, were watching themselves. That is always the best kind of supervision.

Fourth, schedule 1 [11] enables the Ombudsman to review the systems of public authorities for handling complaints. Next, schedule 1 [15] clarifies the circumstances under which the Ombudsman can share information with similar bodies in other Australian jurisdictions. Next, schedule 1 [2] and schedule 2 [1] and [3] rename the Community and Disability Services Commissioner as the Community Services Commissioner. Finally, schedule 2 [2] and [5] omit redundant or spent provisions. Those provisions are not only uncontroversial but also welcome. They will improve the operation of the Ombudsman and transparency about what government authorities do. After what we have seen this week with trade commissioners, it is apparent that there is still too much hiding of information in government, and that is something to be avoided at all costs. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Public Interest Debate***HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:00):** I move:

That this House acknowledges that the 2022-23 budget secures a brighter future for New South Wales by improving access to housing affordability.

Enabling an affordable and inclusive housing sector is at the top of the New South Wales Government's agenda. The Premier has noted that housing supply, ownership and affordability are some of the State's biggest challenges. To keep up with the demand, the New South Wales Government is making some major strategic investments. As the Premier said, it is about getting keys in doors and a commitment to supercharging housing supply to help people across the State get one step closer to home ownership. That is a big job, especially as our population rapidly changes and grows, but we are backing it with the right investment.

The 2022 housing package in the budget is the biggest investment to address housing in New South Wales history. It lays the Government's foundations for an inclusive and sustainable housing sector in New South Wales for generations to come. The package targets home ownership, increased supply and social and Aboriginal housing as well as key workers. It represents a whole-of-government approach to addressing the housing challenges we currently face together. It aims to supercharge supply through enabling hundreds of thousands of new homes across the State and to drive down affordability pressures.

The housing package includes almost \$500 million to unlock land and supercharge housing supply; \$554 million for new and improved social and Aboriginal homes; \$174 million for key worker housing; and economic reforms to tackle affordability and help more people become home owners sooner. Those measures complement the Government's existing work and are underpinned by the housing strategy Housing 2041, which sets out our vision for better homes across metropolitan and regional New South Wales.

The plan recognises that people do not stay in one home all their lives and that needs and capacities will change, requiring a dynamic model. Under this plan, New South Wales will have housing that supports security, comfort, independence and choice for all people at all stages of their lives. Housing 2041 includes a continued focus on the end-to-end process of delivering a good housing supply across the State, which is highlighted in the budget outcomes. The strategy lays the Government's foundations for an inclusive and sustainable housing sector in New South Wales for generations to come.

Off the back of this strategy we have a housing strategy action plan, which complements the housing package. We are collaborating with all stakeholders to achieve the long-term housing certainty that the people of New South Wales deserve. A big part of that is economic reform, and the New South Wales Government is taking a holistic approach to housing affordability. Increased supply alone cannot fix the problems. We are working with all levels of government to help bring down the cost of living.

As part of a \$2.8 billion package over the next four years, \$728.6 million will go towards property tax reforms to give people the option to choose between paying stamp duty or an annual property tax. That will help more than 6½ thousand home owners buy a home worth up to \$1.5 million. A further \$780 million will go towards a two-year pilot offering 3,000 places a year for a shared equity scheme. That will help single parents, older singles and key workers buy a home.

Faster assessments and rezonings mean faster sod turns, and that is why the New South Wales Government is cutting assessment time frames to expand the opportunities for people to purchase their own home. The Planning Reform Action Plan has already been successful in reducing assessment time frames and enabling more homes to be delivered faster, with 115,000 dwellings and land lots approved last financial year. The Government is continuing those efforts by creating an even more productive and responsive planning system for all levels of government. That is why it has allocated \$89 million over the next two years to enable a more efficient relationship between councils and industry that will cut assessment times, unlock the land needed to build new homes and put more keys in doors.

The Faster Local Assessment Grant Program is already providing financial support to 14 councils to bring forward housing supply and accelerate local assessments. Each of those councils, which were selected based on having a high number of undetermined development applications and planning proposals, will receive \$350,000 to improve their processes and unblock the bottlenecks that are hampering construction. The New South Wales Government's Planning Delivery Unit has also been instrumental in untangling issues causing delays for individual projects stuck in the planning system.

The Government is also setting aside an extra \$16.4 million to further enhance its Planning Portal tools. To date, more than 170,000 applications have been lodged in the system, representing more than \$160 billion in

potential investment in new homes, infrastructure, community facilities and job-generating developments. The Planning Portal has delivered more than \$485 million in benefits since the 2018-19 financial year. That cuts assessment time by up to 38 per cent, and we want to expand on that.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's focus is to give more people access to a roof over their head but with less red tape and greater certainty. We know that there is no one-stop shop to making homes more affordable. That is why this year's housing package puts all of the right settings in place so that we can better partner with all levels of government, industry bodies and the community housing sector to put more keys in doors. I am certain that together we are looking at a bright future for everyone in New South Wales.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:07):** I am delighted to contribute to today's public interest debate on housing affordability, an issue of utmost importance impacting our economy and our social living standards. The Government wants us to believe that it has a plan to help New South Wales families and residents buy a home. The reality, of course, is very different. The member who brought this public interest debate to the House should know the history of this issue.

After 12 years in office, and despite the former Premier stating back in 2017 that housing affordability was one of the biggest issues on the Government's agenda, it is now 2022 and the current Premier is still talking about housing affordability being one of the biggest issues we have. Government members say these things, but no progress is ever made. What is the central panacea proposed by the Government? It is another new tax on the family home forever. I have rarely seen a public policy problem solved by whacking a new tax on potential home owners. The Government is not interested in solving housing affordability; it is all about self-interest.

**Mr Mark Coure:** They've given you the wrong speech.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Oatley that he is on one call to order from question time.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** Do not listen to what they say; look at what they have done. Jobs for the boys with whale-sized wages? Check. Subsidised New York and London apartments for plum overseas roles to ensure that there are no housing affordability issues? Check. Funding rorts? Check. Corruption scandals? Check. Ministers resigning or being sacked? Check. And that is just this week. Housing affordability is a genuine issue of concern and must be prioritised. It needs a government with the best interests of home owners at heart—which is not this Liberal Government. After almost 12 years, all it has are press releases and political spin. Housing affordability is generally a two-factor equation of wages and asset prices.

Let us look at the first aspect. Rather than offering hardworking frontline workers a worthy pay rise, given the difficulties we have had over the past couple of years, practically at the stroke of midnight in 2022 the Government went to the Industrial Relations Commission and asked for an only 0.3 per cent wage rise for frontline workers. Inflation is running hot, the cost of living is going up and there are never-ending toll increases—but all that workers deserve is 0.3 per cent! Real wages are going backwards. The Government tried to make housing affordability better by cutting people's wages. Earn less, pay more: That is what helps housing affordability under this Liberal Government. That is the record and that is the fact. Despite announcing it as a major policy focus, Government members deliberately act the other way.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Oatley will come to order. The member for Willoughby will come to order.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** A leopard never changes its spots. Government members cannot afford to improve wages or conditions for frontline workers, many of whom are dealing with significant housing affordability issues, but they can create a \$500,000 "jobs for the boys" scam. They can run a cartel for the politically connected to ask for wages and supporting allowances of up to \$800,000. They can provide a \$112,000 largesse living allowance in high London—

**Mr Paul Scully:** How much?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** It was 112 gorillas—despite the Premier calling the agent general a problem and being unable to express confidence in him during question time today. They rorted the selection process, in which those \$500,000 jobs are gifts for somebody.

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

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** They then tried to run a protection racket, with shenanigans to withhold documents from the inquiry. There is no housing affordability or budget limitations when it comes to those in the Government's inner circle, the elite circle, swindling the public purse to make life ultra comfortable for the insiders and ensure that no housing affordability stress is ever experienced by their selected favourites. All

of that shows that they are absolute snollygosters who are only in it for themselves. Let us not forget about renters and their soaring costs. The solution to housing affordability is never to cut people's wages. It is never to whack a new tax on people's family homes. I have spent many a minute debating the land tax, and I am always happy to do it. What I know is that the Government is out of ideas.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Oatley that he is on two calls to order.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** They keep saying that housing affordability is a big issue—and it is—but what have they actually done? They have done nothing except work up a new tax on people's homes.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Mark Coure:** You've got the right speech, don't you?

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** I do have the right speech. It is relevant.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Mulgoa has the call.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Speaking of irrelevant.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wollongong will come to order. That interjection was unparliamentary.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:12):** What a shotgun, everything everywhere speech we just heard from the member for Macquarie Fields. I am pleased to speak relevantly about the public interest debate indicating that this year's budget will do a significant amount to improve housing affordability for our community. Can I just set the record straight right now? The member for Macquarie Fields kept talking about a new tax, which it is not. The member needs to read the information about what the Government is proposing and understand that it is not a new tax. Stop spreading misinformation to scare the community. I know that comes from the Labor playbook, which it is going to whip out again for this coming election—scare, scare, scare people. I would like to know what the Labor Party's proposal is for improving housing affordability, because it is crickets. Do you hear that? Crickets.

I thank the member for Albury for bringing this public interest debate before the House. Getting back to the right speech on this really good topic, I am very confident that this year's budget will create all the right conditions for affordable homes across the State. Not only that, it will also serve those new homes with community infrastructure, transport and valued green spaces needed to connect our communities. I considered a key reason when I put my hand up to represent my community of western Sydney in this place. I lived in western Sydney for decades and all I could see was the former Labor Government dumping people everywhere and anywhere. It failed to provide the necessary connectivity, infrastructure or support services or deliver an increase in schools, hospitals, roads, rails, bridges, parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities. It was building ghettos in western Sydney. Having become a new mother, I decided that that was not good enough for my family or for the families in my community and that we needed not only homes but also proper community infrastructure to support the lives and livelihoods of people out in western Sydney.

Under the New South Wales Government's new approach to rezonings, we are leading the strategic planning for key areas across Greater Sydney and empowering councils to plan strategically. Land has already been rezoned to accommodate 34,500 dwellings and 137,800 jobs. It is exactly what my community of western Sydney needs—employment, jobs and careers in western Sydney—so they can end the commute nightmare into the city to access quality jobs and quality careers. That includes the rezoning of the initial aerotropolis precincts in my electorate, which is expected to create 11,400 new homes and up to 102,200 new jobs. The community will also be supported by metro stations, the M12 motorway and a new regional park along Thompsons Creek. Over the next four years, we are investing \$74 million into a new rezoning program to supercharge even more homes. The program is expected to pave the way for at least 70,000 more homes.

New South Wales already has more homes under construction than anywhere else in the country. We know new homes need supporting infrastructure, which is why we are already driving 390 projects worth \$3 billion across New South Wales. As part of that, the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund has proven to be enormously successful in keeping people in jobs and the construction pipeline moving through the COVID-19 pandemic. The first two rounds saw \$215 million worth of investment support more than 100,000 new homes and almost 700 hectares of employment land.

The Accelerated Infrastructure Fund has already had big success stories like the Balmoral Road Reserve in western Sydney and upgrades to Railway Terrace in Schofields. The Scalabrini East project in Camden will also provide drainage, roads and open space in support of a pipeline of 4,000 homes in Leppington. Just last month in my electorate of Mulgoa, road construction started for stage one of the Aldington and Abbotts Road in the

Mamre Road Precinct, which is expected to unlock 420 hectares of employment land and create 71 construction jobs. The New South Wales Government is building on this bigger than before. Over the next four years \$300 million will be made available for the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund. There is an obvious continuing demand for greenfield housing in high-growth areas, so providing rapid, targeted infrastructure to support those communities is crucial. Those are just some of the measures from the housing package that will lead to a brighter future for New South Wales.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:17):** Dominic Perrottet's land tax—on your home, every year, forever. This Government's new initiative is to impose a land tax. I am calling on the Premier to get out there and get a mandate for his land tax at the March 2023 election. It has been revealed that it will cost Sydney first home buyers an average of \$2,400 a year forever—it is not just a one-off; it is forever. As announced in the State budget—hey, fellas, how is that promotion going after the past seven weeks?

**Mr Mark Coure:** We're ramping things up.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** As announced in the State budget, the likely first stage of the land tax will allow first home buyers to opt out of stamp duty for homes valued up to \$1.5 million. The catch is they must agree to pay an annual tax of \$400 plus 0.3 per cent of the value of the land for as long as they live there. The land tax will rise whenever the property's value rises, and there are no limits on how high the tax will be in the future. But with 85 per cent of first homebuyers already getting stamp duty exemptions on homes up to \$600,000 or concessions of up to \$800,000, the vast majority of home buyers would be sluggish with a property tax for the first time. Labor's shadow Treasurer Daniel Mookhey and shadow finance Minister Anoulack Chanthivong have done the analysis. It states:

... analysis of land values provided by the NSW Valuer General finds that the typical first homeowner will be forced to pay \$2400  
... The average across the regions will be over \$1700. Many will pay a lot more. A house valued at \$1 million will be hit with a tax of \$3000.

As well as the high interest rate, the land council rates, the maintenance, that would be Perrottet's "forever" tax on our homes. Anyone living in western Sydney better watch out because this land tax will be very bad for them. Western Sydney will have to pay the land tax but Sydney's north shore and eastern suburbs will not. Mr Perrottet is proposing to initially exclude the top 20 per cent of residential property owners from the new land tax system. This is designed to limit the impact of the new tax on the State's budget.

As a result, western Sydney will carry more of the burden of paying Mr Perrottet's new land tax than the north shore and the eastern suburbs, and now Sydney will have two property markets for half a century. Only first home buyers of a property can choose to pay stamp duty, but as soon as a property enters the land tax system, every future owner of the property has to pay the annual tax. That means every home owner has to consider the impact of buying or selling a home that comes with land tax on the future value of their property. The independent analysts say it will take 50 years to transition to a land tax on all New South Wales residential properties.

The richest commercial property owners get a massive tax cut. That is what this Government is hiding from us. Mr Perrottet is proposing to abolish the premium rate of land tax. That means big corporations who own commercial properties worth more than \$5 million will get a massive tax cut. They will pay the same rate of land tax as a small mum-and-dad business that owns their premises. That is why the Premier needs to go to the 2023 election and seek a mandate from the people of New South Wales. I will read this letter from the Shoalhaven City Council. At its ordinary meeting on 27 June, the council resolved the following:

That Council

Makes strenuous representations to all Members of the NSW Parliament opposing the proposed imposition of Land Tax on residential and rural properties.

...

Based on the initial figures outlined by the government late last year, property owners would be forced to pay \$1500 plus 1% of the land value each year. And based on this information, for NSW the average residential land value is around \$630,400 and the corresponding owner-occupied property tax would be \$2391.

The Shoalhaven City Council, on behalf of our residents, write to inform you of this decision and outline ... opposition to the proposal.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:23):** On behalf of The Greens, I respond to the Liberal-Nationals Government's public interest debate motion moved by the member for Albury, which states:

That this House acknowledges that the 2022-23 budget secures a brighter future for New South Wales by improving access to housing affordability.

One question needs to be asked: What planet is this Government living on? If anyone read the front page of any newspaper for the past week, past month, the past three months or the past year, they would have almost always seen a story about an increase in housing costs, an increase in rental stress or a disastrous wait list for public

housing. They would have seen stories of mould, leaks, rent hikes, bullying real estate agents, dodgy landlords and greedy banks. Yet we have the member for Albury, on behalf of the Liberal-Nationals Government, saying in this place that the aim is to have more people able to access a roof over their heads, and that there is no one-stop shop to making houses more affordable.

The problem is that while there might not be a one-stop shop, there are very clear solutions that advocates in the affordable social and public housing space have been identifying for decades. Those solutions start with investing in more social, public and affordable housing. They start with the ideas of capping rents, making sure that we end unfair no-grounds evictions and ensuring that we do not evict anybody into homelessness. Those solutions also require a level of honesty about which prizes we are going to claim for being the biggest or the best in the country.

The member for Mulgoa spoke about the fact that the State of New South Wales has more homes under construction than any other State. But under the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government this State can also claim some other prizes: the most renters at risk of unfair no-grounds evictions; the most renters living under housing stress; the most people on the public housing waiting list; and the longest wait on the public housing list. They are all prizes that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government can claim we are the strongest State on, and that is a disgrace. The Coalition's budget has done nothing to address the level of housing crisis in this State.

The Government has done nothing when it comes to renters, who have been left out in the cold. Rents have risen at the fastest rate in 14 years in cities and regional areas. In some suburbs the cost of rent has increased by 72 per cent in just 12 months. As landlords pass on the cost of the Reserve Bank of Australia rate hikes, renters are being increasingly priced out of their homes in a market where vacancy rates are at record lows. Who in this Chamber is deciding whether we increase protections for renters? It is a whole lot of people who, when we look at the list of parliamentary disclosures, own a whole lot of investment properties. Who are the people who are actually responsible for the most tenants in the State? They are members of the New South Wales Government. The people responsible for running our public housing system in this State are instead letting it fall into ruin, with disastrous and outrageous stories of mould, water damage, leaks and failed maintenance as a result of their mismanagement over so many years.

The number of tenants who are falling behind in their rents has surged to almost 50 per cent this year. This is the result of the outrageous failure by this Government to recognise the needs of renters. It is something that The Greens are committed to continue to push, no matter how much members in this Chamber would like to ignore the rights of renters. It appears there is no end in sight because rents continue to climb, with a predicted increase of as much as 10 per cent over the next year. But what happens? Instead of trying to keep public land in public hands and build more public, social and affordable housing, this Government is on a mission to privatise more, sell off more, build more private development and put more profits from soaring housing prices into the hands of property developers and property investors. It is a disgrace.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:28):** I acknowledge that people in my community and the communities of other members are telling us that there are currently some very big challenges in terms of housing. It is right that we have acknowledged that with our budgets, our policy settings and our regional acceleration funds to ensure we deal with those issues. I point out to the member for Newtown that New South Wales has grown its public housing assets by 9 per cent over the past 10 years. That compares with Tasmania at 5 per cent, Victoria at 1 per cent and South Australia at 6 per cent.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Beds or doors?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I gave you your time to speak. I am going to put some other facts on the record.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** It's important to clarify if it's beds or doors.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Newtown that the member for Oxley has the call.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We have our community housing providers, another area that we established to encourage the development of more land and more higher density opportunities so we can have more social and affordable housing. Currently those providers have 1,587 homes under construction. We have boosted our budgets for the past two years—I was Minister at the time—and used that boost as part of a stimulus to get more projects done. We are reimagining social housing precincts not just in Sydney but also in regional New South Wales. In Albury an entire precinct is going up near the centre of town, with up to 1,200 homes—700 social and 500 private. We are working with the community and the council to deliver that.

In Coffs Harbour we have the Argyll Estate on Bray Street, making sure we provide better social housing that does not need the maintenance dollars that we are spending on some of our older properties. We are doing that work. It is not as fast as we would like and there are challenges, too, with the building and trade sectors, but we are building houses as quickly as we can, supported by Government. We are also supporting the private sector in delivering homes to first home owners. As the member for Mulgoa pointed out, we are building roads, infrastructure and playgrounds. Our massive infrastructure spend supports those communities in catching up so that we do not have communities that are ghettos. It ensures that communities and families actually have the services they deserve.

Whether it is in the city or the country, we recognise that COVID has shown a different way of living, which is why there is stress on the regions. We are rising to those challenges while we deal with the many challenges arising from the floods in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. Along with the North Coast Reconstruction Corporation, we are working towards that goal by using our contacts within State government, local government, not-for-profits and Crown Lands, for example, to ensure we have other opportunities. We are also working with Aboriginal Housing. One of the things I am proudest of is supporting a policy to ensure that if local Indigenous folk want to buy the homes they have been renting for many years, they can pay off some of those homes in about 10 years. The communities were telling us they wanted that, and we are working towards delivering it.

Our Regional Housing Taskforce is identifying many of the barriers to housing affordability and supply in our regions. But I highlight that we have as many social homes in New South Wales as do Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory combined. New South Wales has invested over many decades, but we also need to use those investments to rejuvenate and refresh that stock. That is what we are doing in many of our city and regional communities to ensure we have new housing stock that meets the needs of the community. Moreover, the budget will see a further \$33.8 million invested over the next four years in implementing more of the task force's recommendations as well as getting projects and land ready for development.

We must be able to put in services such as sewerage, roads and footpaths to ensure that those projects can come online in a timely way. The council is working hand in hand with the Land and Housing Corporation to reimagine the Tolland estate in Wagga Wagga, which has been the focus of many social issues, with a mix of tenants and first home buyers. We must ensure that services are available to enable those communities to thrive so we can grow our regional communities as well as our city communities.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:33):** I know the member for Albury has not been in this place for terribly long, but I think today's debate is a reminder that you should not just accept what the Minister's office gives you and read it out in the Chamber. You will find that you miss a few facts. For the benefit of the member for Albury, I will provide some facts. How many Premiers have promised to do something about housing affordability in the last little while? There have been four: O'Farrell, Baird, Berejiklian and Perrottet.

*[Government members interjected.]*

What has happened to housing affordability over the past 10 years?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Wollongong will resume his seat. The member for Willoughby will come to order. I call the member for Oatley to order for the third time. I understand there may be some interjections, but that was ridiculous. I could not hear what the member was saying and I am only metres away. The member for Wollongong has the call.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I was reflecting on what has happened over the past few years. The member for Albury seems to have missed a history lesson. The Minister's office should have provided him with one before giving him a hospital pass. What has happened to house prices under the Liberal-Nationals Government? I note it does not matter which of the past four Premiers was in power at the time. House prices are up. They have doubled in Sydney over the past 10 years. However, wages have gone up by less than a third. There has been a real wage cut, while house prices have doubled. Last year alone house prices were up around 30 per cent, while wages went up a little over 2 per cent. Again, housing has become less affordable. When one needs more of one's wages to buy a house, it is less affordable, not more affordable. It now takes around 12 years to save a 20 per cent deposit. In the 1990s it took six years.

Sydney now ranks among the 10 least affordable cities on the planet—not just the 10 least affordable cities in Australia but on the planet. We are outranked only by Hong Kong, and now we no longer rank in the top 10 most livable cities either. In 2019 we ranked third. New South Wales' building approvals are falling year on year and dwelling commencements are also down. In fact, over the past five years there have been only two years in which housing targets for Sydney have been met. I now look at regional New South Wales because the Sydney problem is spilling into all parts of New South Wales. At the moment the median house price in regional

New South Wales is higher than in Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart and Darwin. The median regional New South Wales house price is above every other capital city except for Melbourne and Canberra.

I now turn to rents because they are up too, by around 17.5 per cent in the past 12 months. And on social housing waiting lists, guess what? They are up too. More than 50,000 households—not individuals but households—are on the social housing waiting list and most of them are waiting even longer. What has been the Government's response? A great big new tax on the family home. In fact, for all the bravado from the Government about its budget of a few weeks ago—before it got itself into a spot of bother with someone else's living arrangements—more words have been written about the land tax in this media release—

*[A Government member interjected.]*

The member for Albury is celebrating a land tax. He is celebrating a forever tax on the forever home in New South Wales. More words have been written on the land tax in this media release than have been spoken about by members of the Government in this entire debate. In fact, more words have been written on the land tax in this media release than have been spoken by members of the Government since the budget was released. That is why I will move an amendment to the public interest debate. I move:

That the motion be amended by removing all words after "House" and inserting instead:

"acknowledges the 2022-23 budget and opposes a land tax on the family home."

That is what New South Wales will do when it sees the budget. A new tax should not be introduced on the family home—it is a forever tax on the forever home—before it goes to an election. There is an election next year and the Government has said, "No, it will only be for a small group of first homebuyers." But what pops up while wandering down the street on an overseas trade mission? "We might extend it to pensioners and seniors." If people do not think that a land tax is coming on their homes in western Sydney if the Government is re-elected, they are kidding themselves. The motion should be amended.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:39):** In reply: I start where the member for Wollongong left off. I come back to his personal attack about the length of time I have been in Parliament and the fact that I do not know about history, but I know about the 16 years of failure in this State under a Labor government. If we want to talk about the history of land tax reform, let us go to the trendsetter in this country, the Australian Capital Territory. The member for Wollongong should know his history. He should be able to talk to us about land tax reform. The ACT Revenue Office website states—and the member for Wollongong might stretch his mind back and think about who was in power in Canberra in 2012—"In 2012, the ACT Government began a program to modernise and abolish inefficient and unfair taxes." That is from the ACT Revenue Office.

If the member is uncertain about who the Chief Minister was at the time and who was in power at the time, he might reach out to the current Labor Senator Katy Gallagher. The Labor Opposition has run a scare campaign against investment from the New South Wales Government worth \$780 million towards a two-year pilot for 3,000 places for a shared equity scheme and \$728.6 million—call it a tax from the New South Wales Government—towards property tax reforms to give people the option—

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Options!

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** Labor does not like giving options. We will give people the option to choose between paying stamp duty or an annual property tax. Fancy removing a stamp duty tax so that first home owners can get into a property sooner. The Government envisages that this will help 6,500 people to buy a home worth up to \$1.5 million. In debate today the member for Mulgoa said that it is not just about housing, it is about livable communities, which this Government has invested in. And as the member for Oxley rightly pointed out, investment in social and affordable housing is up 9 per cent over the past 10 years in this State. That is a higher amount of social and affordable housing than in Queensland, Victoria and Canberra put together. At the end of the day, it is backed by a strategy that looks at unlocking housing and getting more people into homes. All that members on that side of the House have done is run a scare campaign.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Albury has moved a motion, to which the member for Wollongong has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35  
Noes .....42  
Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, J

Finn, J

Mihailuk, T

## AYES

Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, R  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T

Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kamper, S  
Li, J  
Lynch, P  
McDermott, H  
Mehan, D (teller)

Minns, C  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Scully, P  
Tesch, L  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A (teller)  
Zangari, G

## NOES

Anderson, K  
Ayres, S  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Davies, T  
Dominello, V  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M  
Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Hazzard, B

Henskens, A  
James, T  
Kean, M  
Layzell, D  
Lee, G  
Lindsay, W  
Marshall, A  
McGirr, J  
O'Dea, J  
Overall, N  
Pavey, M  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R

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

## PAIRS

Atalla, E  
Car, P  
Lalich, N  
Saffin, J

Elliott, D  
Bromhead, S  
Conolly, K  
Crouch, A

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....43  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....7

## AYES

Anderson, K  
Ayres, S  
Butler, R  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Davies, T  
Dominello, V  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M  
Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C

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

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

## AYES

Hancock, S  
Hazzard, B

Preston, R

Wilson, F

## NOES

Aitchison, J  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kamper, S  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
Lynch, P  
McDermott, H  
Mehan, D (teller)

Mihailuk, T  
Minns, C  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Scully, P  
Smith, T  
Tesch, L  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A (teller)  
Zangari, G

## PAIRS

Bromhead, S  
Conolly, K  
Crouch, A  
Elliott, D

Car, P  
Lalich, N  
Saffin, J  
Atalla, E

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***OMBUDSMAN LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:00):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Ombudsman Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The object of the bill is to make various amendments to the Ombudsman Act 1974 and the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993. The bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 21 June 2022. It will clarify and enhance the Ombudsman's powers, resolve inconsistencies, and update legislation by proposing 24 amendments to the Ombudsman Act and three amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act.

The bill includes amendments to make clear, for the avoidance of doubt, that the Ombudsman's powers in relation to a public authority extend to a former public authority. Schedule 1 [4] will ensure that a detained person is able to make an oral complaint about the conduct of a public authority in a way that is not recorded or monitored; schedule 1 [5] will enable the Ombudsman to refer a complaint about the conduct of a public authority to the public authority for investigation; schedule 1 [11] will enable the Ombudsman to review the systems of public authorities for handling complaints; schedule 1 [15] will clarify the circumstances under which the Ombudsman can share information with similar bodies in other Australian jurisdictions; schedule 1 [2] and schedule 2 [1] and [3] will rename the Community and Disability Services Commissioner as the Community Services Commissioner; and schedule 2 [2] and [5] will omit redundant or spent provisions.

The bill has been prepared in consultation with the Ombudsman's office and has been the subject of due stakeholder consultation. It will not require funding to be implemented and the Ombudsman's office has advised that additional funding will not be needed to implement the provisions. However, the New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that the integrity agencies—the ICAC, the NSW Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the Auditor-General and the NSW Electoral Commission—have appropriate funding to continue their important work for the people of our State in maintaining integrity in, and for, New South Wales.

On 9 May 2022 the Attorney General tabled a response to the recommendations of the Public Accountability Committee and the Auditor-General relating to funding arrangements for the integrity agencies. The revised funding arrangements include removing the integrity agencies from Premier and Cabinet cluster

financial management processes, providing that no efficiency dividends will be imposed on the integrity agencies, and establishing a specialist integrity agency unit within Treasury to manage representations for budget and supplementary funding. The 2022-23 budget, which was the first budget to be delivered under the new arrangements, funded all proposals submitted by integrity agencies as part of the budget process. It included \$4.9 million—\$12.4 million of recurrent expenses and \$1.3 million of capital expenditure—over four years to support the Ombudsman's office in preparing and delivering new responsibilities stemming from public interest disclosure and mandatory disease testing legislation.

In conclusion, the bill will clarify, enhance and resolve inconsistencies in relation to the NSW Ombudsman's powers. It proposes 24 amendments to the Ombudsman Act and three amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act and implements a number of changes that the Ombudsman has requested. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (18:04):** I make a contribution to the debate on the Ombudsman Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I note that I am on the parliamentary oversight committee on the office of the Ombudsman. I was first a member of the committee in 1995. The object of the bill is to make various amendments to the Ombudsman Act and to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act. None of the provisions of the bill could be described as dramatic or as ushering in major change. However, it is important to update and modify legislation and the provisions relating to institutions to make them more effective and efficient when the need to do so becomes apparent. As I understand the second reading speech, the provisions in the current bill have been requested or supported by the current Ombudsman, Mr Paul Miller, previously from the Department of Premier and Cabinet. It is almost like he has transitioned from poacher to gamekeeper, although I understand he disputes that analogy.

The Ombudsman's role in overseeing the public sector and restraining abuses of power and restricting unfair treatment is self-evidently important and legislation that improves its functions is to be welcomed. The Ombudsman predated the ICAC, the Police Integrity Commission and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. In that sense it was the first of the institutions that might be regarded as part of what politics Professor John Keane has called "monitory democracy". He wrote about that concept in *The Life and Death of Democracy* in 2009 and in other publications since then, and indeed in his most recent book published this year.

Some of the provisions in the bill are administrative: the Ombudsman can appoint a Deputy Ombudsman or Assistant Ombudsman to be acting as Ombudsman during an absence of the Ombudsman for no more than 30 days. Similarly, the Community and Disability Services Commissioner is renamed as the Community Services Commissioner. This is said to better reflect what the present functions of the Ombudsman actually are, granted that many organisations once within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction are now federally funded following the advent of the NDIS. Additionally, there is now an Ageing and Disability Services Commissioner established in the State under 2019 legislation.

Other changes proposed are more substantive. It is clarified that an Ombudsman's powers in relation to a public authority also extend to a former public authority. One probably always assumed that to have been the case but the clarification is of use. A further significant provision prohibits the recording or monitoring of an oral complaint made by a detained person. This is analogous to the existing provision that provides for such complainants to have their written complaints sent to the Ombudsman without being opened.

Another provision allows the Ombudsman to refer a complaint about a public authority to the public authority for investigation. The provision requires a report to the Ombudsman upon conclusion, allows the Ombudsman to monitor the progress of the investigation and allows the Ombudsman to continue to deal with the complaint. This seems to go very close to replicating the previous regime of the Ombudsman dealing with complaints against police. That part of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction has now been taken over by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, but the regime of referring complaints against police to be investigated by police with overall oversight retained by the Ombudsman sounds pretty much the same as what is described here.

That regime, of course, was criticised as police investigating police and therefore inherently evil. The counter argument is that the ultimate aim would be to have a police force, or other public authority, that was so professional and misconduct resistant that it could regulate and investigate itself. The reality of course is somewhere between these two positions—allowing in appropriate cases for public authorities to investigate themselves but with a residual oversight by the Ombudsman. This approach goes hand in hand with one of the other provisions of the bill giving the Ombudsman powers to review the systems of public authorities for handling complaints. The Ombudsman already has lots of jurisdiction very close to this, but making it explicit is no bad thing. And, in one sense, it really is a central role of the Ombudsman. Investigating individual complaints is important but a more general benefit will flow if an authority's system for handling complaints is as good as it can be.

Proposed changes to section 13AA of the Ombudsman Act now ensures that confidentiality or non-disclosure provisions in other Acts do not prevent public authorities voluntarily providing information in response to a request by the Ombudsman for information under that section. That must be good public policy. There are a range of other provisions in the bill, including one to remove redundant and spent provisions. Overall, the miscellaneous provisions of the bill will assist the Ombudsman in the good and important work that the office does. The office of the Ombudsman is an important institution. Investigations into maladministration and wrongdoing make for better government and better outcomes for the community. It can be looked at more broadly, though. I mentioned John Keane's concept of monitory democracy a moment ago. Certainly, while his concept goes well beyond bodies like the Ombudsman and the ICAC, they are nonetheless part of it. He argues that the age of simple representative democracy is behind us. In his latest book, he writes:

Whether we are talking about local, national, or supranational government, or the world of non-government organisations and networks, those who wield power are now routinely subject to public monitoring and restraint by an assortment of extra-parliamentary bodies.

Keane goes on to argue that seeing democracy as the champion of publicly accountable power is an important argument in the contemporary world in support of democracies. That is one of the real cases for democracy, rather than some of the nonsense written by Fukuyama or Huntington. For all those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (18:09):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Maroubra, Willoughby and Liverpool for their contributions to the debate on the Ombudsman Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. As members are aware, the bill proposes minor amendments requested by the New South Wales Ombudsman to two pieces of legislation governing the functions of the Ombudsman's office—the Ombudsman Act 1974 and the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993—to clarify and enhance the Ombudsman's functions and powers. I thank the Ombudsman and his office for performing their immensely important role overseeing the public sector and protecting our community from abuses of power and unfair treatment. The bill will enhance the Ombudsman's powers and improve the legislation governing the functioning and the functions of the Ombudsman's office by clarifying matters, resolving inconsistencies and updating redundant provisions. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE AMENDMENT (RESERVATIONS) BILL 2022

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 21 June 2022.**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:11):** I lead for the Opposition on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Reservations) Bill 2022 as the representative in this place of the shadow Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe. The bill amends the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and seeks to revoke a total of 54.3 hectares from national parks and reserves for a number of priority infrastructure projects to proceed. The bill also sets out the biodiversity compensation requirements the New South Wales Government must deliver to offset the losses of land that is currently gazetted as national park. The infrastructure projects that led to this legislation are the Great Western Highway upgrade, the Princes Highway upgrade and the Maria River Road upgrade, a road that connects Port Macquarie and Crescent Head.

Collectively, the bill seeks to degazette 54.3 hectares of land. The land is predominantly located next to the existing roadway and involves a widening of existing transport corridors to allow these infrastructure works to proceed. Under the bill the New South Wales Government will need to fund the purchase of land to compensate for this loss to the national parks estate and add it to the national parks estate. To be clear, the land purchased to compensate for the land being lost is in addition to any biodiversity offset requirements that will likely arise from the development application process.

