



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday 10 August 2022

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 10 August 2022

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

SCRAP METAL INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2022

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Toole, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (09:46): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Scrap Metal Industry Amendment (Review) Bill 2022 amends the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016 and Scrap Metal Industry Regulation 2016 to implement the legislative recommendations made in the report on the statutory review of the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016. Broadly, the bill will provide for more effective regulation of the scrap metal industry by clarifying who a scrap metal dealer is, by enhancing existing powers to strengthen and improve administration of the Act and by updating certain penalties to appropriately reflect their seriousness.

The statutory review was undertaken in 2020 by the NSW Police Force and completed in accordance with section 29 of the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016. This involved extensive consultation with key industry and government stakeholders. The purpose of the statutory review was to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. The statutory review found that the Act's policy objectives remain valid; however, the industry has evolved and amendments are needed to address emerging issues and better realise the policy intent of the legislation. While there are no express objects of the Act, the principal policy objective of the Act is to prevent property crime in New South Wales through the regulation of the scrap metal industry. This is primarily achieved through requiring scrap metal dealers to register as dealers, prohibiting the use of cash as payment for scrap metal, transparency and record-keeping requirements for scrap metal dealers, and the provision of appropriate powers for police to enforce the Act.

Key issues raised by stakeholders—industry stakeholders in particular—were the lack of adequate enforcement powers, ineffective penalties and commercial detriment caused by the inability to compete with noncompliant scrap metal dealers. Speaking plainly, law-abiding scrap metal dealers are losing out to rogue dealers evading the requirements of the Act. We need to strengthen regulation to level the playing field. These rogue dealers, who use cash to facilitate dodgy dealings, are currently able to evade meaningful enforcement by operating their businesses using unconventional means and are able to absorb any fines as mere business costs. This is inconsistent with the intent of the Act and sends the wrong message to the industry and community.

I am advised by New South Wales police that these people are clearly carrying on a business of dealing in scrap metal but do not fit the traditional definition of a scrap metal dealer as currently defined. This includes people who conduct their business using only a motor vehicle and without a business premises or scrap metal yard. In total, 19 recommendations were made by the statutory review, 16 of which related to amendments to the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016 and Scrap Metal Industry Regulation 2016. The bill implements all 16 recommendations to bolster regulation of the scrap metal industry to ensure that legislation in New South Wales remains responsive to the emerging issues identified in the statutory review and throughout stakeholder consultation.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill will clarify that a scrap metal dealer is a person who carries on a business of dealing in scrap metal, whether or not the business is registered under the Act. Although implied, the definition of scrap metal dealer does not explicitly state that it applies whether or not a person is registered. This amendment closes that potential loophole. First, the bill provides that, for the purposes of the Act, carrying

on a scrap metal business does not include where the person is carrying on a business as a collection point operator within the meaning of part 5 of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001. Secondly, it does not include where the person is carrying on a business under a licence within the meaning of the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996, to the extent the business involves dealing in gold or silver. These amendments will ensure that collection point operators and second-hand gold and silver dealers are not inadvertently captured as scrap metal dealers, as this was never the intent of the Act.

The bill clarifies that carrying on a business includes carrying on a business from a location other than a scrap metal yard and thus requires these scrap metal businesses to be registered. This amendment will ensure that rogue scrap metal dealers, such as dealers who operate using only a motor vehicle, can no longer evade the requirements of the Act. The bill will also require scrap metal dealers who carry on their business using a motor vehicle to keep their transaction records in the motor vehicle. In acknowledging that scrap metal businesses can be run exclusively using a motor vehicle, the bill empowers a police officer to stop and search a motor vehicle for the purposes of determining whether there has been compliance with, or a contravention of, the Act. Currently, efforts to enforce the legislation are often frustrated due to the inability of police to stop and search motor vehicles for this purpose. This power can only be used if the officer reasonably believes the vehicle is being used for the purposes of carrying on a scrap metal business and is intended to put an end to those dealers seeking to evade police when carrying on their business using a motor vehicle.

This power is a natural extension of the existing powers in the Act which allow a police officer to enter a premises where the police officer reasonably believes such a business is being carried on for the purposes of determining whether there has been compliance with, or a contravention of, the Act. The bill creates a rebuttable presumption that a person who deals in scrap metal on more than six days in a 12-month period is carrying on a business of dealing in scrap metal. The Act is currently vague in defining who is carrying on a business of dealing in scrap metal, which has resulted in rogue dealers being able to avoid the obligations of the Act, despite engaging in activities which appear to law enforcement to be carrying on a business of dealing in scrap metal in the ordinary sense. A similar presumption exists for second-hand dealers in the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996.

The bill also introduces three increases to penalties to send a strong message and deter those seeking to take advantage of the industry, exploiting it for dodgy purposes. These amendments form part of a holistic approach to address the issue of noncompliant rogue scrap metal dealers who are perpetuating property crime in New South Wales and enhance deterrence. First, the bill increases the penalty for carrying on a business of dealing in scrap metal without being registered from 100 penalty units to 500 penalty units and makes the corresponding penalty notice amount \$5,500. The current penalty notice amount is not substantial enough to act as a deterrent. Noncompliant dealers who receive these fines can absorb them as mere business costs, effectively allowing them to continue dealing in scrap metal using cash, without records, and they largely go undetected—a small price to pay in order to access a market of ill-gotten gains. The comparable offence of carrying on a business without the appropriate licence under the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 currently attracts a maximum penalty of 1,000 penalty units and the penalty notice amount is \$5,500. In the case of a second or subsequent offence, the maximum penalty is 1,000 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.

Secondly, the bill increases the penalty for buying or disposing of a motor vehicle if the unique identifier for the vehicle has been removed or altered from 100 penalty units to 500 penalty units and makes the corresponding penalty notice amount \$5,500. The current penalty notice amount of \$550 is not substantial enough to act as a deterrent, nor is it an appropriate reflection of the seriousness of the offence. One of the main types of property crime that this Act intended to reduce was motor vehicle theft and, by extension, its associated crimes such as vehicle rebirthing. Crimes such as motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle rebirthing are facilitated by the unrecorded buying and selling of unidentified vehicles. In other words, the easier it is to buy or sell unidentified vehicles, the more appealing vehicle theft becomes. This amendment is reasonable in the circumstances and proportionate to the seriousness of the offence.

Thirdly, the bill also increases the penalty for failing to comply with a police officer's order not to alter or dispose of scrap metal in the dealer's possession from 50 penalty units to 500 penalty units and makes the corresponding penalty notice amount \$5,500. Contravention of this provision not only concerns the disposing of suspected stolen scrap metal but also requires disobeying an explicit order made by police not to do so. For example, the equivalent offence in section 102 of the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 appropriately reflects the seriousness of the offence as it carries a maximum penalty of 500 penalty units. This amendment will reflect the seriousness of the offence and introduce more consistency with the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013.

The bill includes new requirements for scrap metal businesses that operate without a scrap metal yard to be registered. This requires providing registration information to the commissioner, including the address of premises other than a scrap metal yard and the registration number of a vehicle, if the scrap metal dealer deals in

scrap metal from the premises or vehicle. A scrap metal dealer must also provide information as to whether the dealer holds a licence under the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 or the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998. Further, where necessary, approval is required to use a specified premises as a scrap metal yard, such as development consent from local council. The dealer must provide information that the necessary approvals have been obtained to use premises as a scrap metal yard.

The bill also empowers the commissioner to refuse to register a business under the Act, or suspend or revoke a registration, where the scrap metal dealer has breached the Act or regulation, or where the commissioner believes on reasonable grounds that the scrap metal dealer is likely to breach the Act or regulation. The Act does not currently provide for any circumstances in which the commissioner can suspend, revoke or refuse registration of a scrap metal business. Similar regulatory regimes, such as the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 and Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996, contain provisions which allow for refusing, suspending or revoking licences. This amendment will strengthen the policy objectives of the Act and increase confidence in the industry by providing an avenue to keep dodgy dealers from operating. The bill also empowers the commissioner to publish a register about convictions for offences against the Act or the regulation and penalty notices issued to people in certain circumstances. This is similar to the existing approaches adopted in New South Wales to publicly record noncompliance for those involved in offending behaviour, such as the Food Authority's Name and Shame register and the NSW Fair Trading public warnings page.

The bill introduces a new offence, which supports the existing prohibition against payment of cash for scrap metal in the Act, by prohibiting a scrap metal dealer from advertising the payment of cash for scrap metal, attracting a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units where the corresponding penalty notice amount is \$220. A common complaint from industry stakeholders is that there are dealers who advertise cash payments for scrap metal. Operational police have raised the difficulty in proving that dealers are paying in cash when investigating these advertisements. Without this proof, police are unable to penalise the dealers responsible and the Act does not provide police with any power to stop advertisements for cash. This amendment will address this issue.

The bill removes the exclusion of aluminium cans from the definition of scrap metal. The industry stakeholders have told Government that the exclusion is largely irrelevant for compliant dealers and presents an opportunity for noncompliant dealers to circumvent the cash prohibition. The bill empowers the Local Court to issue long-term closure orders for scrap metal premises on the basis that there has been repeated noncompliance at, or in connection with, the premises. Repeated noncompliance will mean the commission of six or more offences against the Act or regulation, or alleged contraventions for which a penalty notice is issued within 12 months. The bill provides for the annual automatic indexation of the prescribed registration fee in accordance with the Consumer Price Index (All Groups Index) for Sydney published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Finally, the bill removes the offence in section 16 (4) of the Act as a penalty notice offence. Section 16 (4) of the Act prohibits a person, in purported compliance with any requirement reasonably made of the person by a scrap metal dealer for the purposes of the dealer's compliance with their record-keeping obligations, from furnishing information or making any statement knowing that it is false or misleading. This offence is currently prescribed as a penalty notice offence but should not be, due to the mental element required. All other offences in the Act that refer to false or misleading statements are not prescribed as penalty notice offences for the same reason. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

HEALTH LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2022

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Brad Hazzard, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (10:03): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring before the House the Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2022. The bill is a health omnibus bill that makes minor amendments to various legislation to ensure that it remains up to date. I turn first to the amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009. The adoption Act adopts the schedule to the Queensland Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act as a law of New South Wales, subject to any modifications made by New South Wales. However, following recent amendments to the adoption Act, if changes are made to the Queensland law, the changes apply in New South Wales only if a regulation is made adopting the changes. The combination of the Queensland law with modifications made by New South Wales is known as the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW).

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) establishes the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme [NRAS] in New South Wales. The NRAS is the national scheme for the registration and accreditation of health practitioners, such as medical practitioners, nurses, midwives and pharmacists. Under the NRAS there are 15 national boards established for 16 registered health professions. The boards are responsible for registering health practitioners. In addition, in jurisdictions other than New South Wales, the boards are responsible for dealing with complaints against registered practitioners. However, New South Wales is a co-regulatory jurisdiction and did not adopt part 8 of the Queensland law that relates to the complaints process. Rather, New South Wales has its own complaints processes involving the independent Health Care Complaints Commission [HCCC] and the health professional councils. The HCCC, in consultation with the health professional councils, prosecutes serious complaints against registered health practitioners before the Civil and Administrative Tribunal of New South Wales [NCAT].

The HCCC can also prosecute matters involving medical practitioners, nurses and midwives before a professional standards committee [PSC]. Less serious matters are dealt with by the councils. In serious matters before NCAT and a PSC, information obtained under a search warrant by another agency, such as the NSW Police Force, may be relevant to disciplinary action regarding the registered practitioner. For example, the NSW Police Force may have obtained evidence under a search warrant that relates to a practitioner's drug use, sexual assault allegations or child pornography. Such material may be relevant to disciplinary proceedings under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). That is because the search warrant material may provide direct evidence of allegations in the disciplinary proceedings which can form a basis for a finding of unsatisfactory professional conduct, professional misconduct, or that the individual is not suitable to practise in the health profession. Further, search warrant evidence may be relevant to the consideration by NCAT or a PSC as to the appropriate protective orders to be imposed.

The disciplinary jurisdiction is a protective one, with a different standard of proof from criminal proceedings. The paramount consideration is always the protection of the public. Material obtained under a search warrant may be needed to prove allegations that allow NCAT or a PSC to take action to protect the public. However, in the absence of an express provision, there is some doubt as to whether material obtained under a search warrant can be relied on in disciplinary proceedings under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). To ensure that NCAT and a PSC can consider relevant material and protect the public, the bill amends the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) to allow evidence obtained under a search warrant to be admitted into evidence in NCAT and PSC hearings where that evidence is relevant to the proceedings.

The bill also amends the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) to provide that appeals, other than on a point of law, against a decision of a PSC, a council or a national board, are to be made within 28 days of the person being given written notice of the decision. Currently, appeals must be made within 28 days of notice of the decision. However, as decisions can be handed down orally, this can make it difficult for practitioners to appeal as, in practice, they will generally need to wait until they get written reasons before considering whether to appeal.

I turn to the amendments to the Health Care Complaints Act 1993. That Act establishes the independent Health Care Complaints Commission and its head, the Health Care Complaints Commissioner. The HCCC receives, assesses and investigates complaints against registered and non-registered health practitioners. When dealing with complaints, the HCCC is not subject to the direction and control of the Minister for Health. There is external oversight of the HCCC and the commissioner by the joint parliamentary Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission. The Minister for Health appoints the commissioner, but the committee has the power to veto any appointment of the commissioner. Currently, under the Act, the Minister sets the remuneration of the commissioner. However, this is not consistent with other similar independent bodies, such as the NSW Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner and the NSW Privacy Commissioner, where the remuneration is set by the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Tribunal. I will refer to that as the Remuneration Tribunal.

In order to align the commissioner with other similar bodies, the bill will amend the Health Care Complaints Act and the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Act to provide that the Remuneration Tribunal will determine the commissioner's remuneration. This will ensure that there is an external and independent remuneration assessment of the role. The bill also amends the Health Care Complaints Act to update the definition of "disciplinary body" to refer to a responsible tribunal within the meaning of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). A responsible tribunal is NCAT. A disciplinary body is the body that has the power to suspend or cancel a registered health practitioner's registration and, in New South Wales, it is NCAT. The bill provides for an accurate updated definition.

Schedule 3 amends the Human Tissue Act to amend the definition of "principal care officer" in relation to a child in the care of the State. Under the Human Tissue Act, if a child in the care of the State dies and there is an option for the child's organs to be donated, this can occur only if the principal care officer has given their consent

or authorisation. Currently the definition of "principal care officer" means the principal officer of a designated agency that has the supervisory responsibility for the child under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. A designated agency is an agency accredited by the Children's Guardian to provide out-of-home care services in New South Wales. Previously, most children in out-of-home care in New South Wales were under the supervisory responsibility of the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] and the secretary of DCJ was the principal care officer for the purposes of the Human Tissue Act.

However, most children in out-of-home care are now under the supervisory responsibility of non-government designated agencies [NGOs]. This means that, for those children, the secretary of DCJ is no longer the principal care officer. DCJ has statutory obligations for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people, and a duty of care for children and young people who are under the parental responsibility of the Minister. While some decisions relating to the day-to-day care of children and young people in out-of-home care are made by designated agencies, the functions of parental responsibility are delegated by the Minister to DCJ officers. It is appropriate that DCJ should have an oversight role to ensure that the right decision is made for a child eligible for tissue donation and that proper processes are carried out.

The responsibility for authorising the removal of tissue from a child is a matter of parental responsibility and one of significant responsibility, which should not be the responsibility of NGOs. Other similar decision-making functions involving significant medical treatment are aspects of parental responsibility requiring DCJ consent, such as end-of-life decisions. A decision as significant as the removal of human tissue should be consistent with similarly significant parental responsibility decisions involving medical treatment and end-of-life care. As such, the bill amends the definition of "principal care officer" so that the secretary of DCJ is the principal care officer and is therefore responsible for providing or authorising consent to tissue removal in respect of a child who was, immediately prior to their death, in the care of the State.

I turn to the amendments to the Mental Health Act 2007. The Mental Health Act sets out the regime for involuntary mental health treatment and detention in New South Wales. Under the Act, if, following a person being taken to a mental health facility for assessment the person is found to be a mentally ill person, the person must be brought before the Mental Health Review Tribunal, which I will refer to as the tribunal. The tribunal then conducts a mental health inquiry to determine if the person meets the criteria for detention and should be detained. The tribunal also conducts ongoing reviews of persons detained in a declared mental health facility. Currently under the Act, if, following a mental health inquiry the tribunal considers that the person is a mentally ill person and should be detained, the tribunal must specify a facility for the patient to be detained in.

Once the tribunal finds that the person should be detained, the tribunal is not best placed to determine which facility the person should be detained in. That is best determined by the patient's treating team. As such, the bill amends section 35 of the Act to remove the requirement for the tribunal to specify which facility the person should be detained in. I note that this amendment is consistent with the tribunal's powers at later review of the mental health patients, where the tribunal can determine that the patient continue to be detained but cannot specify in which mental health facility the patient should be detained. The bill also makes a minor clarifying amendment to section 18 of the Mental Health Act to be clear that once a person is authorised to be taken to and detained in a declared mental health facility, any person authorised under the Act to transport patients can take the person to a mental health facility.

Schedule 5 makes changes to the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020. That Act commenced in 2021 and, among other things, includes provisions for managing people charged with a crime but who are unfit to be tried for the charge because they are mentally or cognitively impaired. A person who is unfit to be tried may still be tried at a special hearing, which determines whether, on the basis of limited evidence, the person committed the offence. If a person at a special hearing is found to have committed the offence or is given a special verdict of "act proven but not criminally responsible", the person becomes a forensic patient. When the person becomes a forensic patient, the tribunal will review the person on a regular basis. As part of the review, the tribunal will consider whether the person has become fit to be tried.

The Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act sets out the circumstances in which a forensic patient ceases to be a forensic patient and currently includes if the person was found to be unfit and then is later found to be fit to be tried for the offence. However, automatically ceasing the status of a forensic patient following a finding of fitness is not appropriate because if the person is detained in a mental health facility, the person must be released from detention even before the Director of Public Prosecutions can consider whether further proceedings will be taken in regard to the person. A more appropriate response is for the person to continue to be a forensic patient until the Director of Public Prosecutions advises the court that further charges will not be brought against the person.

This is generally consistent with the approach taken when the person who is found fit is detained in a correctional facility or detention centre under the Act. In that case, the Act requires that they are detained until

that advice about additional charges is provided to the court. This issue has only arisen under the Act because, when implementing a recommendation of the NSW Law Reform Commission's *Report 138* to remove the requirement for a person found fit by the tribunal to also be found fit by the court, it was not identified that this would create a gap for forensic patients detained in mental health facilities. Under the previous regime, all forensic patients found fit by the tribunal were required to also attend the court for a finding of fitness. This bill amends that gap.

The bill also makes changes to the objects provisions in the Act. Currently, the objects provisions in section 69 only relate to part 5, which deals with forensic patients. The bill extends those objects to also apply to part 6, which relates to extending the status of forensic patients. Finally, the bill makes minor changes to the Public Health Act 2020 to require authorised officers to provide an identification card rather than a certificate of authority on request. An identification card will have the officer's photo, which makes the card harder to forge. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION (DUST DISEASES) AMENDMENT BILL 2022

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Felicity Wilson, on behalf of Mr Matt Kean, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:21): On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The bill amends the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942 and the Workers Compensation Act 1987, which I will refer to as the 1987 Act. The Dust Diseases Care scheme provides financial compensation and healthcare support to people affected by work-related dust diseases, and the bill is part of the response to mis-payments that were identified by icare in 2020. A remediation program is underway to repay those workers who were underpaid, but during that remediation program it was identified that some workers had been overpaid through a continuation of payment practices that appeared reasonable but became inconsistent with legislative changes over the years. The bill, therefore, seeks to amend legislation to make it consistent and to enable the continuation of those current payment practices. The bill further amends legislation to simplify benefit calculations and, therefore, ease the administrative burden on our injured workers.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill removes references to coalminers in the 1942 Act to clarify that coalmining provisions do not apply to workers with a dust disease. The bill amends rates of compensation to injured workers to align with the 1987 Act, rather than with the lower rates under the Workers' Compensation Act 1926, and it ensures that workers get paid a statutory rate that is 20 per cent higher than currently entitled. The bill amends provisions so that, regardless of the date of the injury occurring, calculation of benefits for injured workers are consistent and in line with the rates within the general workers compensation scheme. The bill amends provisions to ensure partially disabled workers who are retired or unfit for suitable duties as a result of their dust disease are entitled under legislation to payments for dependants. The bill amends the 1987 Act so that current weekly wage rates can be calculated according to Australian Bureau of Statistics average earnings.

The bill will contribute to improving the customer experience for workers in the scheme by removing ambiguity over their entitlements and by ensuring that payments are made promptly to workers who are elderly or gravely ill. The bill will directly assist many of those workers by removing the difficult burden of verifying earnings by providing documentation from many years ago. Without this bill, payment practice would need to change, and injured workers would lose their entitlements that have been in practice and have been paid to date. The cost impact of the recommended amendments will be funded by a marginal increase in the rate of drawdown from the scheme's investment fund. There will be no need to increase the levy and thus no cost impact on employers from the recommendation. The recommended amendments do not put the sustainability of the scheme at risk.

The bill before the House today represents another important step in our reform agenda and will ensure that the Dust Disease Authority is delivering the scheme in line with legislated provisions and in a way that is fair and reasonable to all claimants. I acknowledge the Minister in the other place, Damien Tudehope, for his work and his team's work on this legislation. I thank all of those who have been involved in drafting the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMES (SENTENCING PROCEDURE) AMENDMENT BILL 2022**First Reading**

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (10:26): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment Bill 2022. The bill gives effect to the New South Wales Government's commitments to, first, legislate to require the courts to apply current sentencing patterns and practices to all crimes, regardless of when they were committed; and, second, address a historical drafting issue to ensure intensive correction orders are not available for certain historical sexual offences such as sexual assault and child sex offences.

Sentencing law is a critical part of our criminal justice system. When a court has found an accused person guilty beyond reasonable doubt or has accepted their plea of guilty, the court is tasked with imposing an appropriate sentence within the parameters established by the Parliament that adequately reflects the seriousness of the offence and the purposes of sentencing. Those purposes of sentencing are set out in section 3A of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999. They are:

- (a) to ensure that the offender is adequately punished for the offence,
- (b) to prevent crime by deterring the offender and other persons from committing similar offences,
- (c) to protect the community from the offender,
- (d) to promote the rehabilitation of the offender,
- (e) to make the offender accountable for his or her actions,
- (f) to denounce the conduct of the offender,
- (g) to recognise the harm done to the victim of the crime and the community.

The court must also take into account the sentencing practices developed through the decisions of appellate courts and any patterns of sentencing that can be identified for similar offences. A central tenet of the rule of law is that the law should be knowable and able to be obeyed. A corollary of this is the fundamental principle of criminal law that a person may only be punished for an act that would have constituted a criminal offence at the time it was committed and should be given no greater sentence than the maximum penalty that would have been available at that time. That means that where a person is charged with a historical offence, they can only be convicted of an offence that was in force at the time that the act was committed and can only be sentenced in accordance with the maximum penalty and, if applicable, standard non-parole period that was in place at the time.

At common law, courts are required to sentence an offender in accordance with the sentencing patterns and practices that existed at the time an offence was committed rather than the sentencing patterns and practices in existence at the time of sentencing. This was established by the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal in *R v Shore* (1992) 66 A Crim R 37 and later in *R v MJR* (2002) 54 NSWLR 368. This has been subject to judicial disagreement over the years, including a powerful dissenting judgment by President Mason in *MJR*. There, His Honour was critical of a sentencing rule that required courts to perpetuate past errors and to impose sentences that do not reflect current community expectations.

Other courts have subsequently commented on the practical difficulties of this approach. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found, in relation to child sexual offences, that applying historical sentencing patterns and practices can result in sentencing outcomes that are perceived to be too short by current standards and may prevent courts from considering some aggravating features now recognised by the law. Accordingly, the royal commission recommended that all State and Territory governments should introduce legislation to provide that sentences for child sexual abuse offences should be set in accordance with the sentencing standards at the time of sentencing instead of at the time of offending. However, the sentence must be limited to the maximum sentence that was available for the offence at the time when the offence was committed.

In response to this recommendation, in 2018 the New South Wales Parliament amended the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 by inserting section 25AA. This provision requires the courts to sentence offenders for child sexual offences in accordance with sentencing patterns and practices that existed at the time of sentencing rather than those that existed at the time of the offence. The Government's intention is that section 25AA operate to ensure that sentencing outcomes for these offences reflect community expectations and the modern understanding of the terrible harm inflicted by these offences.

The common law position, however, has continued to apply for other offences. This has proven to be problematic. For example, in the case of the *R v Gregory Richardson*—unreported, District Court of New South Wales, Berman DCJ, 20 October 2020—an offender was sentenced for a number of historical sexual offences against victim-survivors aged between 14 and 25. Because of section 25AA the offender was not able to benefit from more lenient historical sentencing patterns for the offences committed against the victims aged under 16. However, the offender did receive that benefit for the offences committed against victims aged 16 and over. This resulted in a disparity in sentencing outcomes for different offences depending solely on the age of the respective victims. This also potentially produced a final sentence that did not adequately reflect legitimate community expectations. The bill will expand the reforms which began with section 25AA to all categories of offences.

Schedule 1 (1) to the bill will insert a new section 21B into the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to require courts to apply the sentencing patterns and practices in existence at the time of sentencing rather than at the time the offence was committed. This will ensure that sentences for historical offences are consistent with current community standards, that they reflect community expectations and that courts are not obliged to perpetuate past sentencing errors or maintain historically inadequate sentencing patterns. Proposed section 21B (1) reflects the current drafting of section 25AA (1) except that it is not limited to child sexual offences. Consistent with the approach in section 25AA, proposed section 21B (5) expressly states that the provision does not affect section 19 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999.

Section 19 provides that any increase to a statutory maximum or minimum penalty only applies to an offence committed after the commencement of the increased penalty whereas any reduction to a statutory maximum or minimum penalty applies to any offence regardless of when it is committed. Section 21B (2), like current section 25AA (2), provides that the standard non-parole period for an offence is the standard non-parole period, if any, that applied at the time the offence was committed, not at the time of sentencing. The bill includes, in proposed section 21B (3), an exception to the new rule where an offender demonstrates that there are exceptional circumstances. This will ensure that courts retain a limited degree of flexibility to ensure that unfairness is not occasioned in exceptional circumstances. The exception will not, however, apply to child sexual offences. This is in recognition of the findings of the royal commission and the special considerations that apply to this category of offences.

Proposed section 21B (4) in the bill will address a technical matter where a person is resentenced following an appeal. Under this bill, in those circumstances the offender will be sentenced according to the sentencing patterns and practices that existed at the time of the original sentence rather than at the time of resentencing after the appeal. This is because it would be an unfair for an appellant to be exposed to harsher sentencing patterns and practices that existed at the time of their initial trial simply because they exercised their right to have an error in their sentence corrected through an appeal.

This bill will also address a historical drafting lacuna in relation to intensive correction orders inherited from the former Labor Government's 2010 reforms. Schedule 1 (3) to the bill will amend the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to ensure that an intensive correction order cannot be made for certain sexual offences regardless of when the offence was committed or under what provision it is charged. An intensive correction order is a court sentence of two years or less which is served in the community under the strict supervision of community corrections instead of full-time imprisonment. It is the most serious sentence that can be served in the community. An intensive correction order is only available to eligible offenders as provided for in the statute.

When the previous Government introduced its Crimes (Sentencing Legislation) Amendment (Intensive Correction Orders) Act 2010, this legislation provided that an intensive correction order would not be available for a "prescribed sexual offence" as defined under the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999. Prescribed sexual offence was defined in the legislation and subsequent iterations of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 as including an offence under part 3, division 10 of the Crimes Act 1900 involving an offence against a child under 16 years of age or an offence against a person of any age, the elements of which include sexual intercourse.

Division 10 was inserted into the Crimes Act 1900 on 29 June 2000. Because division 10 did not exist prior to 2000, the definition of "prescribed sexual offence" does not capture offences committed prior to that date, even if the same offences would have been defined as a prescribed sexual offence after that date. The bill removes this lacuna to ensure that an intensive correction order is not available for certain offences regardless of when they were committed or charged. In conclusion, this bill will give effect to two important amendments to help ensure that sentences handed down by the courts reflect our community's standards and expectations. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ASSAULTS ON FRONTLINE EMERGENCY AND HEALTH WORKERS) BILL 2022**First Reading**

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (10:40): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. This bill contains a suite of important reforms for better protection of health and emergency service workers who commit their working lives to keeping our community safe. Importantly, this bill will ensure that people who assault frontline health workers, correctional and Youth Justice officers, and emergency services staff and volunteers will face tougher penalties under new offences. Every person should be able to feel free and safe in their workplace, including health and emergency services workers who perform an essential public service for our community in difficult circumstances and often at personal risk. That is why I asked the Sentencing Council to review the sentences for offences involving assaults on police officers, correctional staff, Youth Justice officers, emergency services workers and health workers in New South Wales.

After widespread public consultation and consideration of crime and sentencing, the Sentencing Council in its report of July 2021 found, in particular, that in New South Wales the criminal law provides insufficient protection against assault to frontline health workers including ambulance officers, hospital medical staff and hospital security staff. The Sentencing Council made 10 recommendations, including for legislative reform, in its report entitled *Assaults on emergency service workers*. The New South Wales Government supports all of these recommendations in full or in principle and is going further in one key respect. This is by ensuring that firefighters from the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, pharmacy staff, community health workers and NSW State Emergency Service frontline workers will also be covered by the new offences. This legislation is a critical part of our response to the Sentencing Council's report. It underscores the Government's strong commitment to strengthening frontline services.

This bill recognises the vital role these workers have in our community. It makes clear that assaulting them is not only reprehensible but also will attract serious criminal punishment. Acts of violence on emergency services workers and frontline workers in the course of their duties are unacceptable. Those who perpetuate disgraceful acts of violence on these dedicated individuals should face stringent consequences. That is why the New South Wales Government is committed to strengthening criminal law protection for frontline health and emergency services workers as distinct and grave offences through this bill. This bill will also improve the clarity, consistency and coverage of the existing offence regime in the Crimes Act 1900 for assaults against other emergency services workers such as police officers and correctional officers. These reforms have the benefit of extensive consultation on both the state of existing laws and the drafting of the current bill.

The Sentencing Council received more than 20 written submissions from frontline workers' representative bodies, legal stakeholders and members of the public. This included submissions from the Australian Paramedics Association, the United Services Union, the Australian Medical Association, the NSW Rural Fire Service Association, the Australasian College of Paramedicine, the Police Association of New South Wales, the Public Service Association of NSW, the NSW Police Force, Corrective Services NSW, Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Law Society of New South Wales and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Sentencing Council also conducted six in-depth roundtable and individual consultations and closely considered crime and sentencing data. Separate from the Sentencing Council's processes, the New South Wales Government conducted further consultation with impacted frontline agencies and legal stakeholders both in developing the New South Wales Government's response to the Sentencing Council's recommendations and on the detail of the drafting of the bill itself.

We thank the NSW Sentencing Council and all stakeholders who shared their insights as part of these processes. With regard to the technical detail of the bill, the most significant aspect of this reform is that it creates offences for assaults and other actions against frontline health workers and frontline emergency workers under schedule 1 to the bill. The new offences recognise that acts of violence against these workers merit express and distinct recognition and higher penalties than are currently available under the general assault provisions in the Crimes Act 1900. While it is already an offence under New South Wales law to assault another person, the offence charged and the maximum penalty depends on the circumstances of the offending and the injury caused. These reforms will create new, bespoke, graduated offences of assault and other actions against frontline emergency

workers and frontline health workers through proposed section 60AD and section 60AE of the Crimes Act 1900, contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill.

The structure of these offences and the maximum penalties align with the existing offences for assaults on police officers in section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900. This will ensure greater flexibility, better recognition and a more targeted response to the specific circumstances in which assaults against these frontline workers occur. It will also ensure that the new offences can address varying levels of criminal behaviour and intent. Under proposed amended section 60AA, contained in schedule 1 [6] to the bill, "frontline emergency worker" will be defined in the Crimes Act 1900 to include:

- (a) a member of an emergency services organisation, within the meaning of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* other than the Ambulance Service of NSW and the NSW Police Force, who provides emergency or rescue services, or
- (b) a person employed within either of the following while the person is undertaking firefighting activities—
 - (i) the National Parks and Wildlife Service,
 - (ii) the NSW Forestry Corporation.

This means emergency services workers from organisations such as the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, the State Emergency Service, Surf Life Saving NSW, the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association Inc. and volunteer Marine Rescue NSW will be covered by these new offences. To avoid unnecessary duplication, Ambulance Service of NSW workers are included under the definition of "frontline health workers" and New South Wales police officers continue to be covered by the existing offences under section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900.

Under proposed section 60AA, contained in schedule 1 [6] to the bill, "frontline health worker" is defined to include members of the Ambulance Service of NSW, persons employed or otherwise engaged by St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) who provide medical care, members of Hatzolah who provide medical care, persons who are employed or otherwise engaged to provide community first responder services, persons employed or engaged to provide medical or health treatment to patients in hospitals or equivalent health institutions, pharmacy staff, persons employed or otherwise engaged to provide community health services and persons employed or otherwise engaged to provide security services in hospitals or equivalent health institutions. "Pharmacy staff" is defined to mean:

- (a) a pharmacist, and
- (b) a pharmacy assistant or another person employed or otherwise engaged to provide services at a pharmacy.

"Community health services" is defined to mean:

Providing medical or other health treatment to patients in the community on behalf of a public health organisation within the meaning of the *Health Services Act 1997*.

This is intended also to cover health workers who provide medical or other health treatment in patients' homes on behalf of a public health organisation within the meaning of the *Health Services Act 1997*. "Community first responder services" is defined to mean:

Rendering emergency first aid to sick or injured persons.

This is intended to cover services that provide first aid prior to the arrival of professional first aid—for example, the arrival of NSW Ambulance. These services are especially important in rural areas of New South Wales, where ambulance services may not be in close proximity to the scene of an accident or other health emergency. Equivalent health institutions have been included to ensure that these offences extend to rural and remote New South Wales, including where a multipurpose service delivers hospital-like services.

Proposed sections 60AD (1) and 60AE (1) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill will make it an offence for a person to hinder, obstruct or incite another person to hinder or obstruct a frontline emergency worker or frontline health worker in the course of the worker's duty. These are summary offences with a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of 20 penalty units, currently \$2,200. The offence under proposed 60AE (1) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill is not intended to be used in circumstances where a patient is merely exercising their right to refuse treatment or not consent to treatment being provided by a frontline health worker. Proposed sections 60AD (2) and 60AE (2) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill make it an offence to assault, throw a missile at, stalk, harass or intimidate a frontline emergency worker or frontline health worker in the course of the worker's duty, even if no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker. These offences will carry a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

Proposed sections 60AD (3) and 60AE (3) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill introduce an aggravated version of these offences that will apply if the offence is committed during a public disorder. The aggravated version of these offences carries a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. Proposed sections 60AD (4)

and 60AE (4) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill make it an offence to assault a frontline emergency worker or a frontline health worker in the course of the worker's duty and by the assault cause actual bodily harm to the worker. These offences will carry a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. Proposed sections 60AD (5) and 60AE (5) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill introduce aggravated versions of these offences that apply if the offence is committed during a public disorder. The aggravated versions of these offences will carry a maximum penalty of nine years' imprisonment.

Proposed sections 60AD (6) and 60AE (6) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill make it an offence to wound or cause grievous bodily harm to a frontline emergency worker or a frontline health worker in the course of the worker's duty or be reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person. These offences will carry a maximum penalty of 12 years' imprisonment. Proposed sections 60AD (7) and 60AE (7) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill introduce aggravated versions of these offences that apply if the offence is committed during a public disorder. The aggravated versions of these offences will carry a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment.

Proposed sections 60AD (8) and 60AE (8) contained in schedule 1 [14] to the bill, like the equivalent existing provisions in relation to police and other law enforcement officers, make it clear that an action is taken to be carried out in relation to a frontline emergency or health worker in the course of the worker's duty, even if the worker is not on duty at the time, if it is either carried out as a consequence of or in retaliation for actions undertaken by the worker in the course of the worker's duty or because the worker is a frontline emergency or health worker. The sentence imposed by court for these offences will be subject to existing sentencing principles, including but not limited to the principles of totality, proportionality and the need to give effect to the purposes of sentencing, which include deterrence and rehabilitation.

Proposed subsections 60AA (ia) and 60AA (ka) contained in schedules 1, 7 and 8 to the bill extend the definition of "law enforcement officer" for part 3 division 8A of the Crimes Act 1900 to include a person who is employed or otherwise engaged to provide services to an inmate in a correctional centre, within the meaning of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, for the purposes of education, health or rehabilitation, or a detainee in a detention centre, within the meaning of the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987, for the purposes of education, health or rehabilitation. The definition under existing law currently does not include these workers, who may be at an equally high risk of assault as correctional officers and youth justice workers who, like these officers, perform an essential service that puts them in dangerous situations. The bill will remedy that.

As recommended by the Sentencing Council, schedule 1 [11], [12] and [13] to the bill will introduce three aggravated offences located in proposed sections 60A (1A), 60A (2A) and 60A (3A) for assaults and other actions against law enforcement officers during a public disorder. These three aggravated offences are based, in structure and maximum penalty, on the equivalent existing offences against police officers under section 60 (1A), 60 (2A) and 60 (3A) of the Crimes Act 1900. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill will broaden the definition in section 4 (1) of the Crimes Act 1900 of "public disorder" to include a riot or civil disturbance at a correctional centre and a youth detention centre. This means that such offences against correctional and youth justice officers will apply in cases of riots or disturbances in correctional centres and detention centres, and be subject to greater maximum penalties. This will better recognise the key role that corrective services and youth justice staff play in keeping our community safe and promoting the rehabilitation of offenders, and better acknowledge the challenges, dangers and risk these officers face.

As recommended by the Sentencing Council, schedules 1, 2, 3, 9 and 15 to the bill consolidate existing assault and related offences against police officers into section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900 and, in doing so, repeal the second paragraph of section 58 and section 546C. In order to ensure that no existing offences are lost in this consolidation, proposed section 60A (1AA) contained in schedule 1 [10] to the bill introduces a summary offence of hindering, resisting or inciting another person to hinder or resist a law enforcement officer, other than a police officer, like the equivalent offences in proposed sections 60 (1AA), 60AD (1) and 60AE (1). This offence has a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of 20 penalty units, currently \$2,200. Schedule 1 [14] also creates an offence under proposed section 60AB for a person who assaults a person who comes to the aid of a law enforcement officer being assaulted in the course of the officer's duty. This is to ensure that such offending remains specifically criminalised following the repeal of the second paragraph of section 58 of the Crimes Act 1900. In keeping with current section 58, this offence has a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

Finally, schedule 1 [14] creates an offence under proposed section 60AC of the Crimes Act for a person who hinders or obstructs a person who comes to the aid of a law enforcement officer who is being hindered or obstructed in the course of the officer's duty. In keeping with the offences for hindering or obstructing police and other law enforcement officers, this offence has a maximum penalty of 12 months imprisonment and/or a fine of 20 penalty units.

I now turn to amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. Schedule 2 [1] to the bill will amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide the offences created by new sections 60A (2A), 60AD (4) and (5), and 60AE (4) and (5) of the Crimes Act 1900 are to be tried summarily unless the prosecutor or defence elects otherwise. Schedule 2 [2] to the bill will amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide that the offences created by new sections 60A (1A), 60AB, 60AD (2) and (3) and 60AE (2) and (3) of the Crimes Act 1900 are to be tried summarily unless the prosecutor elects otherwise. This mirrors the status of existing offences under sections 58, 60 and 60A of the Crimes Act 1900 on which these new offences are based.

I now turn to the amendment of other Acts. Schedule 3 to the bill will amend the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989, the Health Services Act 1997, the Rural Fires Act 1997 and the State Emergency Service Act 1989 to repeal existing obstruction offences under these Acts. As this conduct will now be covered by the new offences in new sections 60AD and 60AE of the Crimes Act 1900, it is unnecessary to have duplicate offences in multiple Acts of Parliament. I now turn to other reform. In its response to the Sentencing Council's report, the New South Wales Government also committed to supporting in principle the Sentencing Council's recommendation to extend sections 56 and 58 (3) (a) (ii) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to offences committed by inmates on remand.

The Sentencing Council considered, and the New South Wales Government agreed, that sections 56 and 58 (3) (a) (ii) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 should not be limited to offences committed by offenders while a "convicted inmate" or "while a person subject to control". Rather, these sections should also apply to all relevant offences committed by inmates on remand. The New South Wales Government continues to support this recommendation in principle and is actively working to resolve complexities identified by agencies and stakeholders associated with giving effect to this in drafting.

In conclusion, the New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the bill to ensure that assaults and other acts of violence against frontline health and emergency service workers are better recognised and appropriately punished. This is another example of our commitment to support frontline workers and to ensure that our justice system best serves our community. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (RAIL TRAILS) BILL 2022

First Reading

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

MUSEUMS OF HISTORY NSW BILL 2022

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 22 June 2022.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (11:04): I speak in debate on the Museums of History NSW Bill 2022. The bill seeks to establish and confer functions on Museums of History NSW and repeal the Historic Houses Act 1980, amend the State Records Act 1998, transfer certain functions of the State Archives and Records Authority of NSW to Museums of History NSW, and consequently rename the authority. Labor does not oppose the bill. Under the bill the New South Wales Government seeks to merge Sydney Living Museums and the records management functions of the State Archives and Records Authority [SARA] into a new entity called Museums of History NSW. Sydney Living Museums was initially established as the Historic Houses Trust of NSW to manage, maintain, and interpret buildings and places of historic importance for the enjoyment and education of the public.

The trust was launched as Sydney Living Museums in 2013 and currently cares for 12 of the most important historic properties, gardens, houses and museums in the State. Those properties include Elizabeth Bay House, Elizabeth Farm, the Hyde Park Barracks, the Justice and Police Museum, Meroogal in Nowra, the Museum of Sydney, the extraordinary Rose Seidler House in Wahroonga, the Rouse Hill Estate, Susannah Place in the Rocks, the Mint and Vaucluse House. Each of those unique properties and institutions tells our story as a State. Indeed, right now we are debating this legislation in a historic building—the oldest Parliament in Australia. But our history does not just rest in our historic and heritage buildings. We must make sure that the history of First Australians and the oldest living culture in the world also has pride of place in the history of Sydney.

The State Archives and Records Authority hosts a vast array of historical records and archives dating back to European arrival in 1788. The agency also manages and stores over 650 kilometres of semi-permanent government records for the New South Wales public sector offices. The agency already partners with the State

Library of New South Wales and Sydney Living Museums. Under the provisions of the bill, the State Archives and Records Authority and Sydney Living Museums would merge into one entity called Museums of History NSW. The former would continue to perform its archives functions and be renamed the State Records Authority. It is not entirely clear why the Government is choosing to merge those institutions. The Minister has pointed to the need to better understand and appreciate our contested history in New South Wales, particularly in relation to First Nations people, multiculturalism and our colonial past. While the Government's intentions in this context are good, it is not entirely clear how the merger of those institutions will achieve that.

The Government must do more to ensure that the history of the First Australians, which is not written down, but kept orally and passed on from person to person, is there to inform and enrich all of us. I urge the Minister to ensure that in merging those institutions, the primary focus of record keeping and archiving by SARA is not lost or diluted. We know that the work done by SARA is critical to public accountability and cannot become a side project of the newly merged entity. It is also critical that the work of SARA is not commercialised but reserved as a measure of integrity for the New South Wales public. Still, efforts to ensure that our heritage and preservation institutions are more publicly focused are to be commended and supported. It is in that spirit that we support the bill today.