The areas most impacted by the work include the Blue Mountains National Park, 23 hectares; the Hartley Historic Site, 3.56 hectares; Conjola National Park, 21.41 hectares; Parma Creek Nature Reserve, 3.68 hectares;

Corramy Regional Park, 0.3 hectares; and Limeburners Creek National Park, 2.35 hectares. The member for Blue Mountains is quite rightly very protective of the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park. Like me, she does not trust this Government, especially when it comes to anything involving our environment. In her contribution to the debate the member for Blue Mountains—who has just joined me in the Chamber—will no doubt outline her concerns when it comes to the bill and the potential impacts it will have on the beautiful and important area that she represents.

Labor has a proud legacy when it comes to our environment, and its protection and conservation. The former Labor Government added over three million hectares of land to the national parks estate, increasing the amount of protected land by 75 per cent. In the first eight years of the Liberals and The Nationals in government from 2011 to 2019, the conservatives averaged less than 10,000 hectares a year of new national parkland. In several of these years less than 3,000 hectares of land were conserved for future generations. Even when the Government does try to do it, it gets it wrong. The bill before the House today seeks to revoke the gazettal of land that was recently declared as the Maiyingu Marragu Aboriginal Place in the Gardens of Stone reserve. This change has occurred following feedback from the traditional custodians of the land that they wish for the area to remain as Crown land. At the time, Premier Perrottet declared it as, "The most important environmental announcement this Government has ever made." Today the Government is legislating to undo part of it because it failed to properly consult First Nations people before making the announcement.

It gets worse. At the same time that those opposite were failing to protect land by creating national parks, they were actively stripping protections away from existing bushland. The Liberal-Nationals Government rolled back land clearing laws in New South Wales, which encouraged widespread bulldozing of native bushland and resulted in the massive loss of habitat across this State. Under this Government, land clearing in New South Wales has increased thirteen-fold. Do not think for a moment it is a coincidence. It is a direct consequence of this Government's decision to change the biodiversity conservation laws, which wound back protections for habitat and gave the green light to bulldozers. The direct and predictable consequences of the irresponsible changes to environmental protection laws that were made by this Government include the plummeting populations of koalas and the exacerbation of the impact of climate change on ecosystems. Whilst we all like to talk about koalas, it is not just my furry friends that are now endangered. A rising number of other native species are at greater risk of becoming extinct due to this Government's irresponsible attitude when it comes to our environment.

In the State of the Environment report released recently by the new Federal Labor Government, the extensive land clearing in New South Wales over the last five years was cited as a major cause of habitat loss and fragmentation and the reason why many of Australia's native species are now listed as threatened. The report was prepared and ready for release last year under the former Federal Morrison Government, but it sat on it. It clearly realised that failing to care about the environment has political implications, as it should. Just like their former Federal counterparts, as we head into an election next year, this Liberal-Nationals Government will no doubt be seeking to hide its environmental legacy of land clearing, habitat loss and critical declines in koala populations. But I can guarantee the Government members that my Labor colleagues and I will not let the good people of this State forget this Government's legacy when it comes to our environment.

I acknowledge that Minister Kean did what he could when he was the Minister for Energy and Environment, but ultimately he did not succeed in his battle against his Coalition partners—the environmental vandals otherwise known as The National Party. It appears that the new Minister and member for Manly will have even less success. When Minister Griffin was asked what his priority was in the portfolio, he said he wanted to massively increase conservation activity on private land. Let us check how that is going. The Government's data reveals that land clearing approvals on privately owned land have now exceeded an astonishing half a million hectares in just four years. That is a shocking 646,418 hectares that have been approved between 2018 and April 2022. That is in addition to the many thousands of hectares of land no longer requiring formal approval because of other changes to laws and regulations made by this Government. The bill before us today will, at best, deliver the status quo in protected land. Our environment needs so much more than that and so much more than this Government.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:17):** I am pleased to support the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Reservations) Bill 2022 and acknowledge that the Minister is in the House. The bill has two straightforward but important purposes. First, it revokes around 54 hectares of land from six reserves in the national parks estate to enable high priority road upgrades to proceed in the Blue Mountains, on the south coast—I acknowledge the member for South Coast is also in the Chamber—and near Port Macquarie. That will improve public safety and transport outcomes for the community. I will talk about the particular road in my community that is in question later in my contribution. That will ensure that we have connectivity between two regional communities. Secondly, it will make a minor adjustment to the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act 2021 to remove the land declared as the Maiyingu Marragu Aboriginal Place from the proposed Gardens of Stone

reserves, which, under that Act, will otherwise be automatically created by 30 June 2022. That addresses feedback from local Aboriginal community representatives.

The bill enables priority government road projects to proceed that, at the end of the day, are for the benefit of our local communities. This Government is committed to improve transport infrastructure, road safety and connectivity. The New South Wales and Australian governments are funding major upgrades to sections of highways and roads right across the State, including in the Port Macquarie electorate. The bill will facilitate the removal of small areas of land from six reserves to enable the delivery of priority road projects and critical road safety upgrades. Such revocations are necessary from time to time after all options to avoid parks have been exhausted. The last revocations bill was passed in 2020 and before that in 2016. Importantly, the areas revoked from parks will remain vested with the Minister for the Environment and Heritage while final arrangements to transfer the land to Transport for NSW and to relevant local councils are completed. Those final steps will include confirmation that suitable compensation will be provided for the revocations to ensure that the overall conservation value of the national parks system is maintained.

I now turn to how the bill enables an important road safety upgrade in my electorate and the Oxley electorate to Maria River Road. That 30 kilometres of road links communities in Port Macquarie-Hastings and Crescent Head in the Kempsey local government area. Some 25 kilometres of this road are unsealed and have raised longstanding safety concerns, especially during wet weather. As we have all seen in recent months, many communities have been repeatedly affected by extreme weather events, including flooding. As such, road safety is paramount. The New South Wales Government allocated \$17 million under the Fixing Local Roads scheme for critical road safety upgrades, including Maria River Road. I was pleased to join the member for Oxley, Melinda Pavey, and the Federal member for Cowper, Pat Conaghan, to make this announcement in July 2020. The Maria River Road Upgrade project will involve stabilising the existing pavement and placing new gravel on top of the road before sealing—improving road safety and accessibility. Where other safety issues remain, works involving road widening, provision of guardrails and signage will be undertaken.

Delivering those upgrades to Maria River Road require the revocation of land from Limeburners Creek National Park. The areas to be revoked are spread along 30 kilometres of road. In any one location they are relatively minor, but collectively they total around 2.35 hectares. Options to avoid impacting the national park have been thoroughly investigated and the National Parks and Wildlife Service has been consulted. However, due to the nature of the road and the park boundaries, it is not possible to avoid all impacts. There is high community expectation that the upgrade project will commence in the months ahead. There have been calls for the upgrade, including the road sealing, for many years from people across both the Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area and the Kempsey local government area. The member for Oxley has been a strong advocate for this project and is supportive of it because she understands the importance it has not only for her community but also for those living in the Port Macquarie community. As I said, it is about road safety and connectivity.

The total area of land to be revoked is small, but the improvements in road safety will be significant and will benefit not only the communities of Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey local government areas but also those who use Maria River Road, including the many residents that live on Maria River Road. Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, land can only be revoked from a national park or reserve by an Act of Parliament, which reflects the high degree of protection afforded to national parks and reserves. Furthermore, the requirement for suitable compensation also ensures that the overall conservation value of the national parks system is maintained. The bill provides for compensation for lands revoked from national parks. It is required for all revocation proposals, including those in the bill. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is continuing discussions with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Kempsey Shire Council to determine an appropriate compensation package for the revocations associated with Maria River Road. A potential area has been identified but will need to be confirmed and approved following the passage of the bill.

It is essential that appropriate compensation is agreed on before any final decisions are made to remove protections applying to the affected parts of the national park. For that reason, the bill provides that land will not be transferred to another entity—in this case, Port Macquarie Hastings Council—until such time as the Minister for Environment and Heritage is satisfied that the compensation is appropriate. All proposals in the bill have been the subject of consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, relevant regional advisory committees, relevant State agencies and the local councils involved. The revocations are minor, as I have mentioned, and will not compromise the natural values or the integrity of the national park system.

In the case of Maria River Road, the revocation will deliver on long-held community desires to improve the condition and safety of this important connection between the Port Macquarie Hastings and Kempsey local government areas. In addition, project design has been carefully planned to limit the footprint of impacts to the national park's estate to as small an area as possible. For the areas of the park where impacts are unavoidable, compensation for the revocation is required, and a compensation package will be determined in discussions

between the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Transport for NSW and then considered for the approval by the Minister for Environment and Heritage. The Maria River Road revocation, together with the other revocations in the bill, are essential, well planned and carefully thought through. The overall outcome is a positive one for the community, and in fact for the national parks that we are talking about, achieving the right balance between improving community access and safety for road users, and protecting our national parks and reserves.

I acknowledge the letter that I received from the Kempsey Shire Council general manager, Craig Milburn, dated 14 June. In the letter he highlighted the importance of this amendment and the important part of the process in allowing the next critical step for this project to move forward. In closing, I acknowledge the advocacy of many local residents who live on Maria River Road or who regularly use that road between Kempsey Shire Council and Port Macquarie Hastings. I also take the opportunity to commend the work of the Northside Progress Association on this issue. It has been a very strong advocate and has done very well in representing its community on the need for safety upgrades to Maria River Road. It is certainly very welcomed by the community, and I thank the association for its advocacy.

Many members of my constituency have written to me. I have heard many stories about accidents, such as vehicles going off the road. Being from a regional seat, Temporary Speaker Layzell, you would know that it happens so easily on wet gravel roads. There is not much coverage on the verges of the road for drivers who are using it. I commend the Minister for bringing this bill forward and making sure that, whether they are in the Blue Mountains, South Coast, Port Macquarie or Oxley electorates, these major and critical infrastructure projects are able to proceed thanks to this amendment.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:27):** I contribute to debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Reservations) Bill 2022. My electorate of Blue Mountains sits within a World Heritage-listed national park. I have spoken in this place before about the significance of that. There is a list of criteria for a place to be considered worthy of being welcomed into the UNESCO World Heritage family. It must be of outstanding universal value and be found to display superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance. I want all members to really understand that; I know my colleague the member for Port Stephens does.

It is easy to come to the Blue Mountains for a day or two and take in the Three Sisters, do a bit of shopping in Leura Mall and maybe enjoy some lunch in a cafe in Mount Victoria, Blackheath or Katoomba. There is a lot to enjoy socially, especially if you are in the neighbourhood when one of our big local events is happening, like Winter Magic, the Rhododendron Festival or Springwood Foundation Day. We really are blessed in the mountains to have such a vibrant and diverse community, but today I emphasise the preciousness of the natural environment in which we live. I believe the acknowledgement of that needs to be front and centre of any decisions we make, be they related to development or the planning and building of infrastructure. The Blue Mountains much be treated with absolute sensitivity and care.

That brings me to what I want to focus on in the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Reservations) Bill 2022. The bill states that the land identified as "land to be revoked" in the Blue Mountains National Park will be "about 23 hectares". I want it to be acknowledged that this is not a sliver, as has been suggested by senior Transport for NSW bureaucrats; it is a sizeable chunk. I imagine the argument put forth will be that it is necessary to forge ahead with the Great Western Highway duplication project west of Katoomba. I also imagine that it will be pointed out that the piece of land to be revoked, whilst it is national park, does not sit within the World Heritage-listed section. The suggestion might be, therefore, that it is not such a big deal. I think it is still a big deal, and so do many in the community of the Blue Mountains—the Blue Mountains Conservation Society especially.

Labor is not opposing the bill, with the expectation that the New South Wales Government will do the right thing and that the land revoked will be replaced, like for like, with land of equal area and equal or greater environmental value. I note that the bill amends the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to revoke more than 54 hectares from national parks and reserves for priority transport projects; that national park land revocations occur regularly and are only considered as a last resort when no other practical options are available; and that there is a requirement that the lost land will be compensated. The Minister must be satisfied that appropriate compensation has been secured before the land can be revoked. I note that the Minister is in the Chamber; we will hold him to this, and so will the State.

Whilst the party I represent is not opposing the bill, as the local member for an area that will be on the receiving end of the actions that result from the bill, I want my concerns and the concerns of my community on the record. I want to know that there are protections in place for the remainder of our national park, World Heritage-listed or otherwise. It seems that what is deemed as progress that meets human need always wins out in the end, often by way of large infrastructure projects like highways. I understand this to a degree, but we must all realise that the days of this kind of thinking are numbered.

I worry for my electorate because so much of the focus on getting the Great Western Highway upgraded is not at all about what is best for protecting and preserving the natural environment in the Blue Mountains. While I acknowledge the growing need for a more efficient traverse across the mountains and more practicable solutions to ease local traffic congestion, I am yet to be convinced that one of the core motivations in progressing the highway upgrades is respect for environmental sensitivities. This is starkly illustrated by the New South Wales Government's decision to opt for a review of environmental factors in the area where the land in the Blue Mountains is earmarked for revocation, rather than a full environmental impact statement.

I highlight this because it makes me question whether we really know enough about the land in the Blue Mountains that is set to be revoked. Do we know that there are no vulnerable species living there? Do we know the full impacts on things like groundwater run-off and nearby swamps? We are essentially being asked to trust in the process of taking something away and giving something back, but I would feel more inclined to trust in this if I had any trust in the Government. Let us not forget that Blue Mountains National Park has already lost millions of hectares and wildlife from the 2019-20 bushfires and from the impacts of several major flooding incidents.

I would also like to understand what assurances, if any, will be in place to protect the surrounding national park and World Heritage national park as this highway project ploughs ahead. I want to know that a precedent of sorts is not being set here. I want to know that, if this piece of our park must be revoked, it will not pave the way for further revocations at a later date because another project has been deemed more important than the unique environment in which we live. Our national parks are essential to us all, both locally and globally. They support broader conservation and anchor ecosystems. They are home to Indigenous cultural heritage, and they provide habitat for wildlife and plant life.

It is important to mention at this point the work of Bob Debus, AM, the former member for Blue Mountains and Minister for everything in this place. His work as Minister for the Environment has left an enduring legacy. Along with Bob Carr, throughout the 1990s and early 2000s he ensured that large areas of bushland and wilderness throughout New South Wales were invested in, protected and made accessible to the people of this State. Over 350 new national parks were declared by Bob Debus and Bob Carr, and between 1995 and 2011 Labor added more than three million hectares to the national park estate, gazetting more national parks in one day than the former Coalition Government gazetted in its entire term of office. That legacy must be protected.

We all have a duty to protect our national parks. We are responsible for the ways in which we move through those spaces as individuals, and we should all have a platform to speak up and shout loudly when we believe that our national parks are not being cared for as they should be or if we sense impending harm. That is why I am contributing to this debate. My Labor colleagues and the Labor Party do not oppose the bill, but my Blue Mountains community and I—and I dare say the millions of visitors who come to our region every year—will be watching closely to ensure that what is removed from our park is replaced. We will be watching to make sure that this revocation of land does not herald any further destruction of the places that sit within this World Heritage place.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (18:35):** In reply: I am pleased to speak in reply on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Reservations) Bill 2022. I thank the member for Port Stephens, the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Blue Mountains for their contributions to the second reading debate. As we have already pointed out, the proposals in the bill are sensible initiatives that will lead to good outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Reservations) Bill 2022 proposes to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to remove a small area of land from the reserve system—only 54 hectares, which is less than one square kilometre—from six parks and reserves. Those revocations are required to facilitate essential road upgrades to the Great Western Highway, the Princes Highway and Maria River Road. All three projects are funded jointly by the New South Wales and Australian governments, or by the New South Wales Government supporting local councils. All projects will deliver improved community safety, better travel conditions and times, and support connectivity that will reduce the risks of accidents, save lives and improve economic productivity. The bill recognises the objective of attaining overall public good outcomes where national park revocations are necessary.

In terms of the impact on land and the reference to land clearing, there will be no net loss of land within the national park estate as a result of the bill. The loss of land will be offset by adding new land to the reserve system as required under national parks revocation policy. Compensatory lands will be of suitable biodiversity or other conservation values. Importantly, the bill includes a safety net to ensure that appropriate compensation must be approved by the Minister for Environment and Heritage before any of the revoked lands are transferred to the relevant road authority. That is consistent with the approach successfully applied in previous revocation bills over the past decade. In addition, the bill will respond to feedback from local Aboriginal representatives, who have

indicated a clear preference for the Maiyingu Marragu Aboriginal Place not to be included in the Gardens of Stone State Conservation area, and the bill seeks to make a minor adjustment to the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act 2021 to deliver that particular outcome.

There were a number of glaring omissions during the—at times—unhelpful, alarmist and non-factual criticism of this straightforward bill. It is important to recognise that none of the land being revoked sits within the Blue Mountains World Heritage area, and I can assure the member for the Blue Mountains that appropriate compensation will be provided and transferred into parks. I also note that since 2019 this Government has increased the New South Wales protected area network by over 441,000 hectares. The bill is only recognising that, from time to time, park boundaries require routine adjustment to correct historical areas, address encroachments and enable significant infrastructure projects to proceed. At the core of this, appropriate transfers and compensation will be identified and provided to the particular parks where an impact is being felt. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **CASINO LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Kevin Anderson, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (18:40):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Casino Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 represents the most significant package of reforms to regulate casinos in New South Wales since the creation of the Casino Control Act and the issuing of the first casino licence in 1992. The reforms represent an essential reset for how casinos will operate in this State into the future. The reforms contained in the bill are incredibly wideranging due to the sheer breadth of failures within the casino sector that has been uncovered by the various inquiries into Australian casinos over the past few years. They include failures of prevention of financial crime, including allowing money laundering to run rampant in casinos; preventing casino patrons from experiencing gambling harm; and corporate governance and culture, including the relationship between casinos and their regulators.

While the public has been rightly outraged by those failures, the inquiries that have completed so far have indicated their belief that the casino operators in question can reform themselves. The Government supports that position and seeks to reset the industry, ensuring that casinos in New South Wales are vibrant, safe, and responsible places to visit. However, with this bill the Government also recognises that the inquiries have found that the casino sector needs a complete overhaul in order to succeed. It is not acceptable for casinos to engage in consistent patterns of non-cooperation and dishonesty with regulators. It is not acceptable for casinos to allow financial crime to run rampant because it is more profitable to do so and risk a fine, and it is certainly not acceptable for casinos to foster a culture where compliance with laws is considered optional and the sole focus is on technical compliance rather than compliance with the intent and spirit of the laws. To help fix that culture, the bill contains an array of reforms, which I will now address in turn.

The core of the bill is the creation of the new NSW Independent Casino Commission, the NICC. It is important to acknowledge at the outset that the Bergin report made very clear that the recommendation to create a new standalone casino regulator was not a criticism of the current regulator, the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA]. Instead, the creation of an independent casino commission will act to ensure that the people responsible for casino regulation have enough time to focus on those issues exclusively. This is particularly important given the increasing complexity of the casino industry and the increasing workload of ILGA's liquor and gaming responsibilities.

The bill inserts new part 9A and new schedule 1 to establish the NICC and its procedures. This includes the creation of the NICC, with one full-time legally qualified Chief Commissioner; at least two but no more than four full- or part-time commissioners, including commissioners with expertise in financial crime regulation or law enforcement, accounting or corporate governance; and any full- or part-time assistant commissioners to assist the NICC in exercising its functions that can assist with surge capacity, including large-scale inquiries or compliance activities.

The Chief Commissioner and commissioners are to be appointed by the Governor on the Minister's recommendation for a period of no more than four years and may only be reappointed once. The Minister's recommendation will be based on a list of persons nominated by a selection panel following a formal selection process. Assistant commissioners are to be appointed by the Minister for a period of no more than two years. Persons who have worked in any other capacity for a casino operator in the last seven years must not be appointed. The remuneration of all commissioners is to be set by the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal [SOORT]. The commission will be able to employ its own staff.

All other administrative and governance procedures are kept the same as ILGA. It is notable that New South Wales used to have a Casino Control Authority which was abolished in 2006 following an Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal inquiry which recommended that liquor and gaming regulation be combined to ensure consistency of regulatory effort. This Government has therefore been careful to ensure that the design of the new NICC balances the opportunities offered by a standalone casino commission, as advocated in the Bergin report, but also ensures the continuation of a coordination regulatory effort.

This is achieved in the following manner. First, the Chief Commissioner will also sit on ILGA as an ordinary member. Secondly, the bill establishes a coordination committee which will include representatives from the New South Wales police and the NSW Crime Commission. This committee will ensure coordination of regulatory effort across the liquor and gaming industry. Thirdly, while the NICC has its own administration, policy and secretariat staff, the majority of the operational staff will remain in the department as part of Liquor & Gaming NSW working on a variety of liquor and gaming matters. This model will ensure that the regulator can adequately and quickly meet any peaks in demand, conduct surge activities and have significant contingency to ensure that there is a sustained and diverse high level of monitoring at the casinos.

Importantly, the model will also ensure that Liquor & Gaming NSW is able to take a consistent approach with other significant liquor and gaming venues and can adequately respond to any potential displacement issues. As anyone who has read the Bergin report will know, guaranteeing the independence of the recommended new casino commission was of crucial importance to help ensure that it is successful. Therefore, multiple provisions have been inserted to ensure the NICC's independence, including inserting a new section 135, which states that the NICC is subject to ministerial direction and control except for its advice, report or recommendation to the Minister and its decisions relating to casino licences, disciplinary action or liquor or gaming approval; amending section 142 so that the terms of any commercial agreement with a casino operator are invalid to the extent they prevent the NICC from, or otherwise imposes additional onus on the NICC in, making decisions or taking disciplinary action; and requiring the NICC to table its annual report in Parliament.

To balance the increased powers of the NICC and its enhanced independence, amendments have been made to the Ombudsman Act 1974 to bring the NICC within the Ombudsman's oversight powers. The NICC and the increased resources will be paid for by an increase in the casino supervisory levy. In line with Bergin's recommendation, section 115A and new 115B state that the levy will be paid directly to the NICC instead of being paid to the consolidated fund. Clause 51 of the regulation is also amended to impose a levy of \$19 million apportioned evenly between the two casino operators. These funds will help support a significant uplift in operational capacity and the creation of the NICC. I also note that by passing the bill during this sitting week and commencing the legislation on 5 September 2022, the NICC will be established in time to consider the outcomes of the Bell review, which is due to deliver its findings to ILGA at the end of August. This means that the NICC can hit the ground running in relation to considering and implementing any findings and will avoid a situation where a transfer of powers needs to occur to the new commission in the middle of any potential disciplinary proceedings.

Finally, to ensure parity between the NICC and ILGA, consequential amendments have been made to the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 [GALAA], including preventing ministerial control and direction over ILGA's liquor and gaming related decisions and disciplinary action; allowing for the appointment of assistant ILGA members; imposing a transparent selection panel process for the appointment of ILGA members; allowing ILGA to employ its own staff; changing the term of office to four years and limiting members to one consecutive reappointment; and having ILGA remunerated by SOORT.

One of the most concerning aspects that has arisen in the various casino inquiries is the culture of noncompliance by the casino operators. The bill contains a number of reforms that aim to help improve this culture

but also foster a relationship of trust and cooperation with the NICC. First, the bill will insert a new section 22C into the Act to require casino operators to cooperate with NICC in respect of its functions. This will include making full and frank disclosure of all information requested by the NICC and notifying the NICC of any breach or likely breach of any legislation that regulates casino operations, licence conditions or regulatory agreement as soon as practicable but not later than five days after becoming aware of the breach.

Secondly, new provisions are inserted into sections 36 and 131A to require a casino operator to engage an independent and appropriately qualified compliance auditor under a controlled contract on terms approved by the NICC. The compliance auditor is to report annually to the NICC on the casino operator's compliance with its regulatory obligations and notify the casino operator and the NICC of any activity in the casino that may jeopardise the achievement of the objects of the Act and of any breach or likely breach of the casino legislation or the casino operator's other obligations. These amendments implement Bergin recommendations six and seven. The Bergin report noted that this auditing requirement is an important measure to change Crown's mindset in respect of compliance and provides a proportionate response to the existing and emerging risks identified in the casino operating environment in New South Wales.

The bill will provide greater flexibility to the NICC to enforce remediation efforts by casino operators. Currently the Act allows the regulator to issue a rectification order to a casino. However, this order can only be made in lieu of any other disciplinary action, including fines. A new enforceable undertaking regime will be inserted in section 23 and a new section 26A to enable NICC to impose enforceable undertakings as a form of disciplinary action. A new section 125 will be inserted to require a casino operator to give the NICC full, real-time and independent access to their systems that monitor the conduct of gaming. This gaming data is a crucial tool that will be utilised to monitor a casino operator's compliance with the legislation. Currently the regulator has full access to gaming data for all gaming machines in hotels and clubs through a centralised monitoring system licensed by the Government. No similar arrangements exist for gaming systems at casinos. The regulator has to access data through requests to a casino operator and cannot access the data independently. Therefore, the amendment addresses this issue by requiring casinos to provide the NICC independent access to their systems.

Finally, it is important to ensure that penalties in the legislation continue to rise so they actually penalise operators and close associates for noncompliance and to ensure that they remain a significant deterrent to noncompliance with the Act. Therefore, the bill amends section 23 to increase the maximum penalty for disciplinary action against casino operators to \$100 million. Disciplinary action is generally only taken against casino operators in the most serious of cases. It is important that the potential penalty reflects the seriousness of such matters. Importantly, this penalty will also be retrospective so the NICC will have the penalty available to it for any disciplinary actions it may wish to take arising from either the Bergin report or the Bell review.

The bill also amends section 167 and creates a new section 167A to allow the NICC to prosecute individual executives of the casino operator for offences by the casino operator if the individual knew or ought reasonably to know the offence would be or is being committed and failed to take steps to prevent the offence, or aids, abets, induces, conspires or is involved in the offence. These are important provisions which will ensure that executives who fail to discharge their obligations, including where they did not know but should reasonably have known that an offence was going to be committed, can be prosecuted for their failures. We expect corporate officers to take their duties seriously and ensure that their company complies with the law.

This provision will help ensure that is the case for casinos. The bill also increases all penalties throughout both the Act and the regulation by a minimum of 10 times to ensure that they remain a significant deterrent to noncompliance with the Act. One of the best ways of ensuring that casinos remain suitable is by ensuring that their close associates—those who have control and influence over the casino's operations—are also suitable. As such, the bill strengthens the close associate provisions in a number of ways. The Bergin report found that the tests of relevant interest and relevant power in the current definition of "close associate" in the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act can be overly technical and complex.

Therefore, in line with Bergin recommendation 13, a new section 3A is inserted to define "close associate" more rigorously to include related bodies corporate, people holding 10 per cent or more of the shares in a casino operator or a related body corporate of the casino operator and directors and officers of those entities. The proposed new definition provides greater clarity and facilitates more efficient assessment of whether a person is a close associate. The existing close associate provisions do not provide the regulator with flexibility regarding approvals. The current close associate approval provisions are targeted at the casino operator and ensuring that they comply with the relevant provisions. The Bergin report demonstrated the limits of existing powers. It found Crown did not breach the Act when an agreement was reached for Consolidated Press Holdings [CPH] to sell its shares to Melco without prior approval because the share sale was not within the casino operator's power to prevent prior to approval.

Therefore, the bill completely reforms the close associate regime. A new part 3, division 3 will be inserted into the Act, among other administrative provisions, to (1) require all close associates to obtain the NICC's prior approval, subject to any exemption granted by the NICC; (2) provide the NICC with cost-recovery powers in assessing the suitability of a casino operator or their close associate; (3) allow interim approval to be issued to close associate applicants; (4) require close associates to maintain ongoing suitability and notify the NICC of any substantial change that could affect their suitability; (5) allow disciplinary action to be taken against a close associate for breaches of the Act or adverse suitability findings; (6) require all close associates who are involved in the management of casino operations to complete training and obtain a certificate of competency under section 64; and (7) exempt close associates from any requirement to obtain a special employee licence now that a full regime for close associate approvals and training is being imposed.

These reforms implement Bergin recommendations to prevent persons from holding or transferring 10 per cent interest or more in the casino operator without the NICC's prior approval and to allow NICC to recover the cost of suitability assessments from the casino operator or their close associate. To complement these requirements, a new section 4B will be inserted into the Act to require all persons seeking approval of their suitability by NICC to provide clear and convincing evidence of their suitability and make a full and frank disclosure. This will shift the statutory onus from the regulator disproving suitability to requiring applicants to positively satisfy the regulator of their suitability. Section 34 will also be expanded in line with Bergin recommendation 17 so that the NICC can apply for an injunction against close associates or other people required to comply with the Act, as the current injunction powers only apply to casino operators in particular. This will allow NICC to apply for an injunction to prevent close associates from breaching the Act by becoming a close associate before they are approved.

The bill amends section 35 to extend the requirement for the casino to notify NICC of any major changes in its state of affairs from those that are within the casino's control to include those that are within the power of the casino's holding company to control. Often key decisions, including hiring of close associates or share transactions, are conducted in holding companies that sit above the casino licensee. The amendments will help to ensure that casinos do not escape these notification provisions because of their company structure. Cost recovery provisions are also amended in section 35A so that the regulator's costs of investigating all major changes can be recovered and the costs of external legal, financial or other expert assistance are included. Given the complexity of modern corporate structures, the regulator often has to rely on such advisers to help it complete such probity investigations.

Provisions relating to special employees in section 59 will also be reformed to close a loophole that allowed special employees to relinquish a licence and avoid disciplinary action. Special employees will also be required to undertake anti-money-laundering [AML] training approved by the regulator under section 64. The controlled contract provisions are also overhauled through amendments to section 37 and the insertion of new sections 37A and 37B to shift the focus of the controlled contract regime from a contract review to a probity review; extend the assessment period from 28 days—which can be extended to up to six months—to 12 weeks; allow interim approval to be issued for controlled contracts; and require parties to a controlled contract to notify the NICC of any change that could affect their probity. These amendments will ensure that NICC has a focus on investigating the probity of those contracting with casinos.

I now turn to anti-money-laundering reforms. One of the most concerning aspects of the various failures of casinos has been their failure to actively combat money laundering. Videos of individuals bringing bags full of cash into casinos on numerous occasions with no questions asked have been a common sight throughout the various casino inquiries. As the Bergin report noted, while AUSTRAC regulates Australia's money-laundering laws, it does not have the boots on the ground that are needed to regularly monitor and detect casino compliance with their AML and counterterrorism-financing [CTF] obligations. Therefore, it is appropriate that our new independent casino regulator take on more of a role in regulating AML and CTF requirements and monitoring casinos' compliance with those requirements.

The bill implements the Bergin AML-related recommendations in a number of ways. First, sections 4A and 140 will be amended to add an objective of ensuring that each casino operator prevents money laundering and terrorism-financing activities within the operations of the casino. Secondly, the bill inserts a new section 76B to ban junkets. This includes a ban on the payment of a commission or provisions of another form of benefit to a person by reference to another person's gambling turnover or other gambling metrics. This provision is aimed at prohibiting any junket-like behaviour from emerging. As the various casino inquiries have determined, junkets are an unacceptable risk of money laundering that cannot be mitigated. Therefore, the ban on junkets is an incredibly important provision to ensure that casinos remain free of criminal influence.

Through the various inquiries, it was also found that casinos posed a much higher risk for money laundering than other venues where gambling occurs. This is because, unlike other licensed venues, there are no limits in

casinos on the amount of cash that can be wagered. This situation led to various recommendations to limit cash transactions, to better identify players and to monitor player activity within casinos. As such, new section 71A will introduce a new requirement that all gaming at the casino must be by use of a player card. This card will require individuals to have their identity linked with the card and for the card to track certain gambling metrics outlined in the regulations. This will allow for greater monitoring of potential money laundering and gambling harm, especially when combined with cashless gaming reforms in the bill. It is important to note that these measures are there. In this regard, the bill also inserts new section 73A to prohibit the use of cash over \$1,000 per customer per day for gambling. This will limit the amount of cash being used in the casino. As we know, cash is a significant risk in relation to money laundering and this provision will help hasten the move to cashless gaming.

Section 74 is also being amended to help facilitate the introduction of cashless gaming in the future and new section 76A is being inserted to ban cash prizes. Taken together, these provisions represent a significant shift in the ability of criminals to use casinos to launder money by all but eliminating cash from casino properties and ensuring that anonymous play for criminals is removed. However, the technology is not developed enough to allow for mandatory carded play or cashless gaming to be immediately rolled out. Therefore, these provisions will commence either on proclamation or three years from commencement, whichever is sooner.

The Bergin report made several important recommendations regarding requirements to implement patron account monitoring, patron due diligence and source of funds declarations. While the Bergin report recommended prescribing the requirements through legislation and licence conditions, the bill instead amends section 124 to require these details to be set out in a casino's internal controls. Implementing the recommendations in this way will protect the confidentiality of specific AML-related operational measures. It will also allow the NICC sufficient flexibility to amend the requirements in response to the complex and fast-changing regulatory environment. Consequential amendments have been made to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 to ensure that the NICC has the benefit of exemptions other law enforcement agencies also have. This ensures that information such as suspicious matter transaction reports and similarly sensitive information can remain confidential.

Other important amendments include section 65 being amended to require casino operators to keep CCTV footage for a minimum of three months or any longer period specified by the NICC. This will allow greater time to obtain CCTV in complex investigations such as those relating to money laundering. Section 70 will be amended to more strictly regulate how casino operators can issue chips to patrons, mandating that it must be by a casino employee at a casino cage or table. This will ensure that the issuing of chips is strictly controlled by the casino operator and will not allow it to be undertaken by any other entity. Section 126 will be amended to require a casino operator to maintain a single bank account for patron transactions rather than allowing multiple different bank accounts. This makes detecting money laundering easier because there is only one account to monitor for suspicious activity.

I will now turn to responsible gambling reforms. Aside from the introduction of mandatory player cards, which will greatly enhance the ability of casinos to monitor and detect casino patrons experiencing gambling harm, the bill contains a number of other important responsible gambling measures. A new section 71 will be inserted to prohibit the visibility of gaming machines and gambling-related signs from outside the casino boundary. As casinos become integrated resorts with multiple tourism and hospitality offerings, many people visit casino premises without wanting to visit the casino itself. This provision will ensure that people who are visiting the casino for purposes other than gambling are not subjected to unwanted gambling signage designed to encourage them to gamble.

Section 76A prohibits indecent or offensive promotional prizes and also requires casino operators to inform the participants in their reward schemes of the availability of gambling counselling services. A specific requirement will be imposed in section 84A to require a casino operator to take reasonable steps to prevent an excluded person from entering the casino. The amendment imposes increased accountability on casino operators to take steps to prevent excluded patrons from entering the property. The NICC will provide operators with guidance regarding the types of reasonable steps they can take to satisfy this requirement. Some examples of such steps include ID verification, facial recognition, crosschecking against the casino's patron system, and staff training on the management of excluded persons.

Finally, I will now turn to the compensation issue. It is important to address the amended section 156 contained in the bill. It is common within the regulatory framework for casinos in New South Wales for casino operators and the Government to enter into commercial agreements. However, the result of some of these agreements is that the Government cannot regulate casinos without the possibility that it may have to pay casinos compensation for doing so. Further, the provisions in the agreements mean that the NICC may not be able to use its powers in the future without the possibility that doing so may mean that the casinos are entitled to

compensation. This is obviously an untenable position. It does not meet public expectations that the Government should have to pay compensation to casino operators for regulating them due to their own misconduct.