It is also important to note that the bill will strengthen record-keeping requirements by amending the State Records Act 1998. Those changes include that a record need only be made or received in certain circumstances—not kept as well—for it to become a State record. The bill also shortens the time that must elapse before a State record enters the open public access period from 30 years to 20 years and ensures that when State records enter this period they become public by default. That means that documents and records that are important for public transparency and interest are made available to the public sooner and are more easily accessible. That is a very good thing. The bill also enables the State Records Authority NSW to issue notices requiring public offices to assess and provide a report on record-keeping processes and the records management program. The bill will increase the maximum penalty for an offence relating to protection measures and the time within which proceedings must be commenced. It provides that access arrangements may allow copies of State archives to be altered and alters the constitution of the NSW State Archives and Records Authority Board. This important change will ensure that at least one person has knowledge and experience of First Nations culture.

Strengthening the record-keeping provisions of the State Records Act is critical and the provisions in this bill promise to fortify what is a fundamental principle of good governance, accountability and transparency. I note that these principles are critical and the current Government would do well to strengthen these principles within its current practice. One can only hope that strengthening the record-keeping provisions in this bill will have a direct impact across the Liberal-Nationals Government as a whole. Labor will move an amendment in the other place to further strengthen the maximum penalty for an offence under section 21 related to the protection measures—from the current 50 penalty units to 100 penalty units. This moves further than the 75 penalty units proposed by the Government and we think it better reflects the gravity of the offence. Increasing the penalty units and the period in which proceedings for an offence under section 21 of the State Records Act can be commenced from two to three years derives from recommendations from the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I urge the Government to consider further increasing the maximum penalty for offences under section 21.

In conclusion I reflect on the broader principles that we are considering today. History is our story; it is critical to our understanding of who we are as a community and to providing a foundation for all we do to create a better future. As a people we must do better to ensure that our history is not just about buildings and colonialism. Honouring First Nations history and living cultural heritage is critical. Honouring the rich story of our multicultural community is critical. We are a unique State and a unique people, in large part because of our diversity and because of the land that we rest on today. The land of the oldest living continuous culture on the planet is something of which we must be immensely proud. It is my hope that our historical institutions work better and work together to reflect that. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (11:12): I speak in debate on the Museums of History NSW Bill 2022. Access to government information is a vital part of our democratic process. It is a responsibility of public officials and the right of the contemporary citizen to respectively keep and access government information. This includes current records of government, those in active use and historic records in all formats. In fact, this statement is deliberately format agnostic—a point that becomes more relevant as we proceed forward along the axis of time. More and more records are being created digitally and physical records are requiring digitisation for the purposes of both preservation and accessibility. Current records of government being accessible gives rise to debate about current affairs and events, allows those in public office to be held accountable and provides a trail of decision-making and evidence that is vital to judicial, parliamentary and research processes.

Determining which records of government need to be retained, whether for a period or permanently, is the responsibility of the NSW State Archives and Records Authority Board. This vital decision-making process is

entirely preserved under the Museums of History NSW Bill and safely housed within the State Records Authority, which has been set up specifically to support, educate and regulate record keeping within public offices. The composition of the NSW State Archives and Records Authority Board will now include representation of First Nations people and have the flexibility to include sectors that are not currently included, such as the university sector which is, as public offices, covered by the State Records Act but not permitted representation under the current governance arrangements. Also included on the board is representation from archives users. This was called for during the inquiry conducted by the Standing Committee on Social Issues into the policy positions that underpin this bill. I am pleased to see that this has been included in the bill before the House.

Of the millions of State records created, most can be discarded soon after creation, or as soon as their reference or administrative use ceases. By volume, this is the category in which the majority of records created by public offices lie. Others, although relatively fewer, are required to be retained for a period. The period for which they are kept depends on a range of requirements. These include legal considerations, community expectations and the nature and utility of the records themselves. Within these broad categories of consideration is a wealth of nuance. The records themselves range from the footage captured by speed cameras to Acts of Parliament. A select few are identified as having enduring value and are required to be kept in perpetuity as part of the State Archives Collection under the care of Museums of History NSW. As I said earlier, this identification process happens currently and is unchanged in the bill before the House. It is proposed to be undertaken by the State Records Authority—an agency dedicated to assisting and holding public offices accountable for meeting their record-keeping requirements. I repeat that point because it is important to note that this was not part of the original plan that was examined by the Standing Committee on Social Issues.

The creation of the State Records Authority, as a dedicated agency with a focused responsibility for record keeping, ensures that this vital function can continue without compromise or distraction. That key concern was raised in the inquiry conducted by the Standing Committee on Social Issues and the earnest response to this concern is worthy of specific mention. It is a signal that our upper House standing committees are well-functioning and of value. To ensure that material required for the State Archives Collection is identified and ultimately transferred into the custody of Museums of History NSW, a new transfer planning requirement has been introduced as part of the bill before the House. Upon request, a public office is required to work on and submit a transfer plan to the Museums of History NSW. This process identifies the material of enduring value that remains in the custody of public offices. It helps the Museums of History NSW to understand the volume and value of material, plan for its transfer and ensure that it is resourced appropriately to take control of this material, leaving the public office to focus on its core business, and reducing storage costs at the same time. All of this mitigates the risk that valuable documentary history is lost, destroyed or inadvertently damaged and can reduce costs and complexity for the public office transferring the records.

Just as access to current records of government is vital, so too is the care for and discoverability of historic material. The bill before the House seeks to reduce the open access period from 30 to 20 years, in line with various domestic and international jurisdictional comparators. This means that more archives will be available for public access sooner—after 20 years as the default setting, rather than the current 30 years. When material is open under the State Records Act, it is open in its entirety and not redacted as material under other freedom of information legislation and mechanisms so often is—specifically, the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and Standing Order 52 requests that both have mechanisms to redact parts of the records. This is to balance access and privacy, as the records accessed under these mechanisms tend to be very current. The term "open access period" and its place in the State Records Act earnestly reflects its intention to open the relevant archive in its entirety. This has always been fertile ground for researchers, historians, academics, commentators and media.

Those records are also essential for citizens' rights and entitlements, for understanding who they are and how government has impacted their day-to-day lives. Increasingly, curators, creatives, museums, writers, television producers, designers and artists are using archival material for a range of uses, and that can only be a good thing. When the current State Records Act was drafted and the 30-year open access period was set, it was done so in the name of dignity, with the notion being that 30 years was a respectful amount of time to observe before information came to light. Contemporary thinking is that a shorter period actually affords a more enlightened and modern notion of dignity and, with it, a right of reply, as the record author and many of the protagonists mentioned in the records may still be with us. Opening material earlier gives those individuals the opportunity to be involved in subsequent analysis and debate, affording an element of natural justice to the process.

Having the people who created or are featured in the archives participate in discourse adds to the fascination and interest of the issues, topics and policies under consideration. A number of years ago, the first public event was held to celebrate the release of New South Wales Cabinet papers from 30 years prior, right here in Parliament House. The Hon. Barrie Unsworth, who was Premier at the time that the Cabinet papers were created, spoke at the event, and it was broadcast live on Sky News. Mr Unsworth took the opportunity to call for earlier public release of such documents in future, citing that, had the Cabinet papers been opened earlier, there would be others

from that time still around to share their memories, perspectives and thoughts. That encapsulates the point very well. The move to adopt a 20-year open access period is done with that in mind, as well as relevant comparison with other jurisdictions, such as the Commonwealth, which have adopted 20-year periods.

Of course, not all material is suitable for release after 20 or even 30 years. Mental health records, for example, show that a balance between open access and privacy needs to be observed. There is another example of this balance, again pertaining to Cabinet papers. To that end, I am pleased that the ability for a public office to close records for longer than 20 years for appropriate reasons is carried forward, unaltered, into the bill. The structure of the newly proposed entities—Museums of History NSW, custodians of the collection of historic properties and archives; and the State Records Authority NSW, working to support record keeping compliance among public offices—is a huge step forward in valuing record keeping for both its short-term utility and its longer-term contribution to the documentary history of our State. Accordingly, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (11:22): I speak in support of the Museums of History NSW Bill 2022. I see great potential in the creation of a cultural institution dedicated to history; indeed, our culture and history are inherently intertwined. There are cultural institutions of which the legislative focus is visual and performing arts, the natural environment, applied art and science, and library and information services. I believe the addition of an institution to promote the knowledge and enjoyment of history will make New South Wales a richer State for those who live here and those who visit us. History matters to me a great deal, and I want it to matter more to others, to future generations of Australians and to people visit our shores. Indeed, a famous historian said:

History is who we are and why we are the way we are.

For those foundational and principled reasons, I am excited by the prospect of Museums of History NSW and the potential for it to fill a gap in the cultural fabric of our State. I know and love many of the museums that are intended for the care of Museums of History NSW. Elizabeth Bay House is majestic; Vacluse House is glamorous; and Hyde Park Barracks is classic Georgian and a proud World Heritage site. Meroogal, built in 1885 in Nowra, was handed down through four generations of women. There is the Justice and Police Museum, The Mint and the mid-century masterpiece Rose Seidler House.

Each of those sites is a window into a distinct part of our history, and their preservation and activation are beneficial for all of us. They are sites of activity that have an important role in their contemporary communities as well as our collective history. Over the next month or so, there are billy tea and damper-making classes as well as boomerang throwing at Rouse Hill Estate; tours of the Wentworth Mausoleum, where William Charles Wentworth is buried; drawing classes at Vacluse House; the Spring Harvest Festival; education programs for kids; and many more programs for the people of our State to enjoy and learn from.

I must admit that until quite recently I was less well-versed in the treasure trove that is the State Archives Collection. That was until I became aware of and briefed on the exhibition *History Reflected* at the Museum of Sydney, on the site of our first Government House. The exhibition, a valuable collaboration between NSW State Archives and Sydney Living Museums, promised to be an indication of what the two could and would do together when united and reformed as Museums of History NSW. *History Reflected* featured 25 surprising, iconic, important, mundane and puzzling items from the State Archives Collection. Alongside each item was a contemporary reflection—a sort of present-day response to the item on show.

I share a few reflections with the House. The exhibition began with the New South Wales Charter of Justice from 1787. Issued by King George III, the document sought to impose English law over the new colony of New South Wales, which was then almost half the Australian continent and some of the islands surrounding it. It was a source of pride to see this document out on show, with a contemporary response by two women—one First Nations and one Irish-Australian—sitting alongside it and blending two world views. One could not help but be struck by the full weight of the past upon seeing and considering it. The document itself is astounding. It is formal and full of pageantry but seemingly innocuous. It is important to recall that the instruction in judicial process is in the British tradition, yet it could be said to be the proverbial flag planted in the sand of someone else's land. To see that document is to think of other nations that would have it on permanent display for school excursions and for adults to discuss and share their points of view. This is a real demonstration of the power of fusing our priceless archival collection with a museum institution, just as our nation is a fusion of cultures.

Next in the exhibition was the headstone of George Graves from 1788. Yes, the earliest colonial gravestone we have found was for a man with the surname Graves. The story of its discovery accompanied its display. In November 1880, labourers in The Rocks removed what they thought was an ordinary paving stone. When it was turned over, carved words revealed its original use. It was the headstone of George Graves, a sailor on the First Fleet. The gravestone is an amazing, well-preserved symbol of pragmatic early colonial life. It was accompanied by a 3D scan of the headstone, which brought an historic artefact into the frame with highly sophisticated contemporary technology. The scan is available online, where one can see the reverse of the gravestone and

experience the object in a completely different way. Moreover, Sydney Living Museums and NSW State Archives used the scan to make a 3D print of the gravestone so that it can go on display near where it was discovered.

The exhibition then skipped to 1828, with the first-ever census undertaken in New South Wales and one of the earliest name-identified census records in the English-speaking world. The document and its purpose-built cabinet were sumptuous and, despite omissions—notably the military and most Indigenous Australians—the census provided an invaluable snapshot of New South Wales in November 1828. It revealed a flourishing society, no longer just a convict colony, and a population of some 36,000 people whose cultural and religious backgrounds were more diverse than often thought today. There were many other astounding items, such as the 1838 letter reporting the Myall Creek massacre that opened up a fascinating judicial process and an 1866 petition by Chinese miners at Rocky River goldfield in Uralla to keep a commissioner, who was being transferred, because he treated them with fairness, unlike many others at the time. Plague images from 1900 hit close to home following our twenty-first century global pandemic. They came alive, despite the conditions, dress and technology changes since then, due to our experiences with COVID.

The examination of those pictures of history and their direct comparison with our contemporary world is a powerful experience. The skill of the exhibition allows one to be immersed in a point in time and do more than appreciate what has changed. The probate records of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith show how little we tend to know about one of Australia's most enduring mysteries: the disappearance of Kingsford Smith and his co-pilot, John Thompson Pethybridge. They demonstrate a figure more complicated and human than the somewhat singular hero narrative most have otherwise attached to him. A number of more relatively contemporary items bring new perspectives on World War II, this State's landmark Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and how the Government tried to combat the health impacts of smoking.

The exhibition demonstrates the astounding depth and breadth of material in the State Archives Collection. It is also testimony to the many professionals at the two organisations working as one. The archivists document, describe and organise the archives work with the curatorial staff to find, interpret and display the collection. Add to that talented designers, digital producers, historians, the site of First Government House and knowledgeable front-of-house staff, and we have a cultural experience every bit as arresting and transformative as an art exhibition. The rich diversity of material in the State Archives Collection speaks about our First Nations history, colonial history, migrant history and so many other pivotal social and cultural moments in our collective past. We need to ensure that we have an institution dedicated to not only preserving the past but also promoting awareness, understanding and appreciation for our history.

The level of resourcing required is worth every penny as we are collectively richer for the stories and revelations that they expose. The exhibition opens eyes to the possibility of an institution dedicated to our history and the power contained in the endless material it will be charged with caring for, interpreting and promoting. In conclusion, our history is exciting and enduring, and it serves our State's interests, past, present and future. Let us connect, celebrate and share our history as well as we possibly can and, ideally, better than any other jurisdiction. That is the very intent behind the bill and, indeed, that journey will be made possible through its passage. I am very pleased to speak in support of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (11:31): It is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that I speak in support of the Museums of History NSW Bill 2022. I acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery is the Minister responsible for the bill, the Hon. Ben Franklin, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth, and now Minister for Tourism. His coat buttons up tight over many responsibilities. The bill is a welcome reform. No doubt the introduction of the bill is welcome news for archivists across the State. As we have heard in this debate and in the Minister's second reading speech, the bill is the result of a lot of consultation with stakeholders across the State. Those stakeholders welcome the bill, which will help to streamline the maintenance of archives and make the information more readily accessible to people. It will also be easier to preserve those records.

One person who made a submission to the inquiry that took place in this Parliament into those issues is a gentleman in Armidale by the name of Bill Oates. He has dedicated the best part of his professional life to maintaining the archives in the University of New England archive centre as the chief archivist. Bill has since retired but maintains his interest in those archives. Indeed, he is now involved in another history project at Armidale's Museum of Education, which will enable him to continue to pursue his passion in maintaining historical records, bringing them alive and making them easily accessible to people rather than having to dig deep into various repositories. That facility, which is located on the site of the old Armidale Teachers College, is very well known in Armidale and will no doubt benefit from the bill in streamlining the way records are kept, maintained and made available to the local community.

That was understood by the Minister and is encapsulated in the bill. When we talk about archives and history, it is not just about the main repositories in Sydney. A number of regional repositories are located at

organisations that are not controlled or owned by the State Government. They look after and maintain those archives on behalf of the people of New South Wales, often at great expense. In this case I speak of the University of New England, which has maintained State archives as well as its own for many decades. It does a terrific job, largely because of the efforts of people such as Bill Oates. I am delighted that the intended reform will streamline the administration, bring everything into line and up to modern standards, and make those important archive resources much more accessible.

It is amazing how often those archives get called upon for significant occasions, reaching back through history to understand the context for how decisions were made. We have heard contributions in this debate about Cabinet papers being released to understand the discussion and context of historic moments in time, as well as the regional setting for the design and construction of significant public and civic buildings, such as establishing important public institutions like a university. It is critical that those records not only are kept, maintained and preserved but also are available in an easily consumable way for people who work in those institutions as well as every member of the community. It is about making sure that we keep our history alive and that we keep it accessible for the community. I again thank the Minister and commend him for sitting in the Speaker's gallery during today's debate. We do not often get Ministers from the other place watching their bill progress through this Chamber. It is a credit to him to acknowledge the importance of the bill. On behalf of the people in the Northern Tablelands, particularly Bill Oates, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:37): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Museums of History NSW Bill 2022. The Greens recognise the intention of the bill is to establish the Museums of History NSW to replace the Sydney Living Museums and amend the State Records Act 1998. The majority of functions and responsibilities of the current State Archives and Records Authority of New South Wales [SARA] will transfer to the Museums of History NSW, along with the majority of its staff and budget.

The objects of the bill are to repeal the Historic Houses Act 1980 and dissolve the Historic Houses Trust; establish and confer functions on the Museums of History NSW; transfer certain functions relating to records management services and assuming control of, recovering and facilitating public access to State records from the State Archives and Records Authority to the Museums of History NSW; to rename SARA as the State Records Authority NSW; to amend the State Records Act to provide that a record need only be made or received, not kept as well, for it to be a State record—and a number of other measures relating to that; and to provide for the transfer of assets, liabilities and rights consequent on establishing the Museums of History NSW, including the transfer of assets of the Sydney Living Museums collection, State Archives and SARA to the Museums of History NSW.

It will probably come as no surprise to members in this place who have been following the trajectory of development of the bill that The Greens do not support the bill and merging different agencies and institutions under the Museums of History NSW. My Greens colleague in the other place Cate Faehrmann wrote a dissenting report to the upper House inquiry and raised key concerns, which I will outline in detail. In short, the proposed legislation is based on the recommendations of the inquiry into the State Records Act 1998 and the policy paper on its review. The positions outlined in the Government's further response to the committee showed very clearly that the Government expressed its desire to create a single cultural institution to manage State records and perform the function of Sydney Living Museums. The proposed legislation differs to the way that retained records are held and severely limits the capacity and function of the new organisation. I believe it is important to put on the record the dissenting statement prepared by Cate Faehrmann, my Greens colleague in the other place. In that report The Greens raised as a primary concern that we did not support the key finding of the inquiry:

... that the proposal for a 'single new cultural institution' in place of the State Archives and Records Authority and Sydney Living Museums is strongly supported.

It is very clear from the communication and correspondence around this issue received by my colleague Jamie Parker and I—and The Greens member in the other House who raised concerns about this—that there are a number of concerns in relation to the loss of the specialist skills of the State Records and Archives, as well as a concern that the specialist knowledge, the expertise and recognition of the value of the historic houses and other elements of our history in this State will be lost in the creation of a single cultural institution—Museums of History NSW. It is important that members recognise there are always slippages from this Liberal-Nationals Government when it comes to our cultural and historic institutions and the desire to engage in further commercial-related activities in those spaces. Understandably, concerns have been raised. In her dissenting statement to the report my colleague from the other place wrote:

In fact, the majority of evidence received from witnesses with extensive experience in the state's management and preservation of government records spoke to the significant risks posed to the critical role that an agency such as SARA plays in government accountability through its statutory recordkeeping obligations. This evidence was compelling and convincing.

Therefore as the Greens NSW representative on this committee I sought to move a number of amendments throughout the report.

Ms Faehrmann goes on to detail her concerns around one of the key findings. She sought to remove paragraphs that attempted to suggest the move into this single new cultural institution was strongly supported. Unfortunately, the committee did not support that, and we now have before us this bill that will effect that change. Concern was also raised about the privatisation and commercialisation of an essential government service. Ms Faehrmann sought to replace an existing paragraph in the report that basically noted the concerns about the commercial operations and the risks around that. Unfortunately, it again failed to be included. Ms Faehrmann noted the "urgings of some of the State's most experienced archivists and historians" concerning the new board's make-up. She also noted the need for First Nations and Aboriginal people to have access to, management of and involvement in those records. Thankfully, that amendment did get up. I note that the Minister responsible for this legislation also has responsibility for First Nations legislation. I hope that will be a primary focus when looking at how we are moving forward Museums of History NSW issues and our State records and archives.

One of the things that is really clear from this is the slippage that occurs in our cultural institutions when we move to make them more accessible, entertaining and usable by people. Examples of this that have been recently raised with me are the Powerhouse and Carriageworks in my local electorate. When we are talking about things like State records and archives, maintaining historic houses and the value of our history, it is important that we recognise they will not always be the most exciting, appealing or engaging places to hold opening events, fashion parades or other activities and engagements. There is a real concern about the slippage between the primary purpose of State records and archives and where we might be heading with the idea of turning this into a single entity.

I have been contacted by a number of other stakeholders who have raised key issues with the bill, in particular, that the bill is not creating Museums of History NSW and it does not charge the new entity with responsibility for collecting and interpreting New South Wales history. Concerns have also been raised that the bill merges two organisations with very different functions, responsibilities and skills, and that have little in common. There are further concerns that a number of different stakeholders have not been engaged in the process and that New South Wales needs a clear museum policy and strategy before considering such drastic changes. There are also concerns relating to ad hoc decision-making and the risks around that relating to the involvement and consideration of Indigenous cultural heritage. There is huge concern that no government archives anywhere in the world are managed under an organisation such as that proposed in the bill. While there are some things in which New South Wales might want to be first, when it comes to academic and expert evidence on dealing with government archives and State records it is important that we are in line with best practice, which does not necessarily mean going out on our own and establishing new ways of doing things.

It is important to recognise that place-based museums are not vacant spaces for random historical exhibitions and contemporary installations unrelated to that place. There are specific needs and benefits of having place-based museums as they are—of recognising their purpose and the fact they are not just an empty shell in which to have other artworks, exhibitions or events held or played. Finally, I put on the record that The Greens will be watching how this evolves very closely and with genuine concern. I acknowledge the archivists and experts in this field who have worked closely with The Greens, including my colleagues Cate Faehrmann and Jamie Parker, who holds that Heritage portfolio, and me. They have identified very many concerns that they have with this bill. We will continue to work with them on possible amendments in the other place to address those concerns. *[Extension of time]*

Given that the Minister is in the Chamber listening to this debate, it would be remiss of me not to talk about the absence of a national performing arts or theatre archive in Australia and put it on the agenda of the Minister and the Government. It has been a passion of mine for a long time. It was the focus of my PhD research, which sadly I did not finish because John Howard became such a racist that I decided I was going to get into politics instead. But I was writing on the need for a national theatre archive—

Mr Rob Stokes: You can do both.

Ms JENNY LEONG: Sorry, I realise I totally lost the Liberal crowd at that point. It is important to note that there is a gap. Two areas within our society currently do not have clear national museums or institutions. One is the performing arts and live performance sector. There are incredible examples of that at the Theatre on Film and Tape Archive in New York, at the Theatre Museum in London and the theatre and performing arts archive in the Netherlands. The other thing I want to put on the agenda is the long push for an LGBTI history museum or archive.

If we are talking about what this looks like, and if there is a genuine commitment for New South Wales to lead the way, we can do that not necessarily by rebranding and rebadging different cultural and archival agencies to do their work but by having incredible flagship opportunities to establish new museums and places where we can record and capture history. An incredible place like Sydney would be well placed to host both a national theatre archive and an LGBTI community archive that recognises the ongoing contribution made by both the

performing arts and LGBTI communities to our State and our country. Those are the positive things that we could be talking about in the context of improving the engagement with museums, historical organisations and institutions in our State.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (11:49): In reply: I begin by acknowledging and thanking all members who have contributed to this important debate: the member for Summer Hill, the member for Monaro, the member for Willoughby, the member for Northern Tablelands and the member for Newtown. I also acknowledge and thank the Minister for the Arts from the other place for his presence in the Speaker's gallery. It is a great privilege to have carriage of this bill on his behalf in this place. I welcome his genuine commitment to delivering strong, positive reforms for the arts. The Government is actively progressing a vision for history in New South Wales, one that promotes it to a more prominent place in our cultural scene. This vision is to have greater access to and understanding of the past—the rich and varied histories, stories and cultures of our State.

As the first State in the colony, New South Wales has a complex history that for too long has had a dominant, if not singular, narrative. But complex histories should not be hidden away. Complex histories will not go away or become less complex if they are not spoken about. They deserve attention, discussion, interrogation, appreciation and contemplation. An increased connection with our past will promote a stronger, more cohesive society, one that knows where it has come from, understands how we arrived at the present and one that can exert greater agency over a more positive shared future. In this Government's vision, driven by the arts Minister, positive engagement with our history is not the exclusive domain of academics and school excursions. That is why we need a new cultural institution in this State; one that has history as one of its core objects.

The Museums of History NSW Bill creates such an organisation, and its passage and assent will make history in and of itself by creating the first cultural institution in New South Wales to have history as a core object. In doing so, New South Wales will join every other State in Australia. For New South Wales, this rectification of being the State of first contact is important. It will imbue the stories that Museums of History NSW tells with national and regional significance. It is important to note that, in our vision, history is also about currency. We may engage with the past, but we do it in the present with a mind for the future. In a society of increasing multiculturalism, with a colonial present and a pre-colonial First Nations past, our vision prioritises a range of voices and perspectives on our history.

To bring this vision to life, the Sydney Living Museums and the NSW State Archives will join to form Museums of History NSW [MHNSW]. It will hold the museums currently under the care of the current Sydney Living Museums and the NSW State Archives collection. This in turn will allow for the creation of an agency that is dedicated to the vital record-keeping regulatory function that is undertaken by the current NSW State Archives. This is an important point that will go a long way towards providing comfort to The Greens by addressing its concerns. This focused, standalone public office, the State Archives and Records Authority, will support public offices to comply with their record-keeping obligations and will be given a range of new powers to allow them to do so.

Record keeping is good business, but in a public service context it is also about accountability. Taking a longer-term view beyond Standing Order 52 requests and even access to current government records through the Government Information (Public Access) Act, a subset of today's government records will join an unbroken collection of archives that document the establishment of this State since its earliest days, known as the NSW State Archives collection. To do so, records must be created in the first place. They must also be retained and identified so they can be accessioned into the collection, where Museums of History NSW will care for them in perpetuity. The State Archives collection is vast. It spans more than 87 linear kilometres and grows by one to two linear kilometres and many terabytes each year. With a financial value in excess of a billion dollars and a cultural worth beyond measure, it is not an exaggeration to say that this is the world's leading archive, documenting the wielding of colonial power in all its glory and horror.

Contained within its immensity are billions of stories about the development of the colony and country, the process of country making in the colonial tradition, as well as stories about individuals, groups, migration and the systematic dispossession of Aboriginal people from their country. The collection contains a number of series inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register—many iconic items that are well used by researchers. Noteworthy items included in the collection are the Charter of Justice issued by King George III in 1787 to establish the first courts in this land; Utzon's original competition drawings for the Sydney Opera House and Dupain's photos of its construction; the Sydney Harbour Bridge photographic albums, showing the power of Bradfield's vision and process; the Ned Kelly papers; convict indents from the first and second fleets; many historic Acts of Parliament; and Aboriginal school registers.

The collection also includes many unexpected gems, such as never-before performed plays censored by the colonial secretary, divorce files, petitions for clemency and evidence files about heinous crimes and massacres.

This takes us back to the point I made in my opening about our complex histories. It is not enough to have the State Archives collection; we must give it attention. We must use the expertise of archivists, researchers, curators, historians, creatives, digital, logistics and cultural professionals. Their work will draw out the stories and lessons about the good, the bad, the quirky and the crazy—the complex history of our State in all its glorious detail. In addition, the 12 museums and sites that will be cared for by Museums of History NSW offer a glimpse into our history and built heritage.

From the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hyde Park Barracks to the humble Meroogal on the South Coast, these sites offer vignettes across generations and portals to discover more about our history. In addition to the exploration of the direct history of each of those 12 historic sites, they are increasingly used to bring stories about broader histories to new audiences. Contained within the State Archives collection, and the walls and gardens of the 12 historic sites are the stories of our State. This formidable portfolio of assets, ranging from the spectacular to the vernacular, combined with the expertise of a team of dedicated professionals, will allow MHNSW to continue to collect, manage, preserve and increase public enjoyment of the collection under its care and promote knowledge and appreciation of history throughout the State.

This builds on the work that the two separate organisations currently undertake and expands their remit. History may be thought of as chronological, but the endeavour of sharing its stories and giving rise to its voices is not, nor can it ever be, exhaustive, authoritative or singular. History has happened but it is also happening as each moment fades into the next. We know that the future is nebulous. The present is open to many interpretations, viewpoints and perspectives. It follows that the past as recent as a second ago and dating back beyond comprehension is not fixed or authoritative or exclusively the domain of static pages. The New South Wales Government is committed to a future where history is living and the telling of history, whether cheerful or confronting, is forefront in our culture. The future of history in New South Wales is bright and it lives on in the 87 kilometres of extraordinary material in the State Archives collection and the 12 iconic and historic museums that are to be owned by the proposed Museums of History NSW. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that this bill be now read a second time. A division has been called for. There being only two members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Noes, 2

Ms J. Leong
Ms T. Smith

Motion agreed to.

Ms Jenny Leong: Mr Temporary Speaker, will the names of those who oppose the bill be recorded? I put on record that the member for Balmain is ill today and is not present in the Parliament. People should be aware that he would have voted with The Greens against the bill. Am I allowed to do that?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Newtown requires the leave of the House.

Ms Jenny Leong: I seek the leave of the House.

Leave granted.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:06): I did this yesterday in relation to another bill. Given the current COVID requirements that prevent members being present in the Chamber while ill and there being no pairs for crossbench members, there is no other way to deal with this issue.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Does the Minister wish to respond?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (12:07): My instinct on behalf of the Government is that, ultimately, we do not know what the position of the member for Balmain would be. I respect that he is away due to illness, but certainly I would not want another member to speak on my behalf and seek to exercise my vote as some sort of proxy. I do not believe the member for Newtown is seeking to do that, but that is the outcome of what she would be doing. I do not think it is appropriate. If a member is not able to be in the Chamber then I do not think we can speculate as to what their vote would be.

Ms Jenny Leong: I seek leave to amend my position.

Leave granted.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:07): Taking the Minister's point, I ask for it to be noted that the member for Balmain is not present in the parliamentary precinct today. I do not ask for his position to be recorded, just that he is absent from the Parliament.

Third Reading

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (RAIL TRAILS) BILL 2022

Second Reading Speech

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (12:09): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. The bill amends the Transport Administration Act 1988 to create more streamlined processes for the creation of rail trails and new roads and road infrastructure projects that cross disused rail lines, including those that provide access to special activation precincts. Currently the Transport Administration Act provides that the repurposing or removal of track or other works on disused rail lines outside of the greater metropolitan region is a closure of the rail line.

Section 99A of the Transport Administration Act treats a line as closed when the land concerned is sold or otherwise disposed of, or the railway tracks and other works concerned are removed. Therefore, the removal of remaining tracks or other works from a disused corridor constitutes a closure and requires authorisation by an Act of Parliament. This is a significant barrier to opening up disused rail lines to other uses that could benefit the local community and the economy in the short to medium term. The process to achieve this authorisation takes considerable time and can place financial pressure on councils that need to fund rail trails and cause costly delays to the development of road projects that aim to benefit regional areas.

By amending the Transport Administration Act, as this bill intends, it removes the need for authorisation from an Act of Parliament every time a new rail trail, other recreational or tourism use or other road or road infrastructure purpose is proposed, and allows track and other rail infrastructure to be removed from disused corridors in areas outside the greater metropolitan region without the line being formally closed. By amending the Act, we can increase opportunities for public access to the disused corridor. It will be easier to deliver infrastructure across disused corridors that can help to boost the regional economy. Rail trails are an innovative use of non-operational railway lines that will generate substantial economic and social benefits for local communities. They open up public access to scenic regional areas, acting as a stimulus to local tourism. Rail trails provide an opportunity for all members of the community, regardless of age and level of mobility, to improve their physical and mental health.

Most States in Australia already have multiple rail trails established, with more than 25 active trails in Victoria alone. A 2009 study of the Murray to Mountains rail trail in northern Victoria revealed cycle tourists visiting the trail each spent an average of \$244 per day at local businesses. The New South Wales Government supports in principle councils developing rail trails and other recreational uses on disused railway corridors where there is strong demonstrated community support and a viable business model in place and where proposals align with the New South Wales rail trails evaluation and strategic framework. The New South Wales rail trails evaluation and strategic framework outlines the New South Wales Government criteria in determining the viability and establishment of a rail trail. This includes demonstrated community consultation and support, and evidence of a viable and sustainable business model. Issues relating to environmental impacts, including biosecurity, must also be addressed. The New South Wales Government's current and future transport strategies will also be considered.

Before giving any approval for recreational or tourism uses, the Minister will also need to consult with a range of stakeholders, including the council or councils of the area concerned, the Minister for Regional New South Wales, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and any local Aboriginal land councils that cover the area concerned. This is in the bill itself, and this process will ensure that any concerns about the proposed repurposing of the corridor can be raised effectively and understood by the Minister before a final decision is made. The New South Wales Government's first rail trail pilot running from Rosewood to Tumburumba in the Snowy Valleys local government area was completed in April 2020. It attracted over 15,000 visitors in its first year, with 70 per cent of visitors travelling from more than 100 kilometres outside of the local government area.

A draft evaluation of the pilot rail trail projects in New South Wales commissioned by the Department of Regional NSW found that money spent in the Tumburumba region increased by 20 per cent following the rail trail opening, bringing a much-needed economic boost to Tumburumba, Rosewood and their surrounding local communities. A second rail trail in New South Wales, the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, is proposed to run between Casino and Murwillumbah. Already made possible by an Act of Parliament, the first two sections—between Casino and Bentley, and Crabbes Creek and Condong—are under construction and, despite disruption caused by recent flooding events, are still on course to be operational by 2023. The Department of Regional NSW, the lead agency on the development of rail trails, is currently in discussions with other councils across the State about bringing forward other rail trail proposals. Some of these proposals are at a preliminary stage, but others are more advanced.

This bill is needed to allow councils to take advantage of available grants more quickly and to boost the local economy and tourist industry. Of course, as previously mentioned, councils must be able to demonstrate at the outset that their rail trail proposal meets the criteria set out in the New South Wales rail trails evaluation and strategic framework before a final decision can be made by the Minister. Rail trail proposals generally involve the removal of tracks and other infrastructure. The rail and its associated sleepers and

ballasts often need to be removed to enable the repurposing of the corridor into a safe trail for pedestrians and cyclists. If the Transport Administration Act is not amended, each corridor that is proposed to be repurposed will separately require authorisation from an Act of Parliament, in the same way that this House has already considered the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 and the Transport Administration Amendment (Closures of Railway Lines in Northern Rivers) Bill 2020.

The proposed amendment would also allow tourist-related passenger transport services that may or may not utilise the current rail infrastructure—for example, trikes—to operate along disused rail corridors, subject to ministerial approval. Again, this provides benefits to the local community. However, the Minister's powers would be limited to where the repurposing of the corridor is for recreation and tourism uses and related purposes or roads and road infrastructure. Any other proposed uses along the disused rail corridor that require the removal of track or other infrastructure would still be considered a closure and would still require authorisation from an Act of Parliament. In addition to the tourism benefits that will flow from these amendments, the bill will simplify the process for developing roads and road infrastructure that would cross disused rail lines. Currently, Transport for NSW, councils and developers often need to construct road projects that intersect and cross disused rail corridors. Such schemes can be of significant benefit to the regional economy, particularly where they form access roads for special activation precincts.

The current Act does not allow for even a small section of rail track to be removed for those projects without the line being deemed to be closed, triggering the need for an Act of Parliament. The choice currently facing the proponents of those new infrastructure schemes is to either wait for the authorisation from Parliament, which can delay and add uncertainty and significant cost to implementing schemes, or build grade-separated crossings, level crossings or other infrastructure that would allow the tracks to remain in place. That can result in significant additional costs for no benefit, which may result in projects becoming uneconomical. Should future strategy necessitate the rail corridor to be reinstated, then appropriate grade-separated crossings, level crossings or other infrastructure is to be installed at that point to ensure continuity of the existing road infrastructure. And, of course, should it be decided to actually close a rail line in the future, that will be a matter still requiring an Act of Parliament.

By amending the Act, we can open up disused corridors to other uses that benefit the local community. It will reduce red tape by streamlining the process and reduce financial pressures on councils. There is also a benefit if a regulation can be made to approve the removal of rail track and other works whilst retaining the power to return the rail corridor to railway use in the future. This will support a quicker approval process while allowing Parliament to retain oversight of all temporary uses of rail lines.

To be clear, this is not about selling off the rail corridor or preventing the long-term reinstatement of rail services on disused lines. Land in disused rail corridors, which is currently owned by the Transport Asset Holding Entity of New South Wales, or TAHE, will be retained in TAHE ownership so that it can be returned to passenger and freight use in the future if required. In instances where the Minister approves the alternative use of a corridor and subsequent removal of tracks and other works, a lease agreement will be put in place for the relevant local council or joint organisation of councils to manage and maintain the relevant rail corridor on behalf of the infrastructure owner, TAHE. That agreement will include a break clause should the corridor subsequently be needed for transport purposes.

The bill itself is relatively brief and straightforward. Schedule 1 [1] provides that a rail line is not taken to be closed if a regulation is made authorising the removal of railway tracks or lease of the relevant land. Item [2] updates the name of the Mid Coast Council, formerly Great Lakes Council, which forms part of the boundary of the greater metropolitan region. Item [3] inserts the regulation-making power that enables the use of disused railway lines for recreation, tourism or related purposes, or for roads or road infrastructure, and the removal of railway tracks and other infrastructure from that land. It ensures that, where land is used for a recreation or tourism purpose, the rail infrastructure owner is to enter into a lease with the relevant council or joint organisation of councils, with a maximum term of 30 years. That provision also includes the requirement for the Minister to have consulted before making regulations for recreation, tourism or related uses of disused land.

The regulations can set out matters to be included in such leases. Those provisions include limitations to the structures that can be built so that buildings do not frustrate any return of the corridor for transport purposes. The regulations may also address the matters that must be or may be included in the lease, as well as termination of the lease. It should be noted that, in the instance the lease is terminated for a transport purpose, the New South Wales Government will not be liable for the payment of compensation. However, should the New South Wales Government take the land back for any other reason, it may be required to compensate businesses and/or local government for losses they suffer as a result.

I note and welcome the positive discussions to date that the Department of Regional NSW and Transport for NSW have undertaken with members of Parliament. They revealed general support for the amendment, with many recognising the benefits of rail trails and the delays caused by the current wording of the Act. However, I recognise that some issues were raised during consultation. They mainly focused on the implementation of rail trails and concerns about matters such as councils' management role, the need for community consultation and biosecurity. That reflects more general community concerns about and opposition to rail trails that have been raised during consultations on the existing and emerging rail trails.

To address those concerns, I stress that the existing checks and measures that the Department of Regional NSW and Transport for NSW implement when considering whether a disused rail corridor is suitable for an alternative use, as well as whether the case put forward for repurposing is acceptable, will not change as a result of the bill. All of those matters are already considered when an individual rail trail is proposed. The amendment will streamline the process for those corridors where recreation, tourism or road-related uses are proposed and that are already considered suitable, helping to provide that benefit to the local community and the local economy within the regions. I commend the bill to the House.

I add a few of my own reflections on the significance and importance of the bill. I believe that while it is a modest bill in length, it is a profound bill in the way in which we view and respect the land of New South Wales. To me, part of what the bill is about is a rediscovery of an ancient concept of the commons. It is profound in our passageway towards reconciliation with First Nations people and with the environment, and providing local communities with more opportunities to use disused public land that could benefit them and the welfare of themselves, of their economy, of their society and the broader environment.

The traditional conceptions of land by Indigenous people were richer and more complex, based on ideas of nation and community, rather than our imported conceptions of ownership that are based far more on the

individual. The bill allows us to reconceive public land as something that is there, not so much to exclude the community but the community, if it so chooses, can use it for broader social and community benefits. This country was subject to colonisation at an exquisite period in the development of human relationships with land. The colonising power, the United Kingdom, was facing at the same time the work of the middlemen in Ireland that led to the potato famine, the enclosures in Ireland, England and Wales, and the clearances in the Highlands of Scotland. It was all about alienation and exclusion of the community from the land for which ultimately all of us hold a joint responsibility and stewardship over.

That whole process was perfected in Australia with the development of Torrens title, which was an incredibly efficient way whereby land could be alienated, a title established and guaranteed by the State. It is no surprise that one of the most important ministries in the early colonial administrations was the Minister for Lands. It is no wonder that one of the grandest public buildings in Sydney is the Department of Lands building, because this apportionment of land to individual owners was one of the most profoundly enriching processes in the development of contemporary Australia. The title that was established through Torrens title was hugely stable, dependable and bankable. It is interesting in this country, in this State, we do not have any requirement for title insurance because Torrens title is so dependable and so strongly backed and guaranteed that insurance is not required. It has been a means by which huge wealth has been created, shared and distributed and enabled a huge degree of investment across the State.

But, as with all good things, it also has some problematic consequences. One is that it has left very little space for the commons in many regional communities, including for one of my constituents whom I was chatting to. She lived with her children in a small country town. She said that there was effectively nowhere outside her house where she could go for a walk. There were vast tracks of beautiful farmland and bushland surrounding everywhere she lived, but the main road through town was surrounded on either side by big drainage channels and ditches. It was frequented by B-doubles, so there was no way she could use the road itself to go for a walk. It reminded me of the line in Samuel Coleridge's poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

Land, land, beautiful places to roam but none of it was accessible; none of it was convenient. The irony for this young woman was that there was a railway station and a railway line in the middle of the village but the line had been closed 30 or 40 years prior. That was not available for her or her children to use, even though it was not used for any other purpose, was dilapidated and decrepit. Sadly, the railway station, a beautiful heritage building, had been torn down in the wisdom of transport at the time in the 1980s and there was this public asset just sitting there. There was no way in which she could enjoy the same sorts of pleasures that people in metropolitan areas have with good access to parklands and places to walk and roam.

I believe the opportunities for freedom for regional communities provided by the bill are quite profound and it is something I feel strongly about. Obviously there is the vast national park estate and State forests but often the uses to which those lands can be put are limited and do not allow the broader opportunities to go for a walk. Often the very nature of protecting biodiversity means that they are not terribly accessible for ordinary members of the community. We are left with some vestigial land, whether they are linear public lands, travelling stock routes or road and rail corridors. When these are not put to any particular productive use right now, it stands to reason that if the community wants the opportunity to establish a rail trail, then we should have the legislative means for them to be able to do so. That is why the bill is important.

In other countries there are well-established ancient rights to roam. I have mentioned the UK where there is a strong right to roam movement. Similarly in the Nordics and in parts of Europe, there are even well-established opportunities to roam over what is actually private land in those countries. The bill goes nowhere near that, of course. In the United States various States have established those broad rights. Of course, private owners can put up signs to make it clear that those rights are prescribed in those areas, but otherwise many countries go further. New Zealand, close to us, has the concept of the Queen's Chain, which is an area of public land along coastlines or rivers that is accessible for the public. But nothing in this bill seeks to have any impact at all on private land. Rather, it is those unused, linear stretches of public land—which might usefully link rural villages that might be reasonably proximate to one another—that might be used for the purposes of public recreation, for tourist trails and for all sorts of productive community uses, which at the moment are prohibited by law that is really not necessary. I believe that there are some quite profound processes of democracy that we need to reflect upon in our deliberation.

I also comment in response to matters raised in debate in the other place. I have been genuinely surprised at The Greens' opposition to the bill and I hope to persuade The Greens in this House perhaps to support the bill. Some of the issues they raised that are facing regional communities with transport are very real. I understand the importance of public transport, community transport and taxis for people who may not be able to afford to drive

a private vehicle—so does government generally. But, ultimately, when raised in relation to the bill before the House, those are red herrings. They are not relevant to the bill being debated. Frankly, I would have thought that The Greens would support active mobility and active transport for people who would enjoy walking, riding or rolling between towns along disused rail lines.