Therefore, the new section 156 extinguishes compensation for specific regulatory actions taken by the Crown, including this bill and any future legislation to amend the Casino Control Act, GALAA or any other Act that regulates casinos; the making of regulations under the Casino Control Act, GALAA or any other Act that regulates casinos; and the exercise of statutory functions under the Casino Control Act, GALAA or any other Act that regulates casinos. To be clear, the intent of this provision is to ensure that the Parliament and the NICC can continue to regulate casinos and that the NICC can exercise its statutory functions to license and discipline casinos without fear that doing so will result in casinos being entitled to compensation. The Government recognises that there are various commercial arrangements, including restrictions or exclusivities applying to each of the licences. Those should be honoured. If the Government wanted to legislate out all agreements with casino operators, it could have done so. However, this targeted provision is designed to ensure that the Parliament and the NICC can continue to regulate casinos without the need to pay them compensation for doing so, as the public rightly expects.

I said at the outset that this bill is about resetting how casinos operate into the future. What the various inquiries have demonstrated is that the culture of casinos is broken. We cannot have a casino industry with a culture of profit over people, a culture of illegal and unethical behaviour, and a culture of noncooperation and dishonesty. We want a vibrant, successful and, most importantly, safe casino industry, so the bill is about moving casinos to a better culture: a culture of honesty, integrity and compliance, and a culture that will guarantee their success into the future. The public is tired of scandals from casinos. They are tired of casinos failing to achieve the bare minimum required of them under the law. They are tired of promises from casinos to do better. We need to see casinos actually do better.

The bill gives our new independent regulator the powers to ensure compliance with the law, but it is also designed to give casinos every chance to succeed in the future and to regain the social licence they have lost. Whether they can do so is up to them. I said that we want casinos to succeed, and we do. But we do not want them to succeed at the cost of the community. The bill represents a second chance for casino operators. If they do not reform themselves to meet the public's expectations, I doubt the community will give them a third chance. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:12):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Casino Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill seeks to amend the Casino Control Act 1992 No. 15 and the Casino Control Regulation 2019 along with the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 No. 91. The bill is in response to the recommendations of the Bergin report. From the outset I make it clear that the Labor Opposition believes that we must have the necessary regulatory framework in place to handle the complexities of this industry. As the Minister just described, it is up to the industry; however, members of Parliament are here to ensure that we put in place the regulation. It is absolutely critical that the public has confidence in the integrity of the casino and gaming industry. For that reason, Labor will not oppose the bill.

It is inescapable that public confidence in the casino and gaming sector has been shaken by media reports of misconduct within the industry over the past few years. Those media reports made allegations of money laundering, working with junket tour operators with links to organised crimes, and the failure of casinos to comply with regulatory standards. The allegations put forth in those media reports have shined a spotlight on an industry that has seen public government inquiries launched right across this country. In New South Wales the Bergin inquiry was launched into Crown casinos' operations with its final report handed down on 1 February 2021. The Bergin inquiry was tasked with not just investigating misconduct at Crown Casino but also making recommendations to enhance the casino regulatory framework. That included examining the regulator's capability to respond to emerging risks in the gaming casino sector. The Bell inquiry's report into the conduct of The Star casino is due to be handed down on 31 August 2022. The Bell inquiry is examining the suitability of The Star as a casino operator and whether it has complied with its regulatory obligations. The terms of reference included examining whether The Star casino remained free from criminal influence and exploitation, along with ensuring that gaming had been conducted honestly.

During the Bell inquiry we heard from numerous now former Star executives about failures within the organisation to manage risks within the casino's operations. The inquiry has heard how, like Crown, The Star had enabled suspected money laundering. While casinos both drive tourism and create jobs in this State, holding a casino licence is a privilege that comes with significant regulatory responsibilities. That is critical. Let us be clear: When we refer to money laundering, we are talking about the washing of money that is the proceeds of crime; we are talking about drug money; and we are talking about human trafficking. The people involved in the worst aspects of criminal behaviour are washing money illegally through our casinos.

The Bergin report and subsequent royal commissions in Victoria and Western Australia exposed significant issues within the casino sector. Commissioner Bergin was critical of the leadership of Crown, which has since seen a substantial turnover in executive leadership and is also now owned by Blackstone. The Bergin inquiry uncovered evidence of money laundering at Crown Melbourne, with bundles of cash being exchanged for gambling chips in one of the VIP gaming rooms. Crown was also operating two bank accounts with patrons depositing funds for gambling. The inquiry also heard that Crown failed to act when presented with evidence that it was being used for money laundering. The inquiry also examined Crown's relationship to junket operators with links to organised crime, including fears that Crown Resort Macau employees feared physical violence from associates of one junket operator.

The inquiry was most damning of Crown's culture. Commissioner Bergin stated it had an "unjustified belief in itself". Even when presented with evidence of wrongdoing, it was "unwilling to entertain the prospect". The Bergin inquiry found Crown unfit to hold a casino licence and required that organisation to be significantly restructured before it was granted a conditional licence. As members have heard, the Bergin report made 19 recommendations to address the risks of money laundering in casinos and increase the compliance of casino operators with regulatory responsibility. Recommendations also covered improving probity processes for individuals and companies associated with casinos. The first tranche of those recommendations was addressed in previous legislation, with this bill to implement the final tranche.

I now move to the contents of the bill. The bill sets out significant reforms to the regulation of casino operators in this State. The proposed reforms fall within three primary objectives. Firstly, there are amendments to establish the NSW Independent Casino Commission [NICC]. Secondly, it makes reforms to money laundering along with reforms to strengthen responsible gaming measures. Lastly, there are reforms to strengthen the regulator's ability to address casino operators' noncompliance with their regulatory responsibilities.

New part 9A establishes the NICC, to be headed up by one full-time Chief Commissioner with a minimum of two other commissioners. The Minister will also have the authority to appoint assistant commissioners. Under part 9A, the NICC will be empowered to hold joint inquiries with the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA] along with employing staff to assist with the exercise of its functions. New section 115AB will establish the Casino Supervisory Fund, which will be under the control of the NICC and used to fund its operations. All money collected under section 115A via the casino supervisory levy will be paid into the fund.

New part 4A establishes the Casino, Liquor and Gaming Coordination Committee to provide strategic advice to the NICC and facilitate the sharing of information between regulators, law enforcement agencies and the department. The committee will be made up of the chief executive officer of Hospitality and Racing, the Chief Commissioner of the NSW Independent Casino Commission under the Casino Control Act 1992, the chairperson of the authority, the NSW Police Commissioner or a person nominated by the Police Commissioner, the NSW Crime Commissioner or a person nominated by the Crime Commissioner, and persons nominated by law enforcement agencies. New section 156 will provide that no compensation is payable by the Crown for regulatory action taken against a casino operator, a relevant person, or another matter connected to the management or operation of a casino.

I move on to reforms to address money laundering and harm minimisation. These amendments seek to enhance regulatory capability in responding to money laundering risks, along with both fostering a culture of regulatory compliance in casinos and enabling greater cooperation between regulator and law enforcement. To do that, the bill inserts anti-money laundering [AML] as a primary object of the Casino Control Act 1992 by amending sections 4A and 140. It will insert new section 76B into the Casino Control Act 1992 to ban junkets, along with any payment or commission to a person in reference to another person's gambling turnover or any other gambling matrix. The bill will insert new section 138A into the Casino Control Act 1992 to require a casino operator to provide the NICC with a copy of every suspicious matter it submits to the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre. It also inserts new section 131A into the Casino Control Act 1992 to require a casino operator to engage an independent and appropriately qualified compliance auditor. The auditor will report annually to the NICC on the operation's compliance with regulatory obligations.

New section 126 will require a casino operator to maintain a single bank account, approved by the NICC, at an authorised deposit-taking institution in New South Wales for all banking transactions by patrons. The bill inserts new section 71A, which will mandate the use of player cards for all gambling activities in a casino. This card will collect data that relates to player buy-in and buy-out, time and amount, play periods, player turnover, losses and wins. New section 73A will regulate that a casino operator must not accept more than \$1,000 in cash from a customer in a day for wagering purposes. The bill amends section 65 of the Casino Control Act 1992 to require casino operators to retain CCTV footage for at least three months. It also amends section 124 of the Act to require a casino's internal controls to address money laundering risks by including patron account monitoring,

patron due diligence and source of funds declarations for amounts over a specified amount. Internal controls must also include matters relating to responsible gambling.

Division 3 of the Casino Control Act 1992 will now require casino management to complete training and obtain a certificate of competency. This training will cover AML and responsible conduct of gambling. Division 3 will also require that close associates maintain ongoing suitability and allow the NICC to take disciplinary action against them. This division will also provide the NICC with cost recovery powers. Under new section 84A of the Casino Control Act 1992, casino operators will now be required to take reasonable steps to prevent an excluded person from entering a casino. The bill will insert new section 71 into the Act to prohibit gaming machines and gambling-related signs from being visible from outside a gaming area.

The final amendments that I will address go to strengthening the regulator's ability to address casino operators' noncompliance with their regulatory responsibilities. The bill will amend section 37 by inserting section 37A to empower the NICC to oversee the probity of a casino operator and entities that it has entered a contract with. It will amend section 167 of the Casino Control Act 1992 to empower the NICC to take disciplinary action against an executive of a casino operator for offences by that casino operator. It will amend section 143 of the Casino Control Act 1992 so that the NICC can hold public inquiries with full royal commission powers and insert cost recovery provisions into casino licenses. Section 64 of the Casino Control Act 1992 will require all employees, including close associates, to complete AML training.

The bill will increase the penalties that casino operators and executives face for misconduct, including the fine for disciplinary action regarding a casino licence, which will increase from \$1 million to \$100 million. The bill puts measures in place to respond to any future recommendations made by the Bell inquiry. It is worth noting that many of the reforms in the bill mirror legislation enacted in Victoria in the wake of the royal commission. Labor welcomes consistency across jurisdictions and believes that it is a prudent way forward. It is crucial that we take on organised crime that is using the gaming and casino sector to engage in illegal activities. The Opposition supports measures to stamp out those operations.

One concern that has been raised with me is the potential for this activity to shift elsewhere, especially money laundering. I ask the Minister to address that concern. I thank ILGA for the work it has done in helping to prepare the bill and in working to reform our gaming sector. In particular, I thank ILGA Chairperson Philip Crawford for keeping me and the Opposition up to date on the work that is being done to reform the sector. The Bergin report exposed gaps in the regulatory framework, and ILGA has set about addressing those gaps to help restore community confidence in our casino and gaming sector. I also thank the Minister and his office staff for cooperation and for engaging with me and the Opposition. It has been a long process, but the bill is important and we must support it. There is nothing more important than integrity in casinos and gaming in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:27):** I make a contribution in support of the Casino Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which will implement the recommendations of the important casino inquiry report by the Hon. Patricia Anne Bergin, SC. I thank the Minister for the briefing he provided me and for working cooperatively with me on the legislation. I commend his second reading speech and the contribution from the Opposition. I wish those contributions were made nine years ago. Crown Casino is a sore point for me because it is in my electorate. It opened yesterday, nine years after legislation was rushed through the Parliament in what can only be seen as a betrayal of the people of New South Wales by the Labor Opposition and the Coalition Government to appease James Packer and the Labor Party heavyweights he hired to lobby the Opposition on his behalf.

That legislation followed a number of deals that were done behind closed doors that saw rules for unsolicited proposals being changed and good planning principles, which were aimed at protecting Sydney's iconic harbour waterfront for the public, being thrown out. Today James Packer has nothing to do with the casino after the dodgy dealings at Crown were exposed and led to this important piece of legislation. Karl Bitar and Mark Arbib have also left the company, but Sydneysiders are stuck with a massive blight on our harbour and city. The Crown Casino and the way in which its approval was rushed through the Parliament nine years ago is a monument to all that is broken with New South Wales politics.

At this appalling casino lives will be destroyed, homes will be lost, families will be broken apart and crimes will likely occur. We know this because that is what happens at every casino around the world. In 2013, claims that the casino would be limited to high rollers only were laughable and still are today. The casino will have \$25 tables and computerised gaming terminals. It will welcome anyone who wants to lose money to help the profits of the private equity firm that now owns it. In 2013 the member for Balmain and I were the lone voices pointing out what is well known today and what should have been well known then—casinos can be hotbeds of crime.

At that time the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC] was investigating money laundering in Australia. At the time that this Parliament was rushing through legislation to approve a high-roller casino without the regulatory framework that we now seek to deliver under the bill, AUSTRAC found that high-stakes gaming is vulnerable to abuse because it is common for players to gamble with large volumes of cash, the source and ultimate ownership of which may not be readily discernible. Clearly at that time AUSTRAC was not as respected as James Packer, Karl Bitar and Mark Arbib. Nine years later, thanks to investigative journalism, the Bergin report and the action of the New South Wales Government, we are finally putting some rigour, restrictions and regulations around money laundering, harm minimisation and criminal activity in casinos. That should have been obvious at the time—and maybe it was, which is even more concerning.

I welcome the Government's acceptance of all of the Bergin inquiry's recommendations on regulating casinos in New South Wales and the restrictions on Crown's gaming licence, which is strongly reflected in the bill. I will continue to work with the Government to further address gambling harm minimisation. I foreshadow that I will make amendments to the bill at a later stage.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:32):** On behalf of The Greens I contribute to debate on the Casino Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. For too long in Sydney massive corporations like Crown and Star have been allowed to play by a different set of rules. The Government must show that it is willing and able to hold corporations to account. While the bill is definitely a good start, the Bergin report found that Crown was unfit to hold a casino licence, pointing to links to money laundering and poor governance. The royal commission described the activities that were going on in those casinos as disgraceful, illegal, dishonest, unethical and exploitative, yet no casino in Australia has been stripped of its licence. I foreshadow that The Greens will move an amendment to make sure that that is no longer the case. We will move an amendment to revoke Crown Casino's registered gaming licence because we seek to provide oversight over the industry. While The Greens support the bill, it is necessary to realise that those bodies should not get a second chance.

The Bergin report found that due to the actions of Crown it is unfit to hold a casino licence. Its behaviour was described as disgraceful, illegal, dishonest, unethical and exploitative. Surely that is the most damning evidence this place needs to revoke a licence. Anything less than that demonstrates what we clearly know, as we heard from the member for Sydney. And there is a history too. But Crown is not the only corporation to blame for this mess. In 2013 the Government and NSW Labor rushed through legislation to abandon Sydney's one casino policy and roll out the red carpet for Crown. At the time my Greens colleague the member for Balmain, Jamie Parker, was one of only three MPs to vote against the new licence legislation, which passed with the combined votes of the Liberals, The Nationals and NSW Labor. I acknowledge that the member for Sydney advocated against the horrific rushing through of the legislation. The Greens at that stage were the only political party in this Chamber to oppose the bill. NSW Labor lined up with the Liberals and The Nationals to ram it through.

In his speech at the time, the member for Balmain warned that issuing a second Sydney casino licence would open the door to corruption, money laundering and criminality. Lo and behold, it is as though he had a premonition, except he did not have a premonition because the evidence was clear that this would happen. Regardless, Crown was exempted from existing planning rules, handed prime public waterfront land and granted a casino licence outside the normal tender process. That is a disgrace. The mess that this legislation attempts to fix up is of the Government's own making, backed in by the Opposition, who gave Crown full bipartisan support.

It should come as no surprise that The Greens have uncovered that donation records show that Crown has donated over \$87,000 to the Liberal-Nationals and Labor every year for the past 20 years. Political donations by corporations like Crown, with strong access and strong support across the Parliament, help make sure they are allowed to play by a different set of rules than the rest of us. That is why The Greens do not take dirty donations from Crown. That is why we do not take dirty donations from corporations. That is why the Government and the Opposition are joining forces today to rush through this piece of legislation, rather than dealing with the actual problem and revoking Crown Casino's licence. Instead, they are rushing through these reforms.

Let me talk about why they are rushing through this bill that was seen for the first time only a little while ago. While we support the reforms in the bill, it is important to note that rushing it through is very concerning. It is our suspicion that rushing it through today on a suspension of standing orders has more to do with the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority's independent review into The Star casino, which will hand down its report in late August. There will be gambling harm recommendations to come at the conclusion of The Star review, which is expected in weeks. The Greens are concerned that pushing this legislation through today will enable the Government to avoid legislating some of the gambling harm minimisation recommendations likely to be contained in that report. It is critical to commit to ensuring that legislating gambling harm minimisation measures is on the Government's agenda. I ask the Minister to address that in his reply. I foreshadow that The Greens gambling spokesperson in the other place, Cate Faehrmann, will move amendments to seek to improve the gambling harm measures in the bill.

The final Bergin report, dated 1 February 2021, made 19 recommendations for regulatory reform, primarily aimed at addressing risks of money laundering in casinos, improving casino operators' compliance with regulatory requirements and improving the process for considering and approving the probity of individuals and companies associated with casinos. The Government has accepted all 19 recommendations and the bill gives effect to all 19, which The Greens support. Unfortunately, the Bergin report did not expand its terms of reference to include consideration of the harm caused by gambling. The Government is keen to divide those two issues, with illegal financial crimes and money laundering on one hand and the social crimes big casinos commit on the other. We cannot separate the fact that casinos cause gambling harm to our societies by only looking at this as a regularity issue.

The Independent Gaming and Liquor Authority's review into The Star casino is expected to provide recommendations around gambling harm. Unlike Crown, The Star contains a large number of poker machines. We cannot let that be a distraction to the harm caused by gambling because there are obviously additional considerations when poker machines are present. But just because there are no poker machines does not mean that there is no gambling harm. Just because there are no poker machines now, does not mean there will be no poker machines in the future. As I grew up in Adelaide and know the Adelaide casino well, I can say that there is a slippery slope from a casino with certain types of tables and gambling to rows and rows of poker machines sucking up people's money and causing real harm—all in the interests of corporate profits.

We know that gambling harm recommendations will come and it is critical that those are included. It is also critical for the Government to ensure that it legislates some of the gambling harm minimisation recommendations contained in that report and recognises the harm that is being caused by not revoking Crown's licence. The Greens are concerned about and are pushing for those things. It is critical that the Government listens. That view is shared by key stakeholders, including Wesley mission. I acknowledge its work and the work of the Alliance for Gambling Reform in this area over many years.

Wesley Mission strongly believes that the bill could contain stronger gambling harm reduction elements, including requiring responsible conduct of gambling training to be developed and delivered by the casino regulator rather than the casinos themselves. Tim Costello from the Alliance for Gambling Reform clearly stated yesterday that Crown cannot be trusted to do this right and that its business model has not changed. The Greens echo those concerns. I foreshadow that my Greens colleague in the other place Cate Faehrmann will be moving a number of amendments to improve the gambling harm measures in this bill. In this Chamber, I will be seeking on behalf of The Greens to take the step that is really needed—a step to act on the Bergin report, which found that Crown was unfit to hold a licence. As such, we will move an amendment to seek to revoke Crown's licence in this State.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (19:41):** In reply: The Casino Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 is the most significant package of reforms to the casino industry that this State has seen in over 30 years. It is a package of reforms that is necessary to restore public confidence in New South Wales casinos. The evidence of wrongdoing in the casino sector that has been uncovered by the Bergin report, the Bell review and various others has been nothing short of shocking. The bill will go a long way towards helping address some of those issues. I thank members for their contributions to the debate. The issues they have raised demonstrate the importance of the bill.

Firstly, I will address the concern of the shadow Minister and member for Swansea about money laundering. I thank her for her concern and for her interest. I know she is genuine about the anti-money laundering regulations that will be implemented to prevent money laundering in New South Wales. We want our pubs, clubs and casinos to be free from criminal activity, moving from casinos to hotels, pubs and clubs. The Crime Commission is currently conducting an inquiry into the risk of money laundering in pubs and clubs. The Government is carefully monitoring that inquiry and looks forward to receiving the report.

The bill will help to reform how casinos operate in the future and enhance how the Government oversees and regulates casinos to address the increasing complexity of the casino industry and the risks it faces. To that end the bill will create the New South Wales Independent Casino Commission [NICC]. The commission will have sole responsibility for casino regulation, which will allow commissioners greater time to focus on issues in the casino sector. I know the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA] has separated its casino functions into a separate committee in anticipation of the creation of the NICC. That is an important step. The committee reports that focusing solely on casino matters gives it greater oversight and better depth of knowledge of the industry rather than trying to juggle it with other liquor and gaming matters.

At this point I also acknowledge that ILGA was the first casino regulator to investigate misconduct within the casino sector. That included establishing the Bergin inquiry in August 2019 to inquire into misconduct by Crown in States other than New South Wales. Its proactive work has helped lead to a safer casino sector, and I look forward to that work continuing as it becomes the NICC. The commission will be made up of suitably

qualified commissioners with experience in law, corporate governance and financial crime regulation. It will also be funded directly by an increased supervisory levy, as recommended by the Bergin report.

Similarly, the bill contains a range of amendments to ensure the commission's independence, including allowing the commission to employ its own secretariat staff, removing the ministerial powers to interfere with the commission's exercise of its core functions and insulating the commission's regulatory actions from any compensation claims by casinos under existing commercial agreements. To help ensure that the commission can effectively exercise its regulatory functions, the bill introduces crucial elements and enhancements to its investigative and disciplinary powers. Those include expanded powers for the commission to assess the probity of a casino operator's related corporate entities and requiring those who control and influence a casino's operations to obtain the prior approval of the commission, which will bear the onus of proving and maintaining suitability.

The bill will significantly expand the commission's disciplinary powers through the introduction of executive liability and various other provisions that will allow disciplinary action to be taken against entities beyond just the casino operator. No longer will directors and other related persons and companies be able to hide behind the corporate veil for offences under casino legislation that they committed, participated in or knew about but did nothing to stop. The maximum disciplinary action penalty against casino operators for all offences will be increased by at least 10 times to a maximum of \$100 million. That will serve as a stronger deterrent and allow the commission to take disciplinary action proportionate to the seriousness of a casino operator's misconduct. One of the most concerning aspects of the findings of the various casino inquiries has been the failure by casinos to prevent and combat money laundering. The bill will deliver a strong regulatory response to address such failures, including by adding anti-money laundering [AML] and counter-terrorism financing as primary objects of the Act and by the commission banning junkets, requiring casinos to engage independent compliance auditors, gradually mandating carded play and phasing out cash transactions.

The bill will further prescribe a series of more specific requirements in the casinos' internal controls, including enhancing patron account monitoring and customer due diligence. The AML-related amendments proposed in the bill will enable the commission to take on a more involved role in preventing and combating financial crimes associated with casino activities. Casino operators will be required to cooperate with the commission's requests, proactively notify the commission of any suspicious transactions or potential breaches and comply with any future requirements set by the commission. In addition to enhancing the regulator's powers and imposing additional compliance requirements on casino operators, the bill will also introduce a range of measures aimed at addressing the deficient corporate governance and culture within the casinos. These measures include imposing a positive obligation for casino operators to cooperate with the regulator, requiring them to engage independent compliance auditors and report on any breaches, and significantly increasing the penalty for offences.

Additionally, future regular reviews of casino licences will be conducted as public inquiries, the costs of which will be apportioned between the casino operators, in accordance with the investigative efforts required and any noncompliance identified. Those measures aim to foster a culture of proactive compliance whereby casino operators are motivated, ethically and financially, to conduct regular internal reviews of their operations, monitor and prevent any risk of noncompliance, and routinely report all potential breaches to the regulator. Similarly, the executive liability provisions, expanded disciplinary powers against a casino operator's related entities and strengthened training requirements for directors and staff all aim to promote better awareness of relevant requirements, and a culture that enables and supports active compliance.

The list of reforms in the bill is long and comprehensive. The bill represents the Government's clear and firm regulatory response to the recommendations of recent casino inquiries, and its preparedness to go beyond those recommendations to ensure a robust regulatory framework to prevent crimes and promote responsible gambling. In a normal regulatory environment, many of the measures in the bill would not be necessary. A casino operator should not need to be mandated by legislation to cooperate with a regulator, or actively monitor, minimise or report any of its breaches. The serious misconduct and corporate failures by casino operators that were identified by all recent casino inquiries triggered enormous public outrage and led to the need to enshrine what would otherwise be commonsense expectations. However, as all those casino inquiries observed, casino operators can and should reform themselves to fix their deficiencies and comply with regulatory requirements. This bill will give them that opportunity and points to a clear direction of how remediation and compliance are to be achieved.

It is important to acknowledge that the bill contains a range of substantial reforms that aims to ensure that casinos in New South Wales operate safely and lawfully, and that the days of the noncompliance and noncooperation uncovered in various inquiries are behind us. However, only casino operators can guarantee this. It is now up to them to demonstrate that they can operate in a lawful manner, protect their patrons and cooperate in a productive manner with the NICC. If they do that, they will restore public confidence in the sector and help ensure that the casino industry in New South Wales is the vibrant, safe and responsible industry that they all want it to be.

The Government expects amendments from the member for Sydney and we have had positive discussions with him over the past couple of days. We appreciate the respectful and collaborative manner with which the member for Sydney has worked with us. The Greens circulated their amendments at 6.24 p.m., so there has been no time to consider them. They are a little bit late. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alex Greenwich and Ms Jenny Leong.**

### **Consideration in Detail**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedules 1 to 3 be agreed to.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:51):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 to 9 on sheet c2022-130D in globo:

**No. 1 Commencement—player cards**

Page 2, clause 2(a)(ii), line 9. Omit "3". Insert "2".

**No. 2 Training**

Page 16, Schedule 1. Insert after line 40—

**[50A] Section 64(2)(a)**

Omit "and in responsible practices for the conduct of gaming, being training provided by the casino operator, or".

Insert instead—

and the following training provided by the casino operator—

- (i) responsible practices for the conduct of gaming,
- (ii) prevention of money laundering and terrorism financing activities within the operations of the casino, or

**[50B] Section 64(2)(b)**

Omit "in responsible practices for the conduct of gaming.".

Insert instead—

in the following—

- (i) responsible practices for the conduct of gaming,
- (ii) prevention of money laundering and terrorism financing activities within the operations of the casino.

**No. 3 Training—consequential amendment**

Page 17, Schedule 1 [51], lines 1–7. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (a) has been approved by the NICC, or
- (b) complies with any standards or requirements set by the NICC from time to time.

**No. 4 Reasonable steps—consequential amendment**

Page 21, Schedule 1 [73], proposed section 84A, line 13. Insert "all" before "reasonable steps".

**No. 5 Reasonable steps to prevent excluded persons entering casino**

Page 21, Schedule 1 [73], proposed section 84A, line 15. Insert "all" before "reasonable steps".

**No. 6 Advisory committee for harm minimisation measures**

Page 25, Schedule 1 [90], proposed Part 9A. Insert after line 31—

**137A Advisory committee about harm minimisation measures**

- (1) The NICC must establish a committee to provide advice to the NICC about gambling harm minimisation measures in relation to casinos.
- (2) The committee is to have no more than five members.
- (3) The members of the committee are to—

- (a) have skills or experience appropriate to providing the advice mentioned in subsection (1), and

**Example of "experience"**—lived experience of gambling harm

- (b) be appointed by the Chief Commissioner.
- (4) The procedures for the committee are to be decided by the NICC, including a requirement that the committee meet as requested by the NICC.

**No. 7 Consequential amendment—Advisory committee**

Page 25, Schedule 1 [90], proposed section 138, line 32. Omit "Committees". Insert "Other committees".

**No. 8 Consequential amendment—Advisory committee**

Page 25, Schedule 1 [90], proposed section 138, line 33. Insert "other" before "committees".

**No. 9 Review of Act**

Page 34. Insert after line 7—

**[100A] Section 169B**

Insert after section 169A—

**169B Review of Act**

- (1) The Minister must review this Act from time to time to determine whether—
  - (a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, particularly the object of containing and controlling the potential of casinos to cause harm to the public interest and to individuals and families, and

**Note**—see section 4A(1)(c)

  - (b) whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (2) A review under subsection (1) must be undertaken—
  - (a) for the first review—as soon as practicable after the period of two years from the date of assent to the Casino Legislation Amendment Act 2022, or
  - (b) for subsequent reviews—at intervals of not more than five years.
- (3) A report on the outcome of a review under subsection (1) must be tabled in each House of Parliament—
  - (a) for the first review—within 12 months after the period of two years from the date of assent to the Casino Legislation Amendment Act 2022, or
  - (b) for subsequent reviews—within 12 months after each subsequent period of five years.

I thank the Minister for his cooperative approach in working towards these amendments. I also thank Opposition and crossbench members for their work and, importantly, acknowledge the work of Wesley Mission in helping me move these amendments. Amendment No. 1 deals with player cards. It changes the time before they come into effect from three years to two years. Amendments Nos 2 and 3 deal with training. Importantly, they will give responsible practices for the conduct of gaming the same status as the training for the prevention of money laundering and terrorism-financing activities within the operations of the casinos for the appropriate staff. Amendments Nos 4 and 5 go to the reasonable steps that a casino must take to exclude persons deemed not appropriate to enter, potentially including people identified or self-identified as problem gamblers. These amendments will ensure that the casino must take all reasonable steps to do that. As we have found, if you give a casino an inch, it will take a mile. This amendment is an important safeguard.

Amendment No. 6 comes from Wesley Mission. Importantly, it will establish an advisory committee for harm minimisation measures that will ensure that harm minimisation and the lived experience of gambling harm are part of the decision-making process of the NICC. Again, I thank the Minister and his office for the discussions about the most appropriate way for the committee to be put in place. Amendments Nos 7 and 8 are consequential to that. Amendment No. 9 is a review of the Act, which will occur in intervals of no later than two years and then in five-year intervals after that. A specific focus of that review will relate to containing and controlling the potential of casinos to cause harm to the public interest and to individuals and families. I thank the Government for bringing the bill to the Parliament and for putting in the rigour and regulation, particularly around anti-money laundering. I also thank the Government for the opportunity to work with it to strengthen the harm minimisation measures in the bill.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (19:55):** The Government supports the amendments and thanks the member for Sydney for his

respectful and collaborative approach to working with the Government in this space, as well as the shadow Minister and member for Swansea. The Government believes the proposed advisory committee will provide useful ongoing guidance to the New South Wales Independent Casino Commission [NICC] through advice and recommendations and the NICC's exercise of its functions to minimise gambling-related harm at casinos. The Government also supports requiring a casino operator to take all reasonable steps, rather than just reasonable steps, to prevent an excluded person from entering the casino. While the amended requirement will be more onerous for casino operators, it is reasonable and consistent with the community's expectations to impose a higher obligation on casino operators to minimise gambling-related harm and to help persons who may suffer from problem gambling issues.

Similarly, the Government supports reducing the time frame for mandating carded play from three to two years to push casino operators to implement carded play as quickly as possible as well as amending the training requirement to explicitly regulate anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing training in the Act in the same way that the responsible conduct of gaming is currently regulated in section 64. The Government considers that these amendments rightly require the best endeavours by casino operators to implement systems and procedures to prevent crime and minimise gambling-related harm.

Finally, the Government supports the proposed statutory reviews of the Casino Control Act to be conducted, first, in two years and at least every five years thereafter. The reviews will be a helpful means to constantly review the operation of this substantial reform package against the objects of the Act, including crime prevention and harm minimisation. Ongoing reviews will help prompt further amendments and reforms as appropriate and necessary to help respond to the emerging risks in the casino sector into the future.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:57):** The Labor Opposition accepts the amendments moved by the member for Sydney. I also thank the member for Sydney for his ongoing consultation on the bill and his commitment to his electorate to ensure that our casinos are operating in a manner that we would expect of them. I reiterate the Minister's words. We have worked cooperatively to understand the harm that can be caused. The member for Newtown noted that 10 years ago there was a different landscape. This landscape is different too; it has come together and we have worked cooperatively to ensure that the issues of the past are addressed.

The member for Sydney's amendment relating to training is very sensible. I have spoken to the United Workers Union, which has advised me that it has dealt with similar clauses in the Victorian model and it has not flagged any concerns with me. The Labor Opposition acknowledges that is a good amendment and we support it. The amendment relating to problem gamblers and self-exclusion is ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken. Again, it is a very sensible amendment that the Government has adopted, which is certainly in the best interests of all patrons and people in New South Wales.

The amendment relating to the advisory committee is another very sensible amendment. I note that the committee will be made up of five members and will look at people who have had lived experience of gambling harm. That is a very sensible approach. Like the member for Sydney and all members in this place, in our electorate offices we have conversations with people who have experienced harm from gambling. I can send a message to a few of the people I have spoken to and I am sure they would put their hand up to be part of that. What they are pleased about is that we are working together to make sure that we address these concerns. The last amendment relating to the review of the Act being two years is unusual. We ordinarily review our legislation in five years, but this is a very prudent recommendation and amendment. The Labor Opposition supports that amendment. I commend all of the amendments moved by the member for Sydney and thank him for those very sensible amendments.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:00):** I offer The Greens support for the amendments moved by the member for Sydney. I acknowledge the work, advice and guidance of the Wesley Mission and its collaborative effort in working with the member for Sydney, The Greens, the Opposition and the Government. Incorporating gambling harm minimisation considerations into this legislation is critical. While I have a great amount of respect for the member for Sydney, it is important that we stop making judgement calls about the idea that amendments are sensible or not sensible. The implication is that some of the amendments are being moved in a way that is not appropriate. It is important to recognise that what is not sensible about what we are doing here is allowing a casino that has clearly showed that it is unfit to hold a licence to continue to operate.

While there is broad agreement across the Chamber that those reforms need to be in place and there is broad agreement on implementing the 19 recommendations from the Bergin report, it is not sensible for us to allow Crown to continue to operate in this State. While it is absolutely essential that we need to include strong amendments in this legislation, and I commend the member for Sydney for doing that, the idea that we are highlighting the sensible nature of some reforms over others really begs the question: How sensible is it to allow Crown casino to continue to operate in this State, given the findings of the Bergin report?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos 1 to 9 on sheet c2022-130D of the member for Sydney be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:03):** I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-139:

**No. 1 Revocation of Crown Casino's restricted gaming licence**

Page 30, Schedule 1[96]. Insert after line 27—

**155A Revocation of restricted gaming licence**

- (1) The restricted gaming licence granted under this Act to operate the Barangaroo restricted gaming facility is revoked.
- (2) No compensation is payable by or on behalf of the Crown to the casino operator or any other person by reason, or on the occurrence, of the revocation of the restricted gaming licence under subsection (1).
- (3) This section has effect despite—
  - (a) another provision of this Act, or
  - (b) any other Act or law, or
  - (c) any other instrument, including an agreement to which the Crown and a casino operator are parties.
- (4) In this section—
 

*compensation includes—*

  - (a) damages, and
  - (b) another form of monetary compensation, and
  - (c) any other amount, whether described as compensation or not, payable under an instrument, including an agreement to which the Crown and a casino operator are parties, and
  - (d) liability to make payments under an instrument, including an agreement, to which the Crown and a casino operator are parties on occurrence of events specified in the instrument.

*Crown—*

  - (a) means the Crown within the meaning of the *Crown Proceedings Act 1988*, and
  - (b) includes an officer, employee or agent of the Crown.

I urge members to support this necessary amendment, which seeks to revoke the licence for Crown casino. I start by reminding members how we got here. It was under the New South Wales Labor Government that we saw that Barangaroo was deemed to be a State significant site, which essentially meant that the development on the site was exempt from any rigorous local planning laws. The site was supposed to be a waterfront public park, but after a private lunch between Packer and then Premier Barry O'Farrell, hosted by Alan Jones, the Government announced that Crown had put forward an unsolicited bid. In 2013 the Government, backed in by the New South Wales Labor Party, worked together to rush through legislation to abandon Sydney's one casino policy and roll out the red carpet for Crown. At the time, my Greens' colleague Jamie Parker spoke against this. Crown was exempted from the existing planning laws, handed prime public land and granted a casino licence outside of all of the normal tendering or oversight processes.