The experience of lockdown and post-lockdown has seen depression, anxiety and obesity on the rise, particularly in regional communities. I think science is telling us quite clearly, as our communities are telling us, that the benefits of reconnecting to nature are very profound. I must admit, I assumed The Greens would be very supportive of bills that try to provide greater public rights for local communities to access land that belongs to them in the first place. The bill is all about providing greater access to public land for communities who are asking for it. That is an important point about the bill. It is not being forced upon local communities—quite the opposite. It is empowering public communities where they want access to this land to create a process whereby they can acquire that access for shared community benefits.

As the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister with carriage of strategic transport planning across New South Wales, I think it is important to communicate that in many areas with disused rail lines, the population density is not there yet to make bringing rail back stack up. However, one could argue that allowing a disused rail line to temporarily be used for community uses such as a rail trail is the sort of initiative that would generate more buzz and more jobs in a local area, bringing more and more people into regional towns, which in the future might create the need for greater public transport connections. It is ironic that The Greens are opposing the temporary use of the very thing that might bring public transport back.

Rail trails are just part of the puzzle of regional transport, which is why the Government has a number of strategic plans in place to facilitate economic growth and community improvement opportunities across regional New South Wales. These plans assist in determining future transport requirements for regional areas, which may include network improvements and increased access to rail services. In addition, the Government is currently rolling out the 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement program as part of its commitment to improving bus services throughout New South Wales. The objectives of the program are to better meet customers' travel needs; provide equitable access to public transport; provide integrated, multimodal, end-to-end journeys; improve customer information; and improve asset usage and operational efficiency.

The program has already delivered a number of improvements. Across 16 cities in New South Wales, more than 2,100 additional weekly services have been introduced, an increase of more than 22 per cent. The Tweed bus network has benefited from the addition of more than 450 weekly services thanks to the strong advocacy of the member for Tweed. Wagga Wagga has received a boost to its bus services with a new timetable delivering more than 240 extra bus services a week and more than 500 additional weekly services have been introduced in Bathurst. Planning is also progressing for other regional cities under the 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement program, including Lismore and Armidale.

I understand The Greens' point about broader access to transport and I am sure that is something that the Labor Opposition would strongly agree with. But, importantly, the bill provides opportunities for tourism, for relaxation, for recreation and for all sorts of reasons that local communities might seek access to disused rail corridors to be used as rail trails. We have seen the tourism benefits of these sorts of things in places such as New Zealand. The Minister in the other place outlined a lot of the benefits that could be unlocked by supporting the passage of this legislation. I hope this will be a piece of legislation that might receive the unanimous approval of this place. But I do understand that there are a number of amendments that will be considered later in the debate.

Rail trails are an innovative use of disused railway lines that have the potential to generate substantial economic and social benefits to local communities. They open public access to scenic regional areas, acting as a stimulus to local tourism as well as providing a much-needed economic injection into regional economies. Rail trails also provide an asset that helps improve the physical and mental health of users of all ages and mobility by providing active transport opportunities within the wonderful natural environments our State has to offer. Importantly, measures have been incorporated into the bill to ensure that the repurposing of corridors will not impact upon the potential of the corridors to be used for rail use in the future. Land will remain in the ownership of the rail infrastructure owner so that it can be used for rail passenger or freight services in future, if required.

I note that there was a comment in the other place that the bill will remove safeguards and public scrutiny regarding closure of a rail corridor. That is not correct. The Transport Administration Act 1988 already has safeguards to ensure that a railway line cannot be closed without the authority of an Act of Parliament. Section 99A of the Act makes that clear. The bill does not change those provisions. Any proposal to close a railway line will still need to come before Parliament. The bill is only one part of the new regulatory framework for rail trails in New South Wales. The recently published *NSW Rail Trails Framework* identifies the essential criteria that must be met before a rail trail proposal can progress. The bill will streamline the process for

authorising rail trails once the requirements of the framework have been satisfied. It provides a sensible solution to what has to date been a major obstacle to viable rail trails being able to proceed without costly delays.

I commend the work of the Minister in the other place, the Hon. Sam Faraway, for the great way in which he has worked through the complexities and the concerns, particularly of farming communities, to ensure that rail trails can be opened appropriately and safely on the basis of community support. In opening the debate, I also acknowledge the great contributions of Labor members in coming to a bill that is in a form that we can now debate robustly, but agree upon the fundamental opportunity to improve access for the people who own the land of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:24): I lead for the Labor Opposition in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. I say from the outset that Labor supports the bill. I note that we will move amendments that have been negotiated with the Government and crossbench members, and I note that the Government may be moving its own amendments in response to some valid concerns that were raised in the other place last night. I am honoured to lead debate on the bill because NSW Labor has given longstanding support for rail trails—as long as they remain in public hands—as a measure to facilitate future use. The assumption that such corridors will be used again in the future—which has happened—is a key principle, because we have a strong commitment to regional transport. With respect to the Minister, I must say that for people who live in regional communities, regional transport is not a red herring. It is something that we take very, very seriously.

I acknowledge from the outset the strength of Labor's long-term commitment across the breadth of that issue from my colleagues, including the Hon. Mick Veitch, MLC, who proposed similar legislation in the other place in 2014; the Hon. John Graham, who led for Labor in debate on the bill in the other place; the shadow Minister for Transport; the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty and shadow Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism; and the member for Lismore. I come to this debate as someone who has had the enormous privilege in my life to have worked as a tourism operator and to have travelled on many modern and heritage rail trails and railways across Australia and around the world for both tourism and transport purposes. I was part of a business that successfully pushed for the reopening of the Walcha Road station in New England back in the 1990s.

Members might not believe it now, but I used to lead bushwalking tours across a variety of tracks and trails around New South Wales and Australia as a tour guide, particularly around New England and the Northern Rivers. When I was shadow Minister for Primary Industries and shadow Minister for Investment and Tourism, the Tumbarumba to Rosewood (Riverina Highlands) Rail Trail was opened in 2020 and the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Lines in Northern Rivers) Bill was passed through this Parliament. I have also recently spent time consulting on the current bill, particularly with communities in New England, the Northern Tablelands and the Northern Rivers; the Rail, Tram and Bus Union; and proponents of the bill, including Rail Trails NSW and the Newcastle Cycleways Movement. I received 130 email submissions on the bill with a wide variety of views, and my office has received many, many calls, so I come to this legislation from a number of perspectives.

While I see the health, environmental and economic benefits of developing rail trails, I also see the benefits of other potential uses of those corridors for other activities, such as heritage rail and other immersive tourism activities, reactivation for freight and/or transport purposes, and even the opportunity to improve level crossing safety. With that said, and while Labor supports the bill, the Government has come late to this. It would have been quite a different bill if it had come from this side of the Chamber, because we have a holistic view of the power of public transport as a social determinant of health, education, economic opportunity, jobs and regional development. The 2,000-odd kilometres of disused rail corridors in our State are, and should be, part of strategic passenger and freight transport plans, particularly in regions where transport and road networks have been under so much pressure, and particularly in recent years with increased population growth in our regions and damage from natural disasters.

One of the issues we have had in our State is over a decade of inaction on harnessing the power of those disused corridors for any public good, including rail trails. Heritage rail trails, level crossing removals and safety improvements have gone ahead in other States across our nation at pace, while in New South Wales we have only opened six tracks fully or partially, with less than 150 kilometres of rail trails. New South Wales is seen as lagging behind other States such as Victoria, which has 23 rail trails covering about 930 kilometres, or Queensland, which has 22 open or partially open rail trails covering over 400 kilometres. Recently, in April 2020, the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail opened in New South Wales. It runs for 21 kilometres through the Snowy Valleys local government area. The Northern Rivers Rail Trail is under development, and will potentially run for 130 kilometres through a number of local government areas.

A further 10 rail trails are proposed by various community groups and councils across 14 local government areas. There are also other proposals that have nothing to do with rail trails. Rail heritage or freight transport could use disused rail corridors in New South Wales for a variety of purposes. Some of those worthy projects have been talked about in communities for decades without any movement on them because it is hard to bring any to fruition. This bill is not the first attempt to change the process for utilising disused rail corridors for the public good. As I said, former Labor member the Hon. David Campbell made an attempt in 2009 and the Hon. Mick Veitch introduced a bill in 2014. There have been many attempts to bring these projects forward.

The lack of progress on using disused rail corridors appropriately has, in my view, led to a widening of the distance between proponents of rail trails and proponents of other worthy proposals—farmers, cyclists, bushwalkers, Aboriginal communities, heritage rail enthusiasts and public freight transport advocates. Nothing has happened, and it is left up to the community. In the discussions I have had I have, frankly, been saddened by the way that some people speak about other groups and the mistrust and division that arises at times in this debate. It does not have to be this way and it should not be this way. There is no one-size-fits-all proposal that works for all disused rail corridors. Not every disused rail corridor will become a rail trail. The idea of removing viable rail infrastructure in some areas and dashing regional transport aspirations in communities that suffer from transport poverty, as well as the lack of a clear pathway for other potential rail corridor users to put forward alternative proposals, has led to this conflict.

That is understandable, but when we consider the jobs, economic and tourism aspirations of regional communities and the benefits that rail trails bring we know that we must come to a balanced view—and that balance will be different for each community. According to the *Rail Trails for NSW Evaluation Summary*, there is evidence that the Tumbarumba to Rosewood rail trail has made a positive contribution to the economies of Tumbarumba and New South Wales. The report contains a number of early indicators of positive economic outcomes, which I invite people to examine. The bill's title is perhaps more inclusive of the transport needs and rail aspirations of regional communities so that we do not see one stakeholder group raised above all others in this complex area of land use, land management, land ownership and planning. To some extent, this is why changing the mechanism for how these projects are proposed, discussed and debated in our communities is so important.

Currently, in order to make any changes—including to rail trails—the Transport Administration Act 1988 requires authorisation by an Act of Parliament to close a rail line. Closure occurs when the land is sold or otherwise disposed of, or the railway tracks and other works concerned are removed. The requirement for an Act has been a significant barrier to many proposals that have proved successful in other States and overseas in tourism activation. There is just no clear path. The bill inserts new section 99A, which states:

For the purposes of this section, a railway line is not closed, if in accordance with regulations made under 99E—

- (a) railway tracks or other works are removed from the railway line, or
- (b) a railway infrastructure owner leases the land on which the railway line is located to a council or joint organisation.

The legislation allows for a much broader range of uses for the land than just rail trails. These include recreation, tourism or related purposes, or roads or road infrastructure. The bill proposes an alternative process for utilising disused rail corridors rather than just closing them and putting it to a vote. While this is largely a semantic and symbolic concept, it is important.

I will give an overview of the process. The *NSW Rail Trails Framework* was developed earlier this year, in June, by the Department of Regional NSW with three clear criteria: demonstrated community support, evidence of a viable business model and addressing of potential environmental impacts. Once these criteria are met, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads will make a regulation. Such a regulation can be disallowed by either House of Parliament. The corridor then remains in public hands. The lease of such land for the purpose has a 30-year term, which might be renewed. But if the lease is not renewed the lessee will have to "make good". Such a lease may be held only by a local council, although it can sublease the project. There is no penalty to government for cancelling the lease where there is a public transport use.

Under this legislation, in effect, there is minimal practical change to the capacity of the Government to alter the use of a disused rail corridor. Under the current regime, the Minister only has to have the numbers in this place—which is easy when they are in government. The change then has to navigate the Legislative Council. There is no requirement for a strategic framework for any consultation; it can just be the flick of a Minister's pen through legislation. The bill calls for strategic policy development and opponents can move for a disallowance. However, to give this power to the Minister to make regulations we must adhere to some key principles. The first of these key principles is central to NSW Labor's policy on rail trails—that is, the rail corridor will remain in public hands.

The second key principle is biosecurity risk mitigation. Biosecurity concerns are not mentioned in the strategic framework developed by the Department of Regional NSW, nor in the legislation and there is no

reference to Local Land Services. This is of concern in the current climate, with multiple significant threats to biosecurity in New South Wales. I note that the Federal Labor Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Murray Watt, released the National Biosecurity Strategy just yesterday. We on this side of the House take biosecurity issues very seriously. We know that there must be strategic focus on biosecurity because one small mite on a bee has a massive impact on our bee industry. We must deal strategically with foot and mouth and other threats. I am surprised by this omission because during the second reading speech on the Transport Administration Amendment (Closures of Railway Lines in Northern Rivers) Bill 2020 the then Minister said that a specific 2019 Biosecurity Risk Management Plan had been prepared by New South Wales Local Land Services to manage both current and potential future risks.

The plan employs several mitigation and management strategies to address potential risks of contact between animals and trail users, and trail users and neighbouring farms. These include appropriate public signage, warnings about trespass and biosecurity obligations, private farm biosecurity signs, and farm visitor notices and directions. I cannot understand what has changed between then and now. It is odd that such a requirement is not included in the strategy. It is also concerning to me that NSW Farmers—a key agriculture stakeholder with real and growing concerns in the biosecurity space, particularly in the current environment—has not had formal consultation with the Government on the bill. It previously expressed concerns about farmers being lumped with ongoing maintenance costs for rail trails on their properties due to health and safety risks, potential for land-use conflicts, fire and flood management, and methods for consulting with adjoining landholders.

I do not hold with the view expressed last night by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party that we just say no, but I think we need to include primary producers in formal regulation at some level. That is why we will seek to move an amendment to the bill, which we will get to later. The rights of Aboriginal native title claimants must be guaranteed and I am pleased to see a clear pathway for consultation through this process. However, I think a statutory review after five years would enable us all to have a sense of certainty that the regulations are operating as anticipated. For too long the rights of First Nations people in this country have been overrun by people who think they are doing the right thing. It is important we are clear on this point.

I turn briefly to level crossing safety, which I understand could be seen as tangential to the bill but is a significant issue in regional communities. It is Rail Safety Week and I particularly acknowledge and thank Maddie Bott, an advocate who lost her fiancé, Ethan Hunter, and his colleague Mark Fenton on the Eurabba rail line in February last year. Yesterday Maddie addressed the National Level Crossing Safety Forum organised by TrackSAFE, and I thank her for the enormous courage she continues to display in the face of her tragic loss. Last year when I visited the site of the accident with Maddie and Ethan's mum, Angela, I noticed the inconsistent marking of active and disused rail crossings around the area where Ethan lost his life—even on public roads. It was sometimes impossible to know whether one was were crossing an active line where a train might be or a rail corridor that had not been used for 20 years. This can definitely lead to errors in judgement, confusion and, in some tragic circumstances, accidents and fatalities such as we have seen.

If we can improve level crossing safety simply by addressing the interface between roads and disused rail lines and ensuring lines are modified not closed, that would be a very good outcome. Another key principle—and this is very important—is the need to ensure future access for public passenger or freight transport. Transport is a major social determinant of health, jobs, education and economic opportunity. While COVID has increased the move toward remote teleworking, telehealth and tele-education, there are still real barriers to people living in regional areas accessing quality health care, education and jobs. Centralisation of health and education services, and the current increase in people moving to regional areas with an expectation of higher levels of public transport than currently exist there, puts more pressure on regional transport networks. Regional communities are experiencing increasing transport poverty. They have aspirations for a return to regional rail networks and the desire to link in with major infrastructure projects, such as the Inland Rail.

While Labor acknowledges that it is unrealistic to expect that all 2,000 kilometres of currently unused rail lines would return to passenger or freight transport in the short- to medium-term—or even in the long-term in some cases—there is a need to ensure that existing rail corridors which could provide alternatives are not sterilised by removing access to small sections of the track for other purposes. Consulting with only one council means that surrounding communities could find themselves isolated and unable to reactivate corridors necessary for them to have good public transport options for economic growth and development. I note that the Government talked about consultation along the line, but Labor also wants transport consultation adjacent to the line for the communities on either side.

Time and again governments have put significant infrastructure in one area, which then creates pressure on public transport or road networks in other areas, and it is put down to unintended consequences. It would be nice to get rid of some of those. Without having proper consultation in place, the compensation clause in the bill creates a sovereign risk for investors in rail trails and associated tourism infrastructure, which could be mitigated

by ensuring that surrounding councils have been included and considered in the context of the rail trail proposal. There is no clear pathway for these reactivations, and that is what this is all about. Another principle is the risk of non-rail trail use of the lines. It is important to note that the legislation allows for the Minister to make regulations for tourism purposes other than rail trails.

As a former tourism operator, I believe that is really positive. But the *NSW Rail Trails Framework* makes specific mention of tourism and commercial development within the rail trail corridor that will complement rail trail use. Given the Transport Asset Holding Entity had secret plans, revealed by Labor, to sell, rezone and develop land across Sydney railways, and that TAHE will retain the ownership of the lines, Labor asks the Government to ensure that the legislation does not open the way for a similar situation to occur in regional, rural or remote New South Wales. While it might be easy to undo a rail trail to restore a rail corridor, particularly if there is complementary use, it is harder to undo a hotel, a coffee shop or other buildings that might constitute tourism and commercial development within the rail trail corridor that will complement the use of the rail trail.

It is therefore important to insert the statutory requirement for a review within five years. It also speaks to the importance of the Greens amendment about the regulation of the sublease, which Labor collaborated on and supported in the other place. It ensures that not just the council or joint organisation [JO] that has the rail trail is regulated, but also the person who may have a sublease with them. That leads to the issue of funding needs. The bill is not accompanied by any funding from the New South Wales Government. Councils are going to have to find the funding either from their own budgets or from private operators through subleasing arrangements. That is why Labor agreed with the Greens amendments in the other place.

It is useful, after all of the consultation processes have happened and people know what the specific proposal is going to look like, that we give the Minister the power to regulate not just the lease with the council or the JO but also the subleases, where it is indicated that they will happen. That is an important check for communities to ensure that subleasing arrangements do not undermine the key principles I have outlined today. Finally, I will talk about the strategic framework, which I believe could be strengthened. Listening to the debate in the upper House yesterday, it was clear that all parties agreed that there need to be strong business cases and strong community support for activities to be undertaken under regulation. In fact, achieving that is the whole point of the legislation before the House. In my view, the consultative and collaborative approach by the Government and crossbench with the Opposition has helped to achieve that.

In the spirit of such collaboration, it is Labor's view that the Minister must be clear about that support well before it gets to the regulatory stage. I humbly suggest that the Government consider adding the following criteria to its framework: that Aboriginal landholders must be consulted; that strategic regional freight and passenger transport plans for the area should be developed; and that biosecurity risk mitigation plans should be looked at.

Debate interrupted.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Reports

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

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:44): As Chair: I speak on report No. 4/57 of the Committee on Children and Young People entitled *Support for children of imprisoned parents in New South Wales*. This inquiry was established to look into the possible impacts on children when a parent or primary caregiver is placed into custody. The committee examined the services and supports that are available to assist these children, how effective they are and whether improvements could be made. I start by acknowledging the contributions to the inquiry made by the previous chairs of the committee, the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox and the Hon. Peter Poulos from the other place. Mr Mason-Cox in particular was instrumental in encouraging the committee to pursue this topic of inquiry.

The committee's report was finalised almost 25 years after the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues conducted a similar inquiry into children of imprisoned parents. Chaired by the Hon. Ann Symonds, the 1997 inquiry found that children of imprisoned parents are rarely considered or supported as part of government policy and are often overlooked or neglected by government services while their parents are incarcerated. Our inquiry found that there are now more supports available for children of imprisoned parents, but there is substantial room for improvement. As stakeholders told us during hearings and in their submissions to the inquiry, children of imprisoned parents will still face many challenges during their lives and are likely to experience poorer outcomes than their peers.

In many ways, children of imprisoned parents are still an invisible and highly vulnerable group. No government agency appears to have direct responsibility for their wellbeing. Separated from at least one of their parents or primary caregivers, they effectively serve a sentence despite having committed no crime. While we acknowledge the new initiatives that have been undertaken by government departments and non-government organisations since the 1997 inquiry, a great number of recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Social Issues remain unfulfilled. Many stakeholders told the committee that one of the best ways to limit the impacts of parental imprisonment is to adequately consider the best interests of a child prior to sentencing their parent or primary caregiver.

The committee found that parental imprisonment has a profoundly negative effect on children. Stakeholders told us that children often experience feelings of grief and loss when a parent is placed into custody. They can also experience poorer physical and mental health over their lives, developmental delay, financial and housing stress, and poorer educational and employment outcomes. They are also at increased risk of having contact with the child protection and correctional systems. Those impacts can be experienced by children, particularly infants, when their parents are only in custody for short periods, even if they have not yet been sentenced to a term in prison. For those reasons, the committee recommends that more consideration is given to whether a person is a parent when sentencing or bail decisions are made. We also recommend that more support is provided to parents who are being held on remand and that greater efforts are made to support children at the point of arrest.

The committee noted the work that has been done by Corrective Services NSW to improve supports for children and families who have a parent in prison. However, it also noted a few areas that could be improved, including improving access to Jacaranda Cottages at Emu Plains Correctional Centre, where children and infants can maintain contact with their mothers while they serve sentences. Greater efforts also need to be made to place imprisoned parents in facilities closer to their families and communities, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. A recurring theme during the inquiry was that not enough accurate, timely and publicly available data exists on children with imprisoned parents. We do not actually know how many children in New South Wales have a parent in prison, and that has significant implications for the delivery of services and supports for children affected by parental incarceration.

The committee also heard that collaboration and information-sharing need to take place between government departments and between government and non-government providers. We commend the Department of Communities and Justice for the introduction of child protection caseworkers, who are located at correctional facilities, for the purposes of supporting children and mothers. We also acknowledge that more needs to be done to make this vulnerable group of children a whole-of-government priority, and we have made a number of recommendations to help achieve this.

On behalf of the committee, we thank Corrective Services NSW for hosting the committee as it undertook a number of site visits to correctional facilities across the State. We also thank the governors, correctional officers, program staff and inmates of each of the facilities for their generosity of time. We wish the inmates well in their rehabilitation and hope that this inquiry can contribute to improving the support provided to them and to their children. I thank my colleagues in this House and in the other place who were members on the committee and who made valuable contributions throughout the inquiry. I also thank the committee secretariat for their professionalism and support in the conduct of the inquiry. I commend the report to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:50): I speak in support of the recommendations of the Committee on Children and Young People in its report entitled *Support for children of imprisoned parents in New South Wales*. The committee was established on 14 November 2019, so this report has been a long time coming. I note that we had the COVID pandemic, which presented some challenges for us. We also had several changes of committee members—in particular, Government members—during that time. It is pleasing to see the final report being tabled, with its 40 recommendations. I hope that the Government will adopt them in full, as they were unanimous recommendations, when it responds by 22 December this year. At the outset, I express my thanks for the immense work and patience exhibited by the committee secretariat, as well as the input of everybody who made a submission and the support provided to the committee by Corrective Services on our many site visits. SHINE for Kids, who provided us with support, is an organisation that provides support to children with incarcerated parents.

We know that when parents are imprisoned, the impacts on their children are profound. It affects their health, both mental and physical. It affects their prospects for educational attainment and their family relationships—in fact, for their entire life. We need to consider the welfare of those children more effectively in the future, and we need to give greater consideration to their welfare during the sentencing process. The committee found that "parental incarceration has a profoundly negative effect on children" and should be avoided wherever possible. For primary caregivers who would be sentenced to no more than 12 months in prison, the committee

recommended that every other alternative must be demonstrated to be exhausted before they are given a custodial sentence. In those cases, it is their children who are serving a "hidden sentence", through no fault of their own. We need to do what we can in order to ensure that those children are not wearing the consequences of actions that are not their own—actions over which they have no control.

Many of the submissions made to the inquiry and evidence provided to the committee made it very clear that children whose parents are imprisoned are not provided with enough targeted and specialised support. Without their primary caregiver, many of those children are separated from family supports and placed in out-of-home care. That cycle puts many of those children at risk of intergenerational offending, and they may become incarcerated themselves at some time in the future. A significantly higher percentage of First Nations children are affected, with more than 20 per cent of Indigenous children having had a parent in jail at some point in their life. The chances of a child ending up in out-of-home care is significantly increased when their parent is sent to prison, and out-of-home care has been demonstrated to produce poorer outcomes for those children.

It is important to note that the committee's recommendations are not only focused on exploring ways to prevent primary caregivers from being incarcerated. There will always be instances in which primary caregivers will need to serve lengthier sentences, based on the seriousness of their crime. In those cases, it is important that the right support structures are in place to ensure that children with a parent in prison are not left at risk. The committee has recommended that a specific role be created in the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] to monitor and advocate for the children of imprisoned parents. The aim of that recommendation is to fill a gap in the provision of services in that area. As the member for Camden indicated, we do not even know how many children in this State have incarcerated parents. A holistic approach to those children would see that new position operating in consultation with other departments, such as Health and Education, to ensure that the whole child is being cared for.

The report includes 40 recommendations in total, focusing on improving outcomes for young people affected by their parents' incarceration. There is a clear link between their experience as children and later contact with the criminal justice system. It is my hope that, by implementing those recommendations, we can keep families together and, ultimately, keep more people from falling into patterns of intergenerational incarceration.

Report noted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Reports

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

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:55): As Chair: I speak on report 3/57 of the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics entitled *Interim Report: Parliamentary Privilege and the use of investigatory and intrusive powers*, tabled with the Clerk on 24 June 2022. This is an interim report for the committee's inquiry into the adequacy of current procedures to protect parliamentary privilege in circumstances where law enforcement and investigative bodies seek to use coercive, intrusive and covert investigatory powers. The inquiry was referred to the committee by the House on 19 November 2020. The committee decided to make an interim report to the House to outline recent developments that are of significance for the inquiry, as well as the committee's progress, immediate priorities and the next steps it intends to take.

A particular issue that has recently been drawn to the attention of the committee is that third parties—for example, government agencies—are sometimes compelled to produce documents and other things to investigative agencies on a confidential basis in circumstances where questions of parliamentary privilege arise. In such circumstances, the third parties cannot consult with the Parliament about issues of parliamentary privilege—confidentiality requirements mean that they cannot disclose the existence or nature of an order to produce the material. Further, where a large volume of material is sought, it may stop a privilege issue being identified, in which case privileged material could be produced to an investigative body inadvertently.

It had been suggested to the committee, based on a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, that where a government agency must produce a large volume of material to an investigative agency and the government agency cannot consult with the relevant House, personnel of that agency be given delegated authority by the House to undertake an initial cull for potentially privileged material. The Supreme Court of Western Australia found that privilege questions surrounding documents that are required to be produced to an investigative agency can only be resolved by Parliament, those authorised by Parliament or by the courts. Further, whilst parliamentary privilege is essentially a privilege against the use of material to impeach or question parliamentary proceedings, production of material would also breach parliamentary privilege because the investigative agency could then use that material for its investigation in a way that could have adverse consequences for members.

In its interim report, the committee noted that, at this stage, it does not support the House delegating authority to third parties to make any determinations about parliamentary privilege. However, as a result of the Supreme Court decision, the Western Australian Parliament has developed a protocol with the Corruption and Crime Commission of Western Australia for the execution of search warrants on premises occupied by members and the determination of claims of parliamentary privilege. The protocol centres on segregation of material produced to the commission, strict access controls and parliamentary authorisation for the process by which privilege claims are made. Taking that into account, the committee noted in its report that it is considering whether aspects of the Western Australian protocol may be useful to adopt in the New South Wales context.

The committee also outlined the next steps that it intends to take to progress its inquiry—in particular, seeking independent legal advice on pertinent issues. This advice will then inform the committee's consultations with relevant stakeholders on the most appropriate procedures to adopt in relation to the production of material under compulsory orders where issues of parliamentary privilege may arise. Bringing forward such appropriate procedures is a priority for the committee, which has reassessed the conduct of its inquiry accordingly. Further, as the issue of third parties would benefit from prompt action, prior to its completion of the inquiry and the committee's final report to the House, the committee intends to recommend interim procedures to assist with the resolution of practical issues where third parties must produce material to investigative bodies and where issues of parliamentary privilege may arise.

In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their valuable input thus far into the inquiry process and deliberations upon the interim report to the House. I also thank the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Ms Helen Minnican, Elspeth Dyer and the committee secretariat for their assistance in the conduct of the inquiry to date, and in the production of the interim report. I commend the interim report to the House.

Report noted.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

Reports

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

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (13:00): As Deputy Chair, I take note of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety report 3/57 entitled *Support for rural and regional learner drivers*. In New South Wales, turning 16 entitles you to apply for a learner driver licence. For some, progressing through the graduated licensing scheme's testing stages can be a high priority due to a significant need and want for a driver licence. Many of us know firsthand the benefits of having a driver licence. It can help a person access a range of services such as education, training, employment, legal services, housing, health care and social connections. But for rural and regional learner drivers, the process of getting a licence is not so easy.

In this inquiry the committee heard that people living in rural and regional New South Wales experience a number of barriers when trying to obtain a driver licence. The committee's recommendations aim to address these barriers. For example, the committee heard that some people in these areas have difficulty providing sufficient identification documents in order to apply for a licence. The committee therefore recommended that the Department of Customer Service review how access to identification documents can be improved and consider waiving the cost for people seeking identification for the purpose of applying for their driver licence. The committee also heard that for people with literacy and numeracy challenges, completing the driver knowledge test can be difficult. It recommended that Transport for NSW review this test to ensure it is more accessible.

Stakeholders highlighted that there may be significant barriers to accessing driving programs and instructors. The committee made recommendations aimed at making driving courses more accessible in rural and regional areas, including to make the NSW Safer Drivers Course available to people over 25 years of age, waive the participation fee and allow applications to be lodged online. It also recommended that Transport for NSW investigate a vehicle accessibility scheme to assist with the purchase or hire of safer vehicles, having heard that rural and regional drivers face difficulty in sourcing safe vehicles to learn on.

The committee was told that people in rural and regional areas may be unaware of the driving programs available in their locality. For this reason, the committee recommended that Transport for NSW investigate the creation of a data-sharing portal for local councils and driver mentoring programs, and that this information be made available to the public. This goes hand in hand with the committee's recommendation that the New South Wales Government consult with the Australian Government to create a publicly accessible database of all driving programs offered nationally.

The committee heard that learner drivers have varying levels of driving experience. In some instances, they may become competent drivers before they complete 120 hours of driving experience. In recognition of this, the

committee recommended that a learner driver be able to apply for their provisional P1 licence without completing the required 120 hours of driving if a qualified driving instructor believes that they are competent in their driving skills. Finally, the committee examined the use of driving simulators. It has recommended trialling the use of simulators in rural and regional areas. The committee is of the view that a trial period will allow Transport for NSW to determine their effectiveness in supporting learner drivers to obtain their licence.

The committee recognises that the path to obtaining a driver licence for people in rural and regional areas has not been easy but hopes its recommendations will help address the challenges facing learner drivers in these areas. I thank the Chair, the Hon. Lou Amato, for his support and guidance of the work of the committee, and my fellow committee members for their contributions. I thank Committee staff for their work. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

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

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:05): As Chair: I address the House regarding report No. 46/57 of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest*, tabled on 9 August 2022. The committee examined 12 bills introduced in the sitting week beginning 21 June 2022. The committee also examined 20 regulations—and commented on seven—tabled in May and June. I will now draw the Parliament's attention to some of the issues raised in this digest.

The Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 makes various amendments to the Electoral Act 2017 and Electoral Funding Act 2018 ahead of the upcoming State election in March. This includes amendments to the allowable early voting period, early scrutiny of postal ballots, and third party campaigner expenditure caps. It also makes special provisions for the 2023 State election to prohibit technology-assisted voting which is not telephone voting for vision-impaired or blind electors. The bill provides that the aforementioned amendments are to commence by proclamation.

The committee generally prefers legislation to commence on a fixed date, or on assent, to provide certainty for affected persons, particularly where it may affect an individual's electoral rights or obligations. The committee noted that there may be practical reasons for a flexible starting date to allow for the time needed to make necessary administrative arrangements. However, as these amendments are intended to facilitate the upcoming State election, this may impact an individual's ability to ascertain their electoral rights and obligations. For these reasons, the committee referred this matter to Parliament for its consideration.

Turning to a private member's bill introduced in the Legislative Council, the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment (Unexplained Wealth) Bill 2022 amends section 28A of the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 to facilitate the making of unexplained wealth orders by the Supreme Court. Section 28A requires the court to make that order if there is a reasonable suspicion that the person has at any time engaged in or acquired property derived from serious criminal conduct. The bill amends the standard of proof to the balance of probabilities and places the burden of proof on the subject person to prove their wealth is or was lawfully acquired.

The committee noted that by reducing the standard of proof to make unexplained wealth orders and reversing the burden of proof onto the person alleged, this may impact a person's right to the presumption of innocence. The committee acknowledged that certain statutory safeguards may mitigate the impact of these provisions on a person's right to the presumption of innocence. These include prohibitions on the court considering any wealth which the Crime Commission has not provided evidence of. However, there is no threshold value of wealth to limit the application of these orders. Given these amendments may impact a core principle of a person's right to a fair trial in criminal proceedings, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for its consideration.

Turning now to a regulation, the Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Regulation 2022 makes various amendments to schedule 2 of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 to extend the matters which can attract merits review and medical assessment under the Act. This amendment is made under section 7.51 of the Act, which enables regulations to amend or replace schedule 2. The committee noted that these amendments are, therefore, made by way of a Henry VIII clause in the Act. This allows the Executive to legislate and amend Acts of Parliament using regulation, without reference to Parliament.

The committee generally prefers that amendments to an Act be made by an amending bill, particularly where those amendments may impact a person's rights and liberties in the course of motor accident compensation disputes, to foster a greater level of parliamentary oversight. However, the committee noted that regulations are tabled in Parliament and are still subject to disallowance motions. In the circumstances, the committee made no

further comment. That concludes my remarks on the *Legislation Review Digest No. 46/57* for this Parliament. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest and, of course, the secretariat for its support. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:10): On behalf of the Opposition, it gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on the *Legislation Review Digest No. 46/57*, dated 9 August. The committee considered 12 bills and commented on all but one of those in the digest. It also considered 20 regulations and commented on seven of those. Those that were not commented on are included in the digest for members who are interested. Also for the benefit of members, links to all of the regulations and bills included in the digest are available in its electronic form. I do want to report on the ongoing work of the committee to strengthen the scrutiny of bills in the State. To that end, the committee has prepared a list of rights and liberties that it will use as a framework with which to consider bills that are introduced to the House. Members will recall that section 8A of the Legislation Review Act requires the committee to consider any bills introduced into Parliament and to report to both Houses of Parliament on whether such bills, by express words or otherwise, trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties as well as other functions outlined in subsections (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), et cetera.

However, section 8A does not in its current form define what those rights and liberties are. Based on the good work of the secretariat, the committee has now produced a list to determine what those rights and liberties are when considering bills before the House. That list was endorsed by the committee on 9 August. It will be displayed on the committee's website and the Chair will write to Ministers of the Government outlining what that list is in order to enable Ministers and parliamentary secretaries who have carriage of legislation to address the rights and liberties questions that may arise from the introduction of bills in the House. The scrutiny of legislation marches on in the State of New South Wales. I thank the secretariat for supporting the work of the committee along with my colleague and Chair Mr David Layzell, who is in the House. The committee members do good work together. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Firstly, I acknowledge the Consul General of the United States, Christine Elder, who I met with this morning. She is not present this afternoon. I welcome to the Speaker's gallery the High Commissioner of Canada, Mr Mark Glauser, and his wife, Diane, and the Consul General of Canada, Mr Andre Giroux, and his wife, Nathalie. On behalf of all members, I thank them for the warm friendship that the people of Canada share with us. I welcome the Hawkesbury Blue Mountains Community Bushfire Alliance, particularly Kooryn Sheaves, Peter Raines, Brian Williams and Margaret and Simon Tadros, guests of the member for Blue Mountains. I also welcome attendees from the introduction to the Legislative Assembly public sector seminar, who are watching question time from the public gallery. I spoke with them this morning, as did a number of members and staff. I thank all who have been a part of that process.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Members

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

The SPEAKER: I report a message from Her Excellency the Governor convening a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly on Thursday 11 August 2022 at 10.30 a.m. to elect a member to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC. I direct that the joint sitting with the Legislative Council for the election of a member of the Legislative Council be set down as an order of the day for 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 11 August 2022, as appointed in Her Excellency's message, dated 10 August 2022.

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.

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

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message regarding the administration of the Government.

Question Time

ELECTIVE SURGERIES

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:19): My question is directed to the Premier. Last month Vicky from Newcastle waited six days for surgery at John Hunter Hospital with multiple fractures from a fall. She was prepared for surgery and then, due to lack of capacity, she was bumped from surgery every day. That meant she was not allowed to eat for the entire time. Has a decade of under investment created a health crisis in our public hospitals?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:20): No government in the history of this State has invested more in health care than the Liberals and The Nationals. Minister Hazzard is the best and greatest health Minister in this State's history. He has built more hospitals than any Minister before him and at every press conference the unions stand next to him because they love the work that he does every day. Our hospitals, like hospitals around the country, had to pause non-urgent elective surgeries from time to time during the pandemic. As a member of the crisis cabinet, I know that those decisions were difficult to make. As the Leader of the Opposition indicated in his question, paused surgeries can cause many difficulties. But what we did—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. It was not elective surgery.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Keira will resume his seat. The Premier has the call.

Mr Ryan Park: It is emergency surgery. You do know the difference, don't you?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I certainly do.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As a government we invested a record amount to clear that backlog. In this year's budget we invested record amounts again—over \$400 million—to clear that backlog as quickly as possible. In doing so, compared to any other health system in the country, we have got surgery back on track quicker than any other State. That did not just happen. That has happened because of record investments time and again by this Government. Over the past 11 years, record health budget after record health budget. That means—

Ms Kate Washington: So Vicky should just say thank you?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No. That means we can give the care, support and surgery to those who need it as quickly as possible coming out of a one-in-100-year pandemic, which those opposite continue to politicise.

COST OF LIVING

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:23): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberals and The Nationals are working to boost the budgets of families and small businesses?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23): I can. What a great question from the great member for Seven Hills.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: He is the greatest member for Seven Hills we have ever had—the first.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Treasurer will be across this but the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Index of Consumer Sentiment published the August index yesterday. New South Wales consumer sentiment increased by 5 per cent to 87.6. This is the strongest growth of any State, alongside Victoria. We now have the highest consumer sentiment in the country, the lowest inflation at 3.3 per cent and the lowest unemployment in the State on record. What does that mean? A strong economy in New South Wales, which we have driven over the past 11 years, means stronger budgets, which means we can invest more in family budgets across the State.

I call out the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government—The DAC Man—because Service NSW has not only revolutionised service delivery in the State but also it has been the one-stop shop where our cost-of-living measures are able to be put out to families across New South Wales. The Savings Finder is still on the Service NSW website. It leads the way with more than \$7.2 billion in cost-of-living measures in this year's budget. It is right across the board: improving home ownership, giving first home buyers choice with our shared equity scheme for frontline workers, key worker housing, the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund [AIF] by the planning Minister, which is driving—

Mr Paul Scully: You haven't mentioned your land tax yet.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I'm getting there. I'm getting there.

Mr Paul Scully: You're running out of time.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much general conversation in the Chamber.

Mr Michael Daley: What about TAHE?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I'll go for an extension.

Mr Michael Daley: Tell us about TAHE. How's TAHE going to help bus fares?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Are you coming to the footy? You can be my plus one. Roosters v Souths, plus one, opening day. The AIF is run by the planning Minister, driving infrastructure investment to ensure the housing supply continues across the State. In addition to that we are giving first home buyers choice when it comes to paying upfront stamp duty or an annual amount. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: There is far too much general conversation in the Chamber. The member for Blue Mountains, the member for Bega, the member for Wyong and the member for Campbelltown will cease conversation.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Good call. Put them on some warnings, Mr Speaker. In the budget this year, there is the \$150 Back to School voucher. If those in the public gallery have children or grandchildren at school, from next year there will be \$150 per child to help with expenses related to going back to school; two Active Kids vouchers of \$100 each; Brighter Beginnings; affordable preschool fee relief, alongside our preschool revolution in universal preschool for all children the year before school; and increasing access to affordable child care. There are energy savings of up to \$600 a year from the Treasurer and energy Minister, with the Energy Bill Buster package. There is toll relief. We hear a lot about tolls from the other side of the House but no policy at all, just talk. Forty per cent—where is their policy?

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Read the budget speech in reply.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There was not a policy in it. You have got to have a policy. We are having a policy debate here about the future and vision of the State. That is a policy vacuum. The travel card still exists.

Mr Paul Toole: Two hundred and fifty dollars.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Two hundred and fifty dollars for concession card holders—regional seniors love it. I was a sceptic; The Nationals converted me.

The SPEAKER: The member for Canterbury will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: These are the policies that the Liberals and The Nationals can deliver on this side of the House. We run a strong economy, which leads to strong budgets and that means, compared with any other State in the country, we can provide more cost-of-living support to people right across New South Wales.

NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:29): My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier has been asked about the Building Commissioner's resignation letter for weeks. Yesterday we gave the Premier yet another opportunity to come clean and his response was:

I have not read that letter. I will seek advice.

A day later we give the Premier another opportunity to inform the House and the public whether he has now read the letter or at least received a briefing on its contents. If so, what does it say?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:29): I thank the member for Maroubra for his question. I can advise the House that I have read the resignation letter from David Chandler to the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service, Emma Hogan. This is a personal letter related to an employment matter. I have been advised by the secretary that appropriate action was taken by her in relation to the contents of the letter. Out of the abundance of caution, the letter was provided to the ICAC for information. I understand the letter is to be provided to the upper House tomorrow.

REGIONAL JOB CREATION FUND

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (14:30): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales and Minister for Police. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to support and create jobs in regional New South Wales?

Ms Melanie Gibbons: That's how you ask a question.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:30): That is exactly how you ask a question. There is a sensible question from a hardworking member about what matters in regional New South Wales. At the moment the regions are booming because of the investment from the Liberals and The Nationals in government. There are not many places in regional New South Wales where you will not see the fingerprints of the investments made by the Liberal-Nationals Government. I talk about the Regional Job Creation Fund.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: A total of \$140 million has been invested in the program, which has also got around \$300 million in private sector investment. That is creating more jobs in regional New South Wales. It has been so successful that this year the Treasurer put in another \$100 million so there could be future rounds of that program. We are well and truly on our way to achieving the target of establishing 7,000 jobs in regional New South Wales. That is thousands of jobs. People will be able to find a job in their regional communities. In the past, people thought they had to pack up and go to a city to get a highly paid, highly skilled job. But no more, because those jobs are happening in regional New South Wales. With the Regional Job Creation Fund businesses are relocating to the regions. They are expanding their businesses and having the confidence to invest in regional New South Wales. In the electorate of Northern Tablelands, there is a \$1.4 million boost to BOSS Engineering in Inverell.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: It will create 70 full-time jobs. Using this grant BOSS will develop a new range of its popular air seeder, which makes seeding more efficient and sustainable. It also means cutting-edge farm machinery being manufactured in the Northern Tablelands that will be used all over Australia. It is a manufacturing boom and it is taking place in regional New South Wales. I have spoken about Simmons Global before but it is such a good story that I will mention it again. That business is relocating from Western Australia and will create 250 jobs in Narromine. It wants to come to regional New South Wales because of the opportunities that will create. Then there is Faircloth & Reynolds, which will create 20 jobs in Coffs Harbour as it expands its business of manufacturing refrigerators and air conditioners. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Steber International is using a \$100,000 grant and that is creating a dedicated assembly line for the manufacturing of small boats in Taree. Thales Australia in Lithgow is creating 56 jobs as it upgrades its military and civil manufacturing lines. We know how important advanced manufacturing is. I acknowledge the interests of those oppose as well, because a few weeks ago the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Port Stephens and Crackers, the member for Newcastle, were all in Port Stephens in the Hunter area. They visited a business called LAVO which is creating 250 jobs for Port Stephens. When those members were there they did not realise that LAVO was doing that because this Government gave it a grant of \$5 million.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the third time.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I was there eight months ago announcing that it would be getting \$5 million from this Government to expand and to create 250 jobs. It is on the front page of the paper—250 jobs because of this Liberal-Nationals Government. Even the shadow Minister for Small Business said:

By committing to domestic manufacturing, we can help grow innovative businesses like ... LAVO, and many others across NSW. This will create much-needed, well-paid jobs, and grow our economy for the future.