In the recent Bergen report The Greens' warnings were confirmed and, as reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Commissioner Bergen said that Crown had "facilitated money laundering" through its bank accounts, "disregarded the welfare" of its staff in China before 19 were arrested there in 2016, and went into business with high-roller junket tour groups linked to organised crime. The Bergen report found that this made Crown unsuitable to hold a casino licence with its core problem being "poor corporate governance, deficient risk management structures and processes and a poor corporate culture". This is as bad as it gets. What more do members in this Chamber need than the findings of this report to make a decision to revoke Crown Sydney's casino licence? There were regulations before now and Crown did not comply. We are putting in place more regulations—that The Greens support—but the question has to be asked: What will happen this time? Will Crown just donate more money to Labor, the Liberals and The Nationals in New South Wales? Will it just donate more money—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** They don't. You know they don't.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** I will retract that. Will Crown donate more money to the Liberal-Nationals? Will it donate money to Labor? If this is maintained it is clear that one can buy votes in this State. What is clear is that

one can avoid any regulation by having the right connections—whether it be to ex-premiers, to existing premiers; whether it be to having long lunches with the right shock jocks; or whether it be making political donations—one can buy one's way out of being regulated in this State. That is unacceptable to The Greens and to the community members who suffer harm every day as a result of gambling in this State. Retaining this licence sends a message that illegality comes with legal casinos. Organised crime and casinos are inseparable. That no matter what one does, if one is big enough, if one has enough money and knows the right people, the Government and the Opposition will back one in to take over prime public land, build a massive casino and continue to completely disregard the regulators. There is only one sensible amendment to this legislation: to revoke Crown Sydney's casino licence. I urge members to support the amendment and I commend it to the House.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (20:07):** The Government does not support the amendment.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (20:07):** The Opposition does not support this amendment. The Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority has been through a thorough process to ensure Crown can operate in a highly regulated environment. The licence is contingent on meeting the very strict regulatory framework imposed upon them within a short time frame to meet the necessary obligations that they are required to adhere to.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (20:08):** From the outset I make it clear that I do not support any casinos—The Star or the Crown—existing in Sydney. My constituents have expressed that view to me, and it is supported. We acknowledge that we are a global city and two casinos have now been placed here. I commend to members the Museum of Sydney's exhibit *Unrealised Sydney*. It has plans and a model of a proposed Trump casino in 1986 at Darling Harbour, the architecture of which is much better than that of The Star or Crown. At the time Cabinet discussed the potential Trump casino but it did not proceed. Subsequently released Cabinet papers said people believed that Trump was a crook and as a result he was not granted that casino licence.

The Government and the Opposition have indicated that they will not be supporting this amendment, so it will not get up, but it is still an important amendment. It will remind Crown and The Star that ultimately casino licences can be issued and can be revoked by the New South Wales Parliament. It gives another level of scrutiny. It puts them on notice that should the practices that we have seen in the past happen again, support for this Greens' amendment will increase in this Parliament. If we saw the crimes, if we saw the harm and if we saw the money laundering and international laws broken that have been associated with Crown, and of which there are concerning allegations around The Star as well, that is how we would have to act.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:10):** I respond briefly to the Minister's comment about this amendment being moved relatively late. It is important to put on the record that the Minister delivered his second reading speech on this bill today. The Government suspended standing orders so that we could rush the entire bill through all stages this evening. The Greens prepared this amendment as quickly as they could, given that the Government attempted to rush the entire bill through.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (20:11):** The Greens' amendment came through this evening at 6.24 p.m. My office briefed The Greens about this bill on Friday afternoon. The statement of the member for Newtown is totally untrue.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:11):** I do not deny that The Greens were briefed on Friday, but it is important to recognise that in developing amendments The Greens work with and talk to stakeholders in the community. We were briefed on Friday; it is now Tuesday. The time frame we were working on was the ability to have those conversations, to get the amendments drafted, and to look at the final version of the bill that was presented and tabled in the House this afternoon. I appreciate it is a sensitive spot because we rushed through the last piece of legislation that put us in this mess in the first place and handed Crown the licence. Now the Government is rushing through this attempt to fix and regulate it. That is welcome, but really we should be revoking Crown's licence because they are not fit to hold a licence. That is not me; that is the Bergin report.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-139 be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only three members for the amendment, I declare the question resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Ayes, 3**

Mr A. Greenwich  
Ms J. Leong  
Ms T. Smith

**Amendment negatived.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended be agreed to

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended agreed to.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:16):** By leave: I note that today The Greens are represented in this place by only two members due to the illness of the member for Balmain. I note for the *Hansard* record that the member for Balmain, Jamie Parker, would have been recorded as voting for the amendment but was unable to be in the Chamber today because of illness. I appreciate the indulgence of the House.

### **Third Reading**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **ST VINCENT'S CARE SERVICES HEATHCOTE**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (20:18):** St Vincent's Care Services [SVCS] Heathcote recently hosted Building Healthy Muscle Tone, a strength and training exercise program for local seniors. This fantastic initiative helps support seniors make the best of their later years by demonstrating how to maintain and build muscle strength while aging. Elderly strength training can assist with a wide range of health issues including osteoporosis, arthritis, balance, pulmonary disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes and back problems. It was great to witness firsthand the seniors come together and see the positive effects they have gained from the program. I have been encouraged by the seniors' feedback, which enforced the terrific outcomes of this program. I am pleased that SVCS was supported to deliver this fantastic initiative through the New South Wales Government's Seniors Festival program.

#### **SHELLHARBOUR STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE AWARDS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:18):** I acknowledge and congratulate the recipients of the NSW SES awards night held for the Kiama and Shellharbour units on 15 June. The community gathered to celebrate the hard work and countless hours of local SES volunteers, and 87 separate awards were given to volunteers for their time, bravery and resilience. With this year's relentless wind, rain and flooding, the SES Shellharbour unit responded to more requests and call-outs this year than during all of 2021. Volunteers who dropped everything to help Queenslanders during Cyclone Debbie in 2017 were awarded national emergency medals for their efforts. The cyclone wiped out homes, infrastructure and farms along the Australian coast in 2017. Inspector Chris Warren and brothers Tim and Mal Anderson were recognised for 40 years of service to the SES, and Tim Anderson and Andy Kinch were awarded life member status. But thank yous are just as important for the families of SES volunteers for all those missed birthdays, dinners and special occasions. I thank each member of the NSW SES and their families.

#### **ST MARK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (20:19):** On 10 July I joined St Mark's Anglican Church, Darling Point, for a special visit by the new Archbishop of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel. It was the first time since 1990 that a sitting archbishop had preached at St Mark's, so it was a fine occasion. Later in July I also attended the St Mark's Women's Afternoon Tea. It was a community-building event and an opportunity to connect with women of all ages after the past couple of years of being impacted by COVID-19. Over 40 women parishioners came together for a cuppa led by Dr Megan Best. I acknowledge the leadership at St Mark's, who make it such a strong community in my local area. They include rector Reverend Dr Michael Jensen; his wife, Catherine; assistant ministers Reverend Dr Tim Escott, Reverend David Crain and Michael Figueira; children's minister Stephanie Leung; parish administrator Wendy Jarrett; communications administrator Wendy Mulder; vergers Annette Jones; and pastoral care coordinator Alicia Watson, OAM. They are all great beneficiaries of the wonderful fellowship that St Mark's Darling Point brings to my local community.

#### **SVITZER GLENROCK EMERGENCY RESPONSE VESSEL**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (20:20):** During July's wild weather, a maritime disaster was avoided off Sydney's coast and a Newcastle team played a vital role. The *Svitzer Glenrock* is an emergency response vessel capable of both towing and salvage, so when the emergency call came to assist the troubled MV *Portland Bay*, the crew sprang into action. Masters David Kerr, Craig Gibson and Andy Duncan; engineers Bruce Puller and Neil Moir; and ratings Dean Hogan, Gerard Inkston, Scott Henderson, Dave Andrews, Bernard Byrnes and Chris Pettitt navigated high swells in the dark to rush to the *Portland Bay's* aid. For over 24 hours the *Glenrock's* crew undertook the risky task of holding the ship through poor conditions before the

weather eased enough to lead the *Portland Bay* into Port Botany. The *Glenrock* and its crew were vital in averting a disaster. Congratulations to all involved on a job exceptionally well done.

#### NSW MINERALS COUNCIL AWARDS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (20:22):** Congratulations to the Upper Hunter electorate award winners announced during the NSW Minerals Council conference last month at the Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley. The Bloomfield Group, which includes the Rix's Creek mine at Singleton, was recognised with the Health Excellence award for the MY Mindset program to encourage the workforce to put mental health on top of their agenda. Yancoal Mount Thorley Warkworth received the Environment Excellence award for developing a management program on its biodiversity offset property in the Goulburn River. The program allows the critically endangered regent honeyeater to breed without being harassed by noisy miner birds. Glencore Ulan Underground won the Safety Excellence award for the dust extraction system known as Mr Snuffleupagus, which provides a safe working environment by removing airborne dust from areas where products are mixed and applied. By highlighting the strengths of each one, we strengthen the mining industry as a whole. They are world leaders right in my own backyard.

#### CHULLORA PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:23):** I was pleased to attend Chullora Public School on 16 June 2022 to meet with the 2022 Student Representative Council [SRC] team on its leadership day. I am always honoured to attend these special events because of the opportunity to speak with future leaders. Student leadership is an excellent way for young school leaders to improve their schools and the wider community by identifying problems, supporting charities and raising awareness of local issues. Chullora Public School SRC empowers elected students to acquire new responsibilities and flourish into high school. Senior leaders in years 5 and 6 are guided to develop their communication and problem-solving skills. The school has 50 active students in its SRC body. Weekly meetings discuss topics that are raised by their fellow class members. These issues are taken to staff and P&C meetings within the school community. Inspiring leadership at an early age reaps dividends for the community. Alumni of Chullora have gone on to be great local lawyers, doctors and teachers, and even some rugby league players. Some are teachers at Chullora Public. My passion for education never dims, and I am always grateful to students and staff for having me along. A visit to local schools always inspires me and lifts the spirits.

#### NEPEAN FOOD SERVICES

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:24):** Today I recognise important work and service being carried out by Nepean Food Services, a local not-for-profit organisation in my electorate of Mulgoa. I have spoken about this organisation in this place before, but this month is especially important to recognise its service as August is when we celebrate National Meals on Wheels Day. Every year it is important that we recognise the tireless efforts that are made by Meals on Wheels organisations, not just in our communities but right around the country. In my electorate of Mulgoa, Ditte Kozak, manager of Nepean Food Services, and her team carry out important community work, promoting healthy living by delivering nutritious meals to our senior citizens. They also provide an important social network by collecting senior citizens from their homes and bringing them into a community centre, whereby they host not only sit-down meals but also social community connections and interrelationships. I thank everyone at Nepean Food Service for the incredible work they do in tirelessly supporting our vulnerable communities.

#### CHIEF INSPECTOR PETER SCHEINFLUG RETIREMENT

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:25):** Recently retired Chief Inspector [CI] Peter Scheinflug served as a police officer for 38 years—a remarkable achievement. The Blue Mountains Command were fortunate that he took care of the community for the last 15 years of his career. Being a police officer is a tall order. I cannot begin to imagine the challenges Peter must have faced over the span of his career. A good officer displays an array of commendable skills. They are critical thinkers with sound judgement. They have heightened communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills. They have a sense of ethics and a strong moral character. Peter displayed all of those and more. We are so grateful for the work this stalwart has undertaken on the Blue Mountains front line, supporting us in mundane day-to-day activities and throughout the toughest of times, including fires, floods and rescues. It was only fitting that CI Scheinflug was recently farewelled by the local police force with such ceremony—bagpipes, a guard of honour and a PolAir flyover—celebrating the contribution that this commissioned police officer has made to the job and the communities he has served. Enjoy your retirement, Peter; you have earned it!

#### DUBBO THEATRE COMPANY PERFORMER GREG MARKWICK

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (20:26):** I congratulate Dubbo's Greg Markwick on being recognised with Life Membership of the Dubbo

Theatre Company. By day, Greg has spent decades supporting farmers across New South Wales. By night, his heart has been squarely on the stage. He cut his teeth in musical theatre while at school, performing in five musicals during his high school years, before being introduced to the Dubbo Theatre Company when he and his family moved to Dubbo in the 1990s. He debuted in the 1991 production of *Annie* as the Butler. Greg has been involved in over 50 productions over the past 30 years. He is well known for his rich singing voice and his precise characterisations, which have seen him recognised as a dream performer for all directors and a really wonderful cast member for many theatre productions. I have always admired his performances, and having had a brief role in the Dubbo Theatre Company's production of *MAMMA MIA!: The Musical* and appearing on stage with Greg, I can vouch for that commitment and his professionalism to the theatre. I again congratulate Greg on his achievement of Life Membership with the Dubbo Theatre Company.

#### **FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE SYRIAC CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:27):** I congratulate Father Lenard Ina, Father Majid Al Hanna and the Syriac Catholic community on the purchase of their new Toyota HiAce van, secured from funding from the Community Building Partnerships program. The Syriac Catholic community is a fast-growing group, with the recent arrival of Syrian refugees. Under the stewardship of Father Lenard and Father Majid, the van will assist in the transportation of parishioners to and from mass services at Saint Therese's Catholic Church at Fairfield Heights. The new van will also serve to assist community members in accessing local services in Fairfield and throughout western Sydney. The Syriac Catholic community is a welcoming one, which will endeavour to include members of its senior and youth groups to utilise the new van for cultural and religious activities. As the Syriac Catholic community begins to grow, it is important for its members to be socially connected and continue to preserve and celebrate their rich culture and heritage. I wish the community safe travels as they enjoy the new Toyota HiAce van.

#### **SOUTH COAST MARINE RESCUE UNITS**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (20:28):** I sincerely acknowledge all Marine Rescue units across the South Coast electorate for their outstanding efforts and hard work throughout the year, having brought in over 800 people back to shore safely. Over the past financial year, Marine Rescue NSW has had its second-busiest 12-month period, with 3,905 rescue call-outs and safely delivering 8,599 people back to shore. In the South Coast, Jervis Bay has had the highest number of rescues, with 96 call-outs, followed by the Shoalhaven with 77, Sussex Inlet with 55, Ulladulla with 30 and Kioloa with three. It is a reminder how important and how grateful we are to have our Marine Rescue units be so responsive in a timely manner. Throughout the year, 57 per cent of the calls were for flat batteries, running out of fuel or engine problems, 14 flare sightings, and over the year there were an extraordinary 223,338 radio calls. I congratulate and applaud Marine Rescue NSW, especially in the South Coast electorate, on keeping everybody safe on our water. I encourage everyone to follow the safety advice, wear a lifejacket, check the weather and log on with local Marine Rescue NSW before heading out.

#### **BAY RUN**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:29):** Sydney's favourite fun run, the Bay Run, returns on Sunday 21 August, bigger and better than ever after two years of absence due to COVID-19. Each year families, school kids, local residents and elite runners take to the seven-kilometre course around Iron Cove Bay or opt for the more casual seven-kilometre walk and two-kilometre kids run. The seven-kilometre route takes participants through Leichhardt, Rozelle, over the Iron Cove Bridge and through Five Dock, Drummoyne and Haberfield. The event is a mammoth undertaking and is coordinated by a volunteer committee from Dobroyd Point Public School P&C, with all profits supporting Inner West schools, including Dobroyd Point, Haberfield, Leichhardt, Summer Hill, Drummoyne and Orange Grove. The event is in its nineteenth year, and this year more than 1,500 participants are expected to take part. More than 600 school-age children will also run along the bay. I warmly congratulate all the parents and carers involved. I wish all the participants the best of luck and thank them for contributing to the wonderful local schools across the Inner West.

#### **QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST RECIPIENT WAYNE STUART**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (20:30):** Today I recognise Mr Wayne Stuart of Yass. Mr Stuart has recently been recognised and presented with a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] on the Queen's Birthday honour roll in June. Mr Stuart's authentic character symbolises a true wish to give back to community. Having worked in the public sector for over four decades prior to retirement in 2001, Mr Stuart had already seen the importance of networking and support, establishing the Old Salts Club. He then became a foundation member of the Yass Valley Men's Shed following retirement, holding many roles including vice-president, membership officer, treasurer, communications officer, and he was in the role of secretary for 13 years. Utilising his skills and attributes in all those roles, he has also importantly captured the

history of the Men's Shed in Yass through its newsletters. Mr Stuart can also be congratulated on his role as grants coordinator, successfully achieving close to \$100,000 in funding for the Men's Shed. I sincerely acknowledge and praise the utmost vitality of individuals such as Mr Stuart. I congratulate Mr Stuart on his efforts.

#### **WRESTLER JAYDEN LAWRENCE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:31):** I congratulate Jayden Lawrence, a resident of the Camden electorate, on representing Australia in wrestling at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Jayden competes with a level of tenacity, dedication and enthusiasm that is to be commended. Jayden's talent and hard work has taken him across the world, representing the very best of Australia. Jayden carries with him a wealth of experience and training, competing for more than two decades. I congratulate Jayden on winning a bronze medal and representing Australia. That is a testament to his sheer hard work, passion for wrestling and years of training. Now that Jayden has won a Commonwealth Games medal, I wish him the very best in his ambition to represent Australia at the next Olympic Games. I am sure he will continue to make us all proud.

#### **COAST SHELTER**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:32):** I offer my congratulations and cheers to the fabulous Coast Shelter team on coordinating the best sleep-out yet at Central Coast Stadium last Friday night. With the highest number of participants ever, there was over \$160,000 in the fundraising pot when I left the crew late on Friday. Tents were set up across the stadium, and the lighting and the entertainment were fantastic. Many local organisations, such as Erina Fair and O'Brien's Plumbing, and even our local doctors were donating, having fun and bonding on the evening. I also commend Jamie-Lee, who spoke beautifully about her first contact with Coast Shelter at 19 on the worst night of her life, which was spread deep with bruises and abuse, all with her two young children. Jamie-Lee's story brought tears to us all, as she spoke from the heart of the struggles she faced to turn her life around after domestic and family abuse. Coast Shelter was by her side all the way, and it is at the side of rough sleepers across the Central Coast as we speak. We love its work, and we love the fabulous way it educates our community about the importance of the work it does for those more vulnerable in our community.

#### **GRENFELL SENIOR CITIZENS WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (20:33):** I highlight the combined efforts of the Grenfell Senior Citizens Welfare Committee and all who have lent the organisation a hand over the years. This committee has been going for over 40 years, during which time it has established 35 units locally to provide affordable housing for older residents on limited income. Initially established to secure a home for retired farmhands, the committee also accommodates retired couples, several of whom are now long-term residents. The units provide safe and secure accommodation with the appropriate safeguards, ensuring Grenfell's older residents can stay on in their home town. It is fantastic to hear they are also well supported by local tradespeople, a gardening committee and the broader Grenfell community through fundraising and other initiatives. Committee members past and present are to be commended for the amazing contribution they have made through this very worthwhile endeavour. They set a fine example of what it is to serve their community, and I thank them for the support they continue to provide to those who need a helping hand.

#### **VET IN SCHOOLS STUDENT OF THE YEAR STELLA COX**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (20:34):** It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Stella Cox, a young and outstanding local resident of Strathfield who received the 2022 VET in Schools Student of the Year for Southern and South Western Sydney NSW Training Award. I also acknowledge her year adviser, Mr Thomas Koulouris, for this outstanding recognition. As a year 12 student, Stella is not only a vice-captain at Strathfield Girls High School but also a strong community advocate who is driven to help those in need. Recently she received the Young Women in Public Affairs Award for volunteering at St Paul's Church in Burwood. Stella is also a young carer to her mum in a wheelchair and is passionate about advocating for vulnerable communities. I am thankful to Stella for her contribution as a young local activist, and I look forward to her doing even more valuable things for our community. I am confident that our future is in good hands when I see young people like Stella committing to excellence, caring for others, devoting their personal time and working to create a brighter future for all. Congratulations, Stella, and best of luck with the statewide grand final for VET in Schools Student of the Year in September.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY 70.3 IRONMAN COMPETITOR JULIA HAMMANS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:36):** I recognise 21-year-old Mosman local Julia Hammans, who is currently preparing to take part in a half marathon in September on behalf of her mum, who was taken from her family earlier this year after a six-year battle with cancer. In 2016 she was diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer at the age of 53 and courageously went through numerous chemotherapy treatments and medical trials. On

her behalf and in her name, Julia will be competing in the Western Sydney 70.3 Ironman in September. The event consists of a 1.9 kilometre swim and a 90 kilometre cycle followed by a 21.1 kilometre run. Julia has an incredible goal of raising \$25,000 for ovarian cancer research. As members know, ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer in Australia and there is currently no early detection test. We need every cent possible to research ovarian cancer. I wish Julia the best of luck with her training and hope that she performs to her absolute best on the day of the marathon. Good luck, Julia. I know you will make your family—and your mum—incredibly proud.

#### **HARMAN FOUNDATION**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:37):** Harinder Kaur is co-founder of Harman Foundation, an organisation established in honour of her late son, Harman. From tragedy, Harinder and her husband, Maninder, wanted to ensure that Harman's legacy of selflessness and humility lives on by providing support to our community's most vulnerable groups. Harman Foundation helps those who struggle with living expenses, people living with a disability, elder abuse and domestic violence victims, and provides emotional support for those who have lost a loved one. Harinder is a crusader for social justice, particularly for women and families who have experienced domestic violence, family separation, incarceration and poverty. Her work over the past three decades culminated in Harinder being named 2021 Blacktown City Woman of the Year. Harinder's unwavering advocacy and support for the marginalised in our community is an inspiration to us all. On behalf of the Blacktown City community, I thank Harinder for her dedication and tireless work.

#### **RACHAEL ROACH AND DEBBIE DEASEY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:38):** I acknowledge two extraordinary nurses from the Port Macquarie electorate who were recently announced as finalists for the 2022 NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards. Rachael Roach and Debbie Deasey, both staff members at Port Macquarie Base Hospital, are among 30 finalists from an exceptional talent pool comprising nurses and midwives who have excelled in patient care and family support. Rachael Roach is described by her peers as a kind and compassionate person who always strives for excellence in her daily tasks and takes time out of her busy schedule to listen to her patients, displaying a caring and understanding approach. Debbie is simply an inspiration to her work colleagues, with her pathway to academic and career success beginning as a hospital cleaner and kitchenhand to then obtaining employment as a nurse practitioner with a PhD. Debbie is known for her endless energy and compassion. The NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards will be held on 24 November, celebrating our outstanding nurses and midwives who work across NSW Health. Two incredible leaders in health care, I thank both Rachael and Debbie for their ongoing contribution and wish them well at the awards ceremony.

#### **ROTARY NSW EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARD WINNER RAYMOND MERZ**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:39):** I congratulate Raymond Merz, Senior Group Officer and Deputy Unit Commander of Shellharbour City SES Unit, on being announced as a finalist in the Rotary NSW Emergency Services Community Awards 2022. Ray has been involved in the emergency services for seven years now, dealing with catastrophes as far away as Tweed Heads, Lightning Ridge and Bega, which highlights his clear dedication to assisting others in times of emergency. Due to his outstanding dedication and performance, Ray has earned three Commissioner's Unit Citations, a Premier's Bushfire Citation and a National Emergency Medal, all high-level awards that recognise outstanding professionalism and remarkable proficiency in his work. Ray has dedicated himself to assisting in a wide range of situations, not hesitating to travel far and wide and undertake a variety of tasks to assist those in need. I again congratulate Ray on this clearly well-deserved recognition and wish him the best of luck as a finalist in the Rotary NSW Emergency Services Community Awards. He should be incredibly proud of this fantastic achievement.

#### **DR JACK HODGES**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (20:40):** I recognise Dr Jack Hodges, Armidale's newest general practitioner. Jack came from the northern beaches in Sydney—why wouldn't you want to leave?—to study at the University of New England in Armidale. After working in multiple hospitals and clinics in rural and regional New South Wales, including some remote towns in Western Australia, Jack has returned to Armidale and we are fortunate that he made that decision. While gaining experience in remote areas with only basic equipment, Jack was challenged in critical situations to keep patients alive until the Royal Flying Doctor Service arrived. Nonetheless, Jack loves a challenge and finds great satisfaction in emergency medicine and adult medicine. Practising his expertise in sports medicine and joint injections, he finds gratifying the immediate result of watching a patient hobble into the surgery and stride out with pride. Jack is a family man with outside interests who has contributed much to his new home in the Northern Tablelands. I congratulate Dr Hodges on his many achievements so far in his medical career. I commend him for choosing to practise in the Northern Tablelands, where we welcome him with open arms.

**ATHLETES TIFFANY HO AND TRACY CHUNYI FENG**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (20:41):** Today I congratulate two athletes from the Strathfield electorate who competed at the recent 2022 Commonwealth Games. Tiffany Ho from Strathfield competed in badminton and put in an admirable effort in both her singles and mixed team events. This was Tiffany's first Commonwealth Games. It was the second Commonwealth Games for Tracy Chunyi Feng from Burwood. Chunyi competes in table tennis and contributed to the Australian women's team claiming a bronze medal. This is an amazing achievement. Congratulations to Tiffany and Chunyi on their achievements. The sustained work and commitment required to reach such a high level of competition is rare and inspiring. Their efforts have made the electorate of Strathfield proud.

**TUCKWELL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE FINN CURRIE**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (20:42):** Today I congratulate Finn Currie, a year 12 student from Balgowlah Boys High School who has been awarded the Tuckwell Scholarship at the Australian National University for 2023. This is a prestigious scholarship offered to only 25 students in Australia. Scholars are selected based on intellect, character, leadership and their commitment to Australia. Finn is the first Balgowlah Boys student to be awarded the Tuckwell Scholarship. He is a true testament to the school's motto, "By Effort We Achieve". I again congratulate Finn and wish him the best in the HSC and for his time at the Australian National University.

**WOY WOY RUNNERS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:42):** I offer a huge congratulations to Woy Woy Runners on reaching two amazing milestones in July: celebrating its first birthday and reaching 100 members. Obviously it is something in demand. Woy Woy Runners was founded by local Ken Lau as an opportunity to bring together like-minded people and foster new friendships. On a Saturday morning the runners can be seen in their signature blue T-shirts leaving Lyons Park in Woy Woy, and they have also entered in running festivals across Australia. Even more heartwarming, the Woy Woy Runners do not just run for their own emotional and physical wellbeing. They also support Achilles Australia and guide blind and low-vision athletes on their Saturday morning runs. I thank the members of Woy Woy Runners for their wonderful contribution to building community and connections on the coast. More importantly, I thank them for opening up more opportunities for inclusion for people with disabilities. They are a gift. I wish them well in their future adventures.

**MOOREBANK ROYALS**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:43):** I recognise Moorebank Baseball Softball Club for its presentation, which I attended on 24 July. The Moorebank Royals have been part of our local sporting community for 42 years. The club welcomes juniors and seniors to play in the Macarthur Baseball League. The presentation took place at the Moorebank Sports Club, and it was great to have "Sporties" CEO Jeff Gibbs and chairman Laurie Willoughby in attendance. I appreciated the opportunity to present the awards to the players and recognise the club's successful season. It was also an opportunity to thank the volunteers who play very important roles and keep the club going. Without them the training, playing, scoring and fundraising would not be possible. They are very good at fundraising and applying for grants. Once again, I thank Moorebank Baseball Softball Club for inviting me to take part in its awards presentation. It is a great club. I congratulate all the club's players on another successful season. It was a wet one but they made the most of it. I look forward to seeing what next season has in store for them.

**3BRIDGES COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:44):** I am pleased to acknowledge the recent opening of the 3Bridges Community Centre in Summer Hill. 3Bridges is well known around Sydney for providing a host of services, programs and events in areas such as child care, education, entertainment, hobbies and health. 3Bridges has forged a strong reputation in keeping communities connected. The doors to the new Summer Hill Community Centre opened in July. I look forward to the implementation of high-quality supports, programs and services to the people of Summer Hill and its surrounding suburbs. I also appreciate the outreach 3Bridges has conducted in the lead-up to the opening of its new site, including its community survey and forum in which Summer Hill residents were invited to participate and share what kinds of programs and services they would like to see in the community centre. The addition of the 3Bridges Community Centre is another promising step towards an even stronger and more well-connected community. I wish 3Bridges all the best and encourage all Summer Hill residents to drop by and see what is on offer at the new community centre.

**ATHLETE LACHLAN WOOD**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:45):** I acknowledge Lachlan Wood for his remarkable achievements on the athletics track. A Winston Hills resident, Lachlan began his athletics journey at the Winston Hills Little Athletics Centre in 2012. Since then, Lachlan has grown into a terrific young athlete who has competed at several State and national championships and has achieved great results. In February this year Lachlan ran at the NSW Junior Championships, which resulted in him representing New South Wales at the Australian championships in April. I congratulate Lachlan on those great results in the 100-metre, 200-metre and 400-metre events. Lachlan was also part of the New South Wales under-18 relay team for the 4 x 400 metres, which secured a silver medal at the Australian championships this year. It was fantastic to see young locals living out their dreams in sport. I commend Lachlan for his hard work and dedication to improving and setting personal bests on the track. I look forward to seeing Lachlan's career continue to grow in the future and wish him and his family all the very best.

**MOSMAN CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:46):** I acknowledge Mosman local and president of Mosman Cricket Club, Bernie Smith, who was recently awarded a life membership at the club's annual general meeting. Bernie is now the only president in the club's history to boast premierships in the first and second grade in the same season after spectacular victories by both teams earlier this year. Many in Mosman would know that Bernie has poured his heart and soul into the club over the past 10 years. He has been instrumental in working behind the scenes to ensure that Mosman Cricket Club remains a successful community club. I recognise the efforts of the club's committee, which includes JP Zwinkels, Warwick Adlam, Patrick Raper, Evan Hughes, Paul Carvosso, Daniel Apps, Mark Adlam, Mark Harrison and Caroline Veitch. Congratulations to Bernie on his incredible achievement of being awarded a life member. I wish the Mosman Whales all the best for the approaching season. I hope they bat and bowl their way to victory.

**MARY MAC'S**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:47):** I offer sincere gratitude to manager Sean MacKinnon and the fabulous team of volunteers at Mary Mac's in Woy Woy, which provides meals, groceries and, importantly, dignity for vulnerable members of our community on the peninsula and beyond. Mary Mac's contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic were particularly noticeable. Volunteers continued to feed community members, providing warm takeaway meals, groceries and other bits and pieces to those in need. The team has missed only one day of service over the past couple of years. Currently Mary Mac's provides up to 100 meals per day, five days a week. It is such an important service to our community and it is very much appreciated. Mary Mac's provides more than just food; it is a secure place, a ritual and safe haven for those in need. It is a place that provides connection, companionship and support without judgement. It offers a friendly helping hand. Sean's phone is running hot with requests for health assistance and housing, which is stretching the scarce housing resources on the Central Coast as far as possible. Once again, I sincerely congratulate and thank the fabulous team at Mary Mac's.

*Private Members' Statements***NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDAL AWARDS**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (20:49):** A week ago it was my great pleasure to represent the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience at the National Emergency Medal and clasps awards ceremony. Some 91 medals were presented over three ceremonies, and it was an absolute pleasure to meet everyone. It was fantastic to see them all in their uniforms. The national medals were presented to the bushfire brigades of Menai, Maianbar, Sutherland, Waterfall, Engadine and Woronora, as well as to group officers Gregory Browne, Peter Coleman, Peter Evans and Matthew Smith. The awards ceremony was held for services during the 2019-20 firegrounds. The brigades that I mentioned were located all over the State, and their members risked their lives to make sure that we were safe and not in danger.

Unfortunately, 26 people perished in the fires, including members of the fire brigade, civilians and aircrew from the United States of America. It was very sad to hear about those people who tragically lost their lives in the firegrounds. As we know, they were some of the worst fires that New South Wales has ever faced. I do not think we have faced anything like that anywhere in Australia before. The fires were relentless. The people who were out in the field on the day said the fires did not behave normally. Usually they can predict where the fire will go, but these fires were completely unpredictable. They had a major effect on the mental health of those involved and on their families, as we saw with former members of the New South Wales Parliament.

At the event I spoke of the mental health assistance that is available to all emergency services volunteers. It is paid for by the New South Wales Government and taxpayers of New South Wales. At the end of each presentation I said, "Do not feel embarrassed about coming forward. Nobody can go through that and not be

affected." Upsettingly, after all three presentations, wives came up to me and said, "My husband needs help. Where do we go? How do we get it?" One woman said to me, "My husband wakes up in the middle of the night screaming and yelling." She said, "He was caught in a firestorm in the truck and had nowhere to go." There is now a water curtain that goes around the cabin to keep the firefighters alive. I reached out to all RFS and emergency service people who need mental health support to tell them that help is there. They should not feel embarrassed about acting to access it. It is not an embarrassment to have post-traumatic stress disorder due to volunteering one's services to the people of New South Wales.

### REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (20:53):** After nearly three years of raising the issue, I cannot believe I have to talk about the regional seniors travel card again. Even in its most recent budget, the Government has not fixed its 2019 mistake of rolling out the regional seniors travel card. The scheme provides a \$250 prepaid Visa card to seniors who live in regional areas to help with travel costs—a great idea. The announcement was very welcome news to seniors across the electorate of Wallsend, but as it turned out only a fraction of our seniors in the electorate were eligible. The Government made the inexplicable decision to include the Lake Macquarie local government area in the rollout and exclude Newcastle city. That resulted in a bizarre situation where 2,000 local seniors were deemed eligible but over 12,000 seniors in my electorate were not.

Furious locals contacted my office, demanding to know why they had been left out while their friends, family members and neighbours in Lake Macquarie had not been. All I could say is that the Government does not classify Newcastle local government area as regional, despite the fact that it was before. For Government members who are not familiar with the geography of Wallsend, I will explain. Wallsend is the western end of Newcastle and the northern end of Lake Macquarie. The suburbs of Minmi and Black Hill have semi-rural properties and the suburbs of Beresfield and Taro are at least 25 kilometres from the Newcastle CBD. They cannot be described as metropolitan areas, but they are in the Newcastle local government area.

Local residents were left bewildered and so was I. Why are Beresfield and Taro seniors ineligible for the regional seniors travel card when they are so far away from transport hubs, while residents of suburbs like Charlestown, which is located near one of the region's most well-served public transport hubs, are eligible? In other areas, residents of Rankin Park, Elmore Vale, New Lambton Heights and Cardiff Heights were told that they are not eligible because they happen to live in Newcastle. Yet residents on the Lake Macquarie side of the street, sometimes their own neighbours, were deemed eligible. One side of the street gets a card while the other side gets punted.

Adding insult to injury, Beresfield and Taro residents were turned away after they visited the Maitland Service Centre to apply. They were initially told that they were eligible and received confirmation that their applications had been received, but a few weeks later they were told that they were rejected. Newcastle is smaller than both Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast in size and population, but Newcastle was the only one excluded. Why? In the year since, I have received no clarification about how the Government determines regional and metropolitan areas. Newcastle does not seem to be either regional or metro. It is left in a strange limbo by a government that cannot get its story straight.

When I write about Newcastle issues on behalf of my constituents or submit questions on notice to the transport Minister, they are directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. The Government classifies Newcastle as regional in that circumstance but suddenly considers it metropolitan when it comes to the travel card. That bizarre classification also excludes Newcastle from applying for significant funding pools for key infrastructure. Newcastle is defined as metropolitan under the Regional Growth Fund but as regional under the Resources for Regions program. That inconsistency makes my constituents wonder what the Government is thinking. They are not happy about it, and I do not blame them. Give all the senior constituents in the Wallsend electorate a travel card. I call on the Government and the Minister to fix this silly mistake that they have not rectified.

### UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE FLOOD RESPONSE

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (20:58):** I offer a public vote of thanks on behalf of the Upper Hunter electorate to everyone involved in the July 2022 Hunter Valley flood response and the ongoing recovery operation. I thank the local first response emergency services, including the State Emergency Service, NSW Police Force, NSW Ambulance, Fire and Rescue NSW and the Rural Fire Service, for their efforts during this event. The work of the Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services to ensure the safety of livestock must also be commended. I thank the out-of-area emergency services that supported their colleagues, including Fire and Rescue personnel from Aberdeen, Mudgee and Tingira Heights.

I give a special mention to the interstate assistance received from Queensland and Western Australia. They are but a few who travelled far to come to the aid of the Upper Hunter. I also thank the Australian Defence Force [ADF] for the boots on the ground. Singleton is home to the Australian Army's School of Infantry. The ADF stepped up to help their neighbours in the days and weeks of need. Most of all, I acknowledge the resilience of the people, including flood-impacted farmers around Singleton, the residents of Broke and Bulga, and those who have subsequently assisted and supported the flood impacted, including global coalmining giant Glencore.

An already damp landscape and an east coast low weather system combined to saturate parts of the Upper Hunter electorate over the first weekend of July, and the rain kept coming over following days. The Singleton local government area bore the brunt of the riverine flooding, as the initial forecast of a moderate flood for the Wollombi Brook catchment, south of Singleton, intensified and rewrote the record book. Wollombi Brook peaked on Wednesday 6 July at 9.11 metres—one metre higher than the flood of 1952. The seriousness of the situation saw the SES issue an evacuation order for people along the Wollombi Brook within the townships of Bulga and Broke to leave the high danger area. The Wollombi Brook then swelled the Hunter River at Singleton to the major flood level of 13.71 metres, prompting the SES to issue further flood evacuation warnings. Residents in low-lying areas of the Singleton township were advised to evacuate, with evacuation orders then made for residents in Dunolly, Combo, Whittingham, Scotts Flat and Glenridding.

The New England Highway, Golden Highway, numerous local roads in the Singleton area and farmlands were inundated. It was the latest chapter of the big wet to follow the 2017-19 drought. Thankfully, the New South Wales and Australian governments' natural disaster declarations were made promptly for the Singleton, Dungog, Muswellbrook and MidCoast council areas after that latest flood event. That said, I note that the Federal and State governments announced the additional Back Home grants of up to \$20,000 for the flood-impacted residents of Broke and other areas. For the record, the Bulga township is within my electorate of Upper Hunter and neighbouring Broke will become part of my electorate from March next year at the 2023 general election.

My recent visits to Broke to see the devastation and provide an additional conduit for the New South Wales Government to be across the needs of the local community have been nothing short of eye-opening. The power of the flood is starkly illustrated at Broke. The damage to Broke Road proves beyond reasonable doubt the danger of driving in flood water, and erosion ponds remain in the aftermath. Again, I thank and commend Glencore for being a good corporate neighbour by allowing workers from Bulga Coal Management to assist Broke residents with the clean-up and to provide water pumps to clear excess floodwater. Resilience NSW and Singleton council are working together in the clean-up effort. The recovery coordinator for Hunter, Central Coast and the Mid North Coast, Mel Gore, has also been in the area to meet with local residents.

Broke may be battered but there is one philosophy among the local residents: Broke but not broken. I recently mentioned in a local newspaper advertisement that preparations begin well before an emergency happens. I encouraged residents to consider giving a hand and joining a local volunteer organisation. In the wake of recent events, there is a timely opportunity to give the idea further consideration when the Singleton Emergency Services Expo is held on Saturday 20 August near Singleton council's administration centre. I wish Singleton council and the partner agencies all the best for the expo. There will be more natural disasters but the challenge for our communities is to be prepared.

### LET'S TALK INITIATIVE

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (21:03):** On 19 July I had the privilege of attending the Let's Talk community video launch hosted by Mariam Mourad and the team at Bankstown Women's Health Centre. The Bankstown Women's Health Centre is an independent non-profit organisation run by women for women and their families. Its vision is to deliver meaningful services for women and families to achieve positive health outcomes and sustainable wellbeing. The event launched a community video to raise awareness about domestic violence and facilitated discussion on the social pandemic of domestic and family violence that has unfortunately ingrained itself in our community.

Listening to stories of crimes that go unreported and behaviour that goes unchallenged, I was reminded of the Where the Good Men Grow mural at my old school as a symbol that there are many good young men, men of integrity and decency who are also repulsed by this behaviour. The initiative is a call to action for all members to put politics aside, be part of the solution and, ultimately, deliver a better society. We have to enable the change we wish to see. In the 12 months to March this year there were 1,361 domestic violence-related assaults in Canterbury-Bankstown. Of the 250 cases reported to Bankstown Women's Health Centre, 90 per cent were not reported to police. Some of the reasons that assaults are not reported include fear of further violence, cultural stigma, feeling overwhelmed or past negative experiences with the police. As Mariam said, 18 women have died this year and 43 women died at the hands of their partner in 2021.

This issue is not new and it is not going away. So, as the video invites us to do, let's talk. We have heard older generations of women speak about this issue. In her seminal 1966 novel *The Watch Tower*, the great Australian writer Elizabeth Harrower wrote of coercive control:

He thinks as long as he can get up and go to work, no one should complain. He doesn't realise what he's like.

Harrower and her contemporaries spoke of the burly larrikin man we idealised with a new parlance that opened our eyes to power and control. Radical then, that discourse sadly remains relevant today when we hear the stories of former Australians of the Year Grace Tame and Rosie Batty. Grace Tame has said that it takes an average of 10 years for a young woman who has been abused to come forward with her personal story. It should be obvious but bears reminding that it does not have to be like this. Indeed, it cannot continue to be like this. There is an imperative to act, for each of us individually and together to meet the challenge of this moment with the determination to make things better.

I wish I had the answer to what we can do but I do not, and nor does any one individual or organisation. That is why we must work together. We have taken important steps. I congratulate the new Federal Government and our local MP, Tony Burke, on introducing legislation to the Federal Parliament for 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave, which has been long sought by unions and women's advocacy groups. Furthermore, I congratulate the Attorney General on carriage of the consent reforms passed by Parliament last year and the important Make No Doubt campaign that accompanies them, which is overseen by the Hon. Natalie Ward, MLC. But we know more must be done. Adequate funding for women's health centres is needed.

Mariam has called on the New South Wales Government to increase funding for the 21 women's health centres that are increasingly being asked to do more with less. For example, the Illawarra Women's Health Centre was initially funded with \$360,000 when it was established in the 1980s. That amounts to \$1 million in today's money, yet its core funding is only \$550,000. There are also practical elements that do not fit within a stock standard funding envelope or standardised reporting mechanism. Mariam spoke of the diversity of people needing help and the special individualised support they require. We must look seriously at ensuring that centres like the Bankstown Women's Health Centre are trusted to work outside the box, given their local and unique circumstances. Where we can go further on domestic and family violence leave, we should. As my colleagues Sophie Cotsis and Jodie Harrison have noted, the New South Wales Government should never have reneged on an agreement to provide additional domestic violence leave to rail and transport workers.

There are so many things to do. However, the starting point must be respect. We must teach it explicitly. We must teach that this unacceptable behaviour has a link to somebody's life, and the expectations we have as a society, judicial laws and consequences. The Let's Talk community video launch event served as an important reminder of all those things. It was a great way to help promote the importance of what we do to help prevent and stop domestic violence in our community. I thank Mariam and the team at the Bankstown Women's Health Centre for everything they do to make women of all faiths, cultures and backgrounds feel safe, and for helping those women rebuild their lives in our community. They are an important piece of the puzzle. Many of the remaining pieces are the members of this House and the actions that we take together. Whilst the Let's Talk initiative is important, it is incumbent on all of us to transform this talk into actions. Victims of domestic and family violence deserve no less.

### CRESCENT HEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (21:09):** After two years of delays, on 22 July Crescent Head Public School finally got to celebrate its centenary, albeit two years late. Elizabeth Jefferies from the Department of Education, the manager in charge of the school district, was in attendance to commemorate this most wonderful day. It was a great opportunity to hear from past students, staff and principals about their cherished memories of the school, which happens to be alongside one of Australia's greatest surfing breaks. Loved former principal Janice Newton invoked so many wonderful memories and was right to lament that student numbers have declined, as many families find it very difficult to afford to live in Crescent Head. Roanne Stirling-Kelly—daughter of much-loved former principal Jim Stirling—who works for the local health district had a heartfelt speech read out that moved the crowd. Jim Stirling was one of the first Aboriginal principals in the New South Wales education system. Janice recounted that everyone was crying on Jim's last day and that it was one of the saddest days of her life.

She also gave words to local champion Shane "Tony" Stedman of surfboard and ugg boot fame, who was educated at Crescent Head Public School from 1945 to 1951. Following the commemoration, Shane kindly dropped his book into my office. I have taken absolute delight in reading some of his attributes and what he has done on a broader Australian scale. It is quite an extraordinary story. He gave everything to turn his love of surfing into an Australian business, supported by many people from his headquarters at Brookvale. The Stedman surfing institution is world renowned. Shane created a lifestyle off this great surf spot and his own incredible intelligence.

He carried on his technical education at Kensington in Sydney, learning to make surfboards and going on to create quite an empire. His son was also an international surfer. I heard the incredible story that he created the ugg boot but sold it for a very cheap price. Now the ugg boot empire is worth about \$800 million, and this is a boy who went to Crescent Head Public School from 1945 to 1951. I find that story beautiful because it is of our regional communities.

I also acknowledge the incredible talent, beauty and skill of Billie McKay. I did not get to watch much of *MasterChef* this year but I do love it. I became a chef because I was silly enough to open a cafe-restaurant. When it was a great surf day the chefs did not arrive, so someone had to go in the kitchen. When it is your business, your wages and you have to pay everybody, you learn how to become a chef. I had to manage 21 orders of bacon and eggs and everything else. I became a chef but compared with the great Billie McKay my skills are very diminished. But if you come to my house for dinner, it is a lot of fun. You will eat great food that will all be local produce.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Is that an invitation?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It is an invitation. I love food and cooking because I am a country girl at heart, and so is Billie McKay. She comes from a fabulous family from the Bowraville district and went to Bowraville Central School. There is so much pride for that young woman, her family and everything that she has done. As I said when she won *MasterChef* for the first time, "The world is your Nambucca Valley river oyster." I understand she is back at the farm with her baby, milking cows and contributing to the family. She is a beautiful woman who has a huge future ahead of her. I also acknowledge Liz Campbell, another local lady who grew up in the Macleay Valley, who served as a councillor of Kempsey Shire Council for 14 years, 10 of which she also served as mayor. She really put the council back on the track it needed to be on. She did not stand at the recent Kempsey by-election. I thank her from the bottom of my heart. Politics is not for the faint-hearted. She has been a great contributor and has much to be proud of.

#### PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:14):** I bring to the attention of the House a number of issues important to the Harrington, Crowdy Head and Coopernook communities, which are all situated in the southern part of the Port Macquarie electorate. I acknowledge and applaud the New South Wales Government's recent commitment to build 30 new ambulance stations across the State. I am advocating strongly on behalf of the local community for one of those stations to be earmarked for Harrington. I had previously met with health Minister Brad Hazzard, as well as written to him, requesting that a new station be built for the growing community of Harrington. Like so many coastal communities, Harrington is experiencing an increase in residential developments, including over fifties lifestyle villages.

I had previously been advised that while NSW Ambulance service planning has identified Harrington as a priority, it is not the highest priority location for a new ambulance service relative to other locations across New South Wales. Given the recent announcement, which I welcome, I implore the Minister to consider prioritising a new ambulance station for Harrington and I call on the Government to do it as a matter of urgency. I also know the Harrington community would welcome a Return and Earn facility so that they have the opportunity to maximise their recycling opportunities. I assure the community that I have made representations to the Minister for Environment and Heritage on the issue.

On another note, the long-awaited, full-grade separated interchange at the Pacific Highway and Harrington Road intersection will become a reality with the New South Wales Government committing \$12 million to the \$60 million project, which is jointly funded by the Australian and New South Wales governments under our 80-20 arrangement. In the recent budget, \$840,000 was included for continued planning for this interchange. The issue has been on the drawing board for around 20 years, so to see planning works currently underway is welcome news for the Harrington and Coopernook communities.

Recently Transport for NSW Maritime sought the public's feedback on the \$2 million infrastructure upgrade of Crowdy Head Boat Harbour, aimed at making it safer for boaters and improving community access to, and use of, the harbour. The project recognised that the infrastructure at Crowdy Head Boat Harbour was nearing the end of its useful life. The western jetty has been out of service since 2010, while the eastern jetty is in need of major maintenance or replacement. The plan is to demolish both jetties and replace one of them with a new floating pontoon, which will have up to 18 berths for various sized vessels with water and electricity to each berth. A review of environmental factors and concept plan has been developed for the project. It is also proposed to dredge the harbour to improve navigation and clearance depth for vessels. Work is expected to start early next year.

Last Monday night I had the pleasure of attending a meeting of the Coopernook Action Group to hear concerns of the group and the community members who attended the meeting. The issue of drainage was raised, with claims that there is no consistency in the MidCoast Council's approach to the work, particularly at the junction

of Coopernook Road and George Gibson Drive, as well as the houses at the northern end of West Street. As with many towns, road maintenance is a huge problem and Coopernook is no different. Correspondence from the Coopernook Action Group states:

Both Lansdowne Road and Harrington Road need to be designated as regional roads according to other discussions we have had with Council so they can secure appropriate funding. Lansdowne Road is a goat track and wheel wrecker and Harrington Road will be like that soon.

I will soon be meeting with the general manager, directors and councillors of MidCoast Council and I will certainly raise those issues with them directly. I also express my support to replace the aging playground adjacent to the Coopernook School of Arts, which is rapidly decaying. I have reached out to the council to encourage it to apply for funding through the latest round of the Stronger Country Communities Fund. I express my thanks to the Coopernook Action Group, president Alan, secretary Michael, treasurer Marion and all the committee members for their strong advocacy on behalf of their community.

In September I will again hit the road with my mobile office to hear from local residents about their concerns. On the twenty-seventh I will be in Harrington at the Harrington library from 9.00 a.m. and at Coopernook at the Coopernook School of Arts Hall from 2.00 p.m. I am looking forward, as always, to meeting with local residents and organisations and to be able to hear their concerns, whether they are personal or community. Once again, I thank the community for providing me with so much input at the Coopernook Action Group meeting. I look forward to seeing them again soon.

### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (21:18):** Times change and as parliamentarians it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the laws of our State keep pace with times and expectations. Most recently we achieved that with the voluntary assisted dying and affirmative consent laws. That is why as our State slowly moves forward it is so disheartening to see other jurisdictions move backwards. That happened in the US only six weeks ago when the Supreme Court of the United States overturned *Roe v Wade* and the constitutional right to abortion. Many States moved quickly to severely limit a person's right and access to a pregnancy termination. Outrage is a pretty accurate way to describe much of the reaction all around the world.

In Newcastle, advocacy organisation What Were You Wearing? organised a rally. I acknowledge Sarah Williams from What Were You Wearing?, who was here tonight for a Voices of Survivors function organised by Full Stop Australia. They organised a rally in solidarity with those affected in America and for improved access to abortion and reproductive healthcare services in Australia—because that is what abortion is: reproductive health care. Forced pregnancy is not health care. Forced birth is not health care and the reality is that we cannot ban abortion; we can only ban safe abortion. Banning safe abortion disproportionately affects people from marginalised and vulnerable communities, people of low socio-economic background, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people who cannot just travel elsewhere to access the health care that they need.

What Were You Wearing? organised the rally in just a few days and hundreds upon hundreds of people turned out. I am sure there would have been people who wondered why we would bother, thinking that a decision in another country has nothing to do with us. That is not the case though. The overturning of *Roe v Wade* is all the green light that is needed by anti-choicers to make the same thing happen in this country. I point to a Queensland Liberal-Nationals senator as an example of someone quick to jump on Twitter to extoll the Supreme Court's decision and propagate complete falsehoods about late-term abortions. He wants them outlawed in his State, demonstrating his wilful ignorance of what constitutes a late-term abortion, how they are allowed to take place and why they happen. We can sit back in New South Wales and be thankful that he does not represent our State, but when it comes to saying the right things, that is about all we are doing.

It was only in 2018 that we instituted safe access zones around abortion clinics, and only in 2019 that we decriminalised abortion. Both these actions, albeit late, were the right thing to do, but striking abortion out of that legislation does not improve access to abortion. In fact, in Newcastle it has got worse. Twelve months ago the city's Mary Stopes clinic closed down, citing operating costs. Since then I have heard from other local abortion providers who now cannot keep up with the demand—such is the loss of just one service. If someone is seeking to terminate a pregnancy, that is health care that cannot wait and that should not be treated as a blow-in, blow-out appointment. Providers want to be ensuring that anyone who seeks their services or advice is given the support they need and deserve. But at the same time we cannot just leave someone seeking an abortion hanging for weeks because appointments are scarce.

But what are we doing to assist? Public providers are telling me, not much. We are not funding additional clinicians or space or operating hours. Those things are enormously important because those clinics do a lot more than provide abortion services. The Newcastle branch of Family Planning NSW, for example, also provides

services around contraception, sexually transmitted infections, gynaecology, psychology, menopause and vasectomies. There is more, but there are only so many hours in the day and so many people it can see. Those clinics provide necessary health care that should be accessible to anyone who wants or needs it. Often those people are exceptionally vulnerable. Imagine trying to do that when one lives three hours away, English is not one's first language or one has a disability. The restriction of access to reproductive health care is an ideology rooted in misogyny. Times change and ideologies need to change too.

### TRIBUTE TO THE MOST VENERABLE SUDHAMMO

#### TRIBUTE TO ROSS ROCCA

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (21:24):** I was deeply saddened to learn of the sudden death of the Most Venerable Sudhammo, President of the Buddhist Federation of Australia, at the age of 70 on 6 July in Munich, Germany, while on a Buddhist mission in Europe. His passion shone through in his advocacy, from promoting peace, wellbeing and Buddhism in Australia to his work with the Dhammakaya International Society of Australia. I am fortunate to have met the most Venerable Sudhammo on a number of occasions over the years, most notably at the United Nations Day of Vesak celebrations at Sydney Town Hall and various receptions at New South Wales Parliament House. I was struck by his ability to transcend cultural, national and religious barriers through his message of peace and compassion.

I admired the support of the Most Venerable Sudhammo of New South Wales communities, as he actively supported various charity activities to help communities during major natural disasters, including bushfires and floods across New South Wales. His funeral was held on 31 July at Dhammakaya Meditation Centre in Bangkok, where he was ordained and was the acting abbot. A delegation of senior Buddhist monks, nuns and lay leaders from Australia and New Zealand attended in commemoration. I send my condolences to his family during this difficult time. I acknowledge the impact he had on both sides of the Chamber. In this regard, I acknowledge that the member for Bankstown is also here tonight and will make a contribution regarding the Most Venerable Sudhammo.

I also send my condolences to the family of Ross Rocca, a humble man who made a giant contribution to the Ryde area. His legacy will not be forgotten. On 30 May the community of Ryde farewelled Ross Senior at Holy Spirit Church in North Ryde. The church was packed with family and friends, whose words of remembrance of his life evoked many memories for those gathered to say their final farewell. Ross was born in Giarre in the province of Catania, Sicily, near Mount Etna. He was one year old when his family came to Australia. Ross went on to attend Marsfield Public School, then attended Ryde Public School and finished at Holy Cross College. In 1938 Ross' family bought five acres of land and a little weatherboard cottage in Smalls Road, Ryde. The land included Shrimpton's Creek, which would water the market gardens his father proposed to build. During the war Ross' family grew vegetables on this property to supply the army and subsequently were not interned like other Italians from the area.

The property on Smalls Road changed hands over the years. However, part of the land remained with Ross' family until he came to hear of a need in the community. RASAIID, the Ryde Area Supported Accommodation for Intellectually Disabled, is an amazing group of parents whose adult children needed specialised accommodation and support. The children have profound intellectual challenges and are dear to everybody in Ryde. RASAIID secured funding to buy the land and build. The question was where, and would the funding be enough. Upon hearing of this need, Ross sold the last portion of the farm for the amount RASAIID had to ensure the project would become a reality. Ross was also responsible for the local shops we still call Midway, which were built in the 1960s. It is still a thriving local centre today. Ross was known to say he handled every brick in the building of the shops.

Ross was an active Rotarian with the Rotary Club of Ryde and he lived the Rotary motto, "Service above self". He was always smiling, he understood hard work, and he coupled that with a vision to create and provide for his family and the broader community. Vale, Ross Rocca.

### TRIBUTE TO THE MOST VENERABLE SUDHAMMO

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (21:28):** On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, I pay tribute to the Most Venerable Sudhammo, President of the Buddhist Federation of Australia and founder of the 60th Dhammachai Education Foundation, on his recent passing. I offer my sincere condolences to the Buddhist community, the loyal devotees of the Dhammakaya Meditation Centres in Australia and New Zealand, and the Most Venerable Sudhammo's family and sangha. The Most Venerable Sudhammo was born on 9 February 1952 in Thailand and sadly passed away at the age of 70 on 6 July 2022 while on a Buddhist mission trip in Europe. The Most Venerable Sudhammo was a highly respected leader within the Buddhist community internationally.

He dedicated his life to undertaking charitable initiatives and the teaching of Buddhism and its principles across the world.

The Most Venerable Sudhammo graduated from university with a Bachelor of Laws in Thailand. Prior to his arrival in Australia in 1997, the Most Venerable Sudhammo spent more than 14 years dedicated to working at Dhammakaya Meditation Centres and other Buddhist temples in Bangkok. In 1997 the Most Venerable Sudhammo established the Dhammakaya International Society of Australia Incorporated to provide Dhamma teachings and an opportunity for Buddhists to learn more about the traditions, cultures and customs of their faith. The Most Venerable Sudhammo was the meditation master and founder of Dhammakaya Meditation Centres in Australia and New Zealand. In 2004 the Most Venerable Sudhammo founded the 60th Dhammachai Education Foundation in Australia with the objective of supporting Buddhist studies at the University of Sydney. As the founding director of the Dhamma International Research Institute, the Most Venerable Sudhammo developed Buddhist manuscript studies. He often collaborated with leading international universities, and generously contributed funding and grants to Buddhist scholars and Buddhist studies students. The Most Venerable delivered speeches at academic conferences and wrote journal articles.

In 2009 the Most Venerable Sudhammo was elected President of the Buddhist Federation of Australia and played a pivotal role in promoting Buddhism in Australia through key events, including the World Conference of Religion for Peace, Australian Buddhist General Conference on Engaging Buddhism in Australia at Victoria University, Inner Peace Australia Conference, participating in Australia Day celebrations, and leading seminars and workshops on Buddhist studies at the University of Sydney and the Australian observance of the United Nations Day of Vesak celebrations. As the member for Bankstown and a former Mayor of Bankstown, I had the honour and privilege of meeting the Most Venerable Sudhammo and attending his Vesak Day celebrations, which are hosted regularly in my electorate of Bankstown.

The Most Venerable Sudhammo's funeral was held on 31 July 2022 at the Dhammakaya Meditation Centre in Bangkok, where he was ordained and previously was the acting abbot. Over 14,000 people were in attendance to pay their respects to a great meditation master, scholar and Buddhist leader, including a delegation of senior Buddhist monks, nuns and community leaders from Australia led by the Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, Abbot of Phuoc Hue Monastery and Quang Minh Temple, and chair of the Buddhist Council; and Mr Henry Dang, Honorary Secretary-General of the Buddhist Federation of Australia and President of BuddhaCare. Many community and political leaders have provided letters of condolence, including the Hon. Chris Bowen, MP, representing the Federal Government; the Hon. Victor Dominello, MP, representing the State Government; Dr Ten Kieu, MP, representing the Victorian Labor Government; and me, representing the New South Wales Labor Opposition. In addition, international leaders—particularly many leaders and dignitaries from Thailand who had long-established relationships with the Most Venerable—provided letters and offers of condolence.

The Most Venerable Sudhammo will be remembered for his compassion and his immense consideration of others regardless of their faith, cultural or ethnic background. The Most Venerable Sudhammo actively undertook charitable initiatives to help those in our community who were financially disadvantaged or affected by natural disasters, including those affected by the Black Summer bushfires and the Lismore floods. The Most Venerable Sudhammo's message of peace, unity and respect will continue to resonate deeply amongst those who were fortunate enough to meet him or participate in his teachings. We mourn his passing as a community and extend our deepest condolences to the Most Venerable Sudhammo's family, sangha, colleagues, disciples and to the Australian and international Buddhist communities. My thoughts and prayers are with the entire Buddhist community at this time. Vale, Most Venerable Sudhammo.

## REGIONAL JUSTICE

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:33):** The administration of justice in our State incorporates an ongoing search for better solutions to longstanding questions and concerns about the adequacy of sentencing and the fitness for purpose of the processes in use. A number of these reforms have been mentioned during my discussions with senior people working in the justice system in the Albury electorate—particularly the use of justice clinical nurses; the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment, or MERIT, program; and access to the Drug Court. I read with interest of the various pilot and trial programs, and of the implementation of those programs across the State. However, we are yet to see them come to life in and around Albury. Our justice leadership values having options. The fundamental question is about how to balance society's call for consequences for offending with the nature and the cost of incarceration, and illness or addiction as a driver of offending.

Since 2019 I have been making representations to the Attorney General on the matter of options. I have appreciated his considered advice, including, earlier this week, his interest in justice processes for regional New South Wales and the welcome expansion of Albury courthouse infrastructure that is now underway. There is a real hunger in Albury to share in the programs one can find elsewhere in the State, or across the border in Victoria, that offer a wider range of options for the administration of justice. On the southern border of the State, we are a

long way from Sydney and from the options and alternatives available in the toolkit for judges and magistrates. Offenders in regional New South Wales will, if all goes well, return to their families and communities. There is an urgency to get the justice diagnosis right early on, and to balance community and individual wellbeing with appropriate sentencing. Our whole community has a share in that.

On the question of justice clinical nurses, I have been pointed to research carried out in New South Wales which examines the association between contact with mental health services and reoffending in those diagnosed with psychosis. The research, published in the *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* this year by authors Armita Adily, Olayan Albalawi, Grant Sara and others, linked health and offending records in this State and identified all individuals with a diagnosis of psychosis and a subsequent offence resulting in a non-custodial sentence between 2001 and 2012. The researchers found that there was:

... a linear relationship between an increased number of clinical contacts and reduced risk of reoffending. Those with no clinical contact had more than a fivefold risk of reoffending compared to those with the highest number of contacts.

The report's conclusion was that:

... efforts to enhance mental health service utilization in those with psychosis who are at a higher risk of reoffending should be promoted.

The Drug Court of New South Wales focuses on underlying drug dependency which has resulted in criminal offending. The Drug Court has Local Court and District Court criminal jurisdiction under the Drug Court Act 1998, the Drug Court Regulation 2015 and the court's past decisions and policies. The three locations of the Drug Court are Parramatta, Toronto and Sydney CBD. When recognising the work of retired judge Roger Dive, the Attorney General noted that the judge:

... has helped change many lives across NSW during his work at the Drug Court, which diverts drug-dependent offenders into tailored, intensive rehabilitation that is proven to be more efficient at driving down crime than prison.

That successful initiative has been operating for 17 years in our State. In Albury we admire this option from afar and advocate strongly for gazettal to allow access to the Drug Court from Albury. When offenders have issues related to their use of alcohol and other drugs, the MERIT program is a voluntary, pre-plea program for adults in the local court. The program can help by opening access to alcohol and other drug treatment services for a period of 12 weeks while court matters are adjourned. MERIT is now established at 62 out of 137 New South Wales local courts. Of those, Wagga Wagga is the closest to my electorate. MERIT has been an active program in New South Wales for 22 years. We know these programs work well. We know that judges and magistrates are seeking more expert health input and corresponding options for sentencing and treatment. The great consumer advocate Ralph Nader said:

A society that has more justice is a society that needs less charity.

I look forward to having these successful programs available along the State's southern border for the community I represent.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (21:38):** I have spoken in this House many times before about the housing and homelessness crisis in the Blue Mountains. The largest cause of homelessness in Australia is domestic violence. Women who do not own property and who have low super are disproportionately impacted. Women of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and women with disabilities are left behind and are particularly vulnerable, suffering double discrimination. The lack of investment in permanent affordable housing under this Government is a disgrace. There is a chronic shortfall of affordable and social housing, and a large number of people are couch surfing or house-sitting due to the lack of housing options, whether or not they are considered part of a vulnerable cohort.

Home and rental prices have soared, and during COVID we saw Airbnb numbers triple when Sydneysiders escaped the huge prices down the hill to snap up the remaining slightly more affordable homes in the Blue Mountains for the temptation of short-term holiday income, making it less affordable for locals. I have heard stories about people living in substandard boarding houses for months on end, applying endlessly for rentals only to be constantly rejected. I have heard the desperate cries for help, and I have seen this Government ignore them. This is nothing new. For the past decade under this Government people have been denied the basic human right for affordable, safe shelter.

The Government's failure to act on the issue of housing has caused the homelessness crisis that we see today. It has forced people to move away from the place they call home. It forces people in domestic violence situations to stay or become homeless because they cannot afford the exorbitant rental or housing prices. Experts in housing, politicians and people in the community know that there is a growing gap between supply and demand. Options are limited, and everyone deserves safe, secure and affordable homes, but our social housing system is

not coping with the crisis to which the New South Wales Government has condemned the most vulnerable people in Australia. In last month's budget, the "losers" according to a *Sydney Morning Herald* report analysis include potential recipients of social housing. With no new housing stock, the 50,000 people on housing waitlists will be disappointed. This disaster has forced people to look outside the square and find innovative solutions to issues that have been plaguing the community for a decade.

Recently I was invited by the Blue Mountains women's housing trust to attend a forum to discuss the Walanmarra Artists and Blue Mountains community land trust. The land trust would create permanently affordable housing in the Blue Mountains that is governed by the local community, and the land would be developed based on the needs within that community. Many successful community land trusts are thriving in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. An example that stands out is the Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative in Boston. In their own words, the initiative empowers residents to organise, plan for, create and control a vibrant, diverse and high-quality neighbourhood in collaboration with community partners. They are ordinary people creating new futures through a community-led response to the need for homes and a significant, creative solution offering permanent, affordable homes. It is an ethical approach and a model that is not dictated by the government, but rather starts with strong voices within the community and is governed the same way.

Professor Louise Crabtree-Hayes, who attended the forum and has a background in urban sustainability, housing diversity and complex adaptive systems, said that every community land trust gets to define what it means for that community. The possibilities include home ownership, affordable rentals and so much more that would be based on local need. That would mean that women and children trying to leave domestic violence situations would have shelter. Families looking to live in the community that they grew up in would have a place to call home. Young people looking to buy their first home would have more opportunities, and the community would have their say.

Under this Government house prices have skyrocketed and safe, affordable housing has been made so rare that families are living in their cars. Women and children in domestic violence situations are forced to stay. We need to look at alternative options like community land trusts, which are a not-for-profit response to local need. I urge the Government to look into land trusts which have proven status, such as the Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative. Community voice is valuable, and a national housing strategy that incorporates those concepts is essential.

### CESSNOCK ELECTORATE FLOODING

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (21:43):** It is timely that you are in the chair, Temporary Speaker Layzell, because I heard your wonderful contribution earlier about the flooding in your electorate. We are neighbours and we share some of that same territory, and I want to speak about flooding in the local communities as well. The Cessnock electorate takes in parts of the Lake Macquarie City Council area, the Cessnock council area and up into Singleton council area, and across those three local government areas there was flooding to various extents.

Through the Laguna-Wollombi area—and, of course, the Wollombi Brook that you spoke to as well, Mr Temporary Speaker—that water flows all the way through up to Singleton, joins the Hunter River and ultimately goes down and out of the harbour of Newcastle. With the Wollombi Valley literally quite steep in terrain on both sides, all the water in that catchment falls down into the one river system—or the one Wollombi Brook, as it is called—and heads off on its path. For people who have seen any of the social media photos, et cetera, the iconic Wollombi Tavern had water up to its roof—and I can tell members that the Wollombi Tavern does not exactly sit particularly close to the river. The river is 50 metres to 80 metres down the back of the tavern. A camping ground sits between the tavern and the river, and there is a slight decline in the land between the verandah of the tavern down to the water. It was no small amount of water going through there to flood the Wollombi Tavern. I was out there the other day, and it is in the process of being rebuilt. I commend the new owners of the Wollombi Tavern for making sure it will be there in the future for the community.

That water then flows up to Broke, and Broke is a small village that rarely floods the way that it did recently. Of course, it flooded back in the fifties and the late forties. We have seen the images of Broke where literally the streets, parks and playgrounds were all covered with water and the only thing sticking up above the water were the roofs of houses. As the Temporary Speaker knows, a feature that came about was a whole range of sinkholes across the Broke Valley. The sinkholes themselves, geologically speaking, created an interesting question about how they were caused, why they were caused, and what caused them. It was important for the local council to engage with Public Works to try to understand whether or not there was a broader issue. Perhaps some paleo river systems that used to exist through that village and the water might be seeking to reclaim a path that might have been a pathway from several thousand years back—or perhaps nothing quite like that; perhaps just some other geological feature.

The trouble with those sinkholes is that some of them were on public land and some of them were on private land. For those on public land it is pretty straightforward—council has responsibility for them; of course it does. But for those on private land, the private landholder has responsibility. When we have a swimming pool and it is full of water, we have to put a fence around it. But when we have a sinkhole full of water, well, it is not a dam and it is not a swimming pool so it becomes a bit of a public safety issue. Through the local government and State governments we have had to wrestle with what the danger was and who had responsibility. Council was not responsible for going onto private lands and dealing with the issue and private landholders needed some support about understanding what was going on with their land and the sinkholes, and how best to deal with them. It was terrific that the local, State and Federal governments worked together through that process. I worked with the Temporary Speaker, as the member for Upper Hunter, behind the scenes to reach out to the Minister and the Minister's wonderful team to try to get some assistance on all those things.

An interesting thing that happens is that the funding for critical infrastructure is obvious; it is a given. If it is infrastructure such as roads, bridges, tunnels or something like that, we say, "Yes, that needs to be funded. Here's the money." But then there is the softer infrastructure—the parks and the playgrounds, the skate parks, the swings and the rides. Those things are not necessarily funded. Things like a sportsground with change rooms and canteen losses are not necessarily funded. I raise these points but I am not being critical of anyone. I think that all three tiers of government have done a wonderful job. If we sit down with some of those local councils at Lismore, Singleton, Maitland and others and talk about the less visible and hidden costs, the waste levy is waived. But once we take the rubbish to the tip the council has to fund the processing and handling of that, et cetera. That is a wonderful response but there are some things that we can learn. I think we all need to go on that journey together. Mr Temporary Speaker, I congratulate you on your work in that time. I am glad that we got a great result for the community.