I could not have said it better myself. That is exactly what we are doing.

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Macquarie Fields to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Macquarie Fields left the Chamber at 14:36]

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Good call. I will use that quote in the future when we expand our regional job creation fund. When it comes to advanced manufacturing what we see from Labor is nothing. All we see is lip service. But what we are seeing from this side of the Government is millions of dollars that are being invested in regional New South Wales, creating jobs for the future. This Government is ensuring that regional New South Wales is getting a secure and a brighter future.

NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:36): My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's previous answer. When was the resignation letter referred to ICAC—yesterday or two and a half weeks ago when Mr Chandler resigned and signed the letter?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:36): I will seek advice relating to the date that it was provided to the ICAC. Hopefully I will come back with an answer during question time.

STATE BUDGET

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (14:36): My question is addressed to the Treasurer and the Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the recent budget will strengthen the New South Wales economy and are there any threats to it?

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The use of the words added to the question "and are there any threats" infringes the intention of the ruling the Speaker gave I think in August 2019 that will initiate a debate—

The SPEAKER: The phrase is more precise than the words "and in related matters". I am happy to allow the question on this occasion, but I accept that it is getting close.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I add, with respect, that your ruling is beyond the words that you just referred to. It encompasses a range of words.

The SPEAKER: It does; I agree. But I am happy to accept the words on this occasion.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:37): I thank the outstanding member for Vaucluse for her question. She knows the importance of building a strong economy, because that is how we deliver the infrastructure and services that the people of this State missed out on for 16 years when the Labor Government was in office. We know there are threats to the economy at the moment. We know there is inflation, we know there are market constraints and we know there are global influences. But we know that the biggest threat is the Midnight Prowler sitting on the other side of the Chamber—the Midnight Prowler, Creepy Chris, who lurks out the front of public hospitals.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The use of that sort of unparliamentary terminology will only provoke disorder in the House. Mr Speaker, I ask you to intervene and to ask the member to be directly relevant to the question that has been asked.

The SPEAKER: I gave some leeway in terms of the question. I ask the Treasurer to be more directly relevant to the question.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am happy to be directly relevant because I want to talk about the great programs the New South Wales Coalition Government delivered in the budget to grow a stronger and more prosperous economy for everyone, including our \$5 billion investment in rolling out affordable and accessible child care right across New South Wales, unlocking thousands of new places and ensuring that we unlock the potential of more than 95,000 women to re-enter the workforce or take on more hours. That is not just good social policy; that is good

economic policy. It will deliver a dividend of up to \$17 billion every year, growing our State's prosperity and creating more opportunities for everyone.

It is one of the reasons the budget announced a \$5.8 billion investment, to ensure that every child in New South Wales is able to access free education in the year before they start school. This is about unlocking the potential of our kids and giving them the best start in life. This policy is as close as we will get to a silver bullet when it comes to raising education standards and ensuring that our kids can get the best start in life. This is not just about ensuring our kids can realise their dreams; it is about ensuring they can dream bigger in the first place. That is what the Coalition Government is all about. Our plan to grow the economy is also about ensuring that first home buyers can enter the market. That is why we announced over \$720 million to ensure that first home buyers can enter the ladder of opportunity, which is the housing market. We know that the best way to grow people's wealth is to ensure that they can own their own home. *[Extension of time]*

We are giving them that choice—the choice between paying a stamp duty or a small annual property fee. It is about choice—a choice that Chris Minns wants to deny the first home owners of New South Wales because he does not want them to own their own home. He does not want them to create their own wealth and he does not want to grow our economy. It is not just about our plans to grow a stronger economy for tomorrow; it is also about helping families with cost-of-living pressures today. That is why we have announced a toll relief package. It is a package that will see motorists save up to \$750 every year on their tolls—40 per cent off their tolls—a real policy that will put more money back in more people's pockets more often. That stands in stark contrast to no policy from those opposite. Is it any wonder? The Leader of the Opposition is probably too tired. He has been lurking outside public places all night. The Night Prowler is out there in his raincoat filming himself and then fleeing from the scene.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: The Treasurer is flouting your goodwill. The question was in breach of Standing Order 128 as the member for Heffron pointed out. Under Standing Order 73, if the Treasurer wants to debate the goodwill, hard work and engagement of the Leader of the Opposition, he should do so by way of substantive motion and we will be here all night.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. At this stage there is no breach of standing orders.

Mr MATT KEAN: Speaking of lurk merchants—the member for Campbelltown! But I digress. While we are focused on growing the economy and helping families, those opposite are focusing on helping their vested interests, the union movement, through the year of the strike. Today is a shameful example of that disgraceful policy from those opposite. *[Time expired.]*

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

REGIONAL MOBILE AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (14:43): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. On 17 June 2019 his predecessor announced a \$400 million blackspot digital connectivity fund to eliminate blackspots across the State. Up to November 2020, \$39 million had been invested. Will the Deputy Premier advise the House and communities across regional New South Wales, many of whom are still without adequate mobile and internet connectivity, how much of that \$400 million has now been invested?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:43): I thank the member for Orange for his question. I say to the member, as I do to any other member in this place, that my door is always open. Feel free to come and speak to me at any time in relation to this matter.

The SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Let me point out a couple of things to the member of the Shooters, Fishers and Fakers Party. As part of our regional digital activation funding, only a few months ago I announced for the first time that eight telcos were coming together. I announced in Millthorpe that eight telcos were coming together for the very first time to be able to share information around how they use towers and how they use data with one another.

The idea is to see that investment go to regional New South Wales to eliminate those black spots. Usually when we talk about black spots and black-spot funding, that space is normally undertaken by the Federal Government. But this Government made the decision to invest \$400 million in a program to eliminate black spots across regional and rural New South Wales. We know how important that is. We know how important it is for people to have connectivity and to be able to do business. And we know how important it is, seeing that we have kids in schools—

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order—

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

Mr Philip Donato: I refer to Standing Order 129. The question was very specific. How much of that \$400 million has been spent? If the Minister does not know, he should just say he does not know.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will continue. I note that the question was very long and broad. It did have an element of specificity to it. The Deputy Premier is being relevant.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Before I finish I will make these points: The \$400 million digital connectivity program includes \$39 million for 140 brand new regional mobile towers and \$50 million for stage one of the mobile coverage project, followed by a \$250 million investment over four years. There is also \$100 million for the Gig State and \$48 million for our expanded farms project. The Nationals keep delivering for electorates like Orange. It is The Nationals in Government that keep the investment going into the Orange electorate. I thank the people, like Sam Farraway, who actually sit down and talk to me about the things that matter. They get investments, whether it is special activation precincts or investment in the regional connecting communities fund. I say to the local member that my door is open. Come and speak to me. Other people are doing all of his work.

NEW SOUTH WALES AGENT-GENERAL TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (14:46): My question is directed to the Premier. Given his trade Minister's statement yesterday that all of the London Agent-General's \$113,000 in expenses were apparently within government policies, will he now express his full confidence in the London Agent-General?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:47): I will respond to the last question first. I can inform members that the letter was provided on Monday 1 August. In relation to the second question, following a discussion yesterday with the Minister for Trade, Minister Henskens, I received a letter from Mr Henskens with some advice. He said:

Premier,

I have met with the COO and CFO of DEIT [Department of Enterprise Investment and Trade] to discuss processes for assessment and approval of expenses. I am meeting with the Secretary this afternoon.

I have determined that it would be prudent for a further assessment of individual expenses to be conducted, including examination of them against the Department's expense policy.

I have asked the Chief Financial Officer to have staff members who were not involved in the processing or approval of the expenses to conduct the further examination and to provide me a report on these matters.

Regards

A. A. Henskens

Once I receive that response I will have something more to say.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:48): My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House about the work of local councils in delivering a brighter future for communities across New South Wales?

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (14:48): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question. Having served the Sutherland shire for eight years as a councillor, she understands all too well the significant role of councils in delivering brighter futures for communities across the State. There is no better example of mayors, general managers, councillors and council staff showcasing the work they do for their local communities 365 days a year than last week during Local Government Week. As someone who has spent a large part of their elected life in local government—and who is incredibly passionate about delivering for local communities and reducing the gigantic infrastructure backlog left by those opposite—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: You are stretching it now, Minister.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN: I am not.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: You are.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN: I am not; the facts are there. I am very happy to see that councils are receiving the recognition they so rightly deserve. Members will know that, traditionally, councils are responsible for managing the three Rs—rates, roads and rubbish—but this is a common misconception that pales in significance to the diversity and breadth of their work that is often overlooked. It has been estimated that councils have over 120 regulatory functions, involving over 300 separate regulatory roles emanating from over 60 State

Acts which are administered by about 30 State agencies. As is the case for any council, the guiding principles in Chapter 3 of the Local Government Act direct councils to act in the best interests of the whole community by carrying out their functions "in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers".

This will not be news to the shadow Minister, who revealed at the Local Government Awards last Thursday what he reads before he goes to sleep at night, and that is the Local Government Act and regulations. I am really enjoying getting to know the two sides of the shadow Minister. There is Greg, the lion, who roars in front of his flock, and there is Greg, the quiet little church mouse, who is afraid to speak his mind just in case he contradicts what others are thinking on the other side of this House. But do not get me wrong; I really like the shadow Minister. Having also attended the Local Government Awards, I am sure the shadow Minister will agree how important it is to acknowledge how councils consistently go above and beyond to help bring communities together, to rebuild, move forward and celebrate diversity. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the member for Holsworthy because it is important that we acknowledge the winners of some of the wonderful awards that were presented the other night. Gilgandra Shire Council won the RH Dougherty Award for their Shop Local and Local Legend campaigns in 2021; Penrith City Council won the Local Government NSW Planning Award for Cultural Change Innovation and Excellence for developing Places of Penrith, a strategic framework for an emerging city. I was pleased to hear that Goulburn and Yass Valley councils won the NSW Youth Week Award for the most Innovative Youth Week Program, a wonderful event for the youth. Councils are the closest level of government to the people, and recent years have demonstrated how the sector continues to support communities across the State by delivering brighter places to live, work and play.

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

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN: We have to commend each and every day the work that councils are doing on the ground. I particularly thank Local Government NSW for hosting a wonderful awards event. More than 300 people from councils across the sector turned up. It was a wonderful event to recognise the fantastic work that local councils are doing on the ground every day of the week.

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY JOBS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (14:54): My question is addressed to the Minister for Hospitality and Racing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is securing a brighter future for New South Wales families by creating jobs in the hospitality industry?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (14:54): Third time lucky. That is a great question. I thank the member for asking it because it is a really good question.

Mr Paul Toole: You had no idea it was coming.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I had no idea it was coming. I was just sitting quietly, minding my own business. It was out of the blue.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Out of the blue like Ol' Blue Eyes?

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Welcome back. The member for Willoughby has a really good understanding of the hospitality industry worldwide, so he has brought some of that knowledge back.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: The member for Willoughby is really helping us in terms of what we have to do to get staff back in the hospitality industry. The Government is doing great work in the hospitality industry for the 300,000 staff across 19,000 venues, those pubs and clubs that we all love to visit. It is really difficult to get staff. We have to look outside the square, think outside the box, and think of new ideas about how we can get the hospitality industry back up and running and get staff back. Recently we were in Coffs Harbour at the Hoey Moey. It is a great pub. If members have been to the Hoey Moey—

Mr Paul Toole: I've been there. I was with you.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: A few of us cannot remember the last time we were there. The Hoey Moey is a great pub. The member for Coffs Harbour was there and he said, "Look, we'll set up the press conference for 9:30 in the morning." I said, "That's a little early," but he said, "Early open is the go in Coffs." At the Hoey Moey we launched a sensational new program called "Kickstart your career in hospitality".

Mr Guy Zangari: What about the Big Banana?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Yes, the Big Banana is there too. You can add them to cocktails. Through Kickstart your career in hospitality, there are courses for free. If people are willing and want a job and the hotel partners with a registered training organisation [RTO], they can get a job in hospitality. It is there, ready for them.

Mr Paul Scully: Do I need Barry O'Farrell as a referee?

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: No, there are no references. Baristas, barmen, bottle shop attendants, coffee shops, food, retail, kitchen hands— [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. If I hear members talking while the Minister is giving a serious answer, they will be called to order immediately.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Mr Paul Toole is one person who can pour a beer. When we talk about barista courses, coffee courses, in-house management and kitchen hands, we know—

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: —you have to be able to pour a good beer. There is nothing worse than when someone pours you a schooner and there is too much head on it—do you want chocolate topping on that or not? "All froth, no beer" is called a Kogarah. If members want to go and get a Kogarah, it is lots of froth and no beer. Those courses for events staff, kitchen hands and licensees that the Government is offering are free.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: We want immediate staff shortages to be fixed, so fee-free courses are on offer now. In addition to that, regardless of where people go, they are able to pick up the phone and get free advice on how they can do those courses and what they can do in the hospitality industry. The Government wants to ensure that there is a brighter future for New South Wales families, and it is working with industry—restaurants, caterers, hotels, pubs and clubs—across New South Wales. If people want a job in the hospitality industry, the Government wants to make it easy for them. It is free of charge, regardless of what people want to do in the hospitality industry. RTOs will come on site, just like they are doing at the Gibraltar Hotel at Bowral. It's open. Members should go along. If a hotel, pub or club has a number of staff they want to upskill or train, the RTO will go on site to do that training. We are providing a brighter future for New South Wales families, and we are backing our hospitality industry. Everyone should along to their pub or club and enjoy a cold one soon.

NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (14:59): My question is directed to the Premier. Mr David Chandler resigned on 25 July. Minister Petinos was sacked on 31 July. Mr Chandler's letter was sent to ICAC on 1 August. When was the Premier told that the Building Commissioner's resignation letter had been referred to ICAC for investigation?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:00): Late last night.

RECYCLING

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:00): My question is addressed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to promote and increase recycling across New South Wales?

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:00): I thank the member for Camden for his question. It was great to spend time with him in Camden recently. He knows that a clean environment means a brighter future for New South Wales. In this State, whether you are from the beach or from the bush, the Government is leading the way in removing rubbish and waste from our environment. Our record investment alongside our nation-leading targets are ensuring that we are winning the war on waste. Our important targets include reducing the amount of waste generated by each person in New South Wales by 2030; significantly increasing the use of recycled content; phasing out problematic plastic bags, including Aldi bags full of cash, by 2025; recycling and returning dodgy donations and crooked cheques from Ernest Wong; halving the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030; and tripling plastic recycling—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The Minister cannot depart from direct relevance to the question. I know he is relatively ineffectual, but he should not be making those remarks.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the Leader of the House.

Mr Alister Henskens: It is entirely unparliamentary to make that sort of comment. It is, in fact, quite disgraceful—

The SPEAKER: I will rule on the point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: Under Standing Order 131 (9), that was an entirely vexatious, repetitive and frivolous interjection. It is contrary to the standing orders. The member for Heffron should be sanctioned. It is a complete outrage.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Heffron to order for the first time. He made an inappropriate aside. There was no point of order. The gratuitous comment and attack on the Minister were out of order. The member for Heffron will resume his seat.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: There is nothing like being ineffectual enough to get you up off your feet, old son.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I took a point of order under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I didn't hear your ruling, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I ruled on it. There is no point of order. I did not call the member for Heffron to order for that; I called him to order for his gratuitous comment and attack on the Minister. It was inappropriate.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Mr Speaker, he is getting wound up. On that note, I was going to make a gag about recycling and reflect upon those opposite recycling their policies, but unfortunately there is a lack of supply of policies. There are none to recycle; that is very unfortunate. I digress. Earlier this month, passionate recyclers across New South Wales were rocked to the core after seeing unfortunate visions of recycling bins being emptied into household waste. I went out and visited Veolia to see the fantastic recycling the industry is doing. It has received nearly \$2 million in grants from the Government to help it do a good job. It receives and processes more than 50,000 tonnes of kerbside waste each year; that waste is then sorted and turned into new products. At one end, trucks unload yellow bins. Ultimately, clean sand is generated, which is used in road base. It is an economic and environmental win-win.

This November, we are going even further to ban single-use plastic items. They pollute our waterways and our parks and even end up in our farming soil. But a serious questions remains as to whether the voices of some of the naughty environmental vandals, sneakily hiding opposite, will rise up again in opposition to the single-use plastic ban, just like members opposite did in June. The environment is an unfortunate afterthought for the Opposition—

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

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: —garnering not even a single mention during the budget reply speech by the Opposition leader. In contrast, this Government is committed to supporting communities to make the most of the resources we have, to lower costs and to help protect the environment for a brighter future.

NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:05): My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier effectively sacked the Minister for Fair Trading on 31 July. On 1 August the Building Commissioner's letter of resignation was referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Does the Premier stand by his statements yesterday that the sacking of the Minister had absolutely nothing to do with the resignation of David Chandler?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:05): Yes.

COERCIVE CONTROL

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (15:05): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General update the House on progress to criminalise coercive control in New South Wales?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (15:05): I thank the member for Oxley for that important question, because I know there is possibly unanimity—at least in this Chamber—about the importance of vigorous action on criminalising coercive control. Why? Because this cumulative pattern of psychological, spiritual, sexual, financial and other abuse is obnoxious in its own right, and robs victim-survivors of their autonomy and independence. It is obnoxious and abhorrent in its own right.

We also know that it is a red flag for domestic violence homicide. The Domestic Violence Death Review Team reported that in an eight-year period, 99 per cent of the domestic violence intimate partner homicides that it looked at had been preceded by a form of coercive control, so it is important to criminalise it. On 20 July the Government released a public exposure draft bill to outlaw coercive control in former intimate partner relationships, and that is open to public comment for six weeks. That consultation is critical because we know the harm that coercive control does, but we also want to make sure that we are not overreaching—that we are just capturing the serious incidences of abuse and control that must be criminalised and not unintentionally endangering the very people we want to protect.

It has been a lengthy, methodical and extensive process to get to the point where we are now. This represents at least the fourth round of consultation. In October 2020 we released a discussion paper as part of the terms of reference for a joint select committee to look at criminalising coercive control. That first round of consultation saw over 150 written submissions during the consultation period that ran for 11 weeks, and the committee received submissions well after that as well. That was followed by a second round of consultation. Over six days of hearings, over 70 stakeholders gave evidence. In response to those two rounds of consultation, the joint select committee unanimously recommended criminalising coercive control. That probably represented the whole gamut of the political spectrum in this place, with One Nation at one end, The Greens at the other end and us in the middle.

Mr Michael Daley: Who's "us"?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The Liberals and The Nationals—we are in the middle. Labor is on the soft left or mid left—whatever. It represented a cross-spectrum of thought in this place. When the Government announced it was going to criminalise coercive control late last year, we had a third round of consultation. We drafted a bill and consulted legal stakeholders, including the Aboriginal Legal Service, and the NSW Police Force. That was our third round. [*Extension of time*]

As a result of that consultation, a fourth round is now underway, which represents the public exposure draft. I encourage all members to participate in that process, and I encourage members of the public to have their say on our Have Your Say website. It is not just open-ended consultation. There will be 10 targeted roundtables—dedicated sessions with specialist stakeholders, including the domestic and family violence sector, Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal-led organisations, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and LGBTQIA+ community organisations' representatives—to get the specialised, detailed knowledge and expertise from those groups that we so keenly seek.

There has been an extensive period of consultation, but now we are at the pointy end of the process and we want to get this done this year. I know members of the Opposition are keen to do that. They supported the private member's bill introduced by the member for Shellharbour last year before we had the consultations, and they saw urgency then as we see urgency. We have had the extensive, thorough and methodical consultation, and now is the time to act. I welcome all feedback on the draft bill. It is an exposure bill, which means the Government welcomes and values public input, but at the end of the day we will need to get this done this year.

That will not be the end of the process because everyone tells us that, once it is legislated, there must be a long lead time to educate the judiciary and the police, create public awareness and raise the expertise and awareness of providers. Currently we are looking at at least 12 months, but I will take further advice and hear from stakeholders on that. But it will be at least 12 months before we start this legislation. We talk about a lot of important things in this place, but nothing can be more important than protecting our citizens against violence, against abuse and, ultimately, saving lives.

WILDLIFE STRIKES

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:10): My question is directed to the acting Minister for Transport. Given the Government's 2018 NSW Koala Strategy finding that vehicle strike is a key threat to koalas in New South Wales, and the subsequent 2021 classification of koalas in this State as endangered, will the Minister consider including wildlife strikes in the criteria for speed zone reviews?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (15:11): I thank the member for Ballina for her question. I am sure every member joins me in wishing the Minister for Transport a speedy recovery. In relation to wildlife strikes, there have always been strikes in the transport system, but vehicle strikes on the New South Wales—

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

Mr ROB STOKES: Vehicle strikes on the New South Wales road network are an issue of serious conservation concern for many native species, including koalas. I thank the member for Ballina for her important

and timely question and recognise her ongoing advocacy for the iconic koala and other wildlife across her electorate and, indeed, across New South Wales. We have a number of ways in which we deal with that scourge on our roads, which is a real risk to not only native wildlife but also occupants of vehicles. Part of the way we do that is through fencing—and the member would be well aware there is a great deal in her community where that has been shown to be effective

We have fenced about 480 kilometres from Newcastle to the Queensland border, with about 300 structures to allow animals to safely traverse roadways between areas of natural habitat. In the town of Wardell, just south of Ballina, for example, a series of fencing has been installed and the results have been dramatic. Some years ago eight koala deaths a year was a regular occurrence. Now, over the past four years, there has been only one death and that was because the fencing had been tampered with, which has now been fixed and monitoring put in to make sure that cannot happen again.

Fencing is one way but, as the member suggests or as the question implies, we have a whole series of other ways to deal with trying to avoid wherever possible koala strikes or strikes by vehicles on other native wildlife. Picton Road is another example, which was the first koala vehicle strike hotspot identified under a program as part of the NSW Koala Strategy. The Deadmans Creek hotspot on Heathcote Road at Sandy Point is now being investigated. In the case of Picton, 13 kilometres of fencing has now been constructed. In response to the member's question, the New South Wales Government is doing a whole variety of things, both in installing fencing and installing appropriate fauna crossings as well as, more specifically—and directly to the member's question on the issue of speed limits—speed zone reviews. As all members would be aware, speed limits are set to balance safety and mobility needs, and to reduce the risk of a crash occurring so that any collisions are likely to be survivable. In setting speed limits, it is vital to take into account a range of factors, including the road's function and its types of uses. [*Extension of time*]

As far as possible, it is also important to make sure that the layout of the road and surroundings match that function. This includes whether the road is in a regional or rural setting as opposed to a metropolitan motorway or local road. I am advised that speed limit reviews already take into consideration crash history along a particular length, including any crashes that may have resulted from animal strikes. I reiterate that all members should remind motorists in our communities to at all times be aware of the potential for animal strikes and other hazards. This is important around dawn and dusk, when animals can be hard to see and may move unpredictably. In conclusion, I am advised that we include wildlife strikes in the criteria for speed zone reviews. However, I do thank the member for this valuable opportunity to re-emphasise an important area of government policy.

PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering for the people of New South Wales?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (15:15): The answer is yes. I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question and acknowledge that there has never been a more passionate advocate for his region in the history of this great Parliament. By way of passing, yesterday I was watching on television the great job the Whip did announcing the new deputy leader. I am pleased to inform the House that I have written to the Governor-General nominating his top shirt button for a Victoria Cross for having held its position so valiantly against overwhelming odds. It was truly a remarkable feat. Well done, mate.

In the space of Planning and Homes, I can confirm that New South Wales is open for business. Currently, there is record delivery of new homes across the State, not just private housing but also social and affordable housing—in fact, it amounts to more than that of Victoria and Queensland put together. We are getting on with the job of delivering strategic precincts, critical infrastructure and State-significant projects, all of which create jobs across this great State. That serves to fast-track and bolster the New South Wales economic recovery, supporting the mobility of key workers and providing opportunities for industry.

We are creating opportunities in the digital space through our Land iQ technology and strengthening of the NSW Planning Portal to make it easier for people to use the online system. We are playing our part in this digital revolution, tracking this information so that today I can stand in this Chamber to tell members all about it. We are playing our part, whether it is getting Victor's latest tech announcements on LinkedIn, TikToks from Felicity, friend requests on Candy Crush from Daley or Wordle challenges from Clayton. I will say, Mr Speaker, that most of these do occur during question time. What an amazing world and time we live in.

We are delivering not just homes and houses, infrastructure and major projects but also gold-plated, state-of-the-art parks. I am so proud of our parks delivered to people through the Everyone Can Play programs, which make our communities fun and fabulous. In fact, last week I was with the members for the electorates of

Maroubra and Coogee unveiling the latest one. It is not just in Maroubra that we are delivering parks. In Macquarie Fields—no, the member for Macquarie Fields is not here so he does not get a park. But you've got a park, Zangari! Trish, you've got a park in the Blue Mountains electorate! Port Stephens, you've got a park! Wollongong, you've got a park! Mel, Dugald, Justin, Roy, Alistair, Jenny, Geoff, Wendy, Greg, Stuart, Matt, Tim, Robyn and Clayton: You're all getting parks! Don't worry, Nat, we'll get you a park as well. We will be delivering another 30 parks this financial year. I say to members: Watch this space.

Ms Kate Washington: Where's my park?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: If you are good, we will get you a park. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: The member for Wollondilly has successfully sought a two-minute extension.

Mr Nathaniel Smith: I want to hear about my park.

The SPEAKER: We all do.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Maybe next question time.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Did I get one or two?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: No, you do not get a park because I do not know what seat you are running for preselection in. Just let me know and we will sort it out. It has got to be any of these on the list in my hand. We are proud of this program. There are parks for everyone, from the north of this great State to the south, and from the east to the west. It does not matter which side of the House you are on. This is about delivering for communities. Members will see more of these parks rolled out over the next—

Ms Kate Washington: Eight months?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Eight months, yes. I say to those opposite that if you are not getting a park, you will be getting a star Liberal candidate very soon. If some of you are really lucky, you will get both!

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House in accordance with Standing Order 105, general business notices of motion (general notices) Nos 3415 to 3444 will lapse tomorrow.

REORDERING OF GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:20): I move:

That general business order of the day (for bills) No. 3 [Government Grants Administration Bill 2021] have precedence on Thursday 11 August 2022.

The Opposition thinks it is important that new grant administration is in place in the final seven months before the March 2023 general election.

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) (15:21): The Government does not support the motion of the Leader of the Opposition to reorder general business tomorrow. The Government has been working on this matter and has made various announcements. It is not appropriate for this matter to be given priority. We will be opposing the motion.

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

The House divided.

Ayes36
Noes43
Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Catley, Y
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T

Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Kamper, S
Leong, J

Mihailuk, T
Minns, C
O'Neill, M
Park, R
Saffin, J
Scully, P
Smith, T

AYES

Daley, M
Dib, J
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Greenwich, A

Li, J
Lynch, P
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
Mehan, D (teller)

Tesch, L
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A (teller)

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Dalton, H
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Donato, P
Evans, L
Gibbons, M
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S

Hazzard, B
Henskens, A
James, T
Kean, M
Layzell, D
Lee, G
Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
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, L
Williams, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Car, P
Hornery, S
Lalich, N
Zangari, G

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

Motion negatived.**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:31):** I move:

That general business order of the day (for bills) No. 5 [Residential Tenancies Amendment (Tenant Protections and Flood Response) Bill 2022] have precedence on Thursday 11 August 2022.

I ask that the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Tenant Protections and Flood Response) Bill 2022 be considered an urgent bill and be brought forward for debate tomorrow. New South Wales is experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis and we are at the pointy end of that crisis. Every day media reports show how serious the situation is, especially for the thousands of people who have been left homeless in the wake of the devastating floods in New South Wales, living in cars, tents and makeshift homes in car parks. Renters in the community are being impacted by floods, heavy rain and extreme weather. They are still grappling with rampant mould, leaks and uninhabitable properties with little or no action from landlords or real estate agents—because, frankly, they do not have any responsibility to act—and more heavy rain is forecast in coming months.

Housing affordability is worse than ever and renters throughout New South Wales cannot find affordable or secure homes. Every day people are being hit with rent hikes on top of the soaring cost of living. There are significant pressures on renters in our community. We cannot ignore it; it is in the news. Flood-impacted areas cover the city and the regions. The Residential Tenancies Amendment (Tenant Protections and Flood Response) Bill will make urgent changes to legislation so that some of those problems can be properly addressed as soon as possible. The bill would do a number of things. It would cap rents, it would end unfair no-grounds evictions, it would require all rental properties to be waterproof and mould-free to be considered habitable, it would ensure that renters in flood-impacted areas be included in the ban on evictions for 12 months and it would ensure that those renters do not face rent hikes.

We are in a rental crisis and we need urgent action now. No member in this place can deny that the 30 per cent of people who rent their homes in this State do not need desperate help urgently. That is why The Greens are asking the Parliament to reorder business for tomorrow to debate a bill that will put renters on the agenda of this Parliament. It is very clear and simple. Members in this place do not have to agree with all elements of The Greens bill in order to agree to reorder business for tomorrow. But in making a decision to not support this

motion, members will send a clear message to the 30 per cent of people in New South Wales who currently rent their homes that we do not believe that the crisis they are facing is urgent. I urge members to support the motion to reorder business for tomorrow.

The SPEAKER: I note that it is 3.35 p.m. I remind the member for Macquarie Fields that he has one more minute before he can return to the Chamber so he is not eligible to vote. The question is that the motion be agreed to. A division has been called for. Under Standing Order 181, there being fewer than five members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative.

Ayes, 5

Mrs H. Dalton
Mr A. Greenwich
Ms J. Leong
Dr J. McGirr
Ms T. Smith

Motion negatived.

Disallowance

WATER MANAGEMENT (GENERAL) AMENDMENT (FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING ACCESS LICENCES) REGULATION 2022

WATER MANAGEMENT (GENERAL) AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO 2) 2022

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:39): By leave: I move:

That this House disallows:

- (1) The Water Management (General) Amendment (Floodplain Harvesting Access Licences) Regulation 2022, which was made under the Water Management Act 2000, and published on the legislation website on 1 July 2022.
- (2) Items [1], [2] and [7] in schedule 1 to the Water Management (General) Amendment Regulation (No 2) 2022, which was made under the Water Management Act 2000, and published on the legislation website on 1 July 2022.

It is the same regulation but a different House. We are here debating a floodplain harvesting regulation because, true to form, The Nationals have again tried to licence this form of take by stealth. The floodplain harvesting regulation has been rejected three times by the upper House. It is an insult to us all to bring it back to Parliament unchanged. That regulation has been overwhelmingly rejected again and again by Aboriginal people, river communities, recreational fishers, floodplain graziers, riparian farmers, academics, scientists and southern Basin irrigators. The people have spoken, the community has spoken, and the environment has spoken—they all said no.

We must ask ourselves: Why is the New South Wales Government continuing to push this regulation forward—when, in its current form, it has the ability to impact a \$24 billion generational staple food industry and tens of thousands of jobs—for a \$2 billion cotton industry that employs fewer than a thousand people and a product that is sent overseas for manufacture straight after it is ginned. Make no mistake, this regulation will cut staple food production and impact our communities socially, economically and environmentally.

I make it very clear that I do not oppose licensing floodplain harvesting. After 28 years of free take, licensing is well overdue. However, I do oppose a volume above the legislated legal take of the 1994 cap. That volume contravenes State and Federal law; reduces river connectivity, which is one of the major drivers of the Basin Plan; prioritises a small, select group of northern irrigators, who do not seem to care about their impact on downstream communities and their environment; and puts at risk staple food production and \$24 billion of the nation's economy. That volume will be the nail in the coffin for the Darling-Baaka River.

In the early 1990s the health of the Murray River was deteriorating. The Government decided to protect it from further over-extraction; no more water was to be taken from the system. In 1994 a line was drawn in the sand. Every licensed and metered irrigator in the southern Basin has operated under the 1994 cap for decades. But those rules do not apply to the northern Basin. There is one rule for a small and powerful group of irrigators in the north and one rule for the southern Basin. I have been advocating for fair and reasonable licensing of floodplain harvesting since 2018. I left the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party this year because of its members' refusal to vote when the floodplain harvesting regulation was presented to the upper House for the third time. Their inconsistent flip-flopping on water policy was not unexpected. Yes, that is right. One would think after three disallowance motions the department would have got the message. But, no, it still refuses to listen.

The basin plan allows for 46 gigalitres' worth of floodplain harvesting licences in New South Wales but the Government has taken the data, manipulated and modelled it based on recent works and land use, and created

a made-up cap scenario to embed in the northern valley water sharing plans. This is illegal and is in breach of the Water Act 2007, the basin plan of 2012, the Murray-Darling Basin cap and the spirit of the historical, political and legal arrangements agreed to by New South Wales and the Commonwealth. The New South Wales Government is proposing to licence volumes of around 350 gegalitres across five different northern valley water sharing plans, with an added bonus of 500 per cent carryover. Yes, that is right: Not only do floodplain harvesters get to take water above the cap; they also take an additional 500 per cent—bingo. It is a bit like paying for one-fifth of one's tank of petrol and getting the rest for nix.

The New South Wales Government led everyone to believe a 500 per cent carryover was necessary because flooding in the north is infrequent. However, the amended water sharing plans gave the Minister the power to declare any type of flood an uncontrolled flow event, allowing unlimited access to floodwater without debiting a water account. Essentially, the New South Wales Government is giving northern irrigators a free credit card to access water while the downstream environment and communities pay the bill in the form of less allocation and increased river damage. I can assure members that metered and licensed southern basin irrigators are not afforded the same luxury.

The New South Wales Government knows it is legally required to keep all extractions, including floodplain harvesting, within the cap, but it seems to be on a promise to issue floodplain licensing volumes that exceed the cap. What does the New South Wales Government do to resolve the problem? It lies about what the cap actually is. The original cap model report for the Gwydir Valley showed the irrigable area was 60,000 hectares, as determined by farmers' records in the year 2000. Now the department says the estimated area is more than double, up to 121,000 hectares—and this is just one valley. I liken the process of licensed floodplain harvesting to John Barilaro and his New York junket. It is jobs for the boys, but in this case it is water.

Remember the 2019 Menindee fish kills and the heartbreaking stories of the Barkandji at Wilcannia, who cannot pass down their cultural practices to the next generation because there is no water flowing in the Darling River. That has jeopardised 40,000 years of culture. At times the water quality in the Darling is so poor people cannot touch the water, let alone bathe in it or drink it. The famous Menindee seedless grape can no longer be grown at Menindee; a once thriving horticultural industry has been decimated. In 2017-18 and in 2018-19 New South Wales Murray security irrigator holders had zero allocation—not a drop—and their crops withered and died. Overextraction in the north is real and it has stopped the Darling from flowing on more than one occasion. Floodplain harvesting impacts the southern Basin significantly, yet the New South Wales Government is handing over billions of dollars in compensable floodplain harvesting licences based on inadequate regulatory measures—measures that are illegal.

Of course, we all want to see floodplain harvesting regulated, metered and licensed. In an upper House inquiry into floodplain harvesting, 263 submissions were made and a mind-boggling 78 per cent of those opposed the current licensing process. Of the 22 per cent in favour, two-thirds received a financial benefit. The inquiry ultimately determined through its 14 findings that there were too many inadequacies and uncertainties around floodplain harvesting at that point in time to embed a licensing framework. The committee also found floodplain harvesting significantly impacted downstream flows and river health, with economic social, cultural and environmental consequences. The Healthy Floodplains Review Committee was supposed to oversee licensing. It included several reviews, but none looked at whether the proposed floodplain harvesting volumes were under cap, or even if they complied with the New South Wales water sharing plans.

The upper House inquiry handed down its report on 15 December. The regulation that is the subject of this disallowance was gazetted two days later. All the hard work, the hours of time, the hundreds of submissions were dismissed without a backward glance. When upper House members spoke out against the regulation earlier this year, they hoped that The Nationals and the water Minister would have no appetite to go through this process a fourth time—but here we are. Members' votes today will be on the public record. The vote is about the long-term sustainability of the Murray-Darling Basin and the regions.

The SPEAKER: The member's time has expired. The member will have the opportunity to speak in reply later. Before I call the member for Maroubra, I reiterate to the House and to those who are interested, we are discussing a motion to disallow statutory rules. That is in accordance with Standing Order 116. Time limits apply to those debates. In accordance with Standing Order 85 I will apply those time limits. For all members, including the speech in reply, which the member for Murray will have the opportunity to deliver, the time limit is up to 10 minutes. If the debate in toto before the reply exceeds 30 minutes, the Chair has discretion as to whether or not to call the member to reply. I will not be in the chair but the member for Heathcote might be.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:51): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the disallowance motion. There were two motions but I believe they have now been combined. I thank the shadow Minister for Water, the Hon. Rose Jackson, whom I represent in this House. One might say that this business does not particularly concern the Opposition with regard to seats in play for it, but this is an incredibly important social

and environmental issue for all people, not only in New South Wales but also in Australia, because the Murray-Darling Basin is one of the key environmental, social and agricultural tracts of land, if I can put it that way, in New South Wales and in the nation. I will not speak for very long on the motion.

This is the fourth time that a disallowance motion in respect of floodplain harvesting has been discussed; there have been three in the Legislative Council and this is the first here. If one would like to discern the Opposition's view of this matter in short form, I would refer them to the speech by the Hon. Rose Jackson on a similar disallowance motion moved by Mr Justin Field on 24 February 2022. It sets out the Opposition's view in succinct detail. I thank and congratulate some of the Opposition members who have worked hard on this issue and have shown great passion: the Hon. Rose Jackson; the Hon. Penny Sharpe; the Hon. Mick Veitch; the Hon. Adam Searle, who assisted greatly with the recent inquiry; and my friend the member for Cessnock, who is in the Chamber. The Hon. Rose Jackson is very passionate about the issue of water and the Murray-Darling Basin and has developed a great expertise on it.

In the Opposition's view, the New South Wales Government has consistently failed to properly consult on the proposed floodplain harvesting licensing regime. Meetings with southern New South Wales communities, farmers and environmentalists have been sporadic and unsatisfactory. The Government is insistent on issuing regulations to support a framework which does not have support across the New South Wales community. It has not done the work to ensure the targets it has put in place are adequate. It has to keep trying to get this right and the Opposition will take steps to ensure it does. We are happy to assist the Government in this regard because laws made on a bipartisan basis are the most enduring. For the sake of a great many people, industries, communities, animals and First Nations people, these laws need to be right and they need to be enduring.

The Opposition believes it is essential to have river connectivity between upstream and downstream communities. Everyone has a stake in supporting agricultural production, protecting our environment and ensuring regional communities and First Nations people have access to water. The consequences of not enough water reaching southern New South Wales are devastating for farmers, communities and the environment. The member for Murray spoke about the fish kills. We saw what happens when the Government gets it wrong. That was not just about drought; it was about mismanagement as well. We all have a responsibility to do what we can in this Parliament to ensure that this does not happen. Labor has been very clear. We support the licensing of floodplain harvesting but only with a proper framework in place. The licensing regime must deliver sustainable water diversions within legal limits and be compliant with the priority of water use principles in the Water Management Act. The use of downstream flow targets and flow triggers in the water sharing plans is critical to this. But so is ensuring that those targets and triggers are adequate. We know from documents released to the Legislative Council that not even the Government's own environment and heritage group within the Department of Planning and Environment believe the targets and the water sharing plans are adequate to protect the environment and downstream communities. It advised Minister Griffin not to give concurrence to the water sharing plans, but he did it anyway, to keep The Nationals happy.

To be clear, the disallowance does not impact the metering provisions contained in the regulations and it will continue to apply in the Border Rivers and Gwydir valleys. Similarly, the disallowance will not impact the licences that have already been issued in the Border Rivers and Gwydir valleys. The disallowance will impact Barwon-Darling, Namoi and Macquarie. We do not want to create uncertainty for farmers in those communities, but the disallowance creates space for improving downstream targets. This is important for many communities in southern New South Wales. We share the frustration of those who see the failure to fully and properly licence floodplain harvesting as unfinished business in New South Wales. We are keen to get this off the State's to-do list but the reality is this is the last time a significant volume of water will be issued as an entitlement in New South Wales and we have an obligation to future generations to ensure that we get this right. Specifically, the downstream target of 195 gigalitres at the Menindee Lakes is too low to protect the environment and downstream communities. The mayor of Broken Hill has slammed the target as inadequate on behalf of his local community. This is an example of an issue we want to see fixed. Disallowing the regulation is an opportunity for the New South Wales Government to continue to work collaboratively with everyone concerned. That is what we are asking today.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:57): I make a short contribution and pick up on something that the member for Murray said in her contribution. I understand that the member for Murray is a farmer and has represented farmers at representative boards before coming into this place. I recognise that. The member for Murray also attempted in her speech to demonise a particular type of farming. It is important for farmers to choose the crops that they grow to get the best and highest use of their land and their water entitlements instead of pandering to inner city activists about a particular crop type. Cotton farming, regardless of where the ginning and the processing is done, is still an important part of our economy—an important part of the northern Basin. Without cotton and the products that are grown on farms all over New South Wales and Australia we would be importing

food and fibre. It is important for farmers to be given that choice; they should not be demonised in this place for doing so.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:59): On behalf of The Greens I support the disallowance motion moved by the member for Murray. I recognise our spokesperson in the other place, Cate Faehrmann, the work that she has done with the member for Murray, and our work at a Federal level over a long period. In our view the current regime needs to go back to the drawing board. That is certainly what the Nature Conservation Council is saying. The Government's own advice is that those targets are too low and that they are inconsistent with the objectives of the State's water laws, which require critical human and environmental needs to be prioritised. It is incredibly disappointing that we are still talking about floodplain harvesting and the Murray-Darling River.

It is incredibly disappointing to know that the vested interests behind our inability to manage the river are so strong. In my region we have seen the human face of a warming planet. Tracking the history of the Murray-Darling Basin, I lived in Broken Hill for five years and I have seen those fish kills. That is actually happening whilst we continue the debate about vested interests. Who speaks for nature? In my world we would give the river some time to recover and analyse what is happening in it. Because of the level of rot and the gaming of the system I do not believe we have the data. We have certainly seen evidence that the data is incomplete and that so-called investigations into farming practices are not the real picture. When the water Minister reintroduced regulations to enable the issuing of floodplain harvesting licences, why did the Legislative Council disallow it three times? There is a reason for that. It is due to the concern of communities downstream and environmental activists in this State.

We have broad agreement that floodplain harvesting should be regulated. We have called for rules that ensure that harvesting can occur only after water needs are met for areas such as Menindee Lakes and Ramsar wetland sites, such as the Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve. If floodplain harvesting is to occur there have to be incredibly stringent rules and regulations. We simply do not have them. The targets are too low. We also need to listen to First Nations people and to the traditional owners about what is happening. It is incredibly disappointing that we are still talking about this. I commend the member for moving this disallowance motion.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:02): I speak against the disallowance motion today in an attempt to avoid the sustained failure that has surrounded this debacle. Floodplain harvesting has been one of the most contentious and difficult issues that I have dealt with and been involved in since I was elected in 2019. I took to the 2019 election a plan that included the regulation of floodplain harvesting and I have steadily worked towards that over the past 3½ years. It started with a government that sleepwalked into the transfer of old rights under the 1912 Water Act to the new Act that will constrain and reduce those rights. This included a completely inappropriate attempt I think at the beginning of 2020—a shabby regulation that raised suspicions and did nothing about constraining those rights—and it was rightfully disallowed.