#### **BOUGAINVILLE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (21:49):** I was honoured to be a member of the recent parliamentary delegation to the Bougainville House of Representatives. Tonight I report to my constituents in The Entrance electorate and to members of this House on the delegation's work. Every Australian State and Territory parliament has entered into a twinning relationship with Pacific parliaments under a program brokered by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in July 2007. The concept of twinning is similar to the "sister city" relationships that exist between cities of different countries. The twinning program was created to foster greater collaboration and understanding between Australian and Pacific parliaments.

The New South Wales Parliament has a partnership arrangement with the parliaments of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. The New South Wales Parliament and our "twins" have participated in a multitude of activities to support twinning over the past 15 years, including delegations, member inductions, joint conferences and workshops. Bougainville is an autonomous province of Papua New Guinea [PNG]. It has a population of 300,000 spread over several islands, of which Bougainville is the largest. Bougainville is rich in copper and possibly gold as well. A feature in the history of the island has been the Panguna copper mine, opened in 1969—and I recall PNG was still an Australian territory at that time. Local indigenous people began to air their grievances against the Australian colonial government over the handling of the mine and protested the sharing of revenues being generated from mining on their land. Local dissatisfaction continued following PNG's independence in 1975 and grew into a movement for Bougainville independence, and civil war ensued from 1988 to 1998. The mine closed in 1989 as a result of the civil conflict. It is still a viable proposition, but there are differing views as to whether it should reopen.

The Autonomous Bougainville Government is the outcome of peace negotiations, which concluded the Bougainville crisis era. The Constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville recognises the House of Representatives as the legislative arm of that government. The House of Representatives is made up of the President, the Speaker and 39 elected members. The House is located in Buka. There are three positions in the Bougainville House of Representatives reserved for women and three for former fighters. In late November 2019 a non-binding referendum was held to decide whether Bougainville should be a sovereign State independent from Papua New Guinea State. The result was overwhelmingly in favour of sovereignty for the island, with 98 per cent of the votes supporting secession.

Our delegation was ably led by the member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams, and comprised the member for Seven Hills, Mark Taylor; Ms Sue Higginson, MLC; Simon Johnston; Clara Hawker; and me. The delegation arrived in Bougainville on Monday 25 July and spent Tuesday and Wednesday meeting with the President of the Bougainville House of Representatives, Ishmael Toroama, who is also a former Bougainville fighter; the Speaker, Simon Pentanu; the Attorney General; committee chairs as well as staff. We attended question time. We also answered questions from the representatives in the House there assembled. I note advice given to the delegation from the Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives that the close relationship

staff of this House have developed with staff of his place, particularly Simon Johnston, has really assisted in the work of the Bougainville House of Representatives.

I thank the local member of the Bougainville House of Representatives who welcomed our delegation at Buka Airport—John Bosco Ragu, the member for Tsitalato and a former member of the PNG army during the conflict—for his hospitality and friendship. I acknowledge the female members of the Bougainville House of Representatives whom we met: the Hon. Theonila Roka Matbob, Minister for Education and Member for Ioro constituency; the Hon. Amanda Mason, member for North Bougainville Women's representative constituency; the Hon. Therese Kaetavara, member for South Bougainville Women's representative constituency and also the Deputy Speaker. The allocation of three positions to women is an innovative feature of the Bougainville House of Representatives and has encouraged women to run for parliament and to then run for open constituencies in that parliament.

The people of Bougainville are committed to their independence, and I was impressed by the parliamentary processes the Bougainville House of Representatives has developed to work towards independence, which includes a requirement that each member of the House report on steps being taken in their electorate to work for independence. I thank the delegation leader and my fellow delegates for their company. I think we did useful work, and I appreciate the opportunity to learn from other parliamentarians. I thank the Speaker and this House for nominating me to the delegation. The work of building a better world for all our citizens is always strengthened if we work with our neighbours in the world. I thank the people of Bougainville for their hospitality, and I wish them all the best as they work towards independence.

### WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE FLOODING

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (21:54):** Once again the people of North Wagga, as well as many other landowners in my electorate, have to face the crisis of flooding. Last Friday afternoon there were flood and evacuation warnings seemingly from nowhere. Many outside the levee banks in Wagga Wagga had to leave their properties. Many other residents, especially at North Wagga within the limited levee banks now there, are still anxiously watching the river levels and waiting to see if and when they will have to evacuate. For many farmers and landowners it has meant long and frustrating hours of work moving stock and preparing their properties.

I say "once again" because this has become a distressing pattern of events. Dam levels are managed to ensure a supply of water for irrigators and the environment. Repeatedly we are told that this supply is the priority, yet there is a price to be paid for this. Dam levels are kept high, which means that at any time a sudden weather event can fill catchments and cause the dams to spill. I understand the need for water for farmers and the environment further down the river, but there is a question of balance and another of priority.

With the rain this year we have been closely watching the levels of Burrinjuck and Blowering dams, which feed the Tumut and Murrumbidgee rivers. This year we have had the added problem of Snowy Hydro discharging water into Blowering to provide extra power because of issues with the electricity supply. In a year of rain and more rain, many people in my electorate are asking: Did we have to have this flooding event? And what is going to happen for the rest of the year? One resident who is facing the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars wrote to me, "This flooding effect ... was completely avoidable." Another resident said, "WaterNSW dam management plans defy logic and lack care." This resident goes on to ask why the dam levels have not been set at 80 per cent; where is the accountability for the impact of floods on people and their property; and what is the plan for the rest of the year? Further, he warns:

Dams, rivers, lagoons and billabongs are all now full, as we enter the major rainfall and run off season of the year, escalating the risk of further and more devastating flooding to severe levels.

To add insult to injury, overnight in Wagga Wagga—when the river was predicted to peak and residents were anxiously waiting for news—the river level measures were not available. This morning another resident wrote to me:

It beggars belief that NSW Water cannot reliably maintain the Wagga gauge ... the last available measurement was at 11.10 p.m. last night.

It has been happening with almost all high rivers since 2016.

Just when we need the data the most, NSW Water fails us.

I have followed this up and was told it was an issue with this particular measure and it has been fixed. But the Government needs to make sure this does not happen again. I commend the work of the SES, which responded very quickly to the surprising news last Friday and has worked hard to prepare the community and keep it informed. I acknowledge the challenges facing the many homeless who have been moved from Wilks Park and thank the support agencies for their work. I acknowledge the work of Wagga Wagga City Council in the flood

response. Above all, I thank the affected residents for the positive attitude they have taken to dealing with this crisis. However, they are fed up, and this continues to be an issue.

I have raised this issue with the Government. I have participated in the airspace reference panels, whose members I thank for their work. But clearly this week's events show that what has happened has not been enough. I am calling on the Government to make sure that the relevant dam levels are set at 80 per cent for the rest of this year, when it is likely that we will face significant rainfall. The predictions are that with the Indian Ocean dipole, La Niña and so on, we are in for a wet few months. Let us set the dam levels so that flooding is avoided. I have already contacted the Minister on this issue and will be following this up with him and the Premier. As it stands the residents of my electorate, especially those in North Wagga, will be spending the rest of the year in a state of constant anxiety, terrified of a repeat of the devastating floods they endured in 2012. Surely we can learn from the past and do better in managing our dam levels.

### **BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE EDUCATION BUDGET**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (10:00):** Today my focus is on education. Every person elected to this Parliament acknowledges the importance of education as one of the key pathways in transforming a person's life. Education can lift a person out of poverty by providing better-paid work opportunities. Education improves knowledge and confidence in life and allows a person to better engage in the issues of the day. Education improves people's social awareness of societal norms so that people are aware there is never an excuse for violence, racism, and intolerance, thereby helping to develop a better society and world. Knowledge is power, and our education system is the engine room to drive greater opportunities for our children.

The Blacktown electorate has fabulous, caring, respected, knowledgeable teachers and support staff in all our public schools and high schools. They are overlooked and overworked, but they relish developing students to become wonderful citizens of the future. Maria Trimmis, principal of Blacktown Girls High School, has worked with industry partners such as Schools Industry Partnerships and Amazon Web Services to build the first Think Big Space in Australia. The Think Big Space utilised an annexe area and refurbished it into a learning environment for robotics and science, technology, engineering and maths. Over many years Blacktown Girls High School has successfully competed at local, national and international robotics competitions. The new learning space was paid for from the school's budgets over many years—as well as fundraising and support of industry partners such as Schools Industry Partnerships and AWS—and not from the New South Wales State Government's School Infrastructure program.

I have examined the past 12 budget papers and found that not one cent of infrastructure has been allocated to any of the schools in the Blacktown electorate. That is 12 long years with four different Liberal Premiers, four education Ministers and not one additional cent allocated in any State infrastructure budget for the Blacktown electorate. The member for North Shore said that we know access to quality education can transform lives, and I totally agree with her. But my question is whether there is a difference between a child's educational opportunities in the electorates of North Shore and Blacktown under this Liberal Government.

Over the past 12 years the budget papers demonstrate not one additional cent—let alone a dollar—was allocated to the electorate of Blacktown, yet in the electorate of North Shore the State budget allocated new food technology rooms for North Sydney Boys High School, four science labs plus prep and storage spaces for North Sydney Girls High School, a covered outdoor space and toilet upgrades for Beauty Point Public School, covered outdoor learning spaces and toilets for Cammeraygal High School, and the replacement of demountables with permanent structures at Mosman High School. In the words of the local member, it is "making sure we are responding to the growth of the population". Both my electorate and the Riverstone electorate have seen massive population growth across the Blacktown City area, with 12,000 people in the past five years and over 100,000 people during the 12 years of this Government. We have plenty of demountables and not enough classrooms to match the population.

North Sydney Demonstration School has new staffrooms, toilets, major upgrades to classrooms and outdoor covered space. Neutral Bay Public School, referred to as a high-performance school, received upgrades including the purchase of a house to expand the green space. I note that I support this initiative, but in my electorate we have the Government selling school sites across the Blacktown city area.

A new school is to be built in the suburb of St Leonards because of its massive population growth. St Leonards has grown by 61 per cent since 2011. Compare that to Blacktown, which has grown by only 17 per cent. But if one looks at the raw numbers, we are comparing 2,700 additional people in St Leonards versus 7,587 in Blacktown. There are 176 per cent more people now living in Blacktown than in St Leonards. Nothing—zip, nada—has been allocated to the people of Blacktown whilst seven massive school upgrades worth \$150 million plus a new school have been provided to the North Shore. That is an absolute disgrace. It demonstrates the Government's infrastructure rorts, which it has provided to its own electorates to the detriment

of western Sydney and the people of Blacktown City, Riverstone and the other seven electorates across the city. We should be treated more fairly.

#### **SMITHFIELD ITALIAN CATHOLIC FEDERATION ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (22:05):** On Sunday 31 July 2022 the Smithfield branch of the Italian Catholic Federation celebrated its fortieth anniversary. I was delighted to join its members at the Montefano Hall in Smithfield for the celebration of that incredible milestone. The event was well attended by approximately 230 people and included a delicious four-course meal, music and entertainment. Fundraising activities included a lucky door prize, raffles and an auction. I thank current President Tony Coiera and his wonderful committee for inviting me along. The Italian Catholic Federation was originally formed by the Scalabrinian Fathers and small groups of Italians in 1960 to provide a network for newly arrived Italian migrants who were struggling to establish their lives in Australia.

In the 1960s Australia experienced an influx of migrants from Italy. In fact, after the British, Italians were the largest immigrant group at that time. This was the main period of migration from Italy to Australia. Most migrants came from southern Italy and mainly from rural areas. Once in Australia, however, they were mainly concentrated in growing industrial areas, which was where most of the work was to be found. In New South Wales that included parts of the Hunter, the Illawarra, Sydney, western Sydney and of course the electorate of Fairfield. Naturally, it required a huge effort for migrants to adjust to their new conditions. When they arrived in Australia, migrants were usually impoverished and their main aim was to get a job quickly to sustain the family they brought with them and to support the family they left behind. With limited knowledge of the English language, it was vital that migrants had access to organisations such as the Italian Catholic Federation, which could assist them in their own language with a social network as well as pastoral care and opportunities for their future.

The Italian Catholic Federation also offered links to the past, which homesick Italian migrants—most of them young men who had migrated on their own—craved. Religious formation and cultural affirmation were the very things needed to help with the transition process, and that was what Italian migrants found in the services that were offered by the Italian Catholic Federation. The Smithfield branch of the federation was formed in 1982, headed by former President Phillip Reitano, and it has been serving the local community of Fairfield ever since. One major fundraiser is held every year, the annual charity fundraiser, along with many other activities such as bingo, which is held regularly throughout the year. These days the Smithfield branch of the Italian Catholic Federation spreads the money it fundraises to various charities including the Cancer Council, the Fred Hollows Foundation, the Children's Hospital, Buy a Bale drought relief, Braeside Hospital, the Heart Foundation, CareFlight and of course the local St Gertrude's parish.

All the fundraising work and preparation is carried out by the 13 committee members and other members of the Italian Catholic Federation, with assistance from local businesses and clubs. A national congress is held every two years, bringing together all the Italian Catholic Federation branches to liaise over their activities. The Italian Catholic Federation has been fundraising in the Smithfield and Fairfield areas since 1962. This mammoth effort has been going for 40 years. Members have given their time and effort year after year for the benefit of those less fortunate in the local area and in the wider community as well. I congratulate current President Tony Coiera, former President Phillip Reitano and all committee and members past and present from the Smithfield branch of the Italian Catholic Federation on such a momentous occasion. I thank them all for their service to the community for 40 years and I wish them the very best with future fundraising endeavours.

#### **SUMMER HILL ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUBS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (22:09):** One of the most exciting things about our return to a more normal way of life post-lockdown has been the resurgence of community sport on our fields, courts, pools and halls across the inner west. We know community sport is vital to improving public health, forging stronger connections and ensuring that people of all ages are able to get fit and stay active. Sporting clubs have had a tough time over the past few years of COVID. It has been harder to recruit and retain players, to organise seasons with any certainty and to fundraise. To add to that, terrible weather over the past year has kept sporting fields closed for weeks at a time, but local clubs across the inner west are bouncing back and showing the resolve and resilience that makes them great.

Last month I was pleased to attend a dinner to celebrate 75 years of the Marrickville Football Club, affectionately known as the Red Devils. Seventy-five years is a lot of football. From humble beginnings in 1945, when the club was founded by Bruce Livingstone and Arthur Ireland, the Red Devils now has over 2,000 registered members—making it one of the largest community sporting clubs in New South Wales. The club has bred champions, including the legendary Tim Cahill. Thousands of players gear up each year. Whether it is to get fit, meet friends, chase dreams or just do what they love, all players are welcome and have a place with the Red Devils. Importantly, the club has worked to tear down barriers and increase participation in sport, rapidly

expanding opportunities for women and girls and fielding all abilities teams. That is important because our local sporting teams should be a place where everyone can achieve their potential. I warmly congratulate Gary Schmidt, Georgie Kokokiris and everyone at the club on this remarkable achievement.

There is also considerable excitement about the planned upgrades for Henson Park in Marrickville, which is the home of the Newtown Jets and will soon be home to women's AFL and the women's Sydney Swans team. The AFL NSW/ACT and Newtown Jets were recently successful in receiving a grant of \$5 million to improve broadcasting facilities, establish female-friendly change rooms and upgrade facilities and lighting for spectators. The grant comes on top of a \$2.5 million commitment from the Albanese Federal Government and \$2.85 million from the Inner West Council for upgrades to the oval. The current facilities for women are frankly appalling. These changes will mean that women players can achieve their full potential at Henson Park and that young girls and boys are able to watch elite women's AFL at their local ground. It will also ensure that local teams, including the Newtown Jets and the Newtown Breakaways, benefit from world-class facilities on their own patch. I congratulate the Jets, the AFL and everyone involved in this achievement.

Finally, I am pleased to announce the successful recipients of the local sports grants for the Summer Hill electorate. These grants acknowledge the extraordinary work that local clubs and sports teams do in the community and work to increase participation in sport, particularly for women, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability and First Nations people. They seek to address barriers to participation and assist clubs to offer quality service to their members and meet community needs. This year the Canterbury District Soccer Football Association received funds to develop and offer a youth female coach development program, which will develop critical coaching skills in women aged 14 to 22, and to establish a female football festival for girls aged eight to 14.

The Cooks River Croquet Club received funds to purchase equipment to introduce gateball to the club and purchase new mallets. Marrickville Cricket Club was awarded funds to upgrade three synthetic cricket nets at Marrickville Oval that had fallen into serious disrepair. With the huge growth of junior cricket across the inner west, the importance of well-maintained nets for training is important. The Red Devils will replace mobile goals that were vandalised during the COVID lockdown, which will mean that more and more players will be able to take the field at Mackey Park. The Newtown Breakaways will provide players with guernseys for their Indigenous round to mark historic events. The Summer Hill Lakers will invest in young netballers by running skills development sessions. The Western Suburbs Lawn Tennis Association will continue its program of upgrading the historic courts at Pratten Park in Ashfield, replacing the old, unsafe fencing. Finally, the NSW River Canoe Club, based in south Marrickville, will install water tanks to recycle water collected on the clubhouse roof to wash its canoes. Local sport has never been more important. I acknowledge, congratulate and thank everyone in my local community sporting clubs.

## **SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE COMMONWEALTH GAMES PARTICIPANTS**

### **WESTERN SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORT**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (22:14):** I acknowledge the recent successes of our New South Wales athletes in the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. In particular, I acknowledge the local athletes representing the Seven Hills electorate and their respective communities. The Commonwealth Games occur every four years and feature athletes from 72 different nations and territories. Competitors from across New South Wales and Australia train year round for the chance to showcase their skills on the international stage. The games consisted of 22 individual sports, three multi-discipline sports and a further seven parasports included on the roster of mainstream sports, such as swimming, athletics and gymnastics. They are alongside some more unique sports such as lawn bowls and squash.

Whatever one's interests, the Commonwealth Games continue to provide a wide variety of sports and local competitors to cheer on. The Seven Hills electorate was lucky enough to have three athletes selected as part of the Australian team: Joshua and Nathan Katz, who competed in judo, and Timothy Hodge, who competed in swimming. The Katz brothers are Hills locals, who made their Commonwealth Games debut in 2022. Nathan is a two-time Olympian, having competed in Rio and Tokyo. He claimed multiple Australian junior titles and competed in the World Judo Juniors Championships. Joshua has won four straight Junior Oceania titles from 2012-15, which was more than enough for him to qualify for the Rio Olympic Games. That made him the youngest male judo athlete to represent Australia. They both inherited their love of the sport from their mother, Kerrye Katz, who represented Australia for the women's judo at the 1998 Seoul Olympics, coached by their dad, Robert. The pair brought home a bronze medal for their country in those games.

Tim Hodge is a Kings Langley local and two-time Commonwealth Games silver medallist, who made his second appearance at the Commonwealth Games. Tim made his World Championship debut in Glasgow when he was just 14 years old, where he competed in seven events. The following year he made his Paralympics debut in

Rio. Since then the nine-time Australian champion has claimed two bronze medals at the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships and two silver medals and a bronze at the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo. At this year's games Tim continued his trend of winning gold and breaking the Commonwealth Games record in the 100-metre backstroke S9 final. It is fantastic to hear the results from our local athletes. Each one has brought home a medal for their country and State. I am looking forward to catching up with them and celebrating their successes.

Many athletes have trained at the Western Sydney Academy of Sport, which takes in athletes from the local government areas of Blacktown, the City of Parramatta, the Hills, Penrith, Hawkesbury, Cumberland, Fairfield and Blue Mountains. It serves to unify skill and technical development using state-of-the-art performance equipment. Athletes who train and develop have a high degree of commitment, discipline, personal growth and accountability. The academy also serves as a pipeline for multiple major sporting corporations across New South Wales. Some of those partners include the NSW Institute of Sport, the NSW Government Office of Sport and the Western Sydney University, which provides sporting-specific programs.

Many big names in sport have started at the academy, including the 2022 Tokyo canoe medallist Jess Fox, Australian Diamonds netball champion Paige Hadley, and a number of our current National Rugby League athletes. It is fantastic to have a facility like the Western Sydney Academy of Sport, which can invest in local talent for the future. At the conclusion of the Commonwealth Games on 8 August, Australia flew ahead with 178 medals under its belt: sixty-seven gold, 57 silver and 54 bronze. On top of that brilliant result, the Australian Diamonds netball team secured the 1,000th Australian Commonwealth Games medal. I extend my congratulations once again to our three local athletes Timothy Hodge, Nathan Katz and Joshua Katz. The Seven Hills electorate and the entire nation are proud. I congratulate the entire Australian Commonwealth Games team. It was a fantastic effort representing our great nation.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF GERRINGONG SUNRISE CHANGE OVER LUNCHEON EVENT**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—On Saturday 25 June 2022 I attended the Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise 2022 19th annual Change Over event held at The Mercure Resort in Gerringong. A huge thank you to outgoing President Robert Miller and congratulations to incoming President Sue McGilvary and I also acknowledge and thank the Secretary John Green and Treasurer Christa Wood and President Elect Graham St Clair, Director Jeff Quine and Director Pauline Thwaites. The Gerringong Sunrise Rotary Club continues to do some wonderfully important and selfless work right across our local communities and I sincerely thank them for their ongoing hard work and dedication to helping others and for helping to make our local community a better place. I thank each and every one of them.

#### **GERRINGONG LIONS CLUB CHANGE OVER 2022 DINNER EVENT**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—I was extremely pleased to attend the Lions Club of Gerringong's 2022 Change Over Dinner held on Thursday 7th July 2022 at the Gerroa Boat Fisherman's Club. I congratulate my good friend and former Kiama Councillor and former schoolteacher Mark Westhoff on being elected as the incoming President. I also acknowledge and sincerely thank the outgoing President Richard Barber for his outstanding contribution during his time as President. The Club is now on track to surpass \$70,000 income for Return and Earn this year which is absolutely fantastic and will allow the Lions Club of Gerringong to continue helping those in need. Our Lions volunteers really do make the world a better place. Thank you and keep up the great work and keep doing more great things for our local community.

#### **NATIONAL TREE DAY AT BOONGAREE BUSHCARE IN BERRY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—On Sunday 31 July 2022, I celebrated National Tree Day by visiting Boongaree Bushcare which was supported by Berry Landcare and joining with local bush regeneration volunteers to plant trees and to spruce up a bit of the surrounding area. Thanks to local Boongaree Bushcare coordinator Hugh Sheil and Ron for having the vision and supporting the group along with the dedicated and hard-working Peter Swanson. A Reconciliation Garden is a special site as a part of Boongaree. Within the site and trails to the centre will be a historic walk from the southside to the centre of the northside commemorating the history of the area. In the centre of the northside there will be two circles, a small one for traditional smoking, spirit cleansing as you enter the yarning circle as an area for discussion. The design concept is to have minimal impact on the environment and Boongaree Bushcare is helping by planting and regenerating the natural area whilst still importantly conforming to all Australian Standards for access. The garden is well advanced. There are ongoing sites with dedicated working bees of volunteers and I thank each of them.

### AL MINIA CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was delighted to catch up with Al Minia Charitable Association, and inspect the new upgrades to their headquarters in Chester Hill in June. Al Minia Charitable Association was established in 1978. Since its establishment, Al Minia has played a pivotal role in providing support and essential services for the Lebanese community in NSW. This includes organising social activities to promote cohesion within the local community, offering medical seminars and education programs for children and the elderly. I was delighted to support Al Minia Charitable Association in their 2021 Community Building Partnership Grant application to secure \$30,000 to upgrade their new centre in Chester Hill, including the purchase of a security system. I wish to congratulate the Al Minia Charitable Association President Moustapha Mahfoud, Vice President Nazih El Kheir, Secretary Ahmed Bakr, Treasurer Ahmed Dehabi, Media Director Rami Dandan, Coordinator Sahar Chemiet, and the members of the Al Minia Charitable Association for their efforts in supporting our local community.

### AUSTRALIAN-SYRIAN BUSINESSMEN COUNCIL

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I had the honour of attending and speaking the launch of the Australian-Syrian Businessmen Council at Summerland Restaurant in Bankstown on Thursday 30 June 2022. The event was well-attended, with many dignitaries present. The Australian-Syrian Businessmen Council was founded with the aim of developing economic connections within the Australian-Syrian business community, and to help foster networking opportunities. I congratulate Australian-Syrian Businessmen Council President Ali Jourieh, Vice President Eng. Dhafer Aayek, Secretary Dr Mohannad Morsi, Treasurer Dr Bashar Kahawati, and Executive Members Dr Ali Al-Ashi, Dr Ammar Hamad, Loay Al-Rifai, Ali Ramadan and George Shahristan on the formation of the Australian-Syrian Business Council. With their incredible expertise and experience, I have no doubt that ASBC will be a great success. I thank the Australian-Syrian Businessmen Council for kindly presenting me with an Appreciation Award at Club Condell Park last month. It is a terrific honour, and I am proud to support the Australian-Syrian Businessmen Council in their future endeavours.

### BANKSTOWN BULLS JRLFC

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate the Bankstown Bulls Junior Rugby League Football Club (Bankstown Bulls JRFLC) on being a successful recipient of the 2021-2022 Local Sport Grant Program. The Local Sport Grant Program aims to increase participation in sport by providing financial support to sporting organisations to encourage the uptake of sport in our local area. I was delighted to support the Bankstown Bulls JRLFC in their 2021-22 Local Sport Grant Program application to secure \$3,000 for the purchase of sports equipment, and \$2,000 to upgrade the Club's electronic systems including scoreboards and speakers. I was also delighted to pop down to the Bankstown Bulls Gala Day on Saturday 6 August at Ruse Park, Bankstown and see their upgraded club room which I supported in the 2020 Community Building Partnership grant applications. I wish to acknowledge President Ali Mehanna, Secretary George Najjar, Treasurer Zahi El Zein, Senior Vice President Stan Hetaraka and Assistant Secretary Lawrence Karam for their terrific work in promoting rugby league in our local community. I am proud to support the Bankstown Bulls JRLFC as the Club's patron, and I congratulate all the Executive, coaches, volunteers and players on a successful season.

### ORCCA

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I thank the Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans Australia Incorporated [ORRCA] for its dedicated work in the East Coast Whale Migration Research Project. At Cape Solander, the project aims to record all Minke whales and calves (new pilot research project in May/June); record all whale/dolphin species passing along our coastline; record and report on all white or special interest whales; record and report on sick looking whales; record mums and bubs heading north (newborns); record and observe entanglements as a support role in the ORRCA Rescue Hotline and NPWS; and launch its 'Junior ORRCA Explorers' program. ORCAA is the only volunteer wildlife rehabilitation group in NSW licensed to rescue, rehabilitate, and release marine mammals. ORRCA's local work this year could not have been done without the hard work and dedication of its volunteer team: Leesa Pratt, Mark McGeachie, Debbie Parry, Diana Fox, Brett Lobwein, Haley Saldamli, Emma Hobbs, Ruth Friedman, Samantha Killick, Jessica Thorne, Ann McGeachie, Paul Kammerer, Greg Fox, Sarah-Jo Lobwein, Ashley Ryan, Steven Dunn, Sue Rennie Wright, Nicola Kennedy, Jack Hubbard, and Jason Sutcliffe.

### BRONTE HENDRICKS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate Bronte Hendricks of Cronulla on being a finalist in the 2022 Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards [RIWA]. This award acknowledges and celebrates the work done by women whose actions inspire others and make a real difference in their communities. Bronte has a Bachelor of Inclusive Education and Disability Studies. She is the co-founder of Stellar Experiences.

Stellar Experiences is an organisation that creates an environment where young people living with mild to moderate disabilities are encouraged to push themselves to their full potential. Stellar is part of a growing movement that is breaking down stigma around disability and empowering people to live more inclusive and adventurous lives. Bronte is passionate about creating more inclusive options for young people with disabilities. Bronte's clients are supported to pursue a range of interests that they would otherwise be unable to do, including competitive sports, music, skiing, international travel, and skydiving experiences.

#### **NAIDOC WEEK 2022 - SUTHERLAND SHIRE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I commend the Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation and Sutherland Shire Council in partnership for the success of the 2022 NAIDOC Week celebrations. Held annually across Australia in the first week of July, NAIDOC Week celebrates and recognises the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This year, over 1000 attendees participated in celebrations at Gunnamatta Hall, Cronulla. Stallholders included over 30 local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community service providers, as well as a range of activities including kids' cultural workshops, local community art displays, the NSW Police Dog Squad (Menai), and the Holsworthy Army Reserve Regiment defence vehicle displays. Many thanks to hosts Cr Carmelo Pesce (Mayor, Sutherland Shire) and Aunty Deanna Schreiber (Chair, Sutherland Shire Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee and Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation); welcome to Country Aunty Barbara Simms (Traditional Owner, on behalf of the Gweagal and Bidjigal Peoples); master of ceremonies Bruce Howell (Deputy Chair, Sutherland Shire Council ATSI Advisory Committee); and performers Col Hardy (First Aboriginal Person to win a Golden Guitar at Tamworth Music Festival), Djaadjawan Dancers and Charla Brown (Caringbah North Public School - National Anthem in English and Dharawal languages).

#### **CAMP BREAKAWAY**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge Camp Breakaway on winning the May round of Greater Bank's #GreaterCentralCoast Community Funding Program. Camp Breakaway is a San Remo based respite care provider for people living with a disability and their carers, and has been operating for over 40 years. The organisation provides an important service for some of the Central Coast's most vulnerable residents and enables carers to have a break from looking after their loved ones who are sick, aging or living with disabilities. Camp Breakaway won \$2000 for winning the May round of the funding initiative. I understand that they plan to use this money to run some of their programs. Once again, I congratulate Camp Breakaway on winning the May round of Greater Bank's #GreaterCentralCoast Community Funding Program. I also wish to thank them for the incredible work that they do and for supporting those living with disabilities on the Central Coast.

#### **CENTRAL COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I acknowledge Central Coast Academy of Sport for their partnership with the University of Newcastle to deliver work integrated learning opportunities for students. As part of this partnership, the Academy has recently welcomed 5 placement students to undertake work in their office, so that they can continue to meet the needs of the Coast's sporting sector. The placements were arranged by the Academy's Programs and Strength and Conditioning Manager, and former University of Newcastle student Tye McGann. The Academy have noted that having these students on board will benefit their administration centre because they will be able to assist with jobs from the Regional Academies of Sport Coaches Conference, as well as with the launch of touch football, swimming and athletics. I know that the placement is a great opportunity for the successful students and I am sure that they will gain many useful skills that will help them establish their careers. I commend Central Coast Academy of Sport for establishing this program.

#### **ZAC GAY**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge Zac Gay, who was named the Newcastle Permanent Youth Volunteer of the Year at the Hunter Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence 2021-22. The Awards of Excellence were held at the Newcastle Exhibition & Convention Centre on 17 June, to recognise and celebrate the amazing achievements of members of the Hunter Surf Life Saving community. Zac is a volunteer surf lifesaver at Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club, and has played a vital role in ensuring beach goer safety, as well as assisting in various Club activities. Zac has also aided people in times of crisis, including the Singleton, Muswellbrook, and Maitland communities during the March floods. It is obvious that Zac is a selfless young man who is dedicated to helping others. I congratulate Zac on this achievement and thank him for his contribution to Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club as well as the Hunter Surf Life Saving Community.

#### **KHANCOBAN POST OFFICE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Ron Aarons and Bronwyne Kremmer, owners of the Khancoban Post Office, who have decided to retire after five years of successful trading. The

business owners have also made a decision to sell the business but will remain living in the area. When Ron & Browyne first arrived in Khancoban from Melbourne, they were seeking a tree change. Khancoban -- a small town of 300 people nestled in the Snowy Valley of NSW -- has benefitted from your decision to settle in that community and run the Post Office. These have not been easy years, particularly over the course of the pandemic, and you have made a valuable contribution to local services for business and residents alike. You expanded the business into a broader line of products and online services, as well as being a connection point for visitors to the region. Thank you Ron & Browyne, and I wish you all the very best in retirement.

#### **RASF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Briony Willett of Corowa, who was awarded a scholarship from The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Foundation. Ms Willett was amongst eighty-two recipients to receive this award in the 2022 Rural Scholarship Program. Students who reside in regional areas often need to relocate in order to pursue tertiary education. Scholarships like this are designed to contribute and support students in rural areas financially with expenses such as educational studies, accommodation, textbooks and to provide a level of income support that allows them to focus on their studies. I wish Briony all the very best in her final year of tertiary study and for successful completion of her chosen degree in Social Work.

#### **FOUR DECADES TACKLING BLAZES TO HANG HAT ON**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Lindsay Bush from Corowa Fire and Rescue brigade who will be retiring from his role as Brigade Captain after four decades with the crew. Mr Bush was part of a very dedicated and professional rescue team, who over the years fought not only residential fires but bushfires, floods, hailstorms and other emergencies along the border of NSW and Victoria. It was in 1982 when Lindsay first joined the brigade and served as captain for 17 years before taking on command of the station in 2005. Over this extensive period Mr Bush has witnessed many changes in his role, especially with the introduction of higher quality breathing apparatus, upgrades to equipment, more modern fire trucks and safer uniforms. A big thankyou to Lindsay for his efforts and service over the years, for taking a leadership role in this key regional service and for being prepared to face danger to help keep our communities safe.

#### **JIAHNNA IVEY**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I acknowledge Jiahnna Ivey who has been awarded the Una May Smith Scholarship after being chosen as the NSW Public School's Year 2 recipient. The academic scholarship supports young Aboriginal students to successfully complete their schooling and progress to future tertiary education by providing funds for educational expenses such as computers, fees, textbooks and excursions. A Ballina Public School student, Jiahnna is a proud Indigenous girl who demonstrates love for her culture in myriad ways and is well-known in the community for her creative abilities. The award is a well-earned acknowledgment of Jiahnna's efforts at school and within the community and provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for this highly-motivated and talented student, setting her on a clear path to high school and university if she chooses. Jiahnna was presented with the award at a "Celebrating Excellence in Public Schools" ceremony in Sydney, and is testament to the high standards of our public school system, and the supportive learning environment at Ballina Public School. I congratulate Jiahnna on winning the scholarship, and on her future goals of becoming an artist and a scientist.

#### **SEVA INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATING POSITIVE ROLE MODELS EVENT**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 18 June 2022, I was honoured to attend SEVA Australia's Celebrating Positive Role Models event in Parramatta. This event was also held with Boronia Multicultural Services and Sri Lankan Women's Network. SEVA Australia works with the South Asian community in Australia and provides services in areas such as supporting women, healthcare supporting women, education, employment and aged care. The celebrating positive role models event recognises and celebrates volunteers and other people who work to support the community. At the event, awards were presented to positive role models. I would like to thank SEVA Australia, Boronia Multicultural Services and Sri Lankan Women's Network for hosting this event and Sue Advani for inviting me to this event. Sue Advani has supported the South Asian community in Australia for many years, and is a white ribbon advocate who was awarded local woman of the year for Strathfield in 2017. Sue currently serves on the board of directors for Macquarie Community College.

#### **MERRYLANDS IN EXPLORE MAGAZINE**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—Explore magazine recently recognised the cultural diversity, food and individuality found in my electorate in an article entitled "How to visit Afghanistan, Syria and Lebanon without leaving home" which said "Pitt Street, Merrylands, a centre for Sydney's Afghans, Syrians, Iranians, Lebanese, Egyptians and many other Middle Eastern cultures." Taste Cultural Tours is based in Granville and is a social enterprise providing training to Australian migrants and refugees and local youth. They also visited my friend Ali

Snoubar's Syrian restaurant, Al Shami, on Railway Terrace, Merrylands for a delicious Syrian breakfast. Ryaan Persian supermarket sells a variety of turmeric- and saffron-coated nuts, and candy and canned okra; and Green Wheat Bakery, is renowned for enormous Afghan tandoori bread is freshly baked every day. Tolo Kebab House has Afghan dumplings of minced lamb in garlic yoghurt sauce mixed with spices along with Afghan palau brown rice sprinkled with barberry and slivered carrots and Shiraz Ice Cream has pure carrot juice spiced with saffron ice cream and a hint of cardamom and pistachio. Small business in Merrylands have had a difficult two years but I am delighted Merrylands has been recognised as a special place to live and visit.