The Government was defending the indefensible and both the upper and lower Houses were filled with suspicion and no information. That was the path that led us to where we are today. Let me explain my concerns about this disallowance motion. It ends any chance at improvement for years. The member for Murray was asked to delay this disallowance motion and I hope that the upper House will agree to a delay. This is the last run-around for this regulation.

For what it is worth, my advice is that if the regulation cannot be resolved we have failed as representatives of our communities. The matter will be dealt with by the courts for a long time. We have also failed our communities as negotiators. For those people who do not know, floodplain harvesting was originally regulated under a 1912 Act. It was a blunt instrument. It was deaf, dumb and blind to downstream communities, environmental needs and the cultural needs of First Nations people. It did not consider any of that.

Basically, it meant that if one had an approved structure and there was water flowing across one's land, no matter how big the rain event was, one could collect water. Fast-forward to the 2000 Water Management Act and we have an Act that has to consider downstream needs and the environment. Regulating floodplain harvesting means that we must have a declared flood event to capture water; we cannot just capture water. It would also put in place metering and ensure that the take of floodplain water was reduced, which would mean more water in the river. Disallowing this regulation will mean continued unregulated floodplain harvesting. Two years ago there was no valley flow target and no capacity for regulation of this activity. All of this has been won through discussion and negotiation.

I will write to the Minister and to the Australian Labor Party to request that the Government moves to delay debating this matter in the upper House to allow negotiations to continue over a more appropriate active water trigger for Menindee. That is a low water trigger, not a storage target. There have been no flows for a long time. We need a certain amount of water in Menindee so we can release water down the lower Darling and ensure that we have water flowing through the system. This is a low water trigger, not a storage target. As a parliament we

have failed because we have been unable to fulfill our task. My concern is that if we hand this process to the courts we will see no real regulation of floodplain harvesting for years and no reduction in the amount of water.

The Menindee target of 195 gigalitres is insufficient as a total target. I have made that clear to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, and the Minister for Lands and Water. I have also spoken to the shadow water Minister and made it clear that I understand that the total storage of 195 gigalitres is inappropriate. However, active storage of 195 gigalitres, which means all of the water that cannot be managed plus a manageable amount of 195 gigalitres—that is 195 billion litres of water—would provide a much better opportunity to protect the lower Darling in dry times. Disallowing the regulation blows that up, which means there is no protection for Menindee.

No-one wants to hit a low water trigger. The reason for that is obviously downstream we want to see water in Menindee Lakes. Another position I took to the 2019 election is that I want to see the lakes restored, upgraded and maintained as a storage to protect the lower Darling, not just storage for local amenity and cultural needs. So when we do not have water coming down the system it means we will have water we can release to keep the area between Menindee and the confluence of Wentworth wet.

With the regulations in place, if the low water trigger is hit upstream, it means that floodplain harvesting is stopped. It is not in the interest of irrigators to see Menindee hit the low water trigger, and it is really important to make that point. It also means that we will have no valley flow targets as well as no low water trigger. All of that is a negative outcome for our communities. I hope that we can land in a place where this regulation can be put in place to constrain and reduce the activity of floodplain harvesting because it has been an extremely long time coming and is well overdue.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (16:07): The New South Wales Government opposes the disallowance motion because it will stop all of the negotiations and all of the hard work that has been done over the years to get to where we are today. The water sharing plans have been finalised in a move that will give certainty to the environment, farmers and downstream water users—healthy rivers, healthy farms, healthy communities. The reality is, by licensing floodplain harvesting we are able to accurately measure the water that is taken, returning 100 billion litres of water to the environment and downstream water users. The disallowance motion will stop all of that occurring.

I advise the member for Murray to meet with her community. If she did, she would know that water users downstream and across her electorate welcome the licensing of floodplain harvesting and recognise the need for it to be effectively regulated. They include groups like NSW Farmers, NSW Irrigators Council, Coleambally Irrigation and the National Farmers Federation. This policy supports farmers and downstream communities and will return around 100 billion litres of water to our floodplains and river systems per year, on average, and more than three times that volume in wetter years.

In response to the member for Barwon and his learned comments—he lives in that area—there are options for better management of the Menindee Lakes. That is what we are working on, so that target of 195 gigalitres becomes "the target". Previously it was just an aspirational discussion. It is now set, but there needs to be better management of Menindee Lakes and we are happy to have those conversations going forward. The Government will oppose the motion.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:09): In reply: What we are doing is historic. The member for Barwon has certainly highlighted how difficult the situation has been and for how long we have been discussing water policy. It is not just in the last three years. I have been around the water world since the conception of the Basin Plan and people started talking about it in 2007-08. History will not look favourably upon those who have turned a blind eye and given the green light to the destruction of the environment, Indigenous communities and farming regions.

The member for Maroubra, Michael Daley, said that this was an incredibly important issue because the Murray-Darling Basin is iconic. He highlighted the speeches of the Hon. Rose Jackson, the Hon. Penny Sharpe and the Hon. Mick Veitch in the upper House. They gave very passionate speeches about the Murray-Darling Basin. There is a good reason they did that; that is, there is a big problem. The problem is that the take is not within the law. We know that. In response to Minister Anderson's comments we certainly want metering and monitoring; that should be the first step. We are not disallowing metering and monitoring, so that is incorrect. In response to the member for Coffs Harbour, I also grow cotton, but I know about the \$24 billion worth of product that is produced in the southern connected system. It has been produced for generation upon generation, and it is predominantly food. We produce food and fibre. I have produced cotton, but I also know about the processing of other products such as rice and a lot of the horticultural industries. We have been farming within the law for many years.

The member for Ballina also highlighted vested interests and the inability of the New South Wales Government to manage water well. One thing we do agree on is that the Menindee Lakes are not managed well and 195 gigalitres at the bottom of the Menindee Lakes, which is unusable, does not provide any security for downstream users. We have witnessed fish kills. The environment has not had a voice—we are the voice—and the majority of constituents in my electorate would be opposed to the regulations. An upper House inquiry into floodplain harvesting made 14 recommendations. I have highlighted that the majority of people who made submissions were against floodplain harvesting. That tells us what is going on. Those submissions were from people in the Barwon electorate as well as the Murray electorate, so they were from right across the board. The regulations are also impacting a lot of farmers in the Barwon electorate who really want the regulations disallowed.

The member for Barwon highlighted the shabby regulations that have occurred in the past, and I have to agree with him. We have the opportunity to get the settings right but we have to do it honestly. I do not think it has been done honestly because the metering and monitoring is not done. There is no doubt that the cap has been cooked up so that the take can be more than what was issued in the original 1994 cap.

I hope that this Parliament will understand the importance of this motion to disallow the regulation for the fourth time. It is up to each and every member to stand up—cross the floor if they have to. I have heard plenty of members in this place say, "Don't talk to me about water. It is far too complicated. It has nothing to do with me and my constituents." Yes, it does. They eat; they wear clothes. It has a lot to do with them. People have an expectation that the environment, out west and elsewhere, will be 100 per cent topnotch so they can take their kids out fishing on the Darling and to see the iconic Murray-Darling Basin. Members have a moral responsibility to be aware of what is happening. We should all be interested in what is going on; it is not just an issue for those out west. It is so very important because we all eat and wear clothes. I urge members to vote with their conscience and make sure they look after the communities, the environment and the people of the Murray-Darling Basin.

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

The House divided.

Ayes36

Noes43

Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
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
O'Neill, M
Park, R
Saffin, J
Scully, P
Smith, T
Tesch, L
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A (teller)

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Donato, P
Gibbons, M
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B

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, L
Williams, R
Wilson, F

NOES

Henskens, A

PAIRS

Car, P
Lalich, N
Minns, C
Zangari, G

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

Motion negatived.*Bills***TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (RAIL TRAILS) BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:24): Before I was so rudely interrupted by all the parliamentary business, I was talking about the biosecurity risk mitigation in my contribution to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. The biosecurity concerns are not mentioned as a separate criterion; they are part of the environmental framework and are not at all in the legislation. That was my concern, and it is something that Labor wants to see the legislation address.

I sincerely thank those people with whom we consulted on the bill. While the Government's consultation on the bill was better than it had been on many other pieces of legislation that I have dealt with in this House, it was still somewhat lacking. I hope that the Department of Regional NSW takes that into consideration in the future, particularly in the regional areas that are most impacted by this. I have already spoken about the lack of formal consultation with New South Wales farmers, but I will also speak about the Country Women's Association, the largest women's membership-based organisation in Australia. It has great networks in our region, and it has been around for 100 years. Health, education, economic prosperity, tourism, regional transport and all those things are key issues for women in our regions, and it is a shame that they were not formally included in that consultation process. That is something the Government should be looking at.

That said, I appreciate the consultative approach to MPs by the two Government Ministers involved in the legislation: the Hon. Sam Faraway from the other place; and the Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport. I pay a special thank you to their advisers—Nat Openshaw, Estelle Grech and Simon Hanna—and thank them for reaching out to Alex Claassens from the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU], as Alex holds such a wealth of knowledge about our State rail network. I also appreciate the consultation opportunity we had with Ms Abigail Boyd from the other place and her adviser, Angus Hoy, to work through the amendments.

I also thank the member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin who, despite the devastating floods in her region, took the time to open up her office so we could consult with her community on these issues. They have been through a hard time up there, but the way she opened her office and spoke with stakeholders really helped to inform our position on the bill. I also thank the member for Northern Tablelands—I spoke to him about the bill as there are a lot of contested areas. I make special mention of the Armidale Regional Council, in particular, Debra O'Brien, who pulled together a meeting for me with a range of community groups that were concerned and they were all very instrumental.

I have already mentioned Maddie Bott. I had a great conversation with NSW Rail Trails and Cycleways of Newcastle, whom I have met with before. I also thank Northern Rivers Railway Action group, the Armidale Regional Ratepayers Association, the Northern Rail Defenders Forum, the New England Railway Inc, Station House Armidale, Save the Great Northern Rail Line Group, and Tenterfield Heritage Rail Organisation. I also thank the 130 or so people who wrote emails to me and the many people who called my office about this topic and reached out to other members in this Parliament. I want to reassure them all that their feedback has been very helpful in reaching our position on the bill. It showed me why the bill is necessary and why we must get to and just do it. These decisions should be made in the interests of the local and regional communities in which the subject land is located. That is where the conflict exists potentially, and that is where it should be decided and discussed.

What Labor tried to do in its approach is not to make that a narrow focus on the rail line but to include surrounding regions to ensure that people are not left out, because that is where the rubber hits the road. Up until now this has been pretty much a political process. Even if it has not always been political in this place, it has been a political tool in those regional areas, and it is based on the numbers in our House and in the other place. This bill is about empowering communities to develop their own strategic land management use for this important public asset—disused rail corridors. We have worked together in this process as a Parliament to provide the appropriate checks and balances to ensure that the future aspirations of regional communities are not overcome by single stakeholder ideas and also to ensure that there is a clear and open process for consultation.

I conclude by speaking on the review of the legislation, which is one of our proposed amendments and which I think is really important. We have all come to the bill with good intentions, and we must make sure that those intentions are activated in the way that the legislation comes through. That is why I thank the Government for being so open to our amendments and for allowing us to have those discussions in such a positive and proactive way.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:29): I am pleased to speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. The bill sets out to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to enable the regulations to authorise the use of disused railway lines for certain purposes. For me, the important part is to streamline the process for using disused rail lines for recreation and tourism uses. I take the opportunity to speak as the member for Albury, given that we have the privilege of having the only completed rail trail on a former government line in New South Wales, which is the 21-kilometre-long Tumbarumba to Rosewood trail. I acknowledge my predecessor Greg Aplin, the former member for Albury, for his work as a champion of rail trails and, in particular, the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail.

It is important to focus on the aspect of streamlining the process. The journey that the Tumbarumba-Rosewood community went on to get to a position where it could proceed with the rail trail started in 2011 with the New South Wales transport Minister's support. It was not until 2017 that an Act of Parliament closed the corridor to allow the rail trail to then proceed. A significant barrier in that regard is that currently, as it stands, it requires an Act of Parliament to close a rail corridor to enable the rail trail infrastructure. I believe the bill will have a particularly positive effect on the development of rail trails within New South Wales.

That is extremely important because at the moment the number of rail trails within this State falls well behind the numbers elsewhere across Australia. Again, as a member representing an electorate on the north side of the Murray River, I can speak for the number of rail trails throughout north-eastern Victoria, the positive impact that those rail trails have had—Beechworth to Bright being a good example of that—and what that has done for communities such as Porepunkah, Myrtleford and Bright from a positive tourism perspective. Owen Fitzgerald, who is a champion of the rail trail in the Tumbarumba community, first saw that in a visit to Otago in New Zealand and saw the benefit of rail trails in New Zealand.

The member for Maitland spoke of the community perspective and she said that it is important for it to be community driven. The experience that we have had in the Rosewood-Tumbarumba region is that it is important for these projects to be driven by the community. I take this opportunity to mention Owen and Cathy Fitzgerald, people such as Deb and Grant Harris, Ron Frew, the Men's Shed at Tumbarumba, the Tumbarumba Rotary Club, the Historical Society and the rail trail committee. Any number of community-driven organisations are passionate about the rail trail between Rosewood and Tumbarumba. A few months ago we had the first marathon on that rail trail. To see the community out and supporting that event was proof positive of the impacts that rail trails can have on local communities.

As I said, Tumbarumba to Rosewood is the only completed rail trail on a former government line in New South Wales, and it demonstrates the many benefits that rail trails have to offer regional communities, including economic, social and environmental benefits. The rail trail from Rosewood to Tumbarumba has been an absolute boon for tourism in the region, with over 15,000 visitors in its first year of operation alone. Two-thirds of those visitors have indicated that they intend to return to Tumbarumba in the future. The New South Wales Government's recent *Rail Trails for NSW Evaluation Summary* found that spend in the Tumbarumba region increased by 20 per cent—we must remember that that was during COVID as well—following the rail trail's opening, with discretionary spending on leisure-based activities increasing by 55 per cent as numerous new or expanded businesses opened. One has only to go down the main street of Tumbarumba to see places like Rosewood Railway Cafe, which has been a real boon to the region, as well as the accommodation, food and beverage and bicycle hire sectors.

Rail trails also have many social benefits. For example, there is evidence that the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail has contributed to reducing social isolation amongst elderly residents. The over-65 age group was more likely to visit the rail trail in larger groups, with the average group size of five people suggesting it provides an opportunity for them to connect socially with others. Being able to use that rail trail pathway during

the COVID lockdowns afforded physical and mental benefits to community wellbeing. It has provided a significant project for the Tumbarumba Men's Shed. As I drive into Tumbarumba I love seeing the trees planted alongside the rail trail. The men's shed has worked on placing benches and doing up the little rail shed at the Tumbarumba end of the trail. Up to 30 members of the group have contributed over \$30,000 in value to the project since construction began and continue to provide labour for maintenance and building works. Working on the rail trail has had a positive effect on the mental health of the group's members. The president of the Tumbarumba Men's Shed recently commented:

Some ... people feel undervalued by the community and can't contribute. If you give them something to contribute—this is important for our communities—

it turns them around overnight. That Rail Trail did that.

As members know, Tumbarumba was directly and severely impacted by the Black Summer bushfires of 2020. The Dunns Road fire and the Green Valley fire from the west damaged tourist attractions, State forests and properties. The Tumbarumba rail trail project has contributed significantly to the rebuilding of the town following the Black Summer bushfires. The Tumbarumba rail trail is also leading to an increase in active transport and improved health outcomes. A recent evaluation of the rail trail has shown that cycling rates among local schoolchildren have increased significantly as a direct consequence of the rail trail. All the 22 students at Rosewood Public School now have working bicycles—up from less than half before the rail trail opened. This is the result of an initiative by teachers at Rosewood Public School, who ran bicycle maintenance classes for students around the time the rail trail opened. Students were encouraged to bring their old bikes to school for repair or to purchase a new one.

The Tumbarumba rail trail has been designed to ensure accessibility for people with all ranges of ability. The sealed surface makes it possible for users with mobility issues to enter the environment. I love seeing the Rotary Club of Tumbarumba using tricycles to take visitors for rides. It is just fantastic. Earlier I mentioned Deb and Grant Harris. Often Grant will be on the bike transporting those with limited mobility, such as elderly people, giving them a chance to use the rail trail. I acknowledge that rail trails are not without their challenges and have created concerns. There is no denying that concerns were raised about the Tumbarumba rail trail before it opened. The member for Maitland spoke about the biosecurity aspect. There is also the security of local properties. These are important issues and understandable concerns about the impact of a rail trail and whether it delivers real benefits to the community. These concerns need to be part of the process for establishing rail trails and we must make sure there is a rigorous framework in place.

At the end of the day, I am a strong believer that rail trails need to be community driven. The community needs to say that it is the right thing for them. But I can say the experience of Rosewood to Tumbarumba is that the rail trail has had an immense benefit. A significant roadblock to establishing the rail trail was the logistical exercise of getting an Act through Parliament to close the corridor. We need to streamline and improve that process so we are not laggards when it comes to rail trails. We must consider the tourism benefit for the rest of our State. Recent evaluations have demonstrated the many tangible benefits that rail trails bring to the community. Currently a network of disused rail lines across New South Wales provides an opportunity to other communities to realise some of the benefits demonstrated in Tumbarumba. I firmly believe this bill, with its intention of reducing red tape, will open up the opportunity for communities to realise the benefits that rail trails offer. I thank the House.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:39): It is with real pleasure that I speak in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022 this afternoon. The bill seeks to establish a framework for the development of rail trails in New South Wales while providing greater opportunities to repurpose disused lines for purposes related to tourism, recreation, roads or road infrastructure. The bill removes the requirement for an Act of Parliament to close a rail line for the purpose of establishing a rail trail, determining that the removal of tracks or the undertaking of other work does not constitute the formal closure of the line. The bill dovetails with the *NSW Rail Trails Framework*, released in June 2022 and developed by the Department of Regional NSW. The framework lays out three key criteria when determining to establish a rail trail. They are:

1. There must be demonstrated community support for the Rail Trail.
2. There must be evidence of a viable and sustainable business model.
3. Issues relating to environmental impacts including biosecurity must be addressed.

When a rail trail proposal meets these three criteria, the Minister is then able to make a regulation allowing the project to proceed on the corridor. The bill stipulates that the Minister's determination can be disallowed by the Legislative Council. Critically, the Minister has said that the corridor must remain in public hands. Leases for rail trails are permissible for up to 30 years, and if a decision is made not to renew the lease at the end of that period the corridor would need to be "made good"—that is, returned to its previous condition. Only a local council can

hold such a lease, and there is no penalty if the lease is cancelled at any time for the purpose of establishing a public transport use. In this way, the line is secured as a public asset and for future use as a transport corridor. That is a very good thing.

This is a critical tenet of Labor's support of both rail trails and this legislation. Labor has long supported the establishment of rail trails across our State. Rail trails are spread across the world. They are found in Europe, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, and have proven to be transformative for communities eager for investment, tourism and recreational opportunities. They activate disused rail corridors for cycling, walking and horseriding. They work to create links across communities, encourage tourist spending and promote active lifestyles. Rail trails can act as a form of active transport, providing safe pathways for residents to travel between townships and communities. They often connect community infrastructure, including towns and sporting fields. They are great for bushwalking, art galleries and so much more.

With investment in heritage interpretation and wayfinding, they can help reveal the stories of our regions. For example, the Murray to Mountains rail trail in our neighbouring State cuts through Kelly Country. Rail trails can also be affordable, fun and active options for family holidays. They are emissions free, meaning that rail trails are an environmentally friendly way to see the country and spend time with family. Importantly, rail trails can often serve as wildlife corridors for wild birds, mammals, insects and plants. It is no wonder that there is an ever-growing number of rail trails across our country and many communities want this opportunity in their part of Australia. For example, in Victoria a person can use rail trails to visit the Victorian high country or the beautiful Gippsland region.

We know that there are real economic benefits. A La Trobe University study shows that cyclists using rail trails in Victoria spend an average of \$51 a day in local economies. They also spend far more than other visitors because they do not carry food and buy as they go. A study of the Murray to Mountains rail trail had visitors spending closer to \$240 a day. Rail trails also make for excellent stimulus spending. We have seen this in response to the Black Saturday fires in Victoria. Back in 2009 the now Prime Minister, then infrastructure Minister, invested \$13.2 million in a 134 kilometre rail trail through the high country. It was a way to support those communities and to rebuild. The Great Victorian Rail Trail and its sister rail trail are now estimated to attract over 100,000 cyclists each year and generate \$81 million for the region's economy.

We are not experiencing that investment or those opportunities in New South Wales. We cannot miss out on them. We have one good example. In his contribution to debate the member for Albury talked about the Tumbarumba to Rosewood trail, which opened in 2020. We have already seen the impact of that investment. Some 15,000 people visited that trail in the first year, which was impacted by COVID. The *Rail Trails for NSW Evaluation Summary* about the Tumbarumba trail reports that spending was up 20 per cent in that first year, discretionary spending was up 55 per cent, consumer staples increased 14 per cent, nine new businesses opened along the trail and spending in Tumbarumba was higher than across the rest of the Snowy Valleys region. Hopefully this success story is indicative of the rail trail under construction in the Northern Rivers.

Such opportunities should be made available to other communities across our State. Currently 146 kilometres of rail trails exist in New South Wales. But approximately 2,000 kilometres of railway lines are not currently in use in our State, so there are endless opportunities. We need leadership and vision to realise those opportunities and we need a clear pathway for those communities to go on that journey. Many communities have been on that journey for a very long time. They have invested so many hours and so much money to try to realise those opportunities. This legislation is about opportunities. While it is imperfect, it provides a pathway for those communities and it is time that we provided a framework to establish rail trails in our State.

Since I was elected to this place in 2015, two pieces of legislation have been introduced to close rail lines and establish rail trails. They are the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail and the planned section of the Northern Rivers rail trail, which is currently under construction. There are more to come. The shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads has pointed to multiple proposals being considered by community groups and local councils across the State. But we must provide greater certainty for the advocates and local communities that have been calling for many years for investment in those transformational projects. Members on this side of the House understand the need for a clear framework for rail trails. We also understand the need for a framework that addresses the concerns of opponents to rail trails. As has been flagged by the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, we will move a series of amendments to ensure that that framework provides communities with some certainty.

While the Minister has said that the rail lines that will be repurposed under the auspices of the Act will remain in public hands, Labor strongly believes that that should be included in the legislation to ensure that that is the case. First Nations people must be engaged and centrally involved in any discussion around those corridors, particularly when it comes to native title claims. The Minister has noted that will be the case, but we want to see that assurance strengthened. The legislation and the Rail Trails Framework must address concerns around

biosecurity. Labor is calling for the current biosecurity mitigation plan, approved by the Minister for Agriculture, to be part of the consultation process and is calling for explicit reference to the plan in the legislation along with the need to engage with Local Land Services.

The Opposition is also calling for surrounding councils to be included in the consultation on rail trails. It is not just about where the line exists on the map; it is also about the surrounding communities. The legislation and the framework must stipulate that the strategic freight and passenger transport plans for the region are a part of those consultation documents. The community must have confidence in all elements of the proposals. That will acknowledge the interconnectedness of regional communities and that changes to infrastructure can and will impact communities beyond those that are directly affected by the particular proposals. I seek a brief extension of time. [*Extension of time.*]

I thank the House. I strongly urge the Government to agree to the important and commonsense amendments. They strengthen the bill and they give the Rail Trails Framework a far greater chance of success in its practical application. It can also provide greater certainty to those who may be concerned or sceptical about rail trails and the impacts upon their land, property, community and surrounding neighbourhoods. It is important that everyone has certainty when it comes to the opportunities before us. We cannot afford further delay. The fact is that we have waited far too long for certainty on rail trails from the Government. The Nationals tried to hedge their way through the first few elections by proposing a series of pilot trials, but that policy was stalled at only two. We are all the poorer for that, which is disappointing.

There has been a clear lack of policy direction. Councils spent thousands of dollars on consultations and studies that came to nothing. Unfortunately, that has pitted communities against one another and stoked division at a time when we should be seeking constructive solutions to our regional transport challenges, rebuilding communities and driving economic opportunities. Rail trails present those opportunities. We have lost a decade of opportunities for not acting on rail trails while other States have steamed ahead. They have investments and opportunities. It is time for us to capitalise on those opportunities and we must make sure that happens. While the framework is an excellent step forward, I note there is no funding attached to it. That is incredibly disappointing because it costs money. We are asking councils to really step up. We must ensure that they do not stumble at another hurdle or we will miss out again.

I say to the Minister in the other place that this is a very good start. But in order to realise the potential of rail trails for our regional communities, we need more than a framework and political goodwill. We need funding. I congratulate the advocates of rail trails for getting us to this point, including the good people at NSW Rail Trails. They have persisted for years, providing certainty on how rail trails can be fostered and realised across our State. They should be very proud to know this legislation is before Parliament. I thank local advocates and government representatives who have pushed for years for their respective projects. They were often carried along by the hope that rail trails will bring support and investment to their communities. It is their hard work that has got us here. Finally, I encourage everyone to get on their bike or take a walk on a rail trail. Enjoy our great State. Members on this side of the Chamber support this legislation because we know it will result in more rail trails. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:52): It is with a great deal of pride that I speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. The member for Albury mentioned the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail, which I supported. Unfortunately at that time the former member for Wagga had a different view. We all know what happened there, so I will not go into it. We got funding for our rail trail. I note the member for Lismore is in the Chamber because about one kilometre of that trail, give or take, is in her electorate.

Ms Janelle Saffin: Two.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Two kilometres. I stand corrected. It is just over 20 kilometres long and runs from Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek. It is very scenic. It was with a little bit of sadness that our train was taken away by a Labor government in the 1990s. But I will move on. I sat for many hours watching the bill go through the upper House. The Greens and a number of other parties spoke strongly against the rail trail, but the bill finally passed after a number of years. I applaud the Tweed Shire Council because construction is well underway and the trail has been very well received. I am sure it is going to be very popular. I have used rail trails in Victoria and New Zealand, where they are extraordinarily popular.

One of the little towns in my electorate, Burringbar, has cheese makers, wine makers who are gearing up for the rail trail. There will be crafts, food and lots of different things along the way. I think it is really good. Way back then I was disappointed by the fact that it took a separate Act of Parliament to build a new section each time. It took time to get it on the agenda and it took time to come before the Chamber. I do not agree with everything the member for Summer Hill said, but I agree that the downside is that the time it took meant costs such as building

materials went up. I know Destination Tweed is very much in favour of it. We were going extraordinarily well until the Federal member for Page decided to fund the Casino rail trail, which slowed down our trail and the one in Lismore. I was not too fussed about that.

The bill will amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to enable this year's railways outside the greater metropolitan region to be used for recreational and tourism purposes or for roads and infrastructure. I am the first to admit that some people further south still have a vision of electric trains and the like. That is fine. Our communities are quite diverse on the North Coast, with many different views—as the member for Lismore knows. It is important to recognise those views, but it is also time to move forward. When the train was removed, we got upgrades to Billinudgel Highway and Sexton Hill Drive, better road transport and more public transport options. But there are more tourists. There was a hiatus thanks to COVID and hardly anyone visited because they could not enter the bubble—I thank Annastacia Palaszczuk for keeping us separated.

Overall, the bill is great for tourism and provides support for rail trail framework. I support it and I know that the rail trail people are very strongly in favour of it. I have attended many public meetings with them. At the moment there are discussions about allowing horses, cyclists and walkers on certain sections of the trail. My good friend Deb Minto from the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association rings me on a regular basis to talk about it. The bill's framework is designed to expedite the development of rail trails across New South Wales by clarifying the assessment and approval process, as well as providing guidance for general rail trail operations and maintenance. No doubt those considering the bill will have concerns about the possible negative impacts of rail trails on adjoining landowners. As I have highlighted with Tumbarumba to Rosewood, there is a tendency for people to use a disused rail trail for private purposes—the fences fall down and cattle graze there.

I have said it before, and it is still relevant today: It is public land to be used for the good of the public. It is not private land; it is owned by the good people of New South Wales and that ownership should be entrenched. The amendment is extraordinarily important because it keeps the land in public hands forever and a day. Our local councils support it—I know Tweed Shire Council supports it and I believe Lismore and Richmond Valley councils support it also. The jury is still out at Byron council, where it remains an active debate. All the issues that have come up in debate have been addressed, including privacy, safety, security, biosecurity, fire hazards, weeds and run-off. The Government has worked with our local shire council to address the concerns of rural landowners and biosecurity issues, which are a big thing.

But there is great excitement in the Tweed about the rail trail. Little villages such as Crabbes Creek, Burringbar, Upper Burringbar and Mooball are excited about it and what it will achieve. Fitness and wellbeing are big things. There are three tunnels in that section and two of them have glow-worms. Work has also been done with national parks concerning microbats. There are virgin rainforests, which are a very valuable resource. I fully support the bill.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

SCHOOL MERGERS

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (17:00): I move:

That this House opposes school mergers.

I speak about the very important issue of school mergers. The forced amalgamation of the only two high schools in Griffith—Griffith and Wade high schools—has been nothing short of a disaster. It was so bad that a recent University of New South Wales report listed a raft of recommendations ultimately resulting in the following statement:

In future consolidation projects, the DoE does not consider the 'one school – two sites' model as an option if the goal is to build a single school culture focused on improving outcomes.

That very damning report was completed in May. The Griffith community remains in limbo. Nothing has been done. Through no fault of their own, students, teachers and parents of Griffith have become the victims of an extremely poor and ill-informed decision by the Department of Education. In 2019 they were well and truly blindsided when the department announced that Wade and Griffith high schools would merge into Murrumbidgee Regional High School. At the time, the department requested that the community consider two options but then chose a third and different model, completely ignoring them. No rationale or data was presented to the school community to support the decision. It was thrust upon them as a directive. Geographically, the schools are 4.2 kilometres apart. Anyone could see the option was doomed from the start, and it just got worse.

Teaching and learning outcomes were compromised, curriculum pathways were not achieved, school operations could not proceed without structural change, and staff and student wellbeing was not what it should

be. The community had lost all confidence. As a result of the report, the Griffith Teachers Association has demanded a change to the current structure and model of secondary education in Griffith. Can one blame it? Teachers, students and parents should not continue to experience the difficulties caused by this merger disaster. They no longer accept the performance framework to compensate for a flawed model of secondary education that does not provide the adequate staffing and additional release time required to ensure the model succeeds. They are calling for a return to the two separate year 7 to year 12 comprehensive high school models because it is the most proven model of secondary education in the State. They want to demerge; they want what is best for the students.

The Department of Education must also recognise and acknowledge that Griffith is a rural town, which requires rural incentives to attract and retain sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified teachers. Staffing shortages have plagued secondary education in Griffith for decades. Yet just 36 kilometres down the road teachers can achieve or access incentives, including transfer points, rental or mortgage assistance and additional pay. While the staff have done their best to minimise the impact on student wellbeing, it has been difficult to hide their frustration and significant decline in wellbeing. The negativity at Murrumbidgee Regional High School has also impacted enrolments. It appears that preferred secondary schooling is now at the local Christian and Catholic high schools and in Leeton. Four school buses run every day to Leeton. Enrolments have decreased by between 10 per cent and 15 per cent, and a further 61 students have left the school this year.

While the amalgamation was intended to increase curriculum and pathways, that has not been achieved. Only considerable reputational damage to secondary public education in Griffith has been achieved. I implore the Government, the teachers implore the Government and the community implores the Government to turn this sinking ship around and return the campuses to the two separate schools that once were.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:04): I appreciate the effort the member for Murray has put into this public interest debate on school amalgamations. I come from a long line of schoolteachers. It has always been my policy to listen to teachers, to senior educators, to headmasters, to school communities and to the P&C. School amalgamation is always an emotive issue. There is a history in schools, a longevity—my grandkids went there, my father went there, et cetera. As members of Parliament we have a duty to put politics and emotions aside, and to create the best education opportunities for children that we can. They are our future.

Schools have changed in many ways—for example, open learning, electronic boards, laptops, iPads and other technologies. As I said, I am guided by my principals, my teachers and the school communities. The member for Lismore is in the Chamber. Undoubtedly she will speak about proposed mergers in Lismore. I acknowledge that this is a controversial issue and that people have quite differing views. We need to work together for the best possible outcome for our students. It is not about bricks and mortar; it is all about the students. It is about giving them a learning environment in which they can thrive and prosper.

Going through any school education is a difficult task and, unfortunately, a number of our schools have been hit with floods. One or two of the smaller schools in my electorate are under significant reconstruction and students have had to be moved. That can be emotional as well. I remember—and I am sure the member for Ballina will mention it—that there was a great debate about the merging of schools. At that stage there was a lot of emotion, one way or the other. But I believe that has been going well. Some time ago the Deputy Speaker had two schools merged in Port Macquarie. There would have been active debate no less in the wider community and differing views. The Deputy Speaker told me once that "it was going gangbusters".

I honour and respect the right of every member in this place to express their views. I am not in Griffith. I am not talking to the Griffith headmasters or the teachers or the schools. We need to focus on the educational outcomes for the kids. It is pretty tough being a kid. Times are tough. As I said, it is not about bricks and mortar; it is about educational opportunities. I visit a lot of schools, like many members. It is disappointing to visit an older school with demountables and no air conditioning—we have gone through that debate. At Pottsville we have a new school, and approximately \$120 million for two local high schools and two primary schools in my electorate. The classroom layouts and the IT facilities are very different but it is all designed to give the kids the greatest opportunity. While I acknowledge the concern, I also acknowledge the future. When we went to school, it was a hell of a lot different to what it is now. The opportunities are different. Different subjects and courses are offered now. We should support our experts in the field.

Mrs Helen Dalton: We do.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: And I am sure a lot of people do. I hazard a guess that all of us here have a good rapport.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:09): I lead for The Greens as the education spokesperson in this public interest debate. The Greens support the motion of member for Murray. It is not my first rodeo in the sense

of hearing the problems that are happening in the electorate of Murray. I have seen that in the electorate of Ballina and also, as a union organiser based in Dubbo back in the day, in the college system that was introduced there. So much of the problem is in the execution of, and the years leading up to, these amalgamations. It is a matter for the communities in the electorate of the member for Murray.

The community needs to be front and centre. What happens is that there is an announcement and then the community gets consulted. My philosophy in life around community consultation is that we do a lot and we do it early. It needs to be genuine. Consultation means there is a possibility that we will not go through with it. The families, school community, teachers and experts need to consult as to whether that is the best model. Unfortunately, consultation these days, particularly by this Government, means something very different to that. It means there is an announcement, then we are going to have rounds of meetings and a lot of spin. That is not community consultation.

My community has told me again and again that they love their small schools. I look forward to hearing from the member for Lismore in this debate. We are an area of villages and each village has its own character. The member for Murray said that these schools are 4½ kilometres away from each other. They are totally different cultures. They are very different ecosystems of school community. It is about the school community and all of that connectivity they have. The infrastructure at the Ballina Coast High School with regard to bricks and mortar is phenomenal. That is why we welcome and we would never talk down infrastructure investment in education. Let us not go to the underfunding and under-resourcing in New South Wales per school student. We have not met that resourcing standard and we still have a long way to go.

We would never talk down infrastructure investment in schools, but the problem is in the detail and in how we bring communities along with us. I believe the Ballina Coast High School is a success story. The reason for that success is the community resilience and that families, students and teachers accepted it. They have rallied and made an absolute corker of it. But that is not the way I think that things should go. That is why we support the member for Murray here today. It should start with the premise that a community gets to decide for itself what is the best model. It is not just about cost. As the member for Tweed rightly said, it is not about bricks and mortar and just about cost; it is about people and the best learning environment. The Southern Cross Public School and Ballina High School were longstanding sites of culture and that transition was very difficult. I know that because I taught at Southern Cross School for over a decade.

It is important to reflect that the anxiety in the community of the member for Murray is that they have not been genuinely consulted. They have not been asked what is the right solution for their educational needs. Until the Government has the courage to ask communities what they would like and we get to the logistics, people will get very despondent about the concept of community consultation, because it is not real. The Government cannot foreshadow the conclusions at which a community will arrive. The Greens are very happy to support this motion today.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:14): I thank the member for Murray for bringing this motion to the House for debate today. I think that everyone in this place agrees how crucial education is for our future generations. I was the beneficiary of a wonderful education, sometimes with better resources than others, sometimes with lesser resources and at a number of different schools. I think we all know what that will mean for future generations of this State. This Government believes that we need to continue to invest in the best opportunities for students and their futures and that, as the member for Ballina said, means investing in infrastructure, teachers, support staff and all the resources and materials for our schools, and ensuring that communities are engaged. We are committed to continuing to do that.

There will always be different perceptions about what is the right path to take with different school models in different towns, and we acknowledge that. We acknowledge the strength of feeling that the member for Murray has brought to the Chamber today and her strong advocacy for our community, and we acknowledge what she is hearing from her own constituents. I understand that she has raised a series of concerns with us all here today and I appreciate her bringing those concerns forward. I will talk about some of the Government's perceptions of the model introduced at Murrumbidgee Regional High School, about how the Government sought to develop evidence-based policy to understand what would work, and about the review undertaken after the fact. That is why the University of New South Wales was commissioned to independently evaluate the "two sites, one school" model at Murrumbidgee Regional High School.

The purpose of that evaluation was to fully capture the impacts and benefits, et cetera, of this new model to ensure that we can provide rigorous and transparent feedback to the Griffith community. The evaluation team conducted a range of interviews and focus groups, for instance, with the executive principal, the senior leadership team, teachers, school administration and support staff, students, parents and caregivers. It was all about their perceptions of the progress. The evaluation began in June 2018, with the interim report published in 2020. The final report was published in July this year. That report by the University of New South Wales found that the years

7 to 9 growth data from the NAPLAN in 2021—the first cohort to enrol in the school—were at or above State averages in reading and numeracy, including a positive trend for student outcomes. However, the report also found that the school's overall NAPLAN and HSC outcomes remain over-represented in the bottom and middle two bands and under-represented in the top two bands. Student wellbeing has remained stable but the report found that building a single school culture has proven difficult, as the two sites continue to operate somewhat independently and there are inefficiencies and duplications across the sites.

The report also made clear that it is difficult to make any fulsome claims about the ultimate impact of the merger until a full graduating class has attended Murrumbidgee Regional High School. That will not be until 2024 and it will occur following two years that were heavily impacted by the COVID pandemic, which has reduced quite a bit of interaction and communal meetings across the two campuses. The evaluation also called for the department to address the reputation or perception issues regarding public schooling in Griffith and to undertake further work to ensure we cement public education as the schooling of choice in the town. This Government is committed to ensuring that the students at Murrumbidgee Regional High School continue to get the best education, as they and all students deserve. We have taken on board all 14 of the recommendations from the final report. The department has acknowledged the challenges that the model has presented at Griffith.

The strategic improvement plan for the school clearly sets out how the school and the department plan to support student and staff wellbeing and focus on cross-site collaboration. This includes both sites participating in school development days and staff meetings together, as well as combined sporting teams and graduations and common teaching and learning programs across all stages. The school is continuing to develop more activities that bring staff and students from both sites together to build a single school community. We will continue to monitor the progress at the school. I know there is a lot of pride for all the staff and students and the whole school community in their ongoing commitment to working together as one school. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Tweed, who talked about how each community has a very different way of engaging in education. In my own community, one of our schools is split across two sites. It is a newer school and we have had similar challenges, but I know that our education models can work to achieve the best outcomes for all of our students and communities, no matter where they live and go to school in this State.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:20): I support the motion of the member for Murray. In so doing, I shall speak directly to the New South Wales Government's plan to merge four schools into one in Murwillumbah. The member for Murray and the member for Ballina spoke about the need for community consultation and said, in essence, that is where a lot of wheels fall off. They also mentioned the cultural recognition that each school is different. That is one of the challenges. I would add that School Infrastructure NSW needs to broaden its focus beyond traditional infrastructure, building and engineering, and incorporate cultural planners into the mix. It cannot lump everyone together and expect that they will all be happy at the end of the day.

The proposed school merger may be convenient for the New South Wales Government, but it certainly is not convenient for the community of Murwillumbah and the district, for the teachers or for the school community. I cannot even remember the date—it seems so long ago with COVID, floods and everything else—when the education Minister arrived in town. She was there two minutes, aided and abetted by her all too willing accomplices, the member for Tweed and the Hon. Ben Franklin. With no advance notice and no conversation or consultation whatsoever with the school community, teachers or Tweed Shire Council, the Minister announced that the merger was to take place. To say that the community was shocked would be an understatement—and they were shocked, because there was no lead-up at all to such an announcement. Government Ministers all too frequently forget that the days when they could do that are long gone. As communities, we expect participation. We are a participatory democracy. Yes, we are representatives in this place. Our communities—our society—have changed. We are participatory democracies. Even with all the powers that Ministers have, they cannot just ride in and say, "I'm going to change your lives overnight and merge four schools into one." That time is long gone.

What emerged from that event was that I talked to the Minister. I said to the Minister, "If you can show me the educational rationale for this merger—that it is in the best interests of the children and students in this community—I have an obligation to listen and work with that." I did do that. I said to the Minister, "Come back to Murwillumbah and meet with the school community. Meet with people, sit around a table and have a talk." We did that, and I sought certain guarantees. One was that the Minister would give me the evidence for the educational betterment of the students. I am still waiting. I was told by people in the department what it would be, but I have yet to see it. That bit is missing from the puzzle. Some of this seemed to have arisen from East Murwillumbah Public School, which was flooded and quite gutted in 2017. There were promises that the school would be rebuilt. Certain works were underway. The library and other areas kept getting put off and put off. I kept asking what was going to happen. It was announced by my predecessor, and it was in the budget papers and out there in the media, but nothing happened.

Then I have been told that some bright spark in education said, "Let's merge and that will be a cheaper way of doing it"—so much for the educational rationale. They are all the issues that shroud this particular merger. We were guaranteed that no teacher would lose their job. But 20 teachers and four administration staff will probably lose their jobs. That is not good enough in a thriving community like Murwillumbah. Just imagine what that would do. We were also told—I was told—we would have a great performing arts centre, which would be the showpiece. When Infrastructure NSW showed me the plans, I asked, "Where is the arts centre?" It said, "That will be in the assembly hall." The list goes on. The merger is a disaster and needs a review. I have a commitment from the Opposition that a Labor government will stop the merger, consult with the community and keep the four schools open.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:25): I thank the member for Murray for raising the great topic of regional education and regional schools. We have always faced challenges in this space. Distance is a challenge in regional areas, and giving our kids the opportunities they need will always be a challenge. I see what the department is doing. It is about opportunities. The other day I met with principal Glen Kite at Muswellbrook South in my electorate. He is doing some amazing work within the school, which is in a challenging part of my electorate. He is looking at new programs and putting energy into them. I thought, "Here is someone we need to back; here is someone we need to promote in what he is doing with the change process and the difference he is making in kids' lives." Managing change is very difficult, whether one is dealing with kids, parents or the community. Here is a principal and teacher who is a real leader doing fantastic work in that space. The New South Wales Government is investing in the school to change demountables to classrooms, and I can only imagine what that principal will be able to achieve in future.

I appreciate some of the challenges in Griffith with the single school located on two sites. It is about change and change management. We cannot be afraid to take on challenges to make sure that kids have the best opportunities. If that is a model that the department, and indeed a lot of the teachers, are supporting then we should support it also. We should see it through to make sure we collect data and evidence. The University of NSW report is helping by collecting and reviewing the information, and making good recommendations about how we can improve going forward. Since the merger occurred there seems to be evidence of more effective student transition from year 6 to year 7, setting up those students for success as they enter high school, providing opportunities through broader classes and even different teachers who can engage with the kids and make sure they get the opportunities and support they need to enrich their educational life going forward.

We are seeing benefits throughout the State. In Ballina and Armidale there are increased enrolments in models with additional facilities. Teachers are having a positive impact on students, and parents can see it. If community leaders get behind the teachers and principals, those positive impacts can only get better and stronger. A combined, community-wide effort is important. At Ballina Coast High School days lost to suspension decreased from 1,943 in 2017 to 674 in 2019. Principals have indicated that higher expectations and focus on school culture have contributed to improved outcomes. In relation to Griffith, the University of NSW final report found that years 7 to 9 growth data from the 2021 NAPLAN, the first cohort, was at or above the State average in reading and numeracy, indicating a positive trend. We do not yet know the full benefits, but we have to get behind the model. We must provide support to see whether this model will work and benefit those kids.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:30): I support the motion of the member for Murray. By way of background, I worked in education for 26 years, mostly as a principal. My first appointment was to Griffith Public School, which shared a site with Griffith High School, and I know Griffith High and Wade High very well. The Government and the education Minister have to stop experimenting on our kids. Educational standards are dropping because we have mad schemes for school improvement. Instead of focusing on ways to improve them, the Government tries weird and wonderful models to somehow form hybrid schools that are failing our kids. When the experiments fail, the education of a whole generation of kids is ruined. These are not one- or two-year experiments. It is not a case of "Oh well, they will get a new teacher, we will fix it and the kids will be okay in the end." Students' entire educational lives are ruined when these experiments do not work.

Griffith Public School and Wade High School had very different cultures. So in its wisdom the Department of Education decided not to form a school for years 7 to 10 and a senior high school, which we have seen work in other places; it decided to keep the schools separate but give them the same name. This has failed dismally because the department wanted to create one cohesive culture across two sites but did not give teachers the time to sit down together and develop that culture. It put a principal in place to oversee the two schools but kept them virtually separate. It gave them the same name and the same uniforms, but kept them separated. How can we develop a cohesive culture across two sites when they never see each other? The teachers had no time to have proper meetings and develop curriculum together. One did not have to be an education expert to know that it would fail.

In the community of the member for Murray the parents of primary school kids have seen that the model is failing and are choosing not to send their kids to those two schools. They are turning to the private system,

where kids generally tend to perform to a higher standard. Parents fear their kids will fall into a system that is not working, which means results spiral downwards because the top kids are lost. One does not have to be a genius to see this. I talk to teachers every day—my wife is one—and they speak about it all the time. As a principal, I advocated against Local Schools, Local Decisions, not because it was a terrible idea but because the implementation was all wrong. The Government put forward a theory to make all schools islands. It was all about the individual school. The Government then gutted the Department of Education of all the specialist staff that used to be the bridges between schools. So the schools became islands and did not talk to each other, did not share resources and did not have opportunities to work together.

Members do not have to believe me; look at the Programme for International Student Assessment results. Our results are going down, down, down. We need to put a stop to this, because teachers are working their behinds off. They are falling over or leaving the system altogether because they are put into a situation where it does not matter how hard they work. They are not being rewarded, and the kids are not improving because that specialist help is gone. They are even starting to make it harder for teachers because the range of students they have to work with in the classroom is getting harder and harder.

I started off in one-teacher schools: I had kindergarten to year 6 in the same room. It was really difficult. It was very rewarding, but we had a curriculum that stayed the same for a period, so we knew what we had to teach. Under this Government the curriculum changes every two or three years, so teachers do not have any continuity. They are continually trying to keep ahead of the changes while also having the skills to teach the kids. Let's have a reality check. The Government needs to understand that its policies have caused the problems in the system. Let's stop, reset and give teachers some continuity so that they can do their job, which is to teach kids and not to be forever coping with change.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (17:35): In reply: I thank all members who made a contribution to this important motion. The member for Ballina highlighted that the community needs to be front and centre, and I agree with that. I thank her for her contribution. Community feedback is so very important, and we did not experience that in Griffith at all. Other places, such as Lismore, did not either. A poor policy from the Government has been landed on us, and we have had no way to address it. It is not like the Griffith community has not tried to adapt; it has. I acknowledge that the member for Upper Hunter said that we need to adapt to change. We have tried. We have given it a red-hot go, but it is impossible when there are two schools 4.2 kilometres apart that are totally different culturally, with totally different needs. It is not just about adapting to change. We would embrace technology if we could only have it, but at the moment there is not even a gymnasium at either school. Almost every high school in this State has a gymnasium; we do not. We are out in extreme weather conditions, paddling around. It is disgraceful.

The member for North Shore agreed that education is important. I invite her to come to Griffith to take a look and discuss the school issues with the community. That would be wonderful, because she would gain a huge insight into what is going on there. There was no bloody upside in the University of New South Wales interim report—none at all. The final thing in the model was that it was never to be replicated again, yet the Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, stands by and allows a generation of children to fall by the wayside because she does not have the intestinal fortitude to admit that she is grossly wrong. She needs to demerge that school today. There is no need for this to go on. I thank the member for Wyong, who has taught in Griffith and has some insight into what it is like. I urge the Government to stop experimenting on our children. And that is what it is: one big experiment.

Mr Geoff Provest: Do I get a mention?

Mrs HELEN DALTON: What about you?

Mr Geoff Provest: Yes.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: Well, you touted a lot of platitudes, too. I am happy to have you come to Griffith and talk to the people because, as I reiterated, we have tried to work with the Government. In fact, the Minister came to see our school. She heard from the community, the parents and the children. She even heard from the principals of the primary schools. No-one was in favour of this. In fact, she was walking through the playground—*[Time expired.]*

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

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (RAIL TRAILS) BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:39): I contribute to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. I support the bill, along with the Opposition. Some people in my electorate would have preferred that the bill be the subject of an inquiry so that the public—in part, those who are passionate about trains—could have had a bigger say. There are people who are passionate about rail trails. The debate has gone on for quite a long time, and I hope that we can get to a position where we can have these debates without the division that surrounds them.

The bill maintains the rail corridor in public hands as a public asset, and that is important to the community. There is no change to that in the Northern Rivers because of the amendment that went through in 2020, but the Minister has said that he wants the process standardised—I get that—so that it does not have to come before the Parliament every time somebody wants to have a rail trail. It would have been better if there was an overarching provision in the bill for whatever the public rail corridor is being used for, not just for rail trails but for a whole range of other uses. That is what I understand the Government is trying to get to. I would have preferred to have a debate about public transport needs in general, particularly in rural and regional New South Wales, because it has been served poorly with regard to transport provision.

Yes, I know there have been some gains. Yes, there are some buses and B-ConX and all of those things, which I advocate for, support and welcome when they come. But there is no overarching, integrated regional and rural public transport plan, and that is what we would like to see. We need a plan for five, 10, 15, 20, 25 or 30 years, or even up to 50 years. In the area where I live, the growth is huge on the coastal strip. It goes out to Tenterfield and borders Deepwater, to the electorate of the member for Northern Tablelands. We need more transport options. I have never promised to bring the train back—I never knew that I could deliver that, even if I desired it—but I have always promised that I would do my best to keep the rail corridor in public hands. To date, we have done that. We have managed it.

My colleague the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads said in her contribution to debate that while Labor supports the bill, "it would have been quite a different bill if it had come from this side of the Chamber, because we have a holistic view of the power of public transport as a social determinant of health, education, economic opportunity, jobs and regional development." She said much more, and I valued her contribution because it closely aligned with the way I wish we were having this debate. I will also quote from the second reading speech of the Minister in the other place. He said:

To be clear, this is not about selling off the rail corridor or preventing the long-term reinstatement of rail services on disused lines.

That will give some hope to people, I am sure, and I think everybody who supports this amendment bill would be of that view. I certainly am, and I know others are. I have always said that I never give up on what may happen in the future. That is particularly true when we look just north of the border and see the train coming down. Thank goodness for the Olympics. It is inching down to the border. We see the developments and think that it is some of the planning that we have to do.

Recently the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads was in the Lismore electorate, and she and I met with local people in my community to hold a roundtable on public transport needs. That was a useful discussion with the highway patrol and bus and taxi representatives. All modes of transport were represented. We also met with the Northern Rivers Railway Action Group, who put some very sensible proposals to us on a Northern Rivers transport expansion strategy. It is quite a detailed document, which covers a whole range of transport needs. I have not had time to study it forensically but, on the face of it, it is something worthwhile and something that we should consider deeply.

Mr Geoff Provest: He's a good Minister.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: It did not come from a Minister. It came from one of my constituents.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lismore will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I will direct my comments through you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I support our amendments to the bill that the shadow Minister has foreshadowed. I understand they will be supported by the Government, so I thank the Government for that. One of the amendments concerns biosecurity. This puzzles me because we have The Nationals in government. They talk about representing the country and the farmers and everything, yet biosecurity was low down on the list of concerns around the rail trails. I do not say that just to

have a crack at them; I say that as fact. A lot of farmers have come to us. I understand biosecurity is in the framework for rail trails, but it has not been included in the legislation when it is a really big issue. We are currently seeing the threat of foot-and-mouth disease and other biosecurity threats, so I was quite surprised. It should be in the legislation, and it should be the subject of one of the impact statements that has to happen before any development can take place.

At the recent NSW Farmers Conference, the Leader of the Opposition announced that, if Labor were in government, it would certainly set up a biosecurity commission. That would be a good development for New South Wales because it could assist with so many of our biosecurity threats. We have had them for a long time, and they cost the State at least \$2 billion each year. That is a 10-year-old figure, but it is the latest figure that we have. I fear the reality would be much higher than that. Within any developments that take place, I hope that biosecurity will loom large and that it is guaranteed that the corridors will be in public hands. Before any development like a rail trail can take place, there has to be community consultation and it has to be real consultation, with absolute support from the community. I welcome those thoughts. With those comments, I begrudgingly support the bill.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (17:48): I make a contribution to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. I note that the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon. Sam Faraway, is in the Speaker's gallery. He is the second Minister from the other place we have had in the Speaker's gallery today. It is a new trend of upper House Ministers coming down to the commons. Long may it continue. I am glad that the Minister is here. I commend him for introducing the legislation and for the collaborative way in which he not only put together the legislation but also worked with the Opposition to seek a bipartisan approach to an issue that has often vexed members in this place and the other place as well as local communities.

Members have spoken in this debate about how rail trail proposals can often be very divisive when put forward. Certainly that has been the case in my electorate, with two separate proposals that have now been conflated into one to convert the disused corridor rail line from Black Mountain, north of Armidale, into a rail trail to Ben Lomond and for Glen Innes Severn Council to convert the rest of the line from Ben Lomond up to the township of Glen Innes. Both councils have received some capital funding for those proposals from the Commonwealth Government. That debate to and fro has gone on for years. In fact, it has become divisive and people on both sides have become very entrenched in their views. Unfortunately, it has become very personal. We are not Robinson Crusoe, unfortunately. The bill will not resolve that aspect, but it will give the Minister of the day the ability and flexibility to lease whole portions of disused rail line to a local council for not just rail trails but for other tourist purposes, which could be heritage rail, tourist experiences using the existing rail infrastructure or, indeed, new rail infrastructure.

I am glad the member for Lismore identified that, critically, the bill enshrines once more in legislation of this Parliament that, even if the Minister of the day uses their regulatory powers under new section 99E in an amendment to the Transport Administration Act 1988, the rail corridor remains entrusted and vested in the Crown and in the public hands of the people of New South Wales forever and ever in absolute perpetuity. The bill stipulates quite clearly that the lease for tourism and related purposes is only temporary. That is firstly because the lease can only be a maximum of 30 years and, secondly, because the rail corridor is not closed as it would have been under the old regime through legislation. The rail corridor remains legally open; it is temporarily leased for a tourism-related purpose. That is a small but significant difference from the current approach taken under the Transport Administration Act. That is important as it keeps alive the hope that many people have in certain parts of the State that rail can return. It leaves open the door for it to return without having to trot back to Parliament to reopen a line that has been closed by a piece of legislation passed through this Parliament. That, to me, is the first important thing.

The second important thing in the bill is that it would enact the important framework to give consistency to how proposals are assessed by the government and the Minister of the day before a lease is granted. In his second reading speech in the other place, the Minister clearly set down that a proposal must have and be able to demonstrate genuine community support—not this Clayton's stuff from SurveyMonkey or holding a meeting at the local RSL club that 50 people turn up to, who are largely all supporters of a proposal, and taking matters to community consultation. The proposal must demonstrate that the proponent has done broadscale consultation and that it has broadscale support.

The proposal must also take into account all the environmental factors, including something that is close to my heart: the biosecurity considerations. Certainly in the case of a proposal in the Northern Tablelands, biosecurity concerns are chief because every metre of that rail corridor is adjacent to productive agricultural grazing land that is under active agricultural commercial production. That is absolutely critical. Equally as

importantly, the proponent must demonstrate a sound business case—that is, more than just a grant from the State or Federal governments or a bequest to cover the capital up-front cost.

As we all know, the cheapest part of building any particular piece of infrastructure is the capital construction. The most expensive is the life cycle cost. How are we going to maintain the project over its 20-, 30- or 40-year life span? The proponents must have a plan that stacks up. That plan has to say, "This is not going to be a white elephant. This is something that will be able to be looked after." The challenge for every proponent of a rail trail is to make it return a revenue stream. Quite rightly and demonstrably, there are arguments that in other jurisdictions rail trails attract tourists who stay and spend money, with flow-on effects to the region. But how does the actual owner and operator of that rail trail infrastructure have a revenue stream or an available pot of money to maintain that asset? That is a critical factor.

Some of the proponents of the rail trail proposal in my electorate have heralded this bill as virtually giving their proposal the green light. I am loath to ever burst anyone's enthusiastic bubble—and certainly do not use this place to do it—but the reality is that the bill does not do that. I say to those people who have the entrenched view that rail trails are the absolute devil and the enemy of bringing back trains that the bill does not in any way give approval or make it easier for proponents of rail trails to get their project across the line. They still have to jump through the hoops. The bill just changes the way those hoops can be jumped through. It does not lower or raise the bar whatsoever.

Importantly, each proposal will be slightly different according to community attitudes, the location of the rail corridor and how it interacts with existing transport infrastructure. In the case of the proposal in my electorate, I feel it still has a long way to go to meet a number of the critical thresholds the Minister has outlined. That is not to say that they will not be able to do so in time, but at the moment it probably does not quite meet some of those standards, in my considered opinion. That being said, the bill is a welcome step forward. It will provide greater consistency in how these projects are considered, and give proponents a stronger guide about how to formulate their proposals in the first place to make sure they can have a successful project that is supported by the community—and, ultimately, the Minister of the day, through the granting of a lease under regulation through these changes to the Act.

Again, I commend the Minister for his work. I repeat that, for those in my electorate who I am sure will read over every word that I have made in this contribution, the bill does not give the green light to any proposal, let alone the one that is currently being considered. There are still many hoops to jump through. But for those who treasure the rail corridor and the chance that, after 30-odd years, the line north of Armidale may carry a train once again, the bill does not prevent that. In fact, it makes it easier for that to happen than the old model, which actually forced the Parliament to close a line for an alternative use. Under this model, the line stays open but is temporarily leased for an alternative purpose until, perhaps, the transport returns to the line. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:58): I speak in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. Generally I support the bill, but I will support the amendments foreshadowed by Labor. For the benefit of the House, I relate the experience of my electorate in converting a disused rail line into a shared pathway. In the morning of any weekend when the sun is shining, the Fernleigh Track near my house is full of families, cyclists, walkers and nature lovers. It is a prime route for morning cyclists and joggers every day of the week. The track is set on the old railway line from Belmont to Adamstown. The heritage of the old rail line has been retained, with rail tracks, signage, lighting and some of the stations still in place and visible along the way.

The 15-kilometre shared pathway offers a fantastic protected route through bushland areas and wetlands along parts of its length where wildlife can be seen and heard. There is even a chance to learn a little bit of history. The local Newcastle and Lake Macquarie councils worked with the State government of the time to install heritage notices to help people understand the line's history. The best part is that there are also some quality coffee shops just a few metres off the track. The Fernleigh Track is an example, in my own backyard, of how valuable rail trails can be to a community. It is a hub for locals and tourists, and adds significant interest and amenity to the local area. It is my hope that more communities will have similar opportunities to those currently being taken advantage of by Lake Macquarie and Newcastle local councils.

With the amendments proposed by Labor, the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022 has the capacity to make it easier for communities to explore the options available in their own communities and remove barriers that currently exist, which have been raised by members in previous contributions to this debate. The bill would allow the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads to make a regulation to create a rail trail once they were satisfied that the project had met the three criteria set out in the 2022 *NSW Rail Trails Framework*. The criteria state:

1. There must be demonstrated community support for the Rail Trail.

2. There must be evidence of a viable and sustainable business model.
3. Issues relating to environmental impacts including biosecurity must be addressed.

A 30-year lease can then be offered, which can only be held by a local council. The corridor remains in public hands, which is incredibly important. As I am sure is the case for many other members in this place, my office has received correspondence from across the State signalling the enthusiasm for the amendments proposed. Recently I received a letter that stated:

It is well and truly time that NSW unlocks the undeniable social, lifestyle, health, and economic potential these disused regional rail corridors offer. The most proven and cost-effective way to achieve this is by repurposing them into community owned shared pathways that will boost and broaden regional tourism.

Communities can see the value in their existing facilities and can envisage the opportunities on offer. Removing barriers to opening up disused rail lines will make it easier for communities to build on those local assets. Currently when railway tracks and other works are removed, the Transport Administration Act 1988 requires authorisation by an Act of Parliament to close a line. That has been a significant barrier to opening up rail trails. As one of my constituents stated in a letter to me supporting the proposed legislation:

This is a process that provides a considerable delay and cost to cash-strapped regional councils for such projects, projects that ultimately benefit local regional communities.

This legislation will make it easier for local councils to pursue projects that will increase the ability of local residents to safely travel from place to place and showcase their beautiful surrounds from a bike or on foot. No-one would argue against the proposition that the experience of walking or cycling on one of these paths is very different to sharing a busy road with cars, trucks and motorbikes. Many people in my electorate use the Fernleigh Track as not only a recreational facility but also a transport facility to get to work. Other States across Australia have been taking advantage of the opportunities offered by rail trail infrastructure, recognising its ability to draw tourist visitors and its positive effective on community-building. It is time that we did the same in New South Wales.

It is also important to go about those projects in the right way to ensure that communities maintain ownership over their significant assets. These public facilities must remain in public hands. We should not create a scenario in which private enterprise buys up former rail corridors and rail trails and ends any possibility that they will be used again for public purposes in future. That provision must be stated clearly in the legislation. We must be clear about the use of these corridors as recreational avenues rather than for commercial development, which might impinge on the future uses of the site. We must also work closely with local councils to see that the rail corridors are put to the best use for the benefit of the community and the State.

Watching disused rail lines and their associated infrastructure—some of which hold strong historical value for their local communities—fall apart and fade away has been incredibly difficult for many communities. Denied access to the rail lines and their facilities, communities and volunteer groups that would have loved to have maintained and sustained the heritage of their rail line have instead been hamstrung and left to watch from the sidelines as their rail line goes unused, only to be reclaimed, in some instances, by weeds. The built infrastructure is left to fall apart or fall victim to vandals. What I really like about the Fernleigh Track is that a lot of the heritage has been maintained. Other rail trails should do the same. This legislation may lead to opening those areas up again and encouraging communities, particularly in regional New South Wales, to explore the possibilities of these facilities. It is a great tourism boost for regional New South Wales.

Historically rail connected New South Wales and, with the rising interest in cycling as a transport option and recreational pastime, it can once again. The numbers of cyclists who want to travel around the State and spend money in regional New South Wales is absolutely mind blowing. I am sure that many parts of regional New South Wales would be interested in taking advantage of that. Plans are already underway in the Newcastle region to expand the offerings of rail trails, which is really exciting for the region's future. The first steps are in place for the Richmond Vale Rail Trail project. The 32-kilometre cycling and walking track will follow the former Richmond Vale rail line between Kurri Kurri and Hexham and the former Chichester to Newcastle water pipeline, and it will also go through the Hunter Wetlands National Park.

I am really looking forward to the prospect of an active transport option linking the local government areas of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Cessnock. It will allow cyclists to travel through the region off the Pacific Motorway, the Hunter Expressway and the New England Highway, which will certainly be a win for commuter safety. Like the Fernleigh Track, the Richmond Vale Rail Trail will make the most of the remaining railway infrastructure, allowing people to travel through old railway tunnels and over bridges along the way. I look forward to the day that I can explore its length—though that may well be some time in the future as the first 13-kilometre stage was only approved in December last year. I look forward to a time when more communities in New South Wales have the freedom and expanded ability to explore options for their own rail lines.

I am encouraged by the success of the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail project, a 21-kilometre shared pathway that celebrates the region's history and beautiful countryside. It is happening in Tumbarumba, it is happening in Newcastle and it is happening in the Hunter. Through this legislation I look forward to hearing about many more projects opening and celebrating the unique flavour of our local communities. There certainly is an established appetite in the community for this kind of adventure. It is attracting visitors from far beyond each local area that has invested in it, and I am sure that kind of success can be emulated in other projects by other communities across New South Wales in the future. I hope the Government supports Labor's sensible amendments to the bill, which will be moved by the shadow Minister, the member for Maitland, to ensure that the bill not only does what it intends to do but also is the best that it can be.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:08): I contribute to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. Although the bill is not large, its implications are. I endorse what members on this side of the House have said about the bill, and I agree with the member for Northern Tablelands in his assessment of how the bill will work to ensure that protections and proper procedures are in place. I particularly thank the shadow Minister, the member for Maitland. I previously held the shadow Regional Transport portfolio, so I know how complicated the topic is to communities. They are passionate about it. The shadow Minister has done a wonderful job consulting with stakeholders and making sure that we have put forward well-considered and well-thought-out amendments.

I also thank the Minister and the Minister's staff for the cooperative way in which they engaged with the Opposition on the bill. We asked some tough questions and they provided answers that gave me solace. This will be a very robust process, and not every application will be approved. If they do not stack up, they will not be approved. For those who are following or have an interest in this debate, one of the key factors is that the process will be managed by regulation, so if a member of the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council feels that an appropriate benchmark has not been reached in a decision of the Minister, they may move a disallowance motion and have that decision overturned. The safeguard is in place to ensure that there is a framework that must be followed to the letter, and an approval can occur only if a project stacks up under the terms of that framework.

I do not want to repeat what everyone else has said, so I speak from the perspective of my role as shadow Minister for Tourism, which obviously covers elements of transport. I say to those people who are looking at these projects to hold a few different views in mind because people are drawn to different attractions and places. If there was a sudden, massive splurge of rail trails right across New South Wales, some places will have an environment that is particularly attractive, and that will be an enticement for people to visit, but other sections of track may be pretty normal in places right across the State. That could actually devalue some of the projects that are put in place. My colleague in the other place the Hon. Mick Veitch said that between 13 and 15 significant trails around the State would be a sustainable model to ensure that we do not overdo this attraction. Otherwise, communities may not get the full value out of it. His favourite saying to me is, "Not every rail corridor makes a good rail trail" and that is quite sensible.

The framework will help to sort out which projects are good for the community and the State with regard to economic return, tourism, physical endeavours, et cetera, and it will also ensure that we do not overbake the pie. On the tourism slant, I am a great fan of heritage rail, as is the member for Wollondilly. I say to people and council areas to consider other opportunities such as rail with trails. A great example of that is the Oberon to Hazel Grove line, which is operated by Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. It has put in both rail and trail, so it is not one or the other. In some communities there is a great debate about whether there is a rail trail for bicycles or a rail line for heritage rail and never the twain shall meet. But if the terrain allows for it, there is great opportunity in some places to benefit from both a rail and a trail line.

Some heritage rail projects that have been put forward have given thought to that. A person can ride the train to the end of the track with their bike on the train and then ride their bike back. That is incredibly sensible and is a good attraction. There is a solar train in Byron Bay in the electorate of the member for Ballina. We must be careful that we do not rule out good tourist attractions by cutting significant rail lines into too many sections. Queensland has the Kuranda Scenic Railway and Victoria has the Puffing Billy Railway. Those attractions draw in huge crowds all year around. New South Wales heritage trains run on a calendar, but Zig Zag Railway is probably the only one that runs on a regular basis. Other places in the State would benefit from solar trains or steam trains to attract people to those communities. It is not just about bicycle trails; it is about leasing for other options as well. The framework says that and it is very important. In my capacity as the—

Mr Nathaniel Smith: You didn't mention Thirlmere steam museum, with the largest set of heritage trains.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: That is it, yes. I knew the member for Wollondilly would back me up on that one.

Mr Nathaniel Smith: You forgot about it.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: In my capacity as the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, the framework, through consultation with the Minister, will also ensure that Aboriginal interests are looked after along these trails, particularly sacred places. When the corridors were first formed that likely was not foremost in the minds of those who chose the routes for the rail lines, but there is capacity now to go back and ensure protection for and access to sacred places for Aboriginal communities that may not currently exist. The framework provides opportunities to fix past wrongs and to get things right.

Originally I was worried that this was just an opportunity to shut down rail lines without having to bring it before the House. But after engaging with the Minister's office through the work of our shadow Minister, I am fairly confident that this is a good outcome. The corridor remains in public hands, so it can be returned for transport use. It keeps a high bar in making sure that projects pass good scrutiny and one particular group does not get on a slant, get some funding and away it goes. It is a lot more robust than that.

The framework allows for other options, such as rail with trails, heritage rail and alternative uses on the lines. Most of all, as a Parliament we have a responsibility to understand that many of these lines have huge historical value to our State. The Great Northern Line runs up through New England and was the first line to Queensland. I have visited the stations. It is part of the story of Federation. Henry Parkes travelled on that line to visit those communities. Bearing that in mind—a disallowance process is included if proper process is not followed—I support the bill.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:18): On behalf of The Greens I contribute to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. We will not be supporting or opposing the bill because of the work that has been done. It was disappointing. My colleague in the other place Abigail Boyd, who is our transport spokesperson, spent a lot of time with Minister Faraway on this. I was disappointed that the Minister for Active Transport did not recognise that. In fact, my office has been working with Minister Faraway for quite a few months and we appreciate that. I want to separate the term "rail trails" in the bill. In this case it is a misnomer because it is really about disused rail corridors, particularly in regional areas. It is of grave concern for my community that it is retained in public hands. I acknowledge that the bill does that.

I am pleased that councils are front and centre. For example, if Byron council wants to extend the solar train that goes to the Bluesfest site or to Mullumbimby—this has been spoken about for a long time—the bill allows for that. It will be much easier. Having worked with Elements of Byron on the solar train—in a small way compared with the work that it did with the Federal Government—I got an insight into just how clunky it is. The Federal laws are very much geared to heavy rail and so innovative work like a solar train was not easy to achieve. There have been other innovators in the area. I am pleased that transport options are on the table in a way that they were not before this legislation.

I am also grateful that the State Government cannot foist anything on a community and that councils will undertake due diligence. We were pleased with the amendments relating to compensation and the productive work that has been done to ensure there is compensation. I have always said that it is very tricky. The Northern Rivers Rail Trail in my electorate has done amazing work. If funds are raised and millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure are put into the rail trail, who gets to stare that down and say, "No, we have a viable transport option here"? Because this will be regulated we are a long way from what it will look like for the community. They will have to pay a lot of attention to what is happening. We are never very comfortable when the rigorous oversight of legislation by Parliament is changed.

But we are pleased that compensation has been strengthened. The Government has looked at those loopholes and a compensation provision has been included in the bill, which attempts to preclude compensation being payable to those with a lease over the land and transport corridor. I will not go down into those weeds other than to say I still have concerns about how one would make that case. A case would have to be made to local council about changing the use when there has been considerable investment. We are concerned about a rail corridor or rail trail change of use. What happens if something changes and council says, "No, we want to put a theme park in the corridor. We want to do something else"? Unless residents and the community are paying careful attention that would be disastrous. We are glad that each and every change will be triggered.

It has been hard for people in my community and it has been a divisive debate. The community has been completely robbed of public transport. I am not being disrespectful to our transport providers in the area, but what we have is very minimal. People have been talking about that for a long time—since 2004 when we lost the rail. The conversations about rail trails are kind of cruel for people who lament that we do not have public transport. It is a painful conversation. I am pleased that this now becomes a conversation at council level. Quite frankly, people can vote with their feet if the local representatives are not reflecting the will of the community around what happens to that public asset. I am not sure it is akin to the protections of the commons that we heard about. The devil will be in the detail of how this develops but we are moving in the right direction.

The Opposition has foreshadowed some amendments. We have been able to strengthen those by working with it on the review of the legislation. It is important that the review is specific and does happen. I have been in this place for eight years and spoke in debate about Tumbarumba. I was fascinated to hear that there are some jagged edges about that, and also to hear other members for the first time talking about the controversy in their own electorates around rail trails. To me, it is nothing to do with rail trails. I have ridden the Otago rail trail and the Queenstown Trail. I have a long association with the Queenstown Trails Trust. I am a huge fan of cycle tourism and if my council embraces sections of rail trail in the Byron shire, in particular, I would be happy and relieved to be able to celebrate that after eight years.

But it has always been an either/or-sum game, between the promise of public transport returning—the promise of trains returning—versus rail trails. It has been a disservice to everybody that the debate has been so basic. There is no world in which The Greens would oppose cycle tourism—no world whatsoever. We are always about making sure that the community makes decisions about what it wants and the use of public land, and that we do not lose public land. That is the beginning of the end for us because of how little public land we have left.

We thank Minister Farraway for working with us and the Opposition. I commend Ms Abigail Boyd because she has hung in there with all the iterations to be where we are today. From listening to the contributions by the member for Lismore and the member for Tweed, it is clear that a lot of people in the Northern Rivers will be very disappointed. At least now they can turn their attention to their local councils and have that debate about what they want to see at a community level and go from there.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:27): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. I say at the outset that I went to the last election as a supporter of rail trails. But I was very conscious—and I made this point clearly—that the concerns around privacy and biosecurity of landowners and farmers through whose properties these trails went needed to be respected. I maintain that position very strongly. I have to say, though, that since the last election I have acquired an e-bike. I have not quite acquired the lycra to go with it, and I do not intend to. My wife and I have ridden on the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail many times. It is a great facility for the community and a great adornment to the State. We love it. I can see the value in it and it has clearly provided an enormous economic boost.

There is a huge future in rail trails but I am very conscious that it has been and continues to be a divisive issue. It is always important to respect different views when these matters are being discussed. Often the debate degenerates into quite an antagonistic and polarising one. There are clearly ways that issues around privacy and biosecurity can be addressed, but often the consultation process and the debates degenerate into needless antagonism and no-one goes forward. I appreciate the Government's approach, particularly Minister Farraway's work with the rail trails strategic framework, which a number of speakers have already commented on. Finally communities, through their councils, can engage with a clear framework in putting forward proposals. The framework will allow for a sensible and considered discussion and will give space for groups to resolve their differences. I do not think that has existed before.

When I was first elected as a member of Parliament, the mayor of Wagga Wagga approached me to say, "Look we are interested in perhaps discussing a rail trail. How do we get it?" It took me some months to work out exactly what process might be considered, only to find out really there was no process. If a framework does not exist where people can discuss and resolve differences, that will of course create conflict. I congratulate the Government on the framework; it is very clear about how those issues can be resolved. I know that in my community discussions and debates will continue. I hope that they are conducted civilly and respectfully, which I think the framework allows for. There will obviously be passionate arguments on both sides. The presence of the framework is a step forward for our communities for the development of rail trail networks and for addressing the concerns that I have always had about respecting the privacy and biosecurity of landowners and farmers.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (18:31): In reply: It is my privilege to speak for the Government in reply on the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022. I thank every member who exercised their voice on behalf of their community to speak on this important issue. I particularly thank the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and member for Maitland, and the member for Albury. I loved hearing that over 20 students at Tumbarumba Public School are using the Rosewood trail to ride to school. What a fantastic example that is of the benefits these trails bring to the community. I thank the shadow Minister for Transport, and member for Summer Hill, whose comments I will refer to a little later, and the member for Tweed for his enthusiastic comments as always and his wise insight into the realities of implementing the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. I also thank the member for Lismore, the member for Northern Tablelands, the member for Charlestown and the member for Wyong. I thank the member for Ballina and the member for Wagga Wagga, who are both in the Chamber this evening. I thank them all for their contributions to debate.

I address a few of the key issues raised by some of the members, and put on record that I agree with many of the points the member for Maitland raised. However, I reassure this place that the Government has not treated lightly the issues of biosecurity. When one looks at the *NSW Rail Trails Framework* from the Department of Regional NSW, one finds that it is one of the three essential criteria that underpins the whole policy framework. The Coalition Government acknowledges the important role and connection our farmers and regional communities have with the land of which they are custodians. I acknowledge that the amendment proposed by the Opposition will elevate that important consideration, which is a positive thing.

I also acknowledge the enthusiasm of the member for Summer Hill for the bill and her wish that money be put towards realising rail trails in regional communities. However, I also point out that this is not an appropriation bill; this is not a budget bill. Instead, it is a bill that will enable governments to allocate future funding to rail trails that have gone through the framework and have been considered by the Minister. Her enthusiasm is absolutely understandable, but it is important to note that community participation is part of the process. Ultimately, these are trails that the community would like us to proceed with and we can move to funding once those discussions have been had.

One significant issue in the past has been that governments—Federal, State or local—have provided grant funding for rail trails before a bill has passed parliament, which is certainly putting the cart before the horse. I also touch on something the member for Lismore said about a lack of strategic regional transport planning in the Northern Rivers. I ask her to watch this space because Transport for NSW is currently working on a 20-year strategic transport plan that will look holistically at her entire region to determine future service needs. As other members have done in this debate, I acknowledge the diligent work and positive engagement of the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon. Sam Faraway, and his staff, in particular Simon Hanna, to see the bill supported by both Houses.

I also note that the member for Ballina would like me to acknowledge Ms Abigail Boyd of The Greens in the other place and I am delighted to oblige. She has clearly worked passionately to resolve some of the challenges around the bill. The member for Ballina mentioned a couple of things. I understand the exquisite challenges in her area, but I do not believe that this bill is a misnomer. It is ultimately about rail trails. Fundamentally, if we want to see public spaces used for tourism or recreation opportunities, we need to pass this bill. Without it, those uses are prohibited. It is the only way to achieve those great things. I note her comment that the devil might be in the detail. The detail is the rail trails strategic framework, so I do not believe that the devil is in that detail. The devil, of course, is in the community conversations that will democratically decide whether or not the community wants a rail trail in its locality. They will be difficult discussions for us all to be involved in.

Any use of public land is always a bit of a bunfight, but that is what we are involved in. They are political processes that should, of course, be carried out courteously, positively and productively. But, ultimately, different people will have different views. That is the nature of democracy in all its delight and messiness. I also thank the Hon. Mick Veitch in the other place for his advocacy and insights. Many community champions were behind the bill, including Peter McLean of Bicycle NSW, Tim Coen of Rail Trails for NSW and Damian McCrohan of Rail Trails Australia—all incredible advocates for this reform. It is great to see the House support regional New South Wales to realise the benefits of rail trails sooner, with the economic and social benefits that come with the improved access, and a drawcard for tourism.

I again acknowledge the work of the member for Maitland. I know she will move some amendments, which the Government will support. I acknowledge Estelle Grech and Dan Rubenach from my office for the incredible service that they provide to the public. I also note that the member for Wagga Wagga mentioned the need to respect surrounding private owners, which has been in the background of this entire bill. Of course, that is a fundamental understanding. It is also worth noting, however, that we are dealing with public, not private, land. We must respect our neighbours, but all of us also have a shared obligation to ensure that public land is used to benefit the public that we serve. That is ultimately what the bill is about. It is about converting wasted spaces into treasured public places. I quoted Samuel Coleridge earlier, so it is probably appropriate to conclude with William Wordsworth: "Sweet was the walk along the narrow lane." I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Jenny Aitchison and Mr Rob Stokes.

Consideration in Detail

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:38): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2022-131E in globo:

No. 1 Consultation about leases

Page 3, Schedule 1[3], proposed section 99E(5). Insert after line 35—

- (e) the councils and joint organisations of areas that are adjacent to the council area in which the subject land is located,
- (f) Local Land Services, in relation to the mitigation of biosecurity risks.

No. 2 Land cannot be sold

Page 4, Schedule 1[3], proposed section 99E. Insert after line 8—

- (9A) Subject land in relation to which regulations have been made under this section cannot be sold.

No. 3 Review of amendments

Page 4, Schedule 1[3], proposed section 99E. Insert after line 8—

- (9B) Within 5 years after the date of assent to the *Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Act 2022*, the Minister must—
 - (a) review the amendments made by that Act, and
 - (b) table a report of the review in each House of Parliament.

Labor approached this bill seeking to empower communities to appropriately turn disused rail corridors into productive community assets for active public freight- and tourism-based transport with the support of communities. Our key principles include strong support from communities, not just where those rail trails are but where they may impact; the retention of rail corridors in public ownership, ensuring future use for regions; biosecurity; the rights of landholders; native title claimants; and the improvement of level crossing safety. We also have concerns about the strategic plans. I know that the member for Lismore would have been excited to hear the Minister speak about the upcoming 20-year plan. That is obviously a strong part of her advocacy for her region and she is a fantastic advocate.

The three amendments seek to make all those principles clear in the legislation. While some of them are in the framework, we want them to be in the legislation forever and clearly so that people know there is certainty. As I said before, one of the big concerns in this debate has been the lack of certainty for so long. We cannot legislate for good reviews. That is a matter for us to pursue at the appropriate time, depending on who is in government in five years' time. Again, I thank the Ministers and their offices for their gracious contributions and collaborative work in this space. If that is the standard of work, then review will be appropriately undertaken. I hope they also take on board my suggestions for strengthening the framework. The amendments achieve the objectives that we have all worked so hard on to get to today. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (18:41): For the reasons articulated by the shadow Minister, the Government agrees with Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 3 and does not oppose Opposition amendment No. 2.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2022-131E be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (18:41): I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-145:

No. 1 Compensation

Page 3, Schedule 1[3], proposed section 99E(8), line 41. Insert "or a rail infrastructure owner" after "the State".

The amendment removes any doubt that, if a lease of a rail trail is terminated by the Minister to allow rail to return to the line, no compensation is payable by any rail infrastructure owner. Building a rail trail on disused rail lines will open up our beautiful regions to many visitors, but we hear and understand some communities' concerns that we should retain the capacity to return that land to some other transport use if that is of greater public benefit at any point in the future. That objective will be achieved by ensuring that there is no ambiguity concerning compensation payable if the Minister requires the land to be returned.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:42): The Opposition supports the amendment. It came to the Chamber with support from The Greens in the other place, and I acknowledge the work of Ms Abigail Boyd in that space. It is important that we speak about sovereign risks for those people who are proponents of the rail trails. We must be very clear about what those risks are. With the Transport Asset Holding Entity owning the

assets and the rail infrastructure, we must ensure that that is clear and that compensation arrangements are well done. That clause will strengthen the importance and motivation of parties to consult properly. We definitely support it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-145 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 ROB STOKES: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 22 June 2022.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (18:44): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends the Electoral Act 2017 and the Electoral Funding Act 2018 to implement a number of recommendations made by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in its report *Administration of the 2019 NSW State Election*. At the outset I acknowledge the work of that committee and, in particular, the Opposition members on the committee—the Hon. Courtney Houssos; the member for Wollongong, Paul Scully; and "the Professor", the Hon. Peter Primrose, who we defer to in matters such as these. I also acknowledge the Hon. John Graham, who brings his significant expertise and work experience in these fields to this discussion.

It is the Opposition's sincere view that changes to the electoral law should be bipartisan changes. That is the best way to make enduring changes and introduce laws that stand the test of time. There is one key issue in the proposed law that means the Opposition cannot, and will not, support the bill without amendment. I am referring, of course, to the acting in concert provisions that are switched on as a result of the electoral caps being revived. Earlier today I circulated amendments that will seek to remove the acting in concert provisions. I foreshadow now that if the Opposition fails in that endeavour we will vote against the entire bill. The acting in concert provisions are repugnant and taint the entire bill. But first, I will speak to some of the provisions of the bill as a whole.

The bill makes miscellaneous amendments to the Electoral Act 2017 and the Electoral Funding Act 2018. The amendments to the Electoral Act make the following changes. The bill reduces the early voting period to a maximum of seven days. Some may see that as a retrograde step, removing the fun of standing at a pre poll booth, while others think it is a necessary and positive amendment. The bill allows the preliminary scrutiny of postal voting envelopes to begin 14 days before election day, instead of five days, and allows postal voting envelopes to be accepted in the scrutiny if received before the expiry of a period not exceeding 13 days from the close of voting, rather than the current four days. The bill makes it clear that the postal voting procedure must take place before the close of voting. It also inserts a provision to provide that where a voter has been delivered two envelopes, ballot papers will not be rejected merely because they were not inside the envelope on which the postal vote certificate is printed.

The bill further amends the Electoral Act by replacing "the registered officer or official agent" with "the registered officer or the first candidate of the group of candidates". It also inserts a new provision dealing with social media posts, allowing the regulations to prescribe the way these details must be published or distributed. An example is, let us say, a three-minute TikTok video. The regulations may prescribe that the name and address of the individual on whose instructions it was published must be displayed for a specified number of seconds or at a specified size as a percentage of the video display.

I turn now to the mystical "six-metre rule", which anyone who has campaigned on a polling booth should know well. The bill provides that guidelines for its enforcement should be published by the Electoral Commissioner and considered by voting centre managers. Let us hope that they do—we strange people who love handing out how-to-vote material certainly encourage the Electoral Commissioner to do that to help make election

day even more fun. The bill inserts new provisions to enhance the management of reports made to the Electoral Commission or the Electoral Commissioner about possible breaches of electoral legislation. While the Electoral Act already sets out limited exceptions to a general obligation not to disclose information obtained in connection with the administration or execution of the Electoral Act, the bill inserts an additional exception to enable the Electoral Commission or the Electoral Commissioner to inform persons who have provided information to the Electoral Commission or the Electoral Commissioner about the progress or outcome of an investigation or any action taken, where it is in the public interest to do so.

Information may also be disclosed to the public about the progress or outcome of an investigation. The bill provides that technology-assisted voting, other than telephone voting for vision impaired or blind electors, is not to be used at the 2023 general election, or a by-election held during the period after 30 June 2022 and before the 2023 general election, essentially ensuring that online voting will not be used. The Opposition supports the traditional use of technology-assisted voting to assist voters with disabilities but does not support the wholesale extension of the use of iVote to voters generally. The bill allows for the inclusion of registered party logos on ballot papers in elections, commencing after 1 October 2024. The Opposition would like to see this happen earlier, but we have been advised by the Electoral Commissioner that this is not logistically possible.

I turn now to the amendments to the Electoral Funding Act. The bill broadens who is able to audit disclosures and claims made under the Act to include a person who the commission is satisfied has sufficient skills, rather than only registered company auditors. That is a welcome amendment. The bill removes the expenditure incurred from auditing campaign accounts from electoral expenditure, thankfully, and removes the expenditure incurred on travel and travel accommodation for candidates and campaign staff from electoral expenditure. The bill also includes provisions to apply when a candidate has been disendorsed and a party agent so notifies the commission, so that the person responsible for making the funding disclosure is the candidate and not the party agent. The bill increases certain periods within which disclosures of political donations must be made from four weeks to six weeks after the half-year or disclosure period concerned.

Furthermore, it allows a person to make a request to the Electoral Commission for an extension on the due date of a declaration of disclosures, in addition to before the due date. The bill provides that donations of \$100 or less, rather than \$50 or less, do not have to be aggregated with other donations for disclosure purposes if made by a person at a fundraising venture or function. Significantly, the bill reinstates expenditure caps for third party campaigners. The Opposition supports expenditure caps—in fact, it was Labor that brought them in. It was a part of Labor's approach in government. Expenditure caps have also been supported by the Joint Select Committee on Electoral Matters. The new amounts are \$1,288,500 if the third-party campaigner was registered before the commencement of the capped State expenditure period for the election, or \$644,300 in other cases. This triggers the return of the acting-in-concert provisions, which I will get to shortly.