### **LIONS CLUB THE ENTRANCE**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I acknowledge Lions Club, The Entrance which over the weekend celebrated 65 years of Lions on the Central Coast. This also coincided with the celebration of 75 years of Lions in Australia. The Lions of The Entrance were the first Lions Club on the Central Coast and over the past 65 years have been involved in many community projects including the creation of two Lions Parks, the Lions Rocket Park and the Lions Sensory Gardens. To date, the Club remains an integral part of The Entrance Community, continuing to hold the Lions Community Markets every Sunday, having done so for the last 40 years, catering to not only the locals but the many tourists who visit our beautiful town! I commend the efforts of the Club and in particular President Phillip Morley and Secretary Marcia Allman for a successful event over the weekend which amassed more than 100 attendees. On behalf of The Entrance community, thank you for your continued service and congratulations again for achieving 65 years of Lions on the Central Coast.

### **NATALIE MORT**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Congratulations to Georges River Councillor, Natalie Mort for qualifying for the Ironman World Championship in Hawaii. After completing her first Ironman in 1996, it was 22 years before Natalie attempted her second Ironman in 2017. Since 2017 she has completed three full Ironman events and came painstakingly close to qualifying, just falling short by one spot each time. On her fifth attempt on Sunday 1 May, in brutal rain and windy conditions and battling COVID-19 and walking the final eight kilometres, Natalie proved that persistence, determination and never giving up does pay off. She completed the race in a gruelling 13 hrs 32 minutes and 55 seconds and even had to spend two hours on a drip in the medical tent at the end of the race. We congratulate Natalie and wish her all the very best in her preparation for her dream – competing in Kona, Hawaii. What an amazing achievement of remarkable endurance – our very own Ironman is amongst us!

### **CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR 100TH BIRTHDAY MARGUERITE DIBB**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Congratulations on your 100th birthday Marguerite Dibb – Marguerite Dibb (nee Stead) was born on 7 October 1922 and arrived in Australia from Bradford, England in November 1949 with her husband, Charles Dibb. Marguerite and Charles built their home in Hurstville where Margaret (her commonly used name) still lives and where they raised two daughters, Pauline and Catherine. Margaret worked until she was over 60 years of age at local businesses in Hurstville and the Australia Post Office. Her husband, who passed away in 1988, also worked in local business as an engineer. The family made their first visit to England in 1978 where family members still live today.

Margaret made many life-long friends in Hurstville as her daughters attended St Mary's Star of the Sea. They all loved Hurstville and the life Australia has offered the family which has now grown to include seven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. We know Margaret to be a caring and wonderful mother, grandmother and great grandmother and a loyal friend. Margaret has been loved by so many for a 100 years. Wishing Margaret the happiest of days on her 100th birthday."

### **HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY EDWARD GROSSI**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Happy 100th birthday Edward Grossi – Edward "Doudou" Grossi was born in France on 11 August 1922. He was the oldest boy in a family of eight. He trained as a mechanic and fitter and turner. During WWII he joined the Resistance and later served in a reparatory role in Germany. After the war he met Paulette at a dinner dance and in 1951 they were married. In 1961, searching for adventure and better life prospects, he came to Australia as part of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Paulette followed three months later. Enjoying the laidback lifestyle and favourable climate Australia had to offer, they decided to remain, eventually buying a house in Earlwood in 1965. Their daughter Angelique was born in 1966. Doudou made many friends and was particularly well known in the French Petanque community, going to numerous championships and bringing home many trophies. Paulette made sure they still went dancing. Sadly, Paulette lost her battle with cancer in 1990. Doudou continued to be active in his retirement and in 2012 Doudou moved into St George Aged Care at Bexley, where he likes playing bingo and enjoys the company of his family. Joyeux 100e anniversaire, Doudou!

**CLUB MARCONI – 64TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I wish to congratulate the board and members of Club Marconi on the 64th Anniversary of the club. Throughout the sixty four years since its establishment, Club Marconi has had many achievements and made many contributions to the community over the years. It was an absolute pleasure to be with family, friends and fellow members on Tuesday 2nd August 2022 to mark the anniversary with the traditional luncheon. The celebrations were all the more special with the presence of foundation members, honorary members, life members, past presidents and board of directors. I congratulate Club Marconi President Morris Licata, CEO Matt Biviano, Directors and staff for hosting the celebration after an absence due to the pandemic. It was certainly wonderful to be a part of this momentous occasion.

**WESTERN SYDNEY GREYHOUNDS AS PETS ADOPTION CENTRE OPENING**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—The Parliamentary Friends of Greyhound Racing had the pleasure and privilege to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony for the official opening of the Western Sydney Greyhounds as Pets Adoption Centre. The Greyhounds as Pets [GAP] program is a not-for-profit initiative that has been operating since 2008. GAP facilitate the adoption of greyhounds through responsible rehoming practices. All greyhounds passing through GAP are behaviourally assessed, vet-checked, desexed, microchipped and registered with their respective local council. It was a pleasure to be in the presence of GAP Ambassadors former Socceroos player Tim Cahill and Australian boxing champion Harry Garside. I along with my co-chair Nathaniel Smith MP and Parliamentary friends would like to thank Dr Alicia Fuller the General Manager of GAP, Mr Tony Mestrov CEO Greyhound Racing NSW, directors of the board and volunteers for their commitment to the program.

**AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I wish to congratulate the Australian Christian Fellowship Church on the purchase of their new Toyota HiAce Van with funding from the Community Building Partnership Program. The new van will assist the church community in transporting mobility impaired parishioners for Sunday Services. It will further assist the pastors in transporting the youth and senior groups for activities and events. It was a pleasure to take part in the Sunday service on Sunday 24th July 2022 and meet many of the parishioners that contributed to the service. I congratulate Bishop Francois Machara, Founder and General Oversea and Senior Pastor of the Australian Christian Fellowship Church, Pastor Isaac, musicians, choir members and attendants for their commitment to Christian ministry in the Fairfield community.

**DR PETER BENSON**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**—Dr Peter Benson lived a long and rich life. The lifetime Ingleburn resident and proud Old Boy of Hurlstone Agricultural High School passed away at the ripe old age of 97. Dr Benson attended Hurlstone Agricultural High School from 1938 to 1942. A prominent local dentist, Dr Benson would count former Prime Minister of Australia Gough Whitlam as both a patient and friend. Dr Benson was Ingleburn Horticultural Society's Vice President for many years. His own garden was both his passion and his retreat. Intelligent and compassionate, Dr Benson was intrigued in how the mind can assist the body in pain management. He wrote a thesis on hypnosis which is in the rare book section of Sydney University's Fisher Library. Dr Benson was passionate about heritage and a fierce defender of the Hurlstone Farm. He strongly opposed plans by the Liberal Government to sell off the farm for housing and his advocacy helped retain the school at its rightful home in Glenfield. Our community will be forever grateful for Dr Benson's enormous contributions, and we will miss him greatly. Rest in peace.

**JASMINE SEIDEL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards are a celebration of youth achievement that recognises the work of young people who have made outstanding achievements in their chosen field and for their community. The 2022 presentation dinner for this year's awards was held on the 13th of May, and featured Year 7 New Lambton Heights student Jasmine Seidel. In the past 5 years, Jasmine has raised over \$8000 for the John Hunter Children's Hospital Oncology Ward and other charities, and it is these selfless works that saw her become a finalist for the Freemasons of NSW/ACT Community Service Award. Jasmine raised funds through a variety of means, including physical challenges, running cake stalls, creating online social media awareness campaigns, and performing odd jobs around the community. In addition, she has organised gift collection campaigns to provide Christmas gifts for local disability organisations. Although Jasmine did not win the award, her charity has had a wonderful effect on the community. I would like to congratulate her for the nomination and thank her for the work she has done in the Wallsend community. Well done Jasmine!

### **FIRE AND RESCUE NSW STATION 357 LAMBTON**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—During the Mid North Coast flood emergency in March 2021, a strike team of 17 firefighters from Fire and Rescue NSW was assembled to serve as a response team and flood rescue technicians. Strike Team Zulu included two firefighters from 357 Station Lambton – Deputy Commissioner Jeremy Fewtrell and Senior Firefighter Gerard Collins. Their efforts earned them and the rest of the team an International Rescue Award for Outstanding Achievement at the Higgins and Langley Awards. These awards were held in the USA earlier in the year. This award marks the first time an Australian individual or team had been presented with the Outstanding Achievement Award. All of Strike Team Zulu did an incredible job and service to the communities affected by flood emergencies. My congratulations extend to not just Deputy Commissioner Fewtrell and Senior Firefighter Collins, but to the entire team. The award is well-deserved and I am pleased to see the hard work of our firefighters being recognised. Congratulations to Strike Team Zulu, and thank you for all that you do.

### **CHARISSA SMITH**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Breast cancer is an illness that has a devastating effect on too many Australian families. Approximately 57 Australians are diagnosed each and every day, which means over 20,000 Australians are diagnosed with breast cancer annually. On 18 June, Charissa Smith and two of her friends organised a breast cancer fundraiser at Sanctuary Community Hall in Fletcher. The event was a great success, with a variety of attractions and activities like market stalls, raffles, games, grazing boards, and a lucky door prize. The star attraction, however, was the organisers dying their hair pink in support of the National Breast Cancer foundation. A wonderful night was had by all. The event raised a total of \$3770 for the National Breast Cancer foundation. This money will go towards research for the prevention and treatment of breast cancer, and potentially save many lives. Well done Charissa, and thank you for the great fundraiser you and your friends organised.

### **LOCAL STUDENTS COMPETE IN NSW CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I recognise local primary school students in my electorate who recently competed in the NSW All Schools Cross Country Championship. Held at Sydney Motorsport Park in Eastern Creek, students from across the state battled it out over the 2km and 3km courses. Congratulations to local students Alexandra Bova and Ava Jacob from Loreto Kirribilli, Hana Horii and Natalie Rice from Neutral Bay Public School, Alessandra McWilliam, Sophia Squires, and Ella Hooley from Queenwood Junior, and Isabelle Chudley from Wenona School. A special congratulations to Alessandra McWilliam who placed third overall and has been selected in the NSW Team to compete at the Nationals events in Adelaide in August. Congratulations to all these local students on an impressive display of athleticism competing at the NSW All Schools Cross Country Championship, well done to all.

### **NORTH SYDNEY BEARS FINISH AS MINOR PREMIERS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—During a weekend of wild weather and rain, the North Sydney Bears Harvey Norman Women's Premiership team played a remarkable game of football against the Wentworth Magpies. After an almost flawless game of footy the Bears kept the Magpies to zero in their final round of the regular season. After Cortez Te Pou scored the first try within the first two minutes, the tries continued to with Luisa Yaranamua, and Kirra Dibb converting allowing the team to head to the sheds 14-0. The Bears came out swinging during the second half with Kirra Dibb, Tyla Gambell, and Katrina Phippen finishing off the Magpies 30-0, ensuring that they took out the season as Minor Premiers. A huge congratulations to Katrina Phippen, Shenai Lendill, Page McGregor, Tyla Gambell, Cortez Te Pou, Luisa Yaranamua, Racene McGregor, Tara McGrath-West, Nita Maynard, Kalosipani Hopoate, Vanessa Foliaki, Jamilee Bright, Kirra Dibb, Renee Targett, Allison Futialo, Angelina Teakaranga-Katoa, Reshaun Vaughan, Cassey Tohi-Hiku, Claudia Brown, Tyra Boysen, and Chloe Jackson. Congratulations to all the players and coaching staff on a fantastic season and making it into the semi-finals.

### **VALE ROLAND SHELTON**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I recognise the passing of UTS North Sydney Cricket Club Life Member Roland 'Ro' Shelton in early July. Ro joined the club in the 1960's from the far north of NSW and made his first grade debut against Mosman in the 1970/71 season. Ro was a quick leg spin bowler, and over a 13 season first grade career Ro took 389 first grade wickets. He was also a more than handy batsman scoring 3972 runs with a highest score of 114. Ro was mentioned in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1980: "Shelton, one of the best grade players not to appear in first-class cricket, was superb, combining ferocious spin with accuracy". Ro is remembered fondly as one of the most decorated members of the club, being a life member, first grade captain and first grade player #422. My thoughts go out to Ro's family friends, and all the club members who knew him from his glory days with UTS North Sydney Cricket Club. Vale Ro Shelton

**NATALIE VAN COERVORDEN**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—The 2022 Commonwealth Games has been must-see television in July and August. The opportunity to see the best Australian athletes compete against the best athletes from other Commonwealth countries is something many of us have embraced. One of those Australian athletes that have graced our tv screens hails from our own backyard here in Campbelltown. Of course, I am referring to Glen Alpine resident and triathlete, Natalie Van Coervorden. The 28-year-old has competed in competitions all over the world, however, the Birmingham event was her first Commonwealth Games. And Natalie certainly did herself, her family, her friends, and the entire Campbelltown community proud. Natalie eventually walked away from Birmingham with a bronze medal following an outstanding result in the mixed team relay with fellow Australian's Jacob Birtwhistle, Matthew Hauser and Sophie Linn. Competing in the women's individual sprint distance, Natalie also finished 14th. It was an incredible effort from an incredible athlete. Congratulations again Natalie on a wonderful Commonwealth Games. Myself and the entire community of Campbelltown are enormously proud of you.

**MATTHEW LEVY OAM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I give my warmest congratulations to a distinguished Willoughby local who we're all proud of, Matthew Levy OAM, who won gold at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games in the Men's 50m Freestyle S7. Matthew's latest triumph in the pool is a fitting crown to his decorated career as an Australian Paralympic Swimmer. At five Paralympic Games from 2004 to 2020, Matthew has taken home three gold, one silver and six bronze medals for Australia. Born 15 weeks prematurely, with cerebral palsy and a vision impairment, Matthew survived 50-plus operations to become the international swim star he is today. His determination to overcome personal obstacles and shine on the world stage has made him an Australian success-story for which he was awarded an OAM in 2014. Outside the pool, Matthew has attained degrees in Business, including an MBA, and is pursuing a career in banking with Westpac. As a published author, he released his personal memoir in 2020, entitled *Keeping Your Head Above Water: Inspirational Insights from a Champion*. Matthew is indeed a champion and his success on the world stage has done both Willoughby and Australia proud.

**NORTHBRIDGE SAILING CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—My electorate of Willoughby is fortunate to be surrounded by waterways which offer not only beautiful scenery but fantastic opportunities for water sports such as sailing. This has given rise to recreational clubs such as the Northbridge Sailing Club. I'm delighted to recognise the Northbridge Sailing Club as a community-driven local club and much-loved icon of Willoughby. Located on the shores of Sydney's Middle Harbour, the Club provides people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to sail in a relaxed and friendly club setting. On Sunday 31 July, I was honoured to be a part of the Club's annual presentation day. I congratulate all the trophy and award recipients, and I particularly wish to thank the outgoing Commodore Peter Doyle who has led the Club for five years. Through the great work of Northbridge Sailing Club, I am confident that the next generation of local sailors is in good hands and I congratulate the new leadership of this wonderful local club.

**CHATSWOOD ROSEVILLE ROTARY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Tuesday 28 June, I was delighted to be a guest of the Rotary Club of Chatswood Roseville to attend their annual Changeover Dinner. I would like to congratulate the outgoing President, Michael MacQuillan, for his past year of dedicated leadership and welcome the new President, Norman Gibson. Each year, local Rotary clubs appoint a new President who is supported by a dedicated team of club executives and directors across an array of areas. Serving all as volunteers, these office-holders ensure the smooth running of the club, helping to coordinate regular meetings, activities and events. The Rotary Club of Chatswood Roseville is very proactive in our local community, involved with graffiti removal, charity food drives, Bunnings BBQs and many more initiatives. With a heart to make a positive difference in the world, the club has also supported overseas aid projects in South East Asia, Africa and Europe. Chatswood Roseville Rotary is a wonderful local community club and I wish it all the best for the year ahead.

**YOUTH SOLUTIONS – ANNUAL CHARITY EVENT**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I am pleased to inform the Chamber of the success enjoyed by Youth Solutions on their Annual Charity Event. Youth Solutions is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to 'promoting health and preventing harm' for the youth of Macarthur. Youth Solutions works tirelessly in educating young people through engaging campaigns and programs. These programs are designed to educate and illustrate to young people the dangers and harm that comes from drugs and alcohol. The Annual Charity Event raised more than \$50,000. That is a testament to the dedication of the Youth Solutions team, and it is to be commended and

applauded. I thank Geraldine Dean, the CEO, and the team at Youth Solution, on behalf of the Camden and Macarthur community.

#### **GRACE AMOS**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I recognise Grace Amos who will be taking to the stage for the upcoming Valleyways music festival in the Camden electorate on the 10th of September. At only 18-years old, Grace is determined to make music her life and after finishing her Higher School Certificate in 2021, she was accepted into her dream school, The Conservatorium of Music where she learnt more about song writing and music production. Grace has already made her handprint into the music industry, in 2018 she was selected to perform as part of UK artists HRVY's Australian tour, last year she performed at the Winter Wine festival in Gerringong as one of the supporting artists for Ziggy Alberts, and in 2022 performed at Camden Council's Boots and Beats country music festival headlined by Adam Brand. At Valleyways, Grace will entertain thousands alongside of the home-grown The Rubens. I wish Grace the best of luck at Valleyways and look forward to attending the event in September.

#### **MACARTHUR ANGLICAN SCHOOL DUBBO SHOW SUCCESS**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Dubbo Show is the NSW Breeders Show and is the biggest sheep show held in NSW that is known for its strong competition. The students of Macarthur Anglican School had some great success in a number of fields; In the White Suffolk Ram Lamb Classes, the rams paraded by Jorja, Izzabella and Mikayla were awarded a 3rd and 2x 5th place ribbons. Handler and Junior Judging Competition 13 years and under Handlers Jeffery placed 5th, Christine placed 2nd and Izzabella made the final. In the Merino section Christine placed 6th and Elizabeth placed 3rd. Meat Breed section: Jorja placed 4th, Christine placed 5th, Elizabeth placed 6th and Izzabella made the final. Handler and Junior Judging competition 14 years and over Handlers Elizabeth placed 6th. Congratulations to all the students on a wonderful weekend of sheep showing.

#### **LORRAINE TAYLOR RESERVE**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—The newly named Lorraine Taylor Reserve is located on the highest point of St Ives in my electorate of Davidson. It was originally called Athena Reserve and its soil was mainly clay, due to high winds repeatedly blowing off the topsoil. I believe it resembled more of a 'brick pit' than a park. Lorraine Taylor was a sixth generation St Ives resident whose family lineage dated back to the early 1800s. Les and Lorraine Taylor moved to Athena Avenue in 1969. Lorraine had a clear vision for rejuvenating the windswept reserve and encouraged the local community to help convert the park to a grassy play area for everyone to enjoy. For many years the community diligently collected grass clippings and spread them around the Reserve to help renew the surface soil. Grass runners soon developed, and the Reserve became popular with children and families. Later a small playground was installed by the Council. Sadly, Lorraine passed away in July 2015. Ku-ring-gai Council recently renamed Athena Reserve in honour of Lorraine after a resident-led campaign. Ku-ring-gai Council is now planning an upgrade to the Lorraine Taylor Reserve.

#### **RETIREMENT OF JOANNE CRAWFORD**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I acknowledge the contribution that Joanne Crawford has made to regional news and storytelling after 40 years in media. I first encountered Joanne in her role as the features editor and night news director for the Newcastle Herald. During her career, Joanne has been the Managing editor of the Central Western Daily, Editor of the Maitland Mercury, Group Editor for Content at Fairfax Media. Joanne officially retired as Head of Content and Shared Services for Australian Community Media; a company made up of more than 140 rural and regional news brands consisting of community-based websites, daily and community newspapers, magazines and events. Joanne was also one of the early Executive Committee Members of the Women's Network Hunter NSW, and helped us enormously in working towards increasing the representation of women in decision making at all levels in Maitland's political, social and business networks. She was always promoting others. I want to express my thanks to Joanne for her energy and efforts to tell local regional stories, particularly in a time of enormous change and development in the media landscape. I wish Joanne all the best for the future and congratulations on an outstanding career.

#### **NSW RFS LONG SERVICE MEDALS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I would like to recognise more than a dozen Lower Hunter volunteers, who received Long Service Medals earlier this year with the NSW Rural Fire Service [NSW RFS]. At a presentation, at the Fire Control Centre in East Maitland, 13 members were honoured for their lengthy commitment to the organisation. Those to be awarded Long Service Medals included: Brad Maguire (10 years – East Maitland and Maitland Vale-Luskintyre brigades), Nicholas Crowther (11 years – Lochinvar), Sam Jerrett (11 years – East Maitland), Kieron Pritchard (11 years – Bolwarra-Largs), Gary Price (12 years – East Maitland), Simon Rumbel (12 years – Thornton) and Richard Harding (12 years – Lochinvar).

Adrian Black (23 years – Thornton), Andrew Horn (23 years – Gresford and Thornton) and Robert Metz (28 years – Bishops Bridge and Lochinvar) collected their Long Service Medals 1st Clasp. Long Service Medals 2nd Clasp also went to Roslyn "Dawn" Robson (30 years – Thornton), Peter Roth (31 years – Thornton) and Alan Paterson (33 years – Thornton). Congratulations to each and every one of you."

#### **VALE MARCIA ATKINSON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—A Labor and Union stalwart Marcia Atkinson, formerly of Telarah passed away earlier this year. Growing up in Beverley Hills, living next door to and often babysitting a young Morris Iemma, Marcia was ecstatic when Morris became NSW's 40th Premier and spoke fondly of him throughout her life. At her funeral Marcia's best friend Wilma Hickey described her as "a proud unionist, a proud member of the Labor Party and a proud Australian". A feminist to the core, Marcia was the first woman in Australia to represent herself in her own divorce proceedings, and she was also a fierce advocate for women's rights. She relished the chance to participate in policy making and conferences, particularly in the golden "It's Time" era of Australian politics, when so many gains were made for women in this country. Marcia ran as a Labor candidate in the 2008 local government elections, was a long-time organiser with the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association (the SDA) and a member of Australian War Widows. Marcia was a matriarch, a loyal friend and a devoted mother to her two sons John and Stephen (deceased) and is sadly missed by her family and friends.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH PIPE BAND – BASEL, SWITZERLAND**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—The Manly Warringah Pipe Band was invited to perform at the Basel Tattoo in Switzerland in late July, being the only group from Australia to perform at the Tattoo this year. The Basel Tattoo is the second largest in the world, which is modelled on the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, and is attended by over 8,000 people every night. There are normally over 1,000 performers, as well as a street parade, which normally attracts over 100,000 people. Congratulations to the Manly Warringah Pipe Band for this wonderful achievement of performing at such an elite event, especially those members resident in my Davidson electorate.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF CHATSWOOD INTERNATIONAL**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—The Rotary Club of Chatswood International held its Celebration of 12th Changeover Dinner last month. All local Rotary clubs make a fantastic contribution to our community. Their activities include a variety of fundraising projects supporting local and broader causes, charities, and specific community projects. Present on the evening were people representing two such recipients - youth charity Streetwork, and disadvantaged communities in Nepal. Also in attendance were many Rotary officeholders and government representatives from Federal, State and Local Government. I particularly acknowledge the commitment and leadership of the Club's outgoing President Maria Chan, and new President, Dr Anthony Ching.

#### **THE THIRLMERE FESTIVAL OF STEAM**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—The Thirlmere Festival of Steam finally returned on the 25th and 26th of June after two years of postponement due to COVID and severe weather. The festival made up for lost time, with myself and the attendees enjoying steam train rides between Thirlmere, Picton and Buxton. I was delighted to see children enjoying the miniature train rides and everyone taking pleasure in the incredible live performances from local artists and the carnival held at the Thirlmere Sportsground. I congratulate the event organisers, the Wollondilly Council and the NSW Rail Museum, and volunteers for an outstanding festival. It certainly was a festival to remember, attracting a new record of attendees with almost 8,500 attendees enjoying the festivities. I also congratulate the Picton and District Historical and Family History Society, for receiving the Agnes Chalker Cultural Award at the festival. Named after one of the festival's founders, the Award was given to the Society for their hard work in promoting the arts by encouraging community members to take an interest in the area's local heritage. In fact, Agnes Chalker was a foundation member of the Society and had a love for Thirlmere's rich history.

#### **ALEXANDER CODEY**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—At just 15 years old, Bowral local Alex(ander) Codey is excelling in the field of on-road motorcycle racing. Alex began his racing journey with dirt biking at only five years old and began competing from the age of 10 years old. Alex decided to pursue on road racing after years of excelling in club championships for dirt track racing. After competing for only a year, Alex finished in 8th place for the bLU cRU Oceania Junior Cup, after the third round held at Wakefield Park on the 22nd-24th April. This put him within the top 10 for the overall rankings of the Junior Cup. I express my congratulations to Alex on this incredible achievement and wish him every success in his racing pursuits in the future. It is wonderful seeing young people in my electorate demonstrate such passion and enthusiasm for something they love.

**200TH ANNIVERSARY OF PICTON, TAHMOOR AND BARGO**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Last month, the townships of Picton, Tahmoor and Bargo celebrated 200 years since the towns were formally incorporated into the Colony of NSW. The towns were not brought into the legal settlement boundaries of NSW until 1821. Historical records provide evidence of white settlers within the area as early as 1795, when they ventured into the district to follow stray cattle of the First Fleet. Before colonial settlement, the Wollondilly was home to the Gundungurra, Dharawal and Darug people for thousands of years. To celebrate, the team at the Southern Tablelands Arts held an incredible anniversary event for the local community to come out and commemorate. There was something for everyone to enjoy, with adults enjoying the live music and indulging in the wonderful food, children delighting in the face painting, amusement rides, and of course the outdoor screening of Scooby Doo. I give my gratitude and appreciation to Southern Tablelands Arts for the fantastic display of local pride which I also share for these townships within my electorate.

**TORONTO MEN'S SHED**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—Toronto Men's Shed has been operating in Lake Macquarie since June 2011 and during that time has provided a space for men of all ages to gather and socialise while working together to build and repair various items for local schools and community groups. Shed members recently built planter boxes for a local café which have been placed on the busy main street and have been enjoyed by the customers and passing locals. They have also been providing garden maintenance for local elderly residents and community groups. The shared knowledge of the club's members brings together valuable skills which allow the members to complete projects with a sense of community, as well as provide a safe space for retired, unemployed and skilled men to engage in valuable social interaction. Additionally, their mentoring of local young people ensures these skills are not lost with future generations. This energetic collection of members also offer support to each other, allowing them to foster strong fellowship and mental health. It's with thanks and appreciation that I acknowledge Toronto Men's Shed for their hard work and valuable contribution to the Lake Macquarie community.

**CARL GIBBONS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to congratulate 26-year-old Carl Gibbons from Westlakes Athletics Club who has represented Australia on the world stage for the second time this year. Last month Carl donned a green and gold bib to compete in the World Athletics Championship in the USA. The 25-year-old began his athletics career at Wangi Wangi at the age of three. Since then, he has competed with Westlakes Athletics Club and proved his abilities time and time again. He still holds the club's U14, U15 and U17 1500m walk records for boys. He began competing in race-walking at a national level in 2011 and remarkably won his first State title in 2012. He then won his first national title just a few years later in 2015. Earlier this year he was the only Australian to compete in the 2022 World Race Walking Teams Championships in Oman, which is 35-kilometre walking event. I once again congratulate Carl on his outstanding achievements on the local, national and international sporting stage, and I look forward to seeing him compete in future championships.

**MAX BRADBURY**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—It is always pleasing to see Lake Macquarie's home-grown junior sporting talent turning their dreams into reality, so I would like to acknowledge rising rugby league star Max Bradbury who is doing just that. Max, a former Wangi Warrior, was recently selected to represent NSW in the Under 19s Blues State of Origin side and was a starting prop. I note the team had a convincing win over the Queenslanders with an impressive final score of 32 - 4. The match was played at Leichhardt Oval and screened on free to air TV, with many locals watching on from the Wangi Wangi Workers Club where it was played on the big screen. Max certainly is a rising rugby league talent, coming up through the Newcastle Knights' pathways program, he is a regular starter for the Knights' Jersey Flegg side this season. Not only was Max a Wangi Warrior but he was also a Westlakes Athletics representative and was the club's most recent State gold medallist, winning the under-14 200-metre hurdles for boys. I congratulate Max on his sporting success and I look forward to seeing what he achieves in the future.

**SANDON GIBBS-O'NEILL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Sandon Gibbs-O'Neill. Sandon is an Aboriginal artist from Orange, and his art focuses on his Aboriginal heritage. After finishing school at Canobolas High School, Sandon studied a Bachelor of Community and Social Development at the University of Western Sydney. It was in 2013 that he became interested in Aboriginal culture and learned about Indigenous art. To develop his skills further, Sandon moved to the Central Coast, where he could be closer to his grandfather and mentor, Tex Skuthorpe. Tex was an Aboriginal artist himself, and at the time had his own art exhibition. He taught Sandon the basics of Indigenous art. Shortly after, Sandon began creating his own art. In 2016 Sandon founded his own art

brand, Burruguu Art, through which his art is sold for postcards, canvas and print. Burruguu Art has an astonishing Instagram following of over 30,000 people. I congratulate Sandon Gibbs-O'Neill for his contributions to the Orange and Aboriginal community through his art, and I look forward to seeing his creative work progress. Well done.

#### **CUDAL CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise the Cudal Cricket Club. The Cudal Cricket Club are set to celebrate their 150th anniversary this year. Cudal will be going into the next season as the reigning champions. They've won the George Gavin Trophy in the Molong Cricket Competition, taking the Premiership and Minor Premiership for the 2021-22 season. Cudal Cricket Club reaching 150 years is proof of Cudal's community cohesion and maintaining this classic sporting tradition. Sporting activity has long been integral to country community spirit, social strength, and identity. Club cricket also provides immeasurable health and economic benefits, too. Cricket is a uniting activity which broadens social networks and has provided an important support structure to the Cudal community throughout the last 150 years. The recent renovations made to their home ground, Dean Park, have added ramps to make the ground wheelchair accessible, and the planned resurfacing of the pitch will develop a better playing environment for all teams. I congratulate Cudal Cricket Club on their 150th anniversary and wish them well for the future.

#### **DEBBIE LONGMORE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Debbie Longmore. Debbie has recently retired as the Transfusion Manager of the Orange Health Service, having worked there for 41 years and was the Transfusion Manager for 33 of years. Debbie has achieved major strides in the field of pathology in the West, and bringing quality care closer to home. In the early 2000s Debbie played an integral role in the introduction of the 'trauma esky', a device which holds three units of universal O negative blood, to mobilising blood supplies. This is used by Orange and Western New South Wales helicopter services. Carrying a trauma esky allows blood transfusions to occur on location, rather than wasting time getting to a hospital, saving vital time and people's lives. In recent years, Debbie has been the guest speaker at multiple conferences where she has shared her knowledge and experience about pathology and blood donation services. I congratulate Debbie Longmore for her very successful 41-year career. Well done.

#### **JANE JUDD OAM**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Coonabarabran's Jane Judd has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the community. Jane has had a major impact in many areas of the Coonabarabran community, including being a former science teacher at St Lawrence's Central school and principle of the Warrumbungle National Park Environmental Education Centre and helping to found the Warrumbungle Wheelers Cycling Club and the Coonabarabran Bushwalking Club. Jane has offered her wealth of knowledge on several committees including the Northern Plains Regional Advisory Committee and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Advisory Council and has been an active member of environmental groups such as Friends of the Pilliga and Coonabarabran Residents Against Gas. Jane also acted as an environmental representative on committees for the Brigalow and Nandewar Community Conservation Area Act and the Narramine to Narrabri inland Rail. I thank Jane for her service to the Coonabarabran Community and congratulate her on receiving the OAM.

#### **JAMES KAHL**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—After 19 years on the Cotton Seed Distributors [CSD] Board, James Kahl decided to retire and not seek re-election following the end of his term. James served 13 of his 19 years on the board as Chairman, making him only the fourth chair of CSD in its 55 years. Throughout his term at CSD, James' enthusiasm and interest in the company's success was evident, showing an interest in all aspects of the business. James ensured the future of the Australian cotton seed supply was secure through the development of new facilities near Wee Waa which included a cotton seed processing plant fitted with world-leading de-linting and treating technology, a laboratory, administration building and expanded seed storage facilities. Financially, James' success at CSD was evident in the growth of its balance sheet, which went from \$40million to over \$300million. I thank James for his contribution to CSD and the lasting legacy he has left behind.

#### **ILLAWARRA SURF LIFE SAVING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE BELLAMBI SURF CLUB**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)**—Today I would to knowledge and congratulate the winners of the 2022 Illawarra Surf Life Savings Awards of Excellence . Bellambi Surf Club winners : Chad McNamara – Junior Activities Volunteer of the year, Halle Bone- Youth Volunteer of the Year, Craig St George- Assessor of the Year, Jackie Percy- Trainer of the Year, Luke Edwards- Support operations Member of the Year, All-Ability Nippers Program- Community Education Program of the Year. I would like to acknowledge the contributions these

surf-life saving volunteers are giving to ensure our beaches are safe. These volunteers, give their time and put their bodies on the front line to ensure people visiting the beach are kept safe, educated on safe places to swim and assisted in the event of an emergency. My electorate has patrolling surf-life saving members from Coledale in the North stretching to Corrimal in the South. Congratulations to the winners and thank you for your service to our community.

#### **ILLAWARRA SURF LIFE SAVING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WOONONA SURF CLUB**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)**—Today I would to knowledge and congratulate the winners of the 2022 Illawarra Surf Life Savings Awards of Excellence . Woonona Surf Club Winner : Vanessa Mc Inally-Administrator of the Year. I would like to acknowledge the contributions these surf-life saving volunteers are giving to ensure our beaches are safe. These volunteers, give their time and put their bodies on the front line to ensure people visiting the beach are kept safe, educated on safe places to swim and assisted in the event of an emergency. My electorate has patrolling surf-life saving members from Coledale in the North stretching to Corrimal in the South. Congratulations to the winners and thank you for your service to our community.

#### **UNIT COMMANDER CAMDEN HAVEN MARINE RESCUE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I welcome the appointment of Peter Cameron to the Unit Commander role of Marine Rescue Camden Haven. Described as a leader and mentor by the membership, Peter Cameron was elected in July 2022 as the new Unit Commander tasked in overseeing the local marine rescue operations which provide a 24/7 emergency response service for boaters using our waterways. Peter has been a member of Marine Rescue for 14 years and has extensive experience in State Emergency Service training and fishing boat management. Peter has served three years as the Deputy Unit Commander coordinating a strong and dedicated team totalling 53 members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank retiring Unit Commander Neville Adams and acknowledge his impressive leadership of Camden Haven Marine Rescue during a tumultuous few years of fires, floods and a global pandemic. His ability to keep the team together during this difficult period while providing an invaluable service to the community in times of great distress was an outstanding achievement. Thank you also to all of the dedicated volunteers of Marine Rescue Camden Haven for serving our community.