The bill makes an amendment to deal with the calculation of quarterly payments from the Administration Fund. It also allows a party or elected member to carry over to the next quarter in the same calendar year unspent eligible amounts of administrative funding payments and allows for a quarterly advance payment from the Administration Fund. The funding year for policy development funding for parties not entitled to administrative funding is changed from calendar year to financial year. Furthermore, the bill inserts a provision to enable the registered officer of a party, if the party agent for a party is absent or otherwise unavailable, to lodge a declaration or claim a payment. The bill also makes minor amendments to the Electoral Act and Electoral Funding Act to address minor inconsistencies and administrative inefficiencies.

In respect of the acting-in-concert provisions, I place on record, once again, the Opposition's ongoing concerns. Acting-in-concert provisions prevent third-party campaigners from discussing issues of mutual concern in their campaigns or pooling resources. They place restrictions on third-party campaigners from advocating together on major issues of joint interest—such as domestic violence, climate change or industrial protections—in case it is captured within the expenditure cap. We view the repeal of acting-in-concert provisions as a modest but significant proposal.

Let me give some context. Government members, through the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, initiated a review in a relatively short time frame into an issue that will be of interest to aficionados of the political system: the potential reintroduction of third-party campaign caps on electoral expenditure. The Opposition is open to the review and has supported it in the past. Indeed, the provisions were introduced into law by the former Labor Government. However, the provisions were the subject of some controversy before the 2019 State election, after additional restrictions were placed on them. The caps were lowered. In addition, those acting-in-concert provisions were introduced into law. At the time, they were unwelcomed in the Opposition's point of view. We saw them as an unnecessary Americanisation of the political system. While the committee is yet to report, I draw attention to the worthy and detailed submissions that were made by the Public Service Association of NSW, the NSW Teachers Federation, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Unions NSW,

the Australian Workers' Union, the United Workers Union, NSW Labor and The Greens. They made up the bulk of submissions to the inquiry and they all supported the removal of acting-in-concert provisions.

I will provide a quick background of the law. Those provisions are contained in section 35 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018. They restrict third-party campaigners from acting in concert and they make it unlawful for two or more campaigners to coordinate campaigns where their combined expenditure exceeds the applicable caps. Those provisions and the way the caps worked were the subject of a challenge in the High Court of Australia. The argument was that the third-party expenditure cap and the acting-in-concert provisions impermissibly burdened the implied freedom of communication on matters of politics and government as protected by the Constitution of this nation. On 29 January 2019 the High Court found in favour of that argument regarding the expenditure cap but did not substantively address the question of the validity of the acting-in-concert provisions, finding that it was unnecessary to do so with the caps no longer applying. Now that the bill seeks to apply caps again, the acting-in-concert provisions must be dealt with again by this place or the court.

On 30 March 2022 the Legislative Council passed an Opposition motion noting acting-in-concert provisions and expressing concern regarding their impact on the implied freedom of political communication. The motion passed 22 to 14 with broad crossbench support. The idea that electoral laws would rule out people acting together in political movements is antithetical to democratic principles. Third-party campaigners are entities with distinct political objectives and distinct sources of funding. Not all third-party campaigners have the social, financial or political capital to effect change on their own. Restrictions on acting in concert inherently disadvantage the implied freedom of political communication for these actors. Furthermore, restrictions on acting in concert create a chilling effect on the campaigning work of non-profit and community organisations who fear substantial legal costs or prosecution for seeking proactive and defensive legal advice regarding their campaigns and the application of acting-in-concert provisions.

I note also that third-party campaigners have flagged that the presence of acting-in-concert provisions in the electoral law increases the likelihood of a constitutional challenge before or after the 2023 election. I urge members to reject these changes to the electoral laws and reiterate that the Opposition will not support the proposed laws if the acting-in-concert provisions remain within them. Tonight we are debating, in a calm and measured way, important matters that relate to democracy in this State. We are all lucky that in this political climate we can do so with respect. I feel sorry for the citizens of the USA. From state to state, they are having their freedoms to vote removed by craven political considerations. From time to time, we criticise democracy in this country, but this sort of discussion proves that we are very lucky indeed.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:59): On behalf of The Greens I speak in debate on the Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends the Electoral Act 2017 and the Electoral Funding Act 2018 to implement recommendations made by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in its report on the administration of the 2019 State election. It is good that we review each election—hearing from members of the parties, the community and various experts who have much experience in elections, like the ABC's Antony Green—to see how we can improve the system that elects people to this place. Decisions about electoral processes and electoral funding should be made after broad consultation, which means beyond the two major parties of the Government and the Opposition.

Ultimately, the terms of the process of review in New South Wales are determined by the government of the day through the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, which has only one member who is not from the Government or the Opposition. Members of the committee may seek the views of minor parties and Independents but ultimately it reserves the right to make decisions on the form and function of this State's elections. That is a cause for concern because it means that many things relating to the behaviour and practice of the major parties are left off their agenda or neglected to be dealt with in detail if they do not suit the Government or the Opposition. We will see some of those issues being addressed in some of the amendments being moved, but The Greens put on record their concerns about the process for review.

We do not object to a number of provisions contained in the bill. The crux of the changes that are being made centre on funding and who can spend money in State elections. New South Wales has a relatively robust system for election funding and disclosure compared with some other States. The NSW Electoral Commission is also atypical in Australia in that it has been relatively active in pursuing breaches of funding and disclosure laws, such as fines for not using campaign accounts, withholding public funding for breaching expenditure caps, and fines for illegal donations from property developers. This system is far from perfect, but The Greens are concerned that some of the provisions in the bill may further weaken the controls on spending during elections.

Expenditure caps are essential to our democracy. Without caps, election debates are dominated by those with the most money, not those with the brightest ideas. Without caps, the voices of the community are invariably drowned out and the voices of corporate interests are amplified. Nothing illustrates this better than the grotesque \$100 million spent by Clive Palmer during the recent Federal election. We saw bright yellow billboards

completely dominating our community spaces, but it obviously demonstrated that even if that much money is spent it may not result in a good outcome. In an earlier election, Clive Palmer sent a DVD of *Titanic* to every voter in the Queensland electorates. That was when he was going to open the Titanic theme park, which fell apart. Hopefully very soon all of his other interests will fall apart too. We are grateful that this man would be prevented from spending that kind of money in a New South Wales election and it is really important that position is maintained.

In New South Wales the caps have resulted in reducing the massive expenditure that took place in some hotly contested electorates in pre-2011 elections. That is a good thing for democracy and is supported by The Greens. Still, The Greens do not believe we should retain the caps. We believe that the New South Wales expenditure caps on political parties, candidates and others are too generous—all caps should be reduced proportionately. The statewide caps are still very large and rely on significant access to funds. This bill does the opposite. Instead of moving to make a proportional reduction of the caps, it actually introduces uncapped spending for the first time since 2011. I foreshadow that The Greens will move an amendment to limit spending outside the electoral cap on travel and accommodation because of concerns around exceeding the cap. Allowing the cap to increase by moving things outside of the cap is a very significant concern for The Greens.

When we talk about caps on third parties, in the past the Government has tried to reduce the caps on some groups and to particularly use it as a way to try to silence the union movement. Any attempt to reduce the limits and restrictions on third parties without an equivalent reduction in the spending of political parties would shift the balance of capacity to communicate with voters away from community and working people's organisations and interests over to professionalised parties. Alternatively, the intervention of corporations is almost always about protecting profitability and reducing restraints on their business activities in a way that works against the public interest. Therefore, there is a strong case to differentiate treatment of third parties depending on whether they are a membership-based, democratic, not-for-profit organisation or, in the alternative, a business entity or peak body representing business entities as a whole.

There is a strong case for banning corporate donations altogether, but without the support of either of the major parties—neither the Liberal-National Coalition nor the Labor Party, who both have their hands out for corporate donations in the lead-up to March next year—The Greens know that amendments to that effect are sadly pointless in this place. That is despite the fact that, if we were taking a poll in the community, I am sure such an amendment would get a significant majority of support in the community vote.

It is important to address the changes to voting options in the bill. The bill prohibits the use of technology-assisted voting at the next State election, except for phone voting for vision-impaired and blind electors. It also shortens pre-poll to seven days and, in turn, increases reliance on postal voting. This will have the unfortunate consequence of disadvantaging younger people, and those who are more transient in their lifestyles, from participating in our democracy and voting. The Greens do not support any measures that will have the effect of reducing participation in elections.

Blind Citizens Australia has raised concerns that telephone voting does not fulfil the necessary accessibility requirements of people who are blind or vision impaired and has raised serious concerns that the Government has not consulted with it sufficiently. Now that we may have space between the bill passing from this Chamber to the other place, I urge the Government to consider what further consultation can be done on those concerns. I encourage the Government to engage with the disability community to make sure everyone can participate equally in elections.

Finally, I turn to the acting-in-concert provisions. One of The Greens' greatest concerns regarding the bill, which we share with the Labor Opposition, is in relation to the retention of acting-in-concert laws that seek to limit the ability of groups like unions and community organisations to come together and take collective action. The Greens absolutely support collective action. The idea of preventing groups from being able to collaborate and work together with the fear that they would somehow be in breach of the electoral laws—or needing to comply with a whole lot of regulations and controls when they are small, volunteer-based organisations—is something that we have serious concerns about. The Greens support the repeal of the acting-in-concert section of the Act. We support the view that section 35 unreasonably burdens the implied freedom of political communication. The Greens note that the court orders in *Unions NSW v New South Wales*, as dealt with by the member for Maroubra, did not deal specifically with the question of section 35 as the removal of the caps made it impractical to make a finding.

I conclude by saying that The Greens are, in some aspects, very pleased to see that this electoral law includes caps. We believe that this is an important part of our democracy. But we do have concern that there is a slippery slope in moving to a model where we take things out of the caps which, in effect, raises the caps. As soon as we start having these conversations, and as soon as we start seeing who is in the Chamber and who has vested interests in whether or not we increase the caps, we need to reflect on whether this is a good thing for our

democracy. I will seek to gain from the ideas of some of the amendments that will be moved later. I will benefit from those. [*Extension of time*]

Obviously, every member in this place who chooses to stand in another election to the Legislative Assembly will benefit from the removal of certain items from this capped expenditure. I think that it is clear, in that context, that we will all benefit in ways that would suggest that there is a conflict around us making this decision and determination. I also think it is really important to recognise that, in moving things outside of the cap, we are moving away from what has been a very strict regime to hold all of us to a standard that ensures that we are capped in our expenditure and that there is no slippage outside of that.

I acknowledge, support and recognise the work that my colleague the member for Balmain has done in relation to the Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill and this entire review process and the work of his adviser, Eleanor Nurse. I make this contribution on behalf of The Greens, but I recognise the amount of work that the member for Balmain and his team have done in feeding into this process over many years. I recognise the incredible number of Greens members who have a long-term engagement with some of the history that the member for Maroubra identified and who have fed into this process over many years to make sure that we can strengthen electoral legislation in New South Wales.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:10): From the outset I refer to the contribution of the shadow Attorney General, the member for Maroubra, who has clearly articulated Labor's position on the Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I also acknowledge the shadow Special Minister of State, the Hon. John Graham from the other place, for his leadership and consultation on the bill. As the shadow Attorney General has said, there are many elements of the bill that the Labor Opposition can and will support. But inclusion in the bill of caps on expenditure for the State election campaign by a third-party campaigner effectively switches on acting-in-concert provisions, which is a proposition that NSW Labor cannot support.

Another aspect of the bill that is cause for some concern is schedule 1 [13] relating to the now redundant iVote system and alternative voting options available for vision-impaired or blind electors. As shadow Minister for Disability Inclusion, I confine my contribution to this debate to that aspect of the bill. As was expressed to me earlier today by the CEO of Blind Citizens Australia, "If we can't get something as simple and fundamental as accessing democracy right for people who are blind or vision impaired, then what hope is there for addressing the more challenging aspects of their lives?" Blind Citizens Australia and Vision Australia have separately met with me about the current challenge being experienced by people who are blind or vision impaired to cast an independent, secret and verifiable vote.

For the benefit of members who are unaware of the history, iVote was introduced in 2011 to specifically cater for people who were blind or vision impaired. It allowed voters to cast their vote via the internet through any device, providing options for voting that suited particular accessibility needs. It was then expanded to become an option for many other voters, not just those who were blind or vision impaired, and ultimately the system failed. The failure led to the Electoral Commissioner determining that iVote would not be used for next year's State election, leaving blind or vision impaired voters behind and taking them backwards when it comes to exercising their democratic right. The bill before us provides:

technology assisted voting, other than telephone voting for vision impaired or blind electors, is not to be used at—

- (a) the 2023 general election, or
- (b) a by-election held during the period after 30 June 2022 and before the 2023 general election.

On its face, the bill today duplicates the determination of the Electoral Commissioner and restricts options available to allow for accessible voting at the 2023 election. But the reality is that iVote can no longer be used, as it was decommissioned in March this year. The idea of the Electoral Commission creating a different, untested voting platform at the eleventh hour before another election is not only unlikely; it is unwelcome. Certainty and clarity in voting is important, albeit via a system that has its shortcomings.

Significantly, the bill before us does not even guarantee that telephone voting will be made available at next year's election for blind or vision-impaired voters. I ask the Minister to confirm that the Government will ensure telephone voting will be available for blind and vision-impaired voters at the 2023 election. I also ask the Minister to acknowledge that telephone voting is only being offered at the next election as an interim option for blind or vision-impaired voters, due to its shortcomings. In acknowledging the shortcomings of telephone voting, on behalf of the blind and vision impaired voters of New South Wales, I seek a commitment from the Minister that in future the Government will ensure that they will be able to exercise their democratic right via a platform that balances accessibility and security, and allows a multifaceted approach to casting a secret, independent and verifiable vote. Finally, I note that the Government has failed to consult with the sector regarding this aspect of the bill. In the weeks between this bill passing this House and entering the other place I urge the Government to consult with Blind Citizens Australia and other stakeholders in the interests of achieving democracy for all.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:15): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I will speak further in consideration in detail and flag that I will have two amendments to the legislation that I have discussed with colleagues. I acknowledge that this bill follows a great deal of work from the Government, the electoral matters committees and other reports to get this piece of legislation to the Chamber. I think we will always need to look at electoral law as elections and campaigning continue to modernise. I am concerned that we will not have iVoting at the next election. I understand that that is an opinion that has come from the Electoral Commissioner. However, I represent the electorate which has the most people who are registered to vote who live overseas or who are often travelling and iVote became a way in which they could participate in elections beyond postal votes. It was a convenient way, and also, it was important for people with a disability or other illnesses.

I understand that work is being done to deal with phone voting, but there are concerns there. I hope the Government can address that to make sure that all citizens that are entitled to vote are able to vote. My amendments focus in particular on Independent candidates. As we saw at the last Federal election, there was an independent spring with a number of Independents elected in seats around the country. It is important that when we are dealing with electoral law we focus on Independents. Independents have a completely different process to all political parties. We are an important part of the political system. The legislation that we are dealing with will allow parties to have logos on the ballot paper. My amendments will expand that provision to include Independents.

Also, while parties are often operated and campaigns can be operated out of a headquarters, Independents can run campaign offices. I acknowledge that for regional members transport is a large expense and that is why the legislation, subject to The Greens' amendments which I will support, removes transport out of the cap, which I think is fair enough. As is the case with campaign office expenses, if one has to run a campaign office and one's campaign is in metropolitan Sydney, as mine is, campaign office expenses are more expensive than they are in other places. To create an even playing field, I think it is important that a limited amount of campaign office expense is taken outside the cap. I acknowledge the concerns that The Greens have raised with me on that. We do not want people to manipulate an expenditure item being taken out of the cap. Therefore, we have put a limit of \$20,000 on that. I thank the Government for bringing the legislation to the Parliament. It is something that we need to ensure is passed before the next election to deal with various decisions and advice from the Electoral Commission. I thank all members for their contributions.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (19:18): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Maroubra, Newtown, Port Stephens and Sydney for their contributions to this debate. I deal firstly with the question of iVote. I share members' frustration that iVote will not be available for the March 2023 election. But I am told that it is just not logistically and technically possible to get it ready in a satisfactory way by 2023. It is not a matter of resourcing or funding; it is just not logistically and technically possible to do it. I certainly understand the frustration. The NSW Electoral Commission has stated publicly that in this financial year the current version of the iVote software used by it will be phased out. As members know, on 15 March the Electoral Commissioner made a determination under section 162 of the Electoral Act and section 333L of the Local Government (General Regulation) 2021 that technology-assisted voting is not to be used at the 2023 State general election, or for any State or local government by-election held during the period 1 July 2022 to 25 March 2023.

This bill is consistent with that determination and consistent with what I am told is the state of technology and what is the potential state of technology. I am told the Electoral Commissioner is currently establishing a review of technology-assisted voting to position the commission to be able to conduct lawful, inclusive and cost-effective systems of voting in future elections. It will consider how technology-assisted voting can be done in a way that supports the integrity and stability of the New South Wales electoral system. I had anticipated dealing with the question of section 35 of the Electoral Funding Act when we came to the Opposition's amendments, but as speakers have dealt with that in advance, I will deal with it now. It is one thing to come into this Chamber and say that one is in favour of fairness and equality and a level playing field in an election, but seek to promote an amendment that creates more than just an enormous loophole. It drives an A380 through the whole Act.

I will clarify what section 35 does and does not do at the moment. It does not stop multiple campaigns. It does not stop a number of organisations, be they community organisations or unions or the Minerals Council or corporations, running their own separate campaigns on similar issues. It does not deal at all with campaigns that are not directed at elections. When we look at section 35 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 we find:

- (2) In this section, a person *acts in concert* with another person if the person acts under an agreement (whether formal or informal) with the other person to campaign with the object, or principal object, of—
- (a) having a particular party elected member or candidate elected, or,
 - (b) opposing the election of a particular party, elected member or candidate.

It is focused on elections or opposing elections of candidates or parties; it is not focused on issues. Separate from an election campaign, if 10 community groups want to run a climate change action campaign to lobby government to do something about climate change, this does not affect their ability to act in concert at all. Or if 10 LGBTI groups wish to campaign for certain legislation or against certain legislation to deal with religious freedom or recognising transgender rights, this does not affect that at all. It is focused on the election or opposing the election of a particular party, elected member or candidate. So it is quite specific in scope. Secondly, even when we get to elections, it does not deal with multiple groups campaigning. They may have the same ultimate goal to elect Liberals, Labor, The Greens or an Independent. They can all do that. They can all campaign with the same goal but they cannot act in concert.

That is because, if we allow them to act in concert, we basically negate the whole effect of expenditure caps. We heard about how fortunate we are—and I agree with the member for Maroubra—that our political culture and our political system is not like that of the United States of America. In New South Wales, with relatively robust electoral funding laws, hopefully we have a contest of ideas on a relatively level playing field. Although we say there are problems with the way it is tilted, it is far more level than in the United States, where it is a contest of money. We can have all the restrictions in the world on established political parties and candidates spending money, but if we allow the equivalents of Super PACs like in the United States to basically negate those caps by acting in concert, we do not have effective expenditure caps in place at all.

This is really quite fundamental to the integrity of our electoral funding system in New South Wales. This is not some wicked conspiracy by conservatives who are funded by the Minerals Council and other grubby corporates—and I am just putting the sorts of rhetoric we may get from the member for Auburn or the member for Liverpool. In 2014 that is what an independent expert panel, with a highly respected former Deputy Premier from the Labor Party, John Watkins, on it said. The unanimous recommendation of the three-person panel was that a third-party campaigner be prohibited from acting in concert with others to incur electoral expenditure that exceeds the third-party campaigner's expenditure cap. Page 116 of the panel's final report states:

The Panel also supports the introduction of a provision similar to section 205H of the *Electoral Act 1992* (ACT). This section provides that a third-party campaigner must not act in concert with others (including political parties) to incur expenditure in excess of its spending cap. This would prevent a number of third-party campaigners with common interests (e.g. unions, mining companies, packaging companies) from launching a coordinated campaign with a combined expenditure cap that would completely overwhelm parties, candidates and other third parties acting alone. The Panel considers that such a provision is important to maintaining a fair and balanced electoral contest and the integrity of the expenditure caps generally.

I think reference was made to Clive Palmer and how hopefully in New South Wales we will not be overwhelmed with a \$100 million campaign like we saw at the recent Federal election, but to remove a cap on third parties acting in concert would effectively allow that. It would allow Clive Palmer No.1 Pty Limited, Clive Palmer No. 2 Pty Limited and Clive Palmer No. 3 Pty Limited to get together and bypass or circumvent the expenditure cap by acting in concert.

I will give the member for Newtown the benefit of the doubt that she genuinely wants fair contests and an even playing field and the ability of community groups to participate, but this is not the outcome that will be achieved by removing the section 35 ban on acting in concert. In fact, quite to the contrary, it will allow big money interests to establish front organisations to circumvent the relative rigour we have in New South Wales and basically destroy any semblance of fairness in our electoral funding system. I will not give Labor the benefit of the doubt—

Mr Michael Daley: That is mean spirited, Mark.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I am sorry. It is clear that under the ruse of talking about integrity and fairness, Labor members want to fly an A380 through this electoral funding law to have their union mates run the show. Not only do they want their union mates being the puppeteers on their policy; they want them to control the purse strings. We can have the member for Kogarah as the fresh, pretty face of the Opposition, but we know that Labor members want to basically have their union mates finance them to the hilt and run the show. So he might be Chris Minns but really he is Chris Minions, the minion of Alex Claassens and Mark Morey. This is all about those who control Labor policy. Those who control the industrial havoc that the member for Port Stephens and her mates, and the member for Kogarah and his mates are wreaking on the people of New South Wales are the ones they want to be the financial pay masters as well. They are the financial—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will have her opportunity.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: This is Labor showing its true colours. Basically they want all their union mates acting in cahoots, acting in concert, pulling not only the political purse strings, the policy purse strings, but also the financial purse strings. We can talk the talk about integrity, but when it comes to the crunch, this is a Labor Opposition that wants to destroy any integrity and fairness in the electoral process by allowing its union mates to collude and conspire and act in concert to bypass electoral funding laws in New South Wales.

Ms Kate Washington: Not a brown paper bag in sight on your side.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Let us talk about brown paper bags.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has the call.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Let us talk about Aldi bags. Basically now every union under their model will be able to put—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I am just responding.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Attorney General will resume his seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to relevance. We actually talked about the brown paper bags from Spicer that 11 of your members—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. It is not an opportunity for the member for Maitland to make a speech. The Attorney General has the call.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: There will be no limit on the number of times that the people opposite will be able to collect \$1.28 million from unions and put it all together. This is all about destroying the integrity, the democracy and the even playing field here in New South Wales. It really exposes who controls the Labor Party in New South Wales. It is not the fresh-faced member for Kogarah who told us in his inaugural speech that unions have too much power and we had to reduce it. We know the truth. You vote for them and you get a government led by Mark Morey and Alex Claassens. While we give the member for Newtown the benefit of the doubt, she is just misguided on this occasion; we know what our Labor opponents are up to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. The Attorney General has the call.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Michael Daley, Ms Jenny Leong and Mr Alex Greenwich.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: 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) (19:33): By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 to 7 on sheet c2022-128H in globo:

No. 1 Independent candidate logos

Page 7, Schedule 2[8], line 41. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

Omit "the names of registered parties or the word "Independent" is" from section 101(3)(f).

Insert instead "the names of registered parties and logos, or the word "Independent" and the candidate's logo, are".

No. 2 Independent candidate logos

Page 8, Schedule 2. Insert after line 5—

[11A] Section 105A

Insert after section 105—

105A Request for use of independent candidate logo

- (1) A candidate, or a person intending to become a candidate, in an Assembly election may make a written request that a logo be printed on the ballot papers for the election adjacent to the candidate's name.
- (2) The request must include the following—
 - (a) a copy of the logo as a black and white image in a format determined by the Electoral Commissioner,
 - (b) a declaration that the use of the logo will not infringe the intellectual property rights of any person,

- (c) other requirements relating to the logo as determined by the Electoral Commissioner.
- (3) The request must be given to the Electoral Commissioner at least 2 weeks, or another period prescribed by the regulations, before 12 noon on the nomination day.
- (4) The Electoral Commissioner must refuse a request that does not comply with subsection (3).
- (5) The Electoral Commissioner must also refuse a request under this section if, in the opinion of the Electoral Commissioner, the logo—
 - (a) is obscene or offensive, or
 - (b) is the logo of a registered party or a party currently represented in Parliament or another person, or
 - (c) so nearly resembles the logo of a registered party or a party currently represented in Parliament or another person it is likely to be confused with or mistaken for the logo, or
 - (d) is one a reasonable person would think suggests a connection or relationship exists between the candidate and another person or a registered party if that connection or relationship does not in fact exist, or
 - (e) comprises or contains the words "Independent Party" or comprises or contains the word "Independent" and—
 - (i) the name, or an abbreviation or acronym of the name, or logo of a registered party or a party currently represented in Parliament, or
 - (ii) matter that so nearly resembles the name, or an abbreviation or acronym of the name, or logo of a registered party or a party currently represented in Parliament that the matter is likely to be confused with or mistaken for that name or that abbreviation or acronym.
- (6) The Electoral Commissioner may refuse a request under this section if, in the opinion of the Electoral Commissioner, the logo—
 - (a) is the logo of a party registered under Part 6 at any time during the previous 2 years (a *recently deregistered party*), or
 - (b) so nearly resembles the logo of a recently deregistered party it is likely to be confused with or mistaken for the logo, or
 - (c) is one a reasonable person would think suggests a connection or relationship exists between the candidate and a recently deregistered party if that connection or relationship does not in fact exist, or
 - (d) comprises or contains the words "Independent Party" or comprises or contains the word "Independent" and—
 - (i) the name, or an abbreviation or acronym of the name, or logo of a recently deregistered party, or
 - (ii) matter that so nearly resembles the name, or an abbreviation or acronym of the name, or logo of a recently deregistered party that the matter is likely to be confused with or mistaken for that name, abbreviation, acronym or logo.

No. 3 Independent candidate logos

Page 8, Schedule 2[13]. Insert after line 35—

106B Printing of independent candidate logo on ballot papers

- (1) The logo of a candidate in an Assembly election must be printed on the ballot papers adjacent to the name of a candidate if—
 - (a) a request has been validly made by the candidate under section 105A, and
 - (b) the Electoral Commissioner has not refused the request.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to a candidate nominated or endorsed by a registered party.

No. 4 Independent candidate logos

Page 8, Schedule 2[14], line 43. Omit "relates.". Insert instead—

relates, or

- (iii) the logo of a candidate as required by section 106B.

No. 5 Independent candidate logos

Page 9, Schedule 2[15], line 3. Insert "the candidate's logo or" before "the registered party logo".

No. 6 Exclusion of office accommodation from electoral expenditure campaign caps

Page 11, Schedule 3[3]. Insert after line 13—

- (4B) For the purposes of Part 3 (Political donations and electoral expenditure), Division 4 (Caps on electoral expenditure for election campaigns), electoral expenditure does not include expenditure incurred for office accommodation for a single campaign office for a candidate or a party engaged in an election campaign, including for the campaign headquarters of a party, but only to a maximum amount of \$20,000 for each capped expenditure period.
- (4C) To avoid doubt, expenditure incurred for office accommodation that exceeds the amount referred to in subsection (4B) in a capped expenditure period is electoral expenditure for the purposes of Part 3, Division 4.
- (4D) The amount referred to in subsection (4B) is an adjustable amount that is to be adjusted for inflation as provided by Schedule 1.

No. 7 Exclusion of office accommodation from electoral expenditure campaign caps

Page 15, Schedule 3[33]. Insert after line 8—

5B Adjustment of office accommodation amount excluded from electoral expenditure caps

- (1) The adjustable amount specified in section 7(4B) applies for the first election period that is current when the provision commences and is then to be adjusted for inflation for subsequent election periods as provided by this clause.
- (2) An *election period* is the period between the end of an election day and the end of the election day of a successive general election.
Note— State general elections and local government general elections have different election periods.
- (3) For the purposes of subclause (2), any local government general election held on a day other than a day specified by the *Local Government Act 1993*, section 287(1) is to be disregarded.
Note— The election period for local government general elections is the ordinary 4-year cycle and is to disregard early elections caused by mergers or other causes.
- (4) The adjustable amounts that are to apply for a subsequent election period are to be determined by multiplying the adjustable amounts that applied for the previous election period by the increase in the Consumer Price Index during that previous election period.
- (5) The increase in the Consumer Price Index during an election period is to be calculated as B/A where—
 A is the Consumer Price Index number for the last quarter for which the number was published before the start of the election period.
 B is the Consumer Price Index number for the last quarter for which the number was published before the end of the election period.
- (6) If B/A is less than 1 (as a result of deflation), B/A is deemed to be 1.
- (7) Before the start of each election period after the election period that is current when this clause commences, the Electoral Commission is to publish notice on the NSW legislation website and its website of the amount of each adjustable amount for the election period that results from an adjustment under this clause.

I outlined the purpose of these amendments in my contribution to the second reading debate. The first amendment deals with the use of logos for Independent candidates. The registration of an Independent candidate for an election is different from the registration of a political party.

My amendment creates a separate process for the registration of an Independent logo. As part of that, should an Independent candidate wish to have a logo incorporated, the form of the logo would have the same rules relating to parties. In a conversation I had today with the Electoral Commissioner, he raised concerns about making sure there is a sufficient time frame for the Electoral Commission to deal with Independents who may want to have logos, so I have updated the amendment to ensure that is dealt with by regulation. I acknowledge that the provision comes into effect in October 2024, and in the next Parliament there may be aspects of this that need to be updated or revised. But I think it is important that this amendment is supported as it ensures that Independent candidates have the same right as political party candidates to have a logo on a ballot paper, should they wish and should ballot papers have logos.

The next amendment relates to the exclusion of office accommodation from electoral expenditure caps. It is an exclusion of up to \$20,000 for each capped expenditure period. Any funds above that would come out of the election cap. That adopts the same principle as the exclusion of travel in some parts of New South Wales. In some electorates, travel can be extremely expensive; therefore, there needs to be greater bandwidth for regional candidates to spend more on transport. The same can be said for inner-city candidates when it comes to campaign

offices, where rents can be much more expensive. I appreciate the work done by the Government and The Greens to make sure we got the balance right in the proposed amendment. I commend my amendments to the House.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (19:36): The Government supports the amendments of the member for Sydney and thanks him for bringing them to the House. Amendments Nos 1 to 5 propose to allow for Independent candidate logos to be printed on ballot papers following an approval process similar to that proposed in the bill for party logos. Amendments Nos 6 and 7 propose to exclude certain office accommodation from the definition of "electoral expenditure" for the purpose of the electoral expenditure caps. In relation to amendments Nos 1 to 5, schedule 2 to the bill currently provides for the inclusion of registered party logos to be displayed on ballot papers for Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council elections. The proposed amendments would extend that option to Independent candidates.

In its report on the administration of the 2019 New South Wales State election, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters—its chair, the member for Heathcote, is in the Chamber—recommended that the Government amend the Electoral Act 2017 to require party logos to be included on the ballot papers for the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. Schedule 2 to the bill implements that recommendation. During its inquiry, the committee heard from party stakeholders, advocates for voters with disability and advocates for voters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The committee agreed that displaying logos of a party and a candidate on ballot papers would assist voters to identify their preferred party or candidate.

Therefore, allowing for Independent candidate logos to be included on ballot papers for Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council elections should further benefit voters with a disability or from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. I note that the NSW Electoral Commission has previously identified some potential implementation issues regarding amendments of this nature. Accordingly, if the amendments are made, it would be appropriate for the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to consider the operational and practical impacts of those amendments and any associated risks before they commence in 2024.

Turning to amendments Nos 6 and 7, the bill currently amends the definition of "electoral expenditure" in section 7 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 to exclude expenditure on travel and travel accommodation for candidates and staff engaged in electoral campaigning for the purpose of the electoral expenditure caps. Proposed amendment No. 6 would make a further change to the definition of "electoral expenditure" for the purpose of the electoral expenditure caps to exclude office accommodation for a single campaign office for a candidate or party engaged in an election campaign, including for the campaign headquarters of a party. The expenditure excluded from the cap is appropriately limited to the maximum amount of \$20,000 for each capped expenditure period, adjusted for inflation, as provided by amendment No. 7.

It is appropriate that such office accommodation is not captured as electoral expenditure for the purpose of the expenditure caps in order to achieve greater equality between city-based and regional- or rural-based candidates. Travel costs can be significant when campaigning in regional and rural areas. Equally, office accommodation in the city can be expensive, often more so than in regional and rural areas. The proposed amendments increase equality between city-based and regional- and rural-based candidates while maintaining the integrity of the caps. Office accommodation for candidates and parties engaged in election campaigns, including the campaign headquarters of a party, will still need to be disclosed in accordance with the disclosure requirements under part 3 of the Electoral Funding Act. The Government supports the amendments.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:39): I will deal with the amendments of the member for Sydney separately. While I recognise the desire of the member for Sydney to ensure that there is equal treatment of Independents and political parties in relation to having a visual image or logo on the ballot paper, I am pleased to hear that there is consideration of how that will happen and of the time frame involved through the amendment to allow regulations. I appreciate that members are moving quickly through this debate. I reiterate The Greens' concerns around the process; perhaps if there were more crossbench members on the committee deciding the review, this would have come up earlier.

The concern before the House is that there is often quite heated and contested debate about some political parties trying to register names very similar to other political parties. An Independent usually decides to run very close to an election. If they provide a logo that is too similar to an existing political party logo, there are genuine risks about the time frame for an appeal and the consideration of how that is factored into the decision to allow an Independent to have a logo on the ballot that may be very similar to an existing registered political party's logo. Political parties have that considered along with their logo as part of their registration, but that would not be the case for Independents.

I urge those in the other place who are looking at this to make sure that they are comfortable with the time frame available. For example, an Independent running in a North Shore electorate may wish to choose a logo that looks similar to an "L" for the Liberal Party logo. I imagine that there could be other logos that have similar shapes

to those of registered political party logos. The Greens have one in our logo, which may mean that people would like to do that. It is important that we ensure the integrity of the use of logos in a way that does not allow people to manipulate a system, as we have seen in the past from political parties trying to choose names that are very similar to other political parties. That said, the principle of equality in ensuring that all candidates on the ballot are able to have a logo is good. We just need to make sure that there is a process to be able to assess that.

In relation to campaign offices, the Greens generally do not support the idea of removing any expenditure from the caps because the caps are there for a reason. We respect that the amendment of the member for Sydney seeks to remove campaign offices from the cap. While we appreciate the member for Sydney taking on board our concerns by putting a limit on the uncapped expenditure, in this Chamber we are attempting to cap the uncapped bits. It is important that we make sure there is a limit on that. Having reviewed the 2019 declarations of some of the inner-city electorates, we believe \$20,000 is a generous but workable amount, given that previous campaign office registrations for electoral expenditure in 2019 ranged from \$4,000 to \$15,000 in the inner-city electorates. We think that is a reasonable amount if we are going to take offices outside the cap.

I make a point about what I believe is a concerning consideration of the idea of equality between regional and rural electorates and inner-city electorates. The member for Sydney is not running against the member for Barwon, and the member for Lake Macquarie is not running against the member for Newtown. The caps relate to the electoral expenditure in an electorate, so "like with like" means that all the candidates running in a particular electorate will have significant travel costs or will have significant office rental costs. We know that in some regional areas, for example, the cost of renting an office would probably be the same as renting an office in Newtown. In that sense, we need to be really careful. I put on record a caution that in slippage of moving things outside of the cap and reasoning why we are doing that, we once again come back to the idea that we are the incumbents who have an interest in maintaining our jobs in this place. We must consider how we can participate in those negotiations to ensure that we are strengthening our democracy and the ability for others to participate in it.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:44): I address two legitimate concerns raised by the member for Newtown. One relates to the use of a logo. The Electoral Commissioner has the power to refuse the use of a logo. The Electoral Commissioner also sets a number of requirements relating to logos to ensure that they do not infringe on an intellectual property. Indeed, as I said, I have amended these amendments to ensure that the period around the determination to use a logo is set by regulation, and I know the Electoral Commissioner will have an involvement in that.

I now turn to the point of like versus like and how I am not running against the member for Barwon—although we would have an interesting election if that happened. As I said in my contribution to the second reading debate, that issue deals specifically with Independent candidates, who do not have the benefit of statewide campaigns or campaign headquarters. Because we do not have pooled resources and we are independent, often our office costs can be more expensive. There is that element as well as the city and regional comparison.

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

Amendments agreed to.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:47): I move Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-142B:

No.1 **Exclusion of certain transport expenditure**

Page 11, Schedule 3[3]. Insert after line 13—

- (4B) Subsection (4A) does not apply to expenditure incurred in connection with a motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft decorated with or displaying advertising or electoral material for a candidate or party.
- (4C) Accordingly, expenditure incurred in connection with a motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft decorated with or displaying advertising or electoral material for a candidate or party is electoral expenditure for the purposes of Part 3, Division 4.

The Greens move this amendment in line with our other concerns around the expenditure cap requirements and removing things from the expenditure cap. We think the amendment is reasonable. I appreciate that my electorate of Newtown is the smallest in the State and that my travel tends to be on foot—in an election, we may as well wander around as much as we can. I have 11 square kilometres, and I can walk it fairly easily. I very rarely find myself on any form of transport during an election campaign because it is a wasted opportunity to not stop and chat to people on the street.

That said, as The Greens have previously indicated, the principle behind the amendment is that we believe expenditure caps are an essential part of our democracy, and we generally do not support any changes or tinkering in any way that would increase the caps. In effect, by removing things from the cap we are expanding it with less oversight over those details. For that reason, as I already foreshadowed, we move this amendment relating to

uncapped travel expenses to ensure that we are not giving candidates a blank cheque to use travel as a way to further add to their communications and electoral communications expenditure within the cap.

I will use a couple of examples. During the Federal election campaign, the media were regularly bundled into branded buses by party leaders. We saw Donald Trump flying around in other countries on branded aeroplanes. We even saw Andrew Constance make use of his campaign bus out the back. I saw it one day driving out the back behind Parliament House. The Greens are concerned about the idea of moving transport outside the expenditure cap, which will allow candidates to buy multiple buses, air balloons, helicopters and boats that can pretty much be mobile billboards. Big campaigns can be had on them. That is why this amendment seeks to ensure that the removal of transport from the expenditure cap does not include vehicles, aircraft and vessels that are decorated with or displaying advertising or electoral material for a candidate or party.

The Greens believe this is a sensible amendment. In moving it, we very much recognise that it is intended to capture the abuse of the removal of the travel, accommodation and transport elements from the cap. Having said that, I foreshadow that The Greens will consider moving an amendment in the other place that will look at putting a limit on the uncapped element of travel, transport and accommodation. We believe it is important to do that.

We are talking about the member for Barwon in his absence, but it is the largest electorate, and so a useful one to consider. The member declared of the order of \$10,000 of expenses related to transport, travel and accommodation. I believe we can find a reasonable amount that would not restrict people from travelling but would, at the same time, ensure that the system is not abused. We are not doing that money-related cap with this amendment—or "limit", I should say; I should not use the word "cap" because we are seeking to remove things from the cap. We are seeking to ensure that we do not have a whole lot of moving billboards that are somehow used to access a lot of additional entitlements outside of the cap.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (19:51): With the greatest of respect to the member for Newtown, the Opposition is not yet persuaded that it has had sufficient time to consult on this amendment, but we are happy to have further discussions and maybe work something out in the other place.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (19:51): The Government supports Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-142B. The amendment provides that any expenditure related to the legal advertising on a vehicle, vessel or aircraft is an electoral expenditure. The Government supports the proposed amendment. Excluding travel costs from being counted as expenditure for the purpose of the cap should not create a loophole for campaign advertising in the guise of campaign travel. The attempt to create a more level playing field between regional and city campaigners should not inadvertently undermine the integrity of the caps. An example of leased buses wrapped in political advertising is a legitimate concern. The Government supports this necessary Greens amendment.

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

Amendment agreed to.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (19:52): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-133A in globo:

No. 1 Third-party campaigner acting in concert prohibition

Page 12, Schedule 3. Insert after line 17—

[11A] Section 35 Limit on electoral expenditure —third-party campaigner acting in concert with others

Omit the section.

No. 2 Third-party campaigner acting in concert prohibition

Page 12, Schedule 3. Insert after line 22—

[13A] Section 58 Recovery of unlawful donations and expenditure and certain other property developer donations

Omit section 58(5).

I will be brief because I have already spoken to the substance of these two amendments. Earlier on the Attorney General said that if we do not have acting-in-concert provisions, we effectively do not have any caps at all. The Opposition rejects that in its entirety. Each participant in a scheme, discussion or participation in whatever that they seek to agree on and pursue is individually capped. The intention of the Government is as clear on this aspect of the law now as it was when Barry O'Farrell tried to brazenly introduce it. Seventy-three members sat on that side of the House, and 20 members were on this side of the House. It is to reduce the quantum of spend from people from certain organisations that the Government does not like. It was as clear as day then, and it is as clear

as day now. Earlier on the Attorney General flashed a letter and a number across the Chamber, attempting to drive an A380 through the intent of the bill. Let me respond with a few numbers of my own. How about Eight By Five, an organised secret scheme by a party hurtling—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: We are talking about amendments to acting-in-concert expenditure caps. The material that the member for Maroubra is raising now has nothing to do with that issue. It is not within the leave of the amendments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have heard enough. I caution the member for Maroubra. The member will continue.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I am sorry. Let me use another number, then, if that offends the Attorney General. How about 1,000, as in the Millennium Forum? Is that any better? That was another—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Willoughby will remain silent. I need to hear the Attorney General's point of order.

Mr Mark Speakman: This is not an opportunity for the member for Maroubra to have a cheap spray. We are talking about specific amendments and he should address those amendments. If he wants to talk about \$1,000 cash in Aldi bags that is up to him, but we are talking about specific amendments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Maroubra to address the amendments before the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I am happy to do that. When this issue was raised in this place many years ago I called it the "politics of extirpation". It is all about the Liberal Party trying to cement political domination in New South Wales by making sure it has more money to spend than anybody else. It was about that then and it is about that now. If these provisions are not removed from the bill the Opposition will vote against it in this Chamber and in the other place. We will never agree to this electoral cheating.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (19:56): I will not address the amendments at length but refer members to my previous remarks in the second reading speech. The Labor Party and its union mates are champions of blackmail. At the moment they are holding the people of New South Wales to industrial ransom, blackmailing them with strikes and chaos.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Now Labor wants to blackmail this Government and this Parliament into capitulating to its scheme to have its union mates acting in concert.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Talking about numbers and caps, an acting-in-concert provision does not prevent individual organisations spending up to \$1.28 million or thereabouts on electoral campaigns. It prevents them acting in concert and having, in other contexts, a Palmer front No. 1, Palmer No. 2 and Palmer front No. 3. It does not affect small community organisations. It does not affect people campaigning up to \$1.8 million. It prevents an attack on the integrity of our electoral process by having large groups acting in concert. The Government opposes the amendments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Port Stephens wishes to speak she can seek the call.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:57): The Greens support the Opposition amendments to the acting-in-concert provisions. I love the way the Attorney General suggested he was giving The Greens the benefit of the doubt on our reasons for this. I love the suggestion that we are just misguided. No doubt people have those views about a lot of what The Greens think, but I feel it is important to put the position of The Greens on record. We are not misguided. The clear position of The Greens is that we support the repeal of these provisions. We believe in the idea of collective action. We believe that groups and organisations should be able to come together to engage with democracy.

The Attorney General was concerned that we could have Clive Palmer front No. 1 and Clive Palmer front No. 2 organisations and we would not be able to identify it. If the Liberal-Nationals Government has a real concern about the idea of front organisations trying to infiltrate and influence our democracy, then between now and when the bill moves to the other Chamber I urge it to look at possible provisions in these laws to stamp out the use of front organisations to intervene in our democracy. There would be a lot of options. We could require that an organisation states how long it has been established. We could require an organisation to demonstrate that it has a membership base. We could require that an organisation is not simply called the same thing as another

organisation with a number on the end of its name. There are many ways the Government could address front organisations engaging in our political and electoral process.

We should not ban unions and other community organisations from working collectively and collaboratively together. The way we should address concerns around front organisations is to include provisions in this legislation that would prevent those organisations. The phrase "acting in concert" really just describes the collective action of people coming together. People do that because others have a whole lot of other ways to engage in political power. There is a privilege associated with those who have access to the ownership of entire media outlets that spout a whole lot of right-wing diatribes throughout a campaign to clearly and consistently support the election of one political party over another. I am not suggesting that the media should be subject to electoral caps; I am suggesting that conservative right-wing folks who own media outlets and put conservative shock jocks and think tank advisers on air also have access to a whole lot of power.

Community organisations want to run a campaign to put the Liberals last because they are outraged that the overdevelopment in their area does not include affordable housing. Community organisations want to run a campaign to put the Liberals last because they believe the Liberals should not be selling off public housing across the State and should instead invest in it. Those organisations do not have access to a media outlet to provide that commentary. They need to come together and act collectively to campaign in our elections in the interests of the community. Similarly, if a whole lot of LGBTI groups wanted to join ethnic community groups to oppose One Nation policies to ban the burqa and the development of mosques in our community, I believe those groups should be able to act in concert and run a campaign to kick One Nation out of the upper House. Would that not be a beautiful idea? I am just seeding it now in case anyone wants to do that.

Those kinds of things are not "acting in concert". They are collective action to engage in our democracy. We should be encouraging collaboration in the collective interests of the community that tries to break down the power structures that mean that so many of the laws we pass in this Chamber are not in the interests of the communities we serve. I urge the Government to look at these acting-in-concert provisions again and consider whether the straw man of the Clive Palmer front is a genuine concern. I make it clear that The Greens will join the Opposition to vote against this legislation in this Chamber unless the acting-in-concert provision is removed.

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

The House divided.

Ayes36
Noes41
Majority.....5

AYES

Aitchison, J	Doyle, T	Mehan, D (teller)
Atalla, E	Finn, J	Mihailuk, T
Bali, S	Harris, D	O'Neill, M
Barr, C	Harrison, J	Park, R
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Saffin, J
Catley, Y	Hoenig, R	Scully, P
Chanthivong, A	Holland, M	Smith, T
Cotsis, S	Hornery, S	Tesch, L
Crakanthorp, T	Leong, J	Voltz, L
Daley, M	Li, J	Warren, G
Dib, J	Lynch, P	Washington, K
Donato, P	McDermott, H	Watson, A (teller)

NOES

Anderson, K	Henskens, A	Provest, G
Ayres, S	James, T	Roberts, A
Clancy, J	Kean, M	Saunders, D
Cooke, S	Layzell, D	Sidgreaves, P
Coure, M	Lee, G	Singh, G (teller)
Dalton, H	Lindsay, W	Smith, N (teller)
Davies, T	Marshall, A	Speakman, M
Dominello, V	McGirr, J	Stokes, R
Evans, L	O'Dea, J	Taylor, M

NOES

Gibbons, M
Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B

Overall, N
Pavey, M
Perrottet, D
Petinos, E
Preston, R

Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Williams, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Car, P
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Minns, C
Zangari, G

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

Amendments negatived.

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

The House divided.

Ayes44
Noes34
Majority..... 10

AYES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Dalton, H
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Donato, P
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
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Williams, R
Wilson, F

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Bromhead, S

Car, P

PAIRS

Conolly, K
Crouch, A
Elliott, D
Toole, P

Lalich, N
Zangari, G
Minns, C
Kamper, S

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

Third Reading

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

*Community Recognition Statements***HMS TECHNOLOGY COMPANY**

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (20:18): HMS is a proud Australian owned and operated multi-award winning business that operates in the Hunter Valley. During the past five years, HMS has invested heavily in the latest machinery and technology, which has allowed it to become recognised globally, with customers such as Bobcat and Toro in the United States. Its latest technology, the tank, has been locally designed and manufactured in Thornton using local suppliers and will be exported to the United States to assist the fire brigade in its firefighting efforts. HMS currently employs 16 people, including apprentices and school-based traineeships, and supports 19 local companies and suppliers. It is fantastic to see the latest innovative technology being developed and made a reality in our local community in Thornton. Congratulations to the whole HMS team, ably lead by their group managing director, Jamie Howard. This is a great example of a local Hunter family business doing made in New South Wales and Aussie manufacturing at its best, exporting to China, Chile, Brazil, the United States, South Africa and Germany.

VOLUNTEER MARGARET CRAWLEY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:19): I am proud to say that the Coffs Coast has countless volunteers who go above and beyond to make a positive difference in our community. Among them is Margaret Crawley, Vice President of the Coffs Harbour Show Society. Margaret was recently named Legend of the Show, nominated by President Christopher Pearson, himself a recipient of this prestigious honour. Margaret brings enthusiasm, dedication and energy to our local show society and has enjoyed her roles as steward, chief steward for the pavilion, and current vice president. Margaret is renowned for her hard work and her phenomenal efforts in fundraising and securing sponsorship. I congratulate Margaret on her contributions to the success of the Coffs Harbour Show, an iconic event in our community.

LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER SPENCER MCGILL

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:20): Today I recognise the important work of Spencer McGill of Deniliquin. Spencer has made an immense difference in the community by raising awareness for mental health, and was named a winner at the Murrumbidgee Local Health District Excellence Awards in July. Spencer has been awarded the winner of the Enriching Consumer Experience prize for his works as a consumer peer worker with MyStep to Mental Wellbeing. Spencer, through his commitment to raising awareness for mental health, continues to empower people, build the resilience of the people he works with, break down stigmas and instil hope.

INDIGENOUS MARATHON PROJECT PARTICIPANT HAYLEY PYMONT

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:21): I take this opportunity to congratulate a fantastic young woman from Oak Flats, Hayley Pymont, who is set to run the world's most popular long-distance running race in November, the New York City Marathon. Hayley is a proud Wiradjuri woman from Gundagai, Cootamundra and Narrandera, and has been selected as one of 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be part of the 2022 Indigenous Marathon Project. Hayley began her training for the marathon in April this year, with her first major race being a half marathon in Queensland in June, just two months after beginning training. From there, Hayley will run 30 kilometres in Alice Springs in September before heading off on 6 November to the New York marathon, which is over 42 kilometres long. Before heading off on those adventures, Hayley is hosting a community running event in Warilla on 13 August as part of the Indigenous Marathon Project, and is inviting people to walk or run one or three kilometres to help improve their health. I congratulate Hayley on her achievements in such a short period and I wish her luck in this fantastic endeavour.

NORTH SYDNEY BEARS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:22): I recognise the mighty North Sydney Bears based in my electorate and speak to recent progress towards a possible merger involving the North Sydney Bears to bring about the long overdue return of this club to the National Rugby League [NRL]. My electorate covers the Bears' heartland, so the return of the team to first grade rugby league would mean a great deal to locals who have long lamented their absence. Many locals recall fond memories of barracking for the red and black from the grandstands of North Sydney Oval, where the Bears have played for over a century. I have championed the Bears' return in direct, face-to-face conversations with NRL and community leaders. I share the community's affection for the Bears and believe the club's merger could be the mechanism needed to return this much-loved side to the NRL fold. For New South Wales, the return of the Bears would be a huge positive for the standing of rugby league in our great State and in my local area. I call on the New South Wales Government to give support to the bid and offer its impetus for this exciting initiative. Go the mighty North Sydney Bears!

TEA GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL PARLIAMENT

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:23): Much fuss has been made about the recent opening of Parliament in Canberra, but the real show was at the recent opening of the Tea Gardens Public School Parliament. This annual event, now in its thirty-third year, gives students the opportunity to experience a parliament in action, debate ideas respectfully and build their understanding of how government works. Principal Mark Clemson oversees the school parliament as Governor General, classroom teachers take on the role of senators, and students are Ministers, shadow Ministers, Speakers and Hansard staff, and fill other roles.

I congratulate the impressive school cabinet of Taryn Bryant, Maddison Simmons, Harry Webb, Lily Fidden, Terran Sikora, Lily Selby, Liam Mitchell and Jayden Franks. Opposite them were the equally capable shadow Ministers Kade O'Neill, Havana Mobbs, Rhani Genner, Jackson Alderton, Amarni Reynolds, Jaiver Murphy, Noah Mahoney and Talia Sloggett. Parliamentary roles, including Speaker and Serjeant-at-Arms, were undertaken by Jay Partridge, Ella Jeffery, Ben Germon, Chloe Longworth, Zara Condon, Cooper Smith, Harrison Mills, Khesahn Wells, Noah Faint and Keira Sheather. I congratulate all staff and students at the beautiful Tea Gardens Public School.

MEGAN HALL

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (20:24): I acknowledge the magnificent community of Megan, 14 kilometres from Dorrigo, on the 100th anniversary of its hall, which was actually held on the 102nd anniversary because of COVID-19. I give a big shout-out to the team, under the guidance of Ken Gardner, that put together a magnificent celebration with centenary plaques and memorials to famous Joe and Joyce Cook and Bill Mark. It was a wonderful day of morning tea and lunch. I was joined by Bellingen shire mayor Steve Allan. It was quite an extraordinary day. Megan is the name that was chosen for the village because Megan was the daughter of the English Prime Minister David Lloyd George at the time. If only those tallowwood hall walls could talk, what stories they could tell about christenings, birthdays and weddings. Every community event over the past 102 years has happened in the Megan Hall. It was a wonderful day and to be in the company of all those community members was a pure delight.

BULLI COMMUNITY CENTRE FREE FOOD PANTRY

OLDER AND BOLDER

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (20:25): I speak briefly about two initiatives in my local area, firstly the Bulli Community Centre free food pantry. I visited it the other day and made a donation. It is a fantastic operation working out of the Bulli Neighbourhood Centre and an asset that all in our community are lucky to have. Led by Elizabeth Prasad and a range of volunteers and staff, they do fantastic work. The other one is Older and Bolder, a group of senior residents in my local community who are engaging in physical activity and social interaction. I had the pleasure of doing a bit of yoga with them. I was very good at the downward dog. Those two groups are doing important, great work in the northern suburbs of the community that I am fortunate to represent.

EAST HILLS ELECTORATE COMMONWEALTH GAMES PARTICIPANTS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (20:26): Australia topped the medal tally in this year's Commonwealth Games held in Birmingham in the United Kingdom. I congratulate three residents from the East Hills electorate—Abigail Paduch, Esther Qin and Abbey Connor—on representing our great nation in the games. Esther Qin, a resident of Padstow, represented in diving; Abbey Connor from Panania and one of our youngest athletes made it to the women's finals in the 200 metre butterfly; and Abigail Paduch from East Hills, who has been ranked number three in the world at junior level, competed in judo. Abigail defeated Sarah Hawkes from Northern Ireland in the women's 78 kilogram-plus judo quarterfinals, before losing to Scotland's Sarah Adlington

in a semifinal. Following this, Abigail responded well to clinch the bronze medal, defeating Gabriella Wood of Trinidad and Tobago. I congratulate those three locals on their dedication to their sports. All of the athletes who competed in the 2022 Commonwealth Games did us proud. Aussie, Aussie, Aussie!

WE CARE CONNECT CHARITY ORGANISER DERRYCK KLARKOWSKI

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (20:27): Today I recognise Westfield Local Heroes finalist Derryck Klarkowski from local organisation We Care Connect. Derryck has created a local charity that has supported more than 10,000 Central Coast children with hundreds of thousands of high-quality donated items. With a vision that no local child should go without clothing, a cot or a pram, Derryck founded the We Care Connect charity six years ago with like-minded friends. My office is a drop off point for We Care Connect and we always have a high volume of donations, including clothes, nappies, bedding, cots, prams, car seats, toys, books and other essential items that families of young children need. If Derryck is successful, We Care Connect will use its funds to fill the gap between donation and need and fund an expanded 2023 back-to-school program. I wish Derryck all the best for the competition and hope that he is successful.

TRIBUTE TO JEFF PRELL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (20:28): I recognise the late Mr Jeff Prell of Crookwell. Mr Prell faced adversity in his younger years when he contracted polio, spending many weeks in hospital and learning to walk again. This may well be an insight into the fortitude, strength and determination of Mr Prell, who made a remarkable recovery. Mr Prell went on to captain Kings College First XI cricket team, also playing in the First XV rugby team. Completing his schooling, Mr Prell returned to the well-known family property of Gundowringa in Crookwell, proudly continuing the work of his pioneer father. He became a dedicated grazier, commencing a crossbreeding program with merino sheep in 1975 aiming to produce finer wool, whilst preserving the Corriedale sheep carcass. The Corriedale sheep were exported to South America, New Zealand and Africa, providing a gateway for Mr Prell and his wife, Jess, to travel and form many friendships abroad. Mr Prell was a man of many talents and great conviction—to his family, Corriedale sheep, fishing and cricket. Vale, Mr Jeff Prell.

JEANS FOR GENES FUNDRAISER

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:29): Last week Brisbane Water Secondary College held a Jeans for Genes fundraiser to show support and raise money for families and children with birth defects or incurable genetic diseases, and bring awareness and education to the students of Brisbane Water. All the students and teachers showed their support for the cause by dressing in their jeans and denim and bringing in a gold coin donation. The students and staff ended the day with a colour run by the student representative council as a great ending to Jeans for Genes and the end of Education Week. It was great to see the support and enthusiasm of the students getting involved with the school events. It is so important that every child is able to experience and access education and to get involved in learning and supporting others. It is vital that we support and encourage children's curiosity and urge them to look out and care for other people. That is what Brisbane Waters Secondary College is all about. It is a fine example of quality public education on the Central Coast that has done so beautifully. I thank Matilda for writing this community recognition statement.

JOEY SCOUT LEADER NICOLE TUCKER

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:30): Erskine Park joey scout leader, Nicole Tucker, is a diligent mum in my electorate who is setting the example and leading the way for her children and others by getting involved with scouts to participate in and lead outdoor activities in a world that is increasingly reliant on technology. Not having the opportunity to participate in scouts when she was younger, Nicole put up her hand to lead the Erskine Park joey scouts where she is now leading children to use practical activities to build skills such as communication and leadership. I congratulate Nicole on taking on this leadership role and recognise the positive value she adds to the lives of many children under her leadership every day.

KYOGLE AND MURWILLUMBAH COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:30): Recently I had the privilege of attending two 100th birthday celebrations of the mighty Country Women's Association in the Lismore electorate. I love the CWA and I am the proud patron and member of the Tabulam branch. The Kyogle CWA 100-year ball was a fantastic night at the Kyogle Bowling Club, and I thank president Lyn Croft for the invitation and Susanna Freymark for emceeing the event. The ball was 1920s themed to honour the time the CWA was formed. It was all blue and gold. The bowlo was a hive of activity as the community came out to celebrate the CWA. In Murwillumbah we had an afternoon dressed up in the roaring twenties style as well, with Ilze Jaunberzins giving a great presentation on Latvia. Together we celebrated 100 years of the CWA with a lot of laughs and a beautiful CWA cake. CWA members

have been advocates, carers, volunteers and the backbone of our country communities. It was great to celebrate and I look forward to the next 100 years.

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE COMMONWEALTH GAMES PARTICIPANTS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (20:31): I congratulate four athletes from our Heathcote community who recently participated in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. It is an enormous achievement to qualify and compete at the Commonwealth Games and I wish them all success in their sporting careers: Thomas Cornish, cycling; Jade Lucy, swimming; Jackson Roberts-Young, weightlifting; and Ridge Barredo, weightlifting. I make special mention of Thomas Cornish, who received a silver medal for the men's 1,000 metre time trial final. This was a fantastic result, bringing home another silver medal for Australia.

WAVERLEY COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:32): I wish a happy birthday to the Waverley Community Men's Shed, which celebrated its ninth anniversary last week at the Waverley War Memorial Hospital. For nine years the Waverley Community Men's Shed has been offering men somewhere to go where they can learn woodworking skills, work on projects to give back to the community, form friendships and build stronger support networks. As a proud patron and the first female patron of the Waverley Men's Shed, it has been amazing to see the shed grow from strength to strength and now boast more than 70 members, with no sign of slowing down. Cooperation and mateship are the foundations of any strong community and nowhere are those values better represented than at the Waverley Community Men's Shed. I thank the team for all that they do to make the eastern suburbs a better place.

MINERVA NETWORK

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (20:33): The Minerva Network is an initiative supporting Australian female athletes to maximise their potential on and off the field. It offers a way for elite sportswomen to connect with other athletes across more than 50 different sports. Over 200 Australian women leaders from diverse backgrounds volunteer as mentors and I am delighted to have recently joined the network. With great foresight the network was co-founded by Christine McLoughlin, AM; Romilly Madew, AO; and Sam Mostyn, AO. Annette Wargon is a director of the network with the New South Wales chapter lead by Ann Sherry, AO. In September 2020 the Minerva Network Scholarship Program was launched, which provides \$10,000 scholarships for Minerva athletes to undertake tertiary education alongside their mentoring program. Over 60 Minerva athletes are competing in the Commonwealth Games, with several athletes achieving exceptional results, including gold medals by Katja Dedekind, Maddison de Rozerio and our Rugby Sevens. The Minerva Network has much to be proud of—it is building the capacity and networks of our women athletes and also allowing our Australian women leaders to contribute to and learn more about sport.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE FORREST ELLIS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (20:34): I was deeply saddened to lose my good friend George Forrest Ellis, who lived in Merrylands with his wife, Ellie, during their retirement. George passed away on 12 July at 79 years of age. His apprenticeship as a boilermaker in Scotland started a long career culminating in his appointment as principal of Tenterfield TAFE, principal of Moree TAFE and head of studies at Padstow TAFE. As alderman on Cessnock Council from 1976 to 1986 and deputy mayor from 1982 to 1986, George was instrumental in the establishment of Kurri Kurri Community Centre. It is a tremendous loss for our community to lose a committed, thoughtful and selfless man like George. I offer my deepest and sincerest condolences to Ellie; daughters Lisa and Dianne; Lisa's husband, John; grandchildren Megan and Cameron; Cameron's partner, Michelle; and great grandson, Phoenix. In the words of the Flower of Scotland, which was played at his memorial service:

O Flower of Scotland,
When will we see your likes again,
That fought and died for,
Your wee bit Hill and Glen.

GLENAVON ANGUS STUD OWNERS RICHARD AND PRUE POST

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (20:35): I acknowledge Richard and Prue Post, from Glenavon Angus Stud, on the successful hosting of their recent thirty-eighth annual bull sale. Ninety-nine bulls and around one hundred EU heifers averaged around \$16,600 per lot, which was a fantastic achievement and their best result in the 38 years of running the sale. I congratulate them because they have worked very hard on the genetics of their herd. To achieve this result is a great credit to them, their family and their staff. I also thank Inverell business Smo-KING on a great lunch that everyone enjoyed—good buyers and good spirits, despite the pending threat potentially of foot-and-mouth disease. It is good to see that prices are still holding strong and there

is a lot of confidence in the market. Again, I congratulate Richard and Prue on a great sale and huge success, and great reward for the work that they have been doing.

AUBURN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:36): I recognise the work of the Auburn State Emergency Service unit during the recent flooding crisis across New South Wales. It has been a harrowing few years for our emergency services, with ongoing weather events devastating large parts of Sydney and up and down the New South Wales coast. On each occasion the SES has been there, ready to help local communities prepare, survive and recover from natural disasters. The Auburn SES unit has been a vital local resource not only in our community but also in assisting with flood relief efforts in major disaster zones across Sydney and New South Wales during July. The Auburn unit mobilised their Unimog high clearance trucks to rescue people from cars in flooded areas of Liverpool and the Central Coast, while their water rescue teams also assisted operations in Londonderry. Thank you to the team at Auburn SES whose ongoing dedicated service is vital not only to our local community but also to the people of New South Wales.

SWIMMER MICHAEL PAYNE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:37): I congratulate Michael Payne on his amazing solo swim across the English Channel last month at the age of just 19 years. As a Kurrajong local, Michael is the first Hawkesbury resident to successfully swim the Channel and I am confident that he can continue to excel in the sporting world. Crossing the English Channel is a mammoth challenge. That Michael was able to complete this arduous swim, on his first attempt, in 12 hours and 48 minutes while battling the tides, weather conditions and various ocean life, is to be applauded. Michael has been an active member of the community and he was crowned the 2022 Hawkesbury City Sportsperson of the Year. I am sure his achievements will inspire many young people to strive for excellence.

CLARENCE TOWN POST OFFICE LICENSEE HELENA MORRIS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (20:38): I congratulate Helena Morris who retired as the licensee of the Clarence Town Post Office at the end of June 2022. Helena's career commenced as the then post mistress of the old Clarence Town Post Office in 1986. Over the next 36 years she became an integral part of our township and witnessed the evolution of mail deliveries. When Helena arrived, Clarence Town did not have local mail deliveries. That meant the only way to collect letters and postal supplies was to attend the post office. Australia Post eventually introduced residential home deliveries in 1993, sparking what the Clarence Town and district local newspaper *The Sentinel* described as a rush by local residents to buy a letterbox. If Helena ever wondered about the strength of her relationship with her customers, it would be confirmed by their continued patronage at the post office. Helena, over those 36 years you became Clarence Town's greatest asset. On behalf of the community I thank you and wish you a happy and prosperous retirement.

RURAL SMALL BUSINESS TO WATCH AWARD WINNER TARA MELLOR

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:39): I highlight the achievements of local Port Stephens entrepreneur and small business owner Tara Mellor. This Fingal Bay resident is the founder of the Goldmilk maternity clothing brand and is a recent winner of the Rural Small Business to Watch Award at the Australian Rural Business Awards. Tara launched her business in October 2021, after being unable to find any stylish, everyday breastfeeding clothes or extra-absorbent breastfeeding pads. Tara had three children aged six and under when she founded her small business, on top of the COVID delays and the regular stresses of starting a new business. She has not only overcome these challenges, but she has found a niche in the market and grown her small business into an award-winning brand. It is wonderful to see a young Port Stephens woman achieving success with a new business, catering to a growing market and being recognised nationally. I congratulate Tara on her recent award and wish her every success for the future.

AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE MOOREBANK SQUADRON

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:40): I congratulate the Australian Air League Moorebank Squadron on its Freedom of Entry March, which I attended at Bigge Park in Liverpool on 24 July. This march was planned for several different dates but, unfortunately, on each occasion it was postponed because of the rain we have been having this year. It was important for the march to go ahead because it commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the Australian Air League arriving in the City of Liverpool and its active service to the south-west region of Sydney since then. The anniversary celebrated the many participants of the Moorebank Squadron over the years, and the honourable traditions that have remained. The incredible parade included a formation flypast from the Australian Air League NSW Air Activities Centre, a performance from the Town Crier, the participation of the mayor of Liverpool City Council, local police officers and our colleague the Hon. Shayne Mallard, MLC.

It is great to see these young people giving back to our local community. I congratulate the Moorebank Squadron again on its 60th anniversary and for hosting an impressive-parade.

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN WOMEN IN LEAGUE LUNCH

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (20:41): On 28 July this year I attended the Canterbury- Bankstown Bulldogs Women in League Round lunch. This wonderful event celebrated the women at the heart of rugby league in the community. I acknowledge those who attended the lunch, including the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs board of directors and their Chairman John Khoury—unfortunately CEO Aaron Warburton could not be with us; General Manager of Football Phil Gould, AM; the Canterbury Bankstown Leagues Club board of directors and their Chairman Peter Winchester and his wife, Julie; Club CEO Greg Pickering; NSW Rugby League's Chief Commercial Officer Jody Cross; Men of League's Joanne Baxter; Alan Zreik from Zed N Zed Corporate Jewellers; Councillor Jessie Nguyen, Canterbury-Bankstown council; and councillor Vince DeLuca, OAM, Northern Beaches Council. I also acknowledge the fantastic speakers at the event, including Recovery Partners' Kelly Brown; Women in League ambassadors Hazem El Masri and Arwa Abousamra; Follow My Lead's Arley Higgins; Something Blue's Alex Sarkis; Channel 7's Michelle Bishop and Diane Langmack.

VINCENT AND EILEEN BURROWS SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) (20:42): I take this opportunity to note and congratulate Vincent and Eileen Burrows who celebrate their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 25 August. Vincent and Eileen met as 19- year-olds in Sydney in 1961. They were both recent young arrivals: Vincent arriving from Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, to set up a new life in Australia, and Eileen from Mungindi, on the border between New South Wales and Queensland. A great part of New South Wales—definitely on the right side of the border. They were married at St Joseph's Church, Mungindi, in 1962 before moving to Sydney and establishing their lives here. Vincent and Eileen have lived in the Penrith area for the past 40 years. They have raised four children and they now have seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Vincent and Eileen, happy diamond wedding anniversary.

CENTRAL COAST AND NORTHERN SYDNEY ROTARY DISTRICTS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:43): In the New South Wales Parliament I offer a massive round of applause to the Central Coast and the Northern Sydney Rotary districts for their incredible work selling bowel kits across New South Wales to raise funds for worthwhile causes. For over thirty years local Rotarians have voluntarily delivered approximately 8,500 to 9,000 bowel kits per year across New South Wales. They also sell through chemists and their main sales are now online. For each kit sold, they make a couple of dollars. Over those 30 years they have invested this money very well. They recently donated a tomography machine, to allow early identification of breast cancer, to Gosford Hospital Cancer Centre. In addition to the \$325,000 machine for Gosford Hospital, they have donated another \$50,000 to allow experts to do biopsy examinations when necessary. This saves locals approximately \$600 per test. Thank you to the Rotarians for their incredibly generous, quiet achieving, hard work and thanks for choosing Gosford Cancer Centre for this very worthwhile and generous donation to help save lives with bowel cancer tests and the new tomography machine.

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:44): Last month, along with other shire MPs, I visited Sutherland Hospital for a topping out ceremony for the upgraded operating theatres and new MRI service. It was fantastic to mark the milestone as it meant that the upgrade is closer to being opened for our community to utilise. The \$81.5 million project will make a huge difference for patients and clinicians in the Sutherland shire, as they will have improved access to surgery in a more timely manner and much closer to home. The upgrade also includes access to a world-class MRI service, enabling patients to have this service locally instead of travelling to another hospital. Sutherland Hospital inpatients will be able to access the new MRI service for free. I am looking forward to seeing the new MRI facility open to hospital patients in early 2023, with all construction, including refurbishment works, due to be completed in 2024. Once again I am excited to have been able to celebrate the milestone. I look forward to seeing the construction completed and operational soon.

ROTARY CLUB OF LISMORE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:45): On 20 February the Rotary Club of Lismore marked 90 years of community service and within a week the flood disaster had inundated president Cheryl Hicks' home, along with thousands of other residences and businesses. Secretary and past governor Brian Wheatley says the club is particularly proud of how Cheryl led fellow club members as they walked through the decimated streets of South, North and East Lismore, assisting flood survivors. The Rotary Club of Lismore has now distributed more than \$400,000 worth of support to locals, including vouchers for whitegoods, groceries, specific ones for dairy farmers, and debit cards. Lismore South Public School students were supported with bus travel to Goonellabah Public,

together with new T-shirts and jumpers. Rotary also distributed handmade quilts from the Ladies of the Swamp at Koo Wee Rup, 80 knitted blankets from the ladies of Wrap With Love, a new and second-hand caravan, a second-hand car and a guinea pig hutch, among a long list. I thank Cheryl for her service and congratulate incoming president Mitchell Kirby, who is the youngest in the club's proud history.

GLEN INNES DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (20:47): I congratulate Glen Innes United Hospital Auxiliaries president Edna Holder and members on their recent successful annual general meeting. The auxiliaries have 22 members who, over the past 12 months, have donated 907 hours of voluntary time, contributing to the health, comfort and welfare of the staff and the patients at Glen Innes District Hospital. Over those 12 months, despite a lot of the time being tied up with COVID restrictions, they donated almost \$19,000 worth of brand-new equipment to the hospital. In light of the new \$50 million hospital, the construction of which will start later this year, the auxiliaries will continue raising money through their vending machine and Wednesday cake stalls to make sure that the staff and the patients at the hospital have every comfort and do not miss out on anything. I again congratulate Edna, her executive and all the members on a terrific job looking after the welfare of the staff and patients at Glen Innes District Hospital.

HOCKEY PLAYER JOCELYN BARTRAM

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:48): I congratulate former Albury local Jocelyn Bartram, who was selected to represent Australia in hockey at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The Commonwealth Games commenced on Thursday 28 July and went for 7½ weeks. The selected athletes for this year's Commonwealth Games were a mix of gold medal champions and experienced campaigners. Jocelyn, a former Albury Public and Albury High School student, was goalkeeper for the high-performing Australian women's national field hockey team, the Hockeyroos. In a tough competition, the team came away with the silver medal. The Albury community is so proud of Jocelyn's achievements and thanks her for representing our nation on the world sporting stage and adding her name to the record books.

CENTRAL COAST COMMONWEALTH GAMES TEAM

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:48): I offer big congratulations to all our Central Coast team members who competed in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. It was amazing to see the strength and determination of those young Australians, and it was wonderful to see competitors from across the Central Coast compete and make us proud. I especially mention local hero Brad Woodward, who took home silver in the 200 metres backstroke, another silver in the men's 4 x 100 metres medley relay, bronze in the 100 metres backstroke, and finished fourth in the 50 metres backstroke. Congratulations also to Matthew Dawson and the Kookaburras on taking home yet another gold medal for Australia and making us proud. Congratulations to Faith Nathan and the Women's Rugby Sevens on absolutely smashing it at the games and winning a gold medal. Our hearts go out to Nicola Olyslagers nee McDermott, who tore her calf in the lead-up to her high jump event and was unable to back up her Olympic silver at the Commonwealth Games. All the athletes who competed at the Commonwealth Games did such a great job. Massive congratulations to every one of them. They did Australia proud.

Private Members' Statements

BIRMINGHAM COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (20:50): After 11 days of intense competition Australia has finished atop the medal tally at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. It has been fantastic to see our Australian athletes compete and represent our country with great success. Australia finished with a total of 178 medals: 67 gold, 57 silver and 54 bronze. It was also the largest para-sports program in the games' history, with eight sports being held. In the para-program Australia won 35 medals, being 12 gold, 13 silver and 10 bronze. I congratulate all of our athletes in the 2022 Australian team. The Commonwealth Games have been conducted by the Commonwealth Games Federation every four years, barring 1942 and 1946 due to World War II, since the British Empire Games were held in 1930 at Hamilton, Canada. This year the games included 72 nations and territories with a combined population of 2.6 billion people. The Games are a chance for all members of the Commonwealth to unite through sport and compete in the spirit of friendship and fair play.

The Cronulla electorate had six athletes representing Australia across a range of sports. Their success at the games is a tribute to the great sports culture, talent and opportunities we have locally. I congratulate Oliver Hoare on his fantastic performance in the men's 1,500 metres. Ollie hails from Caringbah South and is a former North Cronulla Surf Club nipper. Ollie stormed the line to win gold and cement a Commonwealth Games record of 3:30.12. The win makes Ollie the second Australian athlete to win Commonwealth Games gold in the 1,500 metres or one-mile event after Herb Elliot's win in 1958. Ollie dedicated his run to his late grandfather, Fred

Hoare, a World War II veteran and Sutherland Athletics life member, who passed away only a week before the 1,500 metres event. I extend my condolences to Ollie and the Hoare family following the passing of Fred Hoare.

I congratulate Tia Hinds, also of Caringbah South, on her success in the Australian Women's 7s team. The team claimed Australia's first ever rugby sevens gold medal at a Commonwealth Games. The Australians defeated Fiji in the final with a score of 22 to 12 after beating New Zealand in the semi-final. The team's success is a tribute to their hard work and commitment after a disappointing result in the Tokyo Olympic Games, where they finished fifth. In September the team will head to the Rugby World Cup Sevens. As the only entirely full-time professional women's team in a football code in Australia, Tia and her teammates stand as impressive role models in sport for women, girls and all athletes.

I congratulate Nathan Lawson of Burraneer on his efforts in the Australian men's sevens team. Nathan, a forward, made his debut for the sevens at the Tokyo Olympics. The men's sevens team missed out on a medal at the games, despite a strong and competitive campaign, falling to New Zealand in the bronze medal match. I extend my best wishes to the team, which will head to the final round of the World Rugby Sevens Series in Los Angeles later this month, where they currently sit in second place with a chance to win the title.

I congratulate Eloise Wellings of Cronulla on her efforts in the marathon event in athletics. Eloise is a two-time Olympian and the first Australian runner to have competed at five Commonwealth Games. For most of her career, Eloise has competed as a 5,000-metre and 10,000-metre runner, but made the jump to marathon following the birth of her second child in 2019. In March 2022 Eloise clocked 2:25.10 at an event in Nagoya, Japan, making her the fourth-fastest Australian woman ever to run the marathon in history.

I congratulate Sam Fricker, originally of Newcastle and now of Greenhills Beach, on his success in the three-metre synchronised springboard final. Sam and his partner, Shixin Lin, won bronze in the event with 374.52 points across six dives. Sam competed in several events, including the 10-metre platform, the one- and three-metre springboard, and springboard and platform synchronised events. Sam also runs a business called Sam's Straws, which is involved in ocean conservation by limiting single-use plastics.

I congratulate Breanna Scott of Burraneer on her success in the Australian women's artistic gymnastics team. Breanna, along with her teammates, claimed silver in the team final. Breanna and the team ensured that Australia maintained its perfect record of medalling in the women's team event since gymnastics was introduced to the Games in 1990. Australia's success at the Games highlights the power of sport to bring us together. Each athlete deserves recognition for their great talent and efforts to represent Australia abroad. The Games reminds us of the diversity and dynamism of the Commonwealth and its commitment to the connecting power of sport. Beyond competition, the Games are an opportunity to promote partnership, friendship and the history of shared heritage among Commonwealth members. I look forward to the next round of the Commonwealth Games, to be held on home soil in 2026. Victoria will host the event across four regional hubs in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, and Gippsland to deliver a multi-city model.

WENTWORTH POINT INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:55): As Shakespeare pondered in the *Merchant of Venice*, all that glitters is not gold. In the Auburn electorate, particularly at Wentworth Point, that is a lesson well learnt under the New South Wales Liberal Government. It should be well known to members in this Chamber that Wentworth Point has been at the forefront of a cavalcade of broken promises from the Government that occupies the benches on the other side of the House. Wentworth Point covers an area the grand total of which is 60 hectares. If members cannot imagine 60 hectares, it is 0.6 square kilometres, and it will have a population just shy of 20,000 people. Members should compare 20,000 people on 0.6 square kilometres to other dense areas such as Potts Point, Pyrmont and Darlinghurst, which have only 15,000 people per square kilometre; that should give them a concept of the density of the housing in that part of the peninsula.

Under this Government, the list of broken promises for this suburb includes: no Peninsula Park, first promised in 2014 and meant to have been completed by 2018; a proposal to reduce by one hectare any future promised Peninsula Park, breaking the commitment to a 3.9 hectare waterfront park; the failure to build Wentworth Point Public School for 1,000 students, which the Department of Education advised was needed from the start but instead a school for only 400 students was built; and the failure for over a decade to build a high school at Sydney Olympic Park, with no development application being approved for a school that the Government has since promised to start constructing in mid-2022.

Yet it is the continued failure of the ongoing on-again, off-again Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 that ranks as a headliner of broken Liberal promises to Wentworth Point. Thinking back to before the last election, in October 2017 then Premier Gladys Berejiklian confirmed that planning for stage two was well underway and was expected to be completed throughout 2018. In July 2019 Minister Constance said that the Government did not have a time

frame for the beginning of works on stage two, saying that its focus was on the first part of the project and on a new metro line at Westmead. Then, in August 2019, the second stage was in serious doubt after the team working on the project was reduced to a handful of people amid uncertainty about the Berejiklian Government's willingness to proceed. The program director for Parramatta Light Rail left his role several weeks after that. In February 2020 Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 was terminated due to budget restrictions. But in June 2021 then transport Minister Andrew Constance said:

This government has never cancelled a project in its life ... We will work through over the next 18 months the necessary Environmental Impact Statement and planning approvals to get it shovel ready.

December 2021 came along and then transport Minister David Elliott said that the Government:

... will not commit to building the second stage of the multibillion-dollar Parramatta light rail line ...

In March 2022 he again stated that the investment decision for stage two of the project would be considered by the Government once the final business case had been completed. I ask members to think back to 2017, before the previous election. That was the same business case that Gladys Berejiklian confirmed would be completed throughout 2018. It is now 2022 and the Minister for Transport is still talking about when the business case is going to be completed. In the budget there is finally a commitment to building stage two of the light rail, but there is no full budget allocation and no time line for the budget allocation. Instead, there is only a commitment of \$600 million to build a bridge between two developments, one at Melrose Park and Wentworth Point, which are the two densest planning developments in that part of western Sydney.

That is great news for the developer at Melrose Park, but it is hardly good news for the people at Wentworth Point. Prior to every election they have seen this Government come up with short-change proposals—as it did with Peninsula Park and the light rail—in which there is no funding or time line for the completion of important infrastructure projects that have been promised time and again. Even the member for Parramatta, who has taken it upon himself to write to people in Wentworth Point about this issue, admits that the Government has no planning. He is going out to Federal members, cap in hand, begging them to chuck in money. It is short-sighted. Surely the people of Wentworth Point deserve better than they get from this Government.

NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (21:00): Seniors play an invaluable role in society. The pivotal role they play volunteering in a range of positions in rural and regional electorates is one of the many reasons those communities are fantastic places to live, work and raise a family. The NSW Seniors Festival is designed to celebrate the key role that seniors play and the contributions they make to the New South Wales community. I am really proud of the array of accomplishments made by seniors right across the Dubbo electorate, whether they live in Trangie, Tomingley, Narromine, Mudgee, Wellington, Gulgong or Dubbo, and all of the smaller towns and communities in between. As part of the festival, the Seniors Local Achievement Awards are run at a local level to provide opportunities for communities to recognise and give credit where credit is due to those irreplaceable locals. They do not do the things they do for recognition; they do it simply to give back to their communities.

I have been extremely honoured to recognise some amazingly dedicated people from around the Dubbo electorate this year. Marjorie Leisfield, better known as Lea, is the Mudgee recipient of the 2022 Seniors Local Achievement Award. Lea was an outstanding primary schoolteacher. Now in her retirement, she dedicates her time to helping plenty of others. She is a tireless contributor. She has been a member of the Mudgee Lions Club for more than 20 years and has been president and secretary during those couple of decades of service. She also does Meals on Wheels, organises family fun days, assists with the Mudgee Show and helps organise fundraising events for plenty of charities. In her free time Lea has recently turned her hand to lawn bowls. Ever so humble, Lea was very surprised and excited when I presented her with the award at the Mudgee Lions Club shed, with members of her family and the Lions Club present. She wants to keep doing what she does for as long as she can, which is fantastic.

The Wellington recipients of this year's award were Terry and Donna Dray. Donna and Terry, better known as Tippy, embody exactly what it means to be selfless and kind natured. Mr and Mrs Dray were recognised for their contributions to the Wellington Diggers Swimming Club as well as the Wellington Eisteddfod, Legacy and the wider community. Tippy was president of the former Wellington Basketball Association. He was a representative on Wellington Shire Council and is currently on the board of the Wellington Soldiers Memorial Club. Donna coached Little Athletics for many years, and the couple was heavily involved with junior rugby league, especially while their sons were playing. Both were also very surprised when they received their award, and things got a bit emotional. We caught up outside the Wellington pool with some friends, and it was a lovely time. Tippy said that they really enjoy doing their bit, and he encourages other people to put up their hand to volunteer.

Barbara O'Brien is an active, dedicated, committed and passionate advocate of the Dubbo community and beyond. She was recognised as the Dubbo recipient of the Seniors Local Achievement Award. Mrs O'Brien has been recognised for her active involvement with the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association; Taronga Western Plains Zoo; Terramungamine Country Women's Association, which she has had a long involvement with; the University of the Third Age [U3A]; St Brigid's Parish; and the St Vincent de Paul Society. Barbara is incredibly passionate about expanding her horizons and helping others do the same. Her U3A class, which is called Dubbo Personalities, has proven to be a real hit. It invites local people to share their stories, and everyone has a great time. Just like her counterparts, Mrs O'Brien said it was overwhelming and amazing to have been nominated, let alone to receive the award. She told me that she was just one little cog in a big wheel. Barbara showcases the qualities of seniors who make our region such a diverse and inspirational place to live.

The Gulgong recipient of the Local Seniors Achievement Award is Bill Sloan, who I managed to surprise pretty well in the past couple of weeks, with his sister, Nanette, helping make that happen. Bill is a kind and considerate man, who helps run exercise classes with the community nurses at his local multipurpose service in Gulgong—again, many of them were on hand to celebrate and help recognise Bill's contribution recently. Bill has furthered his volunteer work by becoming an aqua leader in exercise. He has trained to an advanced level, assisting with a couple of classes a week, and sometimes he runs them independently through the summer seasons.

During winter Bill continues his indoor exercise classes as well as volunteering by leading walking groups around the Gulgong township. He is highly motivated and attends regular training updates in order to keep abreast of continual changes. I take this opportunity to thank all of our incredible senior volunteers across the Dubbo electorate for all they do for our great region. I thank Lea, Barbara, Bill, Tippy and Donna for their incredible dedication to their communities and say: Keep it up.

TRIBUTE TO BILL BRADLEY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (21:05): Today I recognise a highly respected long-term Hornsby resident, Bill Bradley, who passed away last month. Bill was an active and influential advocate for various community groups within the Hornsby community and was someone I knew well in my role as the local member. Bill was born in Belrose in 1935 as the eldest of four children. The Bradley family relocated to Ermington, which is where Bill grew up and was active as a young lad. Sport was very much the most important thing to Bill, and it took up most of his attention. Tragically, at 14 years of age, Bill Bradley contracted polio, which ultimately caused him to become a quadriplegic.

Bill did not let his disability slow down his life or prevent him from participating in activities with his friends and family. In his book *Life After Polio*, Bill said, "I just got on with life." He was a natural leader and a mentor to many people over the years. That was especially evident in 1955 when, as a 19-year-old, Bill founded and was the inaugural president of the Belrose Junior Rugby League Club. Today that club is highly respected, and over the years it has produced many great footballers. For his considerable efforts over many years, Bill was elected as a life member of the Belrose Eagles.

As a 16-year-old, Bill got his first full-time job as a lift operator for McDowells in the city. He was later transferred to McDowells in Hornsby, where he quickly became a well-known identity within the local community. It was where he first met the love of his life, Clover, as she entered his life by entering his lift. When Bill passed away, they were approaching their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Clover later became catering manager at Hornsby hospital, and Bill began to help organise their main fundraising activity: the annual hospital fete. In 1976 Bill and Clover relocated to Hornsby.

Bill continued his volunteering activities as well as becoming a community activist for a wide variety of causes. He was a role model, mentor, teacher, advocate and friend to many people with disability in the Hornsby area, across Australia and even around the world. Over many years, Bill was an active member of the Hornsby Lions club and the fundraising committee for Hornsby hospital, and did work for the homeless. He was also a founding member of Hornsby Connect, a unique organisation that offers groceries to the homeless or those at risk of homelessness in the Hornsby area.

He continued to be a keen