#### **NATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise our very own Hastings Co-op in Port Macquarie for recently receiving the coveted Community Service Award at the Independent Grocers Association (IGA) National Excellence Awards held on 18 July at The Star on the Gold Coast. Community Engagement Manager Tim Walker and Liquor Manager Darren Partridge accepted the National Award acknowledging the role of the Co-op in natural Disaster assistance and fundraising efforts supporting our most vulnerable recovering from droughts, fires and floods. The Mid North Coast suffered an unprecedented flood in March 2021 and at the peak of the disaster, Hastings Co-op was one of the first on the scene delivering essentials to stranded locals via the State Emergency Service [SES] boats. In addition, the phenomenal staff assisted the authorities with facilitating grant information and hosting a community barbecue to bring the public together after one of the most devastating events in our region's history. Hastings Co-op was selected from the 1,455 independently owned IGA's nationwide to claim the prestigious award for Community Service. Other accolades included two major awards from NSW/ACT Excellence Awards. I congratulate the team at Hastings Co-op for their longstanding contribution to our community.

#### **GRACE WEST ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Today I would like to congratulate all the parishioners and leaders of the Grace West Anglican Church on celebrating 25 years at their Glenmore Park site. As Senior Minister Christopher Braga puts it, celebrating together helps build families and communities. When everyone feels able to participate, celebrations provide a powerful way to belong. A big congratulations once again to Grace West Anglican Church on their 25th year anniversary celebrations.

#### **ORCHARD HILLS VETERINARY HOSPITAL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Today I would like to recognise Camille Brandt and her team at Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital who has, as a thank you to their clients, families and friends booked out the entire cinema Skyline Drive-In Blacktown to see the movie Clifford The Big Red Dog. The night paired as a celebration of the businesses 12th Year anniversary, as a thank you for customer's patience as they endured contactless consultations during COVID and an expression of appreciation for winning the 2021 Penrith Small Business Awards in the Pet Care Category. It wasn't too long ago that I made a community recognition statement on Orchard Hills Veterinary but their actions warrant this recognition in this place and I want to congratulate them on their efforts as a local business bringing the community together to spend an evening of leisure together in good spirit.

### EMMA AND CHRIS YOPP

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Earlier this year, Emma and Chris Yopp, from Glenmore Park, were celebrating their daughter Scarlett's first birthday when at the end of the party guests were taken by surprise when Emma and Chris got married. Chris is battling terminal cancer and they took their daughter's birthday party as an opportunity to get married surrounded by family and friends as they did not know when they might get the opportunity to have everyone gathered again. The event was organised in a matter of three days which certainly would have taken a mammoth effort but nonetheless the outcome was the beautiful wedding of two amazing people whom I wish all the very best to. The strength of a family is powerful and from time to time there will be good times and there will be bad times. However, being surrounded by the people you love is a powerful weapon in the battle to overcome any hurdle in life. My thoughts and prayers are with Chris, Emma and their daughters Scarlett and Imogen.

### UTS HABERFIELD JUNIOR ROWERS BECOME WORLD CHAMPIONS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Congratulations to the Under 19s UTS Haberfield rowing team for their incredible golden finish at the World Championships. The Inner West crew was made up of rising star rowers Joshua Wilson, Joseph Lynch, Oliver St Pierre, Brandon Smith and their coxswain Ryder Taylor. The Championships took place in late July, with the team travelling to Varese, Italy to compete and give it their all. There is no doubt that everyone watching the race would have been on the edge of their seats with its close finish! In the last 500m, the Haberfield boys charged forward from third and into the lead. They battled as the crew from Italy gained and stuck closely behind in the last 250m. Under pressure and with great perseverance, the team won the gold by 0.53 of a second. What an astounding win! It was so inspiring to see the UTS Haberfield team travel across the world and display such amazing athletic talent on the world stage. We are lucky to have such impressive young men representing the Inner West and making us all so proud! Congratulations once again to our local World Champions.

### HENSON PARK BEER FOOTY AND FOOD FESTIVAL

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Our vibrant Inner West community came out in force at Marrickville's iconic Henson Park for the Beer Footy and Food Festival on July 30. Attendees enjoyed the offerings of some of the east coast's best breweries and street food vendors all while witnessing an epic Rugby League showdown between the Newtown Jets and the South Sydney Rabbitohs. A truly perfect combination! Smiles and picnic blankets were seen all around as festival goers took in some much needed sunshine on Henson Park Hill. Fans of the Newtown Jets were especially happy to see their team win the highly anticipated match, and in between it all, there was also plenty of live entertainment to be enjoyed by everyone in attendance. Thank you very much to The Music and Booze Company and the Newtown Jets for organising this stellar event - and what a great turn out!

### RAIL SAFETY WEEK

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I support this year's important Rail Safety Week. Taking place this week of 8-14 August, the annual campaign seeks to build community awareness for safe rail practices. Thank you to the Australasian Railway Association and the TrackSAFE Foundation for taking the lead on this cause. I would also like to extend thanks to the rail operators, police, government bodies, and community organisations that unite during this week to shed light on the pressing issue of rail safety. Rail Safety Week hosts a number of informative events and activities, engaging schools and community groups, as well as reaching the general public. In preventing further fatalities and injuries on the Australian rail network, this sort of awareness effort is crucial to the safety of our community. The week is also very meaningful in minimising the work-related stresses our rail staff and recovery staff tend to experience due to the frequency of these incidents. During this year's Rail Safety Week, TrackSAFE continues with its public campaign, 'Stand back. Look up. Stay Rail Safe': an extremely important message. I congratulate everyone involved.

### MR AND MRS COLLIER'S 65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr John and Mrs Gwladys of Woronora Heights on their 65th Wedding Anniversary which will be celebrated on 17 August 2022. 65 years of marriage is a wonderful milestone and I hope they enjoyed their Sapphire Anniversary. I wish them many more years of fun, enjoyment, happiness and good health.

### LIVERPOOL 150

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I wish to recognise the most recent Exhibition by the City of Liverpool and District Historical Society. The Exhibition was entitled "Liverpool 150" and celebrated 150 years of local government in Liverpool. The Exhibition was held at this time because on the 27th June 1872 the then Governor Hercules Robinson proclaimed the Municipality of Liverpool. The official opening of the Exhibition was held on

Saturday 25 June. The Exhibition is in the Harvard Room, on the 3rd floor of Liverpool City Library. Displayed in the exhibition are a range of historical items that tell the history of Liverpool Council and the stories of people associated with the Council. Attendees at the event included ex-Councillors and relatives and descendants of Aldermen (including Dr Andrew McDonald). Credit is due to the Society for the exhibition, especially President Glen Op den Brouw and Secretary Gail Newman.

### COMMONWEALTH GAMES REPRESENTATION

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—The Australian Women's Sevens rugby union side for the 2022 Commonwealth Games featured Hunter Sports High School alumna Jesse Southwell. Jesse and her team took home the gold on 1 August, after winning their final match against Fiji 22-12. Jesse is currently Hunter Sports High School's Sportsperson of the Year. The multi-talented Jesse was named as part of the high performing team for her first Commonwealth Games appearance. To be selected at 17 years old for this international competition is a huge achievement and to take home a gold medal at such a young age is remarkable. Hunter Sports High School had another reason to celebrate, with science teacher and athletics coach Mr Scott Westcott coaching two Commonwealth Games athletes for Australia. Congratulations to these talented Hunter Sports High School performers.

### EDEN

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—On 6 July, I attended the opening night of Eden, a play by my talented constituent Daniel Scott. Not only is Daniel a talented playwright, the performance also utilised his beautiful travel photography from his time as a travel writer for major media outlets. I must say, it was fantastic to see such a thought-provoking production launch in Newcastle. Directed by Janet Nelson, the play was an insight for anyone who wonders about the impact of childhood trauma, and its spiralling effects on families and friends. The arts have an important role to play in all our lives, brightening our days and providing food for thought, and the performing arts in particular have enduring a bruising few years in Australia. It is thanks to the resilience and innovation of our creatives that the arts stand poised to come through the pandemic, and if Eden is any indication we have be entering a time of exciting and interesting creative output. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to support the production of Eden. I want to thank the cast, Janet and Daniel for their work, and the Newcastle Theatre Company for staging the production.

### HUNTER BRANCH SURF LIFESAVING AWARDS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—The beaches in the Charlestown electorate and the surrounding area are world-class, and there's no doubt the people who get involved in surf lifesaving in our area are among the best of the best. That's why it was my pleasure to be asked to help recognise the incredible work of the surf lifesaving crews from across the Hunter at the Hunter Branch Surf Lifesaving Awards on the night of Friday, June 17. After a difficult season, with storm waves pounding local beaches, it was especially good to have a night celebrating the athleticism and community-mindedness of surf lifesavers from across the region. I would like to particularly acknowledge the winners from Charlestown's own Redhead Surf Lifesaving Club! Lani Waller was acknowledged as Youth Athlete of the Year, while Taj Horadam was named one of the two Junior Lifesavers of the Year. Steve Foggett took home the Trainer of the Year acknowledgment; Gail Henderson was again recognised as Facilitator of the Year, and Ray Terrill was named Coach of the Year. Congratulations to them and to all the recipients from across the Hunter!

### GO GENTLE

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—Congratulations to Go Gentle for its outstanding contribution to changing laws across the country to give terminal people new compassionate end-of-life options. Established in 2016 by Andrew Denton to promote safe voluntary assisted dying laws after he watched his father die in pain and talked to others who faced or witnessed a loved one experience a bad death. The Go Gentle team provided politicians across the political divide with resources and information, and I pay special tribute to Andrew, Kiki Paul, Steve Offner and Frankie Bennet. Well done in making Australia a more caring place!

### DYING WITH DIGNITY NSW

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—I congratulate Dying with Dignity NSW for its amazing grassroots campaign to pass voluntary assisted dying laws in this state. The organisation has been bringing dying people and their families together to tell their stories and call for new compassionate end-of-life options since 1983. Members' determination to prevent others suffering the way they or their loved ones have, often sharing deeply personal and traumatic experiences was inspiring. It is not possible to list all the brave and caring members but I especially want to acknowledge Shayne Higson and Penny Hackett for their passion and dedication.

### NSW VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING ALLIANCE

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—I commend the incredible work of the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Alliance which brought together 29 organisations representing communities, health and medical experts, unions, legal representatives and human rights advocates to call for voluntary assisted dying laws. Powerfully alliance members represented all people affected when someone experiences a bad death. Organisations wrote to and met with MPs, spoke to media and appeared before the Legislative Council inquiry. Together they were able to tell a compelling story that saw this state change its laws. I congratulate all those involved on their historic achievement.

### DAVID LAMB - PIERRE C. ROBERT PRECISION AGRICULTURE AWARD

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Applied Physics Professor David Lamb as the first Australian to receive the Pierre C. Robert Precision Agriculture Award from the International Society of Precision Agriculture for his farming innovations applying science to help farmers get the most out of their crops. During his 25-year career in precision agriculture, Professor Lamb has led more than 40 research and design projects and championed the concept of smart farming. He led the launch of Australia's first SMART Farm at the University of New England in Armidale and helped to establish the Global Digital Farm at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, testing and validating agtech to improve water and fertiliser use, efficiency, sustainability, productivity and workflow. David's students give him credit for his willingness to share new insights and encourage them in their own research. I congratulate Professor Lamb on winning this award and giving Australia a place globally in recognition of precision agriculture. I commend David for his 25-year commitment to farming innovations helping Australia's farmers meet the challenges of Australia's harsh farming environment.

### MS KATHERINE SEERS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise Ms Katherine Seers. Ms Seers is employed at the Bundanoon District Community Pre-School, which provides a supportive, developmentally appropriate and scope for extension of learning environment for children from six weeks to five years of age. Ms Seers' submission was selected from an extensive and competitive field of talented applicants, becoming a successful recipient of a scholarship to complete her higher education studies in early childcare. The scholarship will provide the opportunity for Ms Seers to increase her knowledge and further understanding of early childhood learning environments, which in turn will benefit and open gateways for children to learn and develop in environments that are conducive to their needs. I congratulate Ms Seers on her commitment to education, her receipt of the scholarship and I wish her every success with her career pathway and studies.

### MS REBECCA ALLAN

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise Ms Rebecca Allan. Ms Allan is employed at the Murrumbateman Pre-School, which provides a child centred learning approach, combining a structured and play environment for children from three to five years of age. Ms Allan's submission was placed amongst a broad field of talented applicants to successfully become a recipient of a scholarship to complete her higher education studies in early childcare. The scholarship will provide the opportunity for Ms Allan to increase her knowledge and further understanding of early childhood learning environments, which in turn will benefit and open gateways for children to learn and develop in environments that are conducive to their needs. I congratulate Ms Allan on her commitment to education, her receipt of the scholarship and I wish her every success with her career pathway and studies.

### THE SHOP - GRAVESEND

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I congratulate Kate and Craig Warby of Gravesend on all their hard work to establish 'The Shop – Gravesend'. Almost two years in the making, encountering many difficulties including endless COVID-19 complications, mice plague damage and now the increase cost-of-living pressures. Kate and Craig made the most of this time by immaculately fitting out the building which underwent an extensive refurbishment. Gravesend has been without a general store for quite some time, so it is great to see the shop finally open. I dropped in recently to grab some lunch and was absolutely blown away by the job they've done and the range of groceries, fresh food, scrumptious café menu options, and not to mention the lollies on offer. 'The Shop' is focussing on offering quality food and coffee and hopes to meet consumer needs with their range of staples. Kate hopes to increase their range of wares as time goes on and is interested in stocking what the community wants. I commend Kate and Craig for investing in the region and the meticulous care they have put into their new business with the aim of giving Gravesend something special.

**COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION BUNDARRA BRANCH**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Bundarra Branch of the Country Women's Association for their continuous support and activities in the Bundarra community. One of their recent programs is a Basic Machine Sewing Class where the attending ladies learned how to sew on donated sewing machines and overlockers. Comments included not only appreciation for the class but the fact that this once basic skill had not been passed on by their mothers or grandmothers who could sew. The class has proved so popular that the Bundarra CWA is extending the sewing class and adding macrame and a crochet class. The CWA offers not only a friendly environment to learn important skills but it is a meeting place for women in isolated villages. This particular event brought women to Bundarra from outlying towns in the Northern Tablelands. I congratulate the Bundarra CWA ladies and the teacher, Ms Kerrie Mansfield on the success of the Basic Machine Sewing Class. I commend the Country Women's Association which continues to be forthcoming in the district's needs with special notice of the Bundarra Branch.

**JAYLAH HANCOCK-CAMERON**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—My sincerest congratulations go out to homegrown Broulee local and running sensation, Jaylah Hancock-Cameron on her stellar performance on the world stage cementing herself as one of Australia's most promising young athletes. After claiming the title of National Champion at the Australian Track and Field Championships in April last year, Ms Hancock-Cameron has been going from strength to strength. At just 20-years-old, Ms Hancock-Cameron started her current winning spree at the England U20 and U23 Championships and World Junior Titles at the beginning of July, claiming gold in the 1500 metres against the best runners in England. Ms Hancock-Cameron then continued the tour, finishing first in the 1500 metres at the Irish Life Health AAI Games on July 24 in Tullamore, Ireland before heading back to Bedford, England to claim silver in the England Athletics Senior and Disability Championships on July 31. On behalf of the Bega electorate, I would like to recognise Jaylah's dedication and commitment to her sport, and I wish her all the best in her future competitions.

**THE BAY PAVILIONS – NBRS ARCHITECTS, DONOVAN PAYNE ARCHITECTS AND EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—I would like to congratulate all those involved in the creation of our brand-new community space, The Bay Pavilions, which was recently honoured at the Australian Sport, Recreation and Play Innovation Awards. The Bay Pavilions took out first place in the sport and leisure facility design category for 2022 and was presented for innovative and sustainable design that creates an environment where more people are active. A particular focus of the project was to provide people of all ages and abilities with a space that enabled our community to come together and grow. NBRS principal Andrew Tripet partnered with Donovan Payne Architects on the building design which was a unique project driven by the Eurobodalla Shire Council including the Council's director of planning and sustainability, Lindsay Usher. As quoted by Andrew Tripet, "I think Eurobodalla Council should be congratulated for having created such a unique project that many other councils will now be looking to as an example of how to build contemporary and sustainable facilities for their communities." I offer my congratulations to all who were involved in this award-winning project.

**CLUB MALUA**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—July 28, 2022 marked 939 days since the Malua Bay Bowling Club was destroyed on New Year's Eve during the Black Summer Bushfires that tore through our community in 2019. July 28 also marked the Official Opening of the brand-new Club Malua, which has already seen an enormous amount of community support welcoming over one thousand new members through their doors in just over a month. Amalgamated with the Cabra Bowls Group in early 2019, the original building had just finished renovations when the fires came through and decimated the entire structure. Thankfully, the Cabra Bowls Group committed to rebuilding bigger and better, spending 10 million dollars to bring life back to this important community club. Since reopening, Club Malua and their new dining space Blue Salt, have also taken out the 2022 Perfect Plate Award for the Far South Coast and Southern Tablelands as well as being awarded second place in the state for the small club category.

**BANKSTOWN BITES**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—After a two year hiatus, it was a delight to see community events such as Bankstown Bites back up and running. Food brings people together and in such a diverse community, such as Canterbury Bankstown, I would like it known that our food is the best in the state. I joined, my colleague, Lynda Voltz MP, Member for Auburn, Councillor Khal Asfour, Mayor of the City of Canterbury Bankstown, Councillor Bilal El-Hayek, Deputy Mayor of the City of Canterbury Bankstown, and Councillor Rachelle Harika, as we explored the amazing festival. We enjoyed the dumplings, curry chicken skewers, cotton cheesecakes, pasta and

more. I even had to ride a bike to blend my orange juice. As they say hard work makes juice taste better. Celebrity chefs, Adrian Richardson and Alvin Quah, gave us cooking demonstrations and I have kept the recipe book. The festival was a hit and I look forward to joining the community again next year to celebrate the amazing food we can offer to New South Wales. I would like to congratulate Canterbury Bankstown Council for putting together a wonderful food festival for our community.

#### **SURF LIFE SAVING NSW**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—Last week I had the pleasure of meeting with the leadership of Surf Life Saving [SLS] NSW at their offices in Belrose. I am grateful to CEO Steven Pearce and Donna Wishart, the Communications and Engagement Manager for their insights and their hospitality. SLS NSW provides critical services that are may be unknown to members of my community for a variety of reasons. We spoke about how we can do more in the diversity space and I'm pleased to see important work has already been done. The Multicultural Drowning Prevention Short Film Launch is one such example, as was the recent induction of The Swim Brothers as surf lifesavers. Furthermore, we as a wider community owe SLS NSW a debt of gratitude for the unsung rescue work they do including in wider crises. Lifesavers in the Northern Rivers assisted other emergency service agencies in inflatable rescue boats. Duty officers were part of the Incident Management Team and they had unmanned aerial vehicle [UAV] operators providing intel and assistance to other agencies. I look forward to an ongoing relationship.

#### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES INCORPORATED**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—I would like to congratulate Community Support Services on their recent ZEST award in the Outstanding Community Leader category. I had the opportunity to visit this organisation, in their village setting, to see first-hand the wonderful work they do in our community. It was also an opportunity to hear about the hurdles they encounter as a grassroots organisation looking after the needy families, refugees and international students who often do not qualify for government services. It is organisations like Community Support Services who fill these gaps. Like many community organisations, the pandemic added to the pressure on Community Support Services to support the needy. The village pantry continues to provide weekly nourishing meals to those in need. Community Support Services also provide a range of practical courses to assist people in learning new skills to help in supporting themselves and their families. Not only do they support locals but through the many donations they receive they were able to support the community of Mogo during the devastating bushfires. I warmly congratulate Mona Mahamed and Community Support Services on their ZEST award and wish them well with their important work in the community.

#### **THE STARFISH STORE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate a fantastic local business in Shellharbour which operates just a few doors up from my office, The Starfish Store, on being named Best Small Business at this year's Illawarra Women in Business Awards. I congratulate owner and founder, Kirstie Wishart, and all of the fantastic staff on this incredible achievement. They make a huge difference in the community by offering an extensive range of educational, sensory and specialised resources and products to promote and encourage learning and skill building, with the aim of supporting individuals to achieve their goals and thrive in their development. The Starfish Store was the very first of its kind in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, and currently offers the most extensive range of products and services. Many of their products are also able to be purchased using NDIS funding. The store offers sensory experiences which can help children and adults with self-regulation, supporting their ability to manage daily tasks and stresses, and develop their independence to more comfortably and effectively participate in the community. I again congratulate Kirstie and The Starfish Store on this wonderful achievement, and recognise their fantastic contributions to the community.

#### **COL BERRY**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—I pay tribute to a great contributor of my local community, who lost his battle with illness recently. Col Berry was a proud New South Welshman. He was born in Bathurst in 1939 to orchard farmers on Mount Panorama. Having spent his early years in the Southern Highlands, Col moved to Queanbeyan in his early 20s. Col was the inaugural manager of the Queanbeyan Kangaroo RLFC, before opening the Queanbeyan Indoor Cricket Centre in 1983. Col had a deep love of cricket playing outdoor and indoor cricket most of his life, in later years as a member of the over 60s ACT Masters team. A life member of the Queanbeyan District Cricket Club and ACT Veterans Cricket, Col's outstanding achievements included President of ACT Cricket, coaching the ACT Women's Indoor cricket team to the National title, being recognised in 2015 by Cricket Australia for 50 years' service to cricket, and being awarded Australian Community Cricket Champion 2019. Col was a Past President of the Rotary Club of West Queanbeyan and a Paul Harris Fellow, and worked tirelessly as a member of the Club. He was a loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

**BOB HARROW**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—Today I acknowledge the passing of Bob Harrow. Bob and his wife Sue were the faces behind the counter of the local corner store, when the suburb of Jerrabomberra was growing out of a sheep paddock. A true pioneer of softball in Australia, Bob Harrow dedicated twenty years of service to Softball, and had an enormous impact on our country's elite men's and women's programs. Bob led the Australian Men's team as Head Coach from 2000-2018 and took them to their first World Championship in 2009, a defining moment in Softball Australia's history. Bob will also be remembered for his commitment to improve and innovate the game in Australia. His vision for a national competition saw the introduction of the National Fastpitch Softball League. The competition became a breeding ground for elite talent, with many athletes going on to represent Australia. Bob was twice awarded Softball Australia Coach of the Year and became a Softball Australia Life Member in 2010, before being inducted into the International Softball Hall of Fame in 2011. The Harrow name is globally recognised in softball, and I extend my sympathies to the softball community in Canada where Bob similarly had an enormous impact.

**KINGSGROVE COMMUNITY AID SERVICES NAIDOC WEEK EVENT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—Today I thank Kingsgrove Community Aid Services for hosting me at their NAIDOC Week Event, which was a fantastic day of celebrating Indigenous culture. The festivities were a roaring success, with plenty of families from across the local area coming out to participate. We enjoyed performances from the Walangari and the Diramu Aboriginal Dance and Didgeridoo groups, who both put on interesting and educational presentations. It was wonderful to see families walking out with a sense of understanding appreciation of First Nation's culture. The interactivity of the performances certainly put smiles on a lot of faces. The NSW Government is one hundred percent committed to supporting Indigenous Australians and Communities throughout our State. Not only do we acknowledge the achievements and culture of Indigenous Australians, but we reflect upon the history of the oldest, continuing culture on the planet. I would like to thank Anne Farah-Hill and the team at Kingsgrove Community Aid Services for hosting such a successful event. None of this would be possible without your tireless effort and your hard work. I look forward to attending again next year.

**OATLEY SENIORS MORNING TEA**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I thank all those who attended my Senior's Morning Tea, which I hosted at the Oatley RSL Club. For the last three years, I've hosted Seniors Morning Teas every few months, which helps me to gauge the issues that local seniors care about, as well as what can be done to make our community a better place to live, work and raise a family. The event was a smashing success and saw a fantastic turnout, with over 50 seniors from across the Oatley Community attending to share their ideas and concerns, whilst enjoying some tea, coffee, and cake. As the Minister for Seniors, I know how important it is to listen to the voices of seniors within our local communities. They impart on us knowledge, wisdom and a sense of understanding from witnessing the world change and grow around them. I hope all that attended enjoyed the event as much as I did. I look forward to hosting more events in the future.

**SOCIAL BREWERS SMALL BUSINESS VISIT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I recently got the opportunity to tour the Social Brewers in Mortdale, a fantastic new micro-brewery that recently opened in my local community. Opening as the St George area's first craft brewery, the Social Brewers is all about the local community. The owner and founder, Beau, has a wonderful vision - to bring locals together to share great beer, a glass of wine and a simple snack. This is something I can get behind! There was truly something for everyone here, including a great line-up of local food trucks which changes from week to week, non-alcoholic and gluten free drinks, a selection of wines and a range of beers creatively named after local suburbs and icons. Some of my favourites included the 'LagerNo,' the 'Forest Road IPA' and of course, the 'Oat-ley Stout'. I'd like to thank Beau for welcoming me so warmly. It is so important to support small businesses in the local area, particularly those that are up and coming. I look forward to coming back soon for another beer.

**JETT LIU - LEETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise year 12 student Jett Liu for his outstanding commitment to sport, education and his community. Jett has worked hard to be selected in the NSW Catholic Under 18 Schoolboys Rugby League team this year, and participated in the Australian Rugby League School Boys Championships held in Brisbane in July this year. Typically these selections are dominated by Sydney players- making the NSW team as a born and bred Leeton student is a testament to Jett's commitment, hard work and drive. Jett has also been participating in the Canberra Raiders development system for the last 4 years. Jett aspires to pursue a professional rugby career whilst also studying a Bachelor of Laws at the ANU in

Canberra after finishing year 12. Jett with his parents travels an 11 hour round trip Leeton to Canberra multiple times per week for training and for games, and completing school work. Jett is a great role model to his peers and his community and the Leeton community are very proud of his achievements.

#### **BRENDON GLEDHILL - COOMEALLA**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Brendon Gledhill of Coomealla for his immense community contribution. Brendon has been a member of the Mildura Motor Cycle Club for fifty years, holding all executive positions from President to Club administration and currently the Publicity Officer and Course Commentator. Brendon is a Senior Official with Motorcycling Australia & Motorcycling Victoria, officiating at State, National and International events around Australia, and a Board Member from 1997 – 2012, and a member of the National Official's Panel, responsible for developing Rules, Training and Safety in motorcycling. As a fruit-grower, he was a Member and delegate for Australian Dried Fruits Association, Coomealla for 25 years and a member of the New South Wales Dried Fruits Board. Brendon was also a member and Deputy Chairman of the Dried Fruits Research & Development Council for 12 years. Brendon continues to be a community commentator for many gatherings, from anniversaries celebrations to air shows. We are fortunate to have Brendon's voice portray our region so well and I thank you Brendon sincerely for his valued contribution to our community.

#### **SCOTT RICHARDSON AND DI MCQUEEN-RICHARDSON**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to Scott Richardson and Di McQueen-Richardson who were recently named finalists in no less than 6 categories in the Australian Rural Business Awards. It's always wonderful to see people who are able to turn their passion, into a business and Scott and Di have been able to do this with their love of all things bees. Although they have had to endure drought, bushfires, COVID and floods, they have continued to find unique ways to help their business to continue to grow. I wish them both ongoing success into the future.

#### **WAGGA TENPIN LEAGUE BOWLERS**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to Wagga Wagga league bowlers Amy Rennick, Danny Sogal, Luke Gorman, Peter Smith and Tim St Clair on their recent strong performances in Melbourne. The bowlers were among more than 250 competitors from across Australia who took to the lanes in the recent 2022 National Tenpin Bowling Championships for Persons with a Disability, the 33rd such event. Wagga Wagga's Danny Sogal had been chosen for the Michael Cooke Memorial Shield team and as NSW representative in the Classic Masters, while Luke Gorman competed in the Restricted Masters. Amy Rennick, Tim St Clair and Peter Smith were chosen to compete for the Cole Cup team trophy. In addition to bringing home a swag of medals, two of the Wagga Wagga bowlers set national records during the event. Mr St Clair set a new B Grade All Events record of 1631, beating the former record of 1554 set in the year 2000. Mr Gorman was in the C Grade Trios that set a new record of 1443, beating the old record of 1299 set in 2010, according to The Daily Advertiser newspaper. Congratulations to all and I look forward to seeing more records tumble!

#### **PETER AND TRISH HILTON**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to Wagga Wagga's Peter and Trish Hilton, who have received a 2022 Community Hero Award, in recognition of their dedicated service to the community. Peter and Trish have been recognised for their many years of volunteer work in the Wagga Wagga community, particularly through South Wagga Anglican Church. Peter is a dedicated member of the church's men's working bee group, which has been nicknamed The Chain Gang, and helps each week to deliver bread to Wagga Wagga households in need, as well as helping Carevan to distribute meals. Trish volunteers in the kids' ministries at Mainly Music, in the bible study creche, at kids' club and helps during services, particularly with children. Both Peter and Trish are always willing to give a helping hand, get food out to people in need, tackle small projects and care for people both in their church community and beyond. Wagga Wagga is extremely fortunate to have people like Peter and Trish, who are quietly and modestly devoting so much time and effort to assisting their community. It was an honour to present their award in the presence of so many of their grateful supportive church community.

#### **KELLYVILLE ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—It was recently my pleasure to visit the Kellyville Anglican Church and meet with Dave Keun, the new Senior Pastor. Dave walked me through the myriad of good works being undertaken by the Church and showed me the way they are making a positive impact within The Hills. We were also joined by church wardens Greg Chase and Catriona Wood. Part of the visit included seeing the new, recently upgraded air conditioning system that exists throughout the Church. These additions open up these facilities to the broader community and allow for widespread use. I was delighted to be able to secure \$20,000 for this upgrade, part of the NSW Government's \$400,000 commitment to my Electorate of Castle Hill as a part of the NSW

Community Building Partnerships. I would like to thank the Church for the tour and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

#### **NORTH CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club who are the successful recipients of \$412,000 from the NSW Government's 2021-2022 Surf Club Facility Program. North Cronulla is an integral part of our local community, comprised of dedicated volunteers who patrol the beach, educate children on water safety, and protect members of the public. Through this grant funding, North Cronulla will upgrade its 54-year-old swimming pool with new anti-slip pool tiling, safety fencing and a solar panel heating system which will extend utilisation of the pool over the Winter months. North Cronulla will also improve pool accessibility including the installation of pool railing and improvements to pool steps which can assist individuals who are less mobile. I take this opportunity to recognise the dedicated team behind North Cronulla. I commend the 2022-2023 Board of Directors including Warren Rennie AM, Geoff Budd, Craig McKinnier, Dave Waugh, Donna Hargreaves, Ben Smollett, Colin Bulloch, Shane Whittaker, Lee Howell, Anita Pryke, Jeff Loy, Barb Maythers, Geoff Streater, Kevin Macnamara and Barry Schietrumpf. I thank the volunteers at North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club for their service to our community, particularly in keeping beachgoers safe.

#### **WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Wanda Surf Life Saving Club ("Wanda") who are the successful recipients of \$148,000 from the NSW Government's 2021-2022 Surf Club Facility Program. Wanda is a family orientated club that has been keeping beachgoers safe since 1946. Given the importance of this club to our community, I am pleased that Wanda has secured funding to upgrade their watercraft and surf sports equipment area as well as replace the timber racking with stainless steel racking and rollers in the main boat shed. This upgrade will support storage demand for Wanda's increasing membership and ensure the safety of all participants. I take this opportunity to recognise the dedicated executive team behind Wanda Surf Life Saving Club. I commend Nathan Spinner, Todd Lester, Mark Sargeant, Denny Rowlands, Mikaela Sutherland, John De Cean OAM, Anne Caterson, Gerard Cafe, Greg Pierce, Brett Thatcher, Fiona Sutton, Gary McNamara and Natalie Buckley. I thank the volunteers at Wanda Surf Life Saving Club for sacrificing their time to ensure that we can all enjoy our Shire's beautiful beaches.

#### **NSW GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Peter Marsh of Alford's Point who is the deserving recipient of a NSW Government Community Service Award. As the Principal of Gympsea Technology High School, Peter has demonstrated exceptional dedication as he leads a school of bright and diligent students. Over the past 10 years of his principalship, he has championed many projects to ensure his students and staff have access to the best facilities and innovative learning. Peter's impact on the school community has been remarkable as he has spearheaded the development of a new technology centre, a media studio and a visual studio. Peter has also invested in an outdoor STEM garden and classroom that supports student wellbeing and promotes collaborative learning. Peter's passion for education and inspiring students and teachers alike is infectious, and the high esteem he is held in by all is apparent. It is undeniable that Peter has brought a tremendous amount of knowledge to the role and that he has been instrumental in the school's continued success. Peter is truly a worthy recipient of the NSW Government Community Service Award and I thank him for his years of dedication and service to our community.

#### **RIVERVIEW VS JOEYS GAMES**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes)**—I would like to commend the efforts made by both teams at the Riverview vs Joeys game over the weekend. Returning for the first time since COVID it was great to see over 15,000 people in attendance at the game, creating an atmosphere that is hard to top.

Unfortunately, my team did not get up but what a cracking game of rugby it was, the wallabies could learn a thing or two. I am privileged to have these two great schools in my electorate, and I will be counting the sleeps till they meet again."

#### **LANE COVE ROADS FORUM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes)**—I would like to thank all those in my community who took the time out of their evening on the 20th of July to attend a forum about roads issues in the Lane Cove Electorate. It was heartening to see the venue packed with constituents, armed with different ideas about how to make the Roads of Lane Cove safer and more efficient. I would like to thank Prudence and Sinclair from Minister Ward's Office as well as Natalie and Lachlan from Transport for NSW

for their expert contributions on the night. Additionally, this event would not have been possible if not for Jacky Barker's help in organising the event with me. Since that night we have been working hard to resolve some of the issues raised and will continue to fight to improve the road conditions for all Lane Cove residents.

#### **CONSTITUENTS AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes)**—I would like to congratulate Henry Hutchison, Evan O'Hanlon and Alexandra Hulley on their recent performances at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Congratulations to Evan on bringing home the Gold and although Henry and Alex just fell short of medals both should be proud of their efforts. Only a handful of people have the privilege of competing for our country and all our athletes in Birmingham have done the Green and Gold proud. I look forward to seeing them all compete again very soon and hope they enjoy a well earned break after such stellar performances.

#### **MARIA DOHERTY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I acknowledge the newly appointed General Manager of Koala Conservation Australia (Port Macquarie Koala Hospital), Maria Doherty. An organisation renowned internationally for groundbreaking research and for providing first-class care for our beloved koala population Maria has been tasked with overseeing its two major sites in the Hastings. Maria brings with her a wealth of knowledge from a previous senior environment leadership role in both private and public sector organisations. She has worked as a Strategic Adviser at Kempsey Shire Council leading teams managing resources and Workplace Health and Safety initiatives. Over recent years the Koala Conservation Australia team have focused their efforts on a targeted koala breeding program, including a redevelopment of the iconic Koala Hospital and a new rehabilitation site for the public to view and appreciate, supported with funding from the NSW Government. Other projects include the expansion of two local plantations for food sources to feed our sick and injured koalas in the local area. The Port Macquarie-Hastings community is fortunate to have the Koala Conservation members championing the efforts of restoring habitat and caring for our native koala population on the Mid North Coast. I wish Maria every success in her new role.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:21 until  
Wednesday 10 August 2022 at 09:30.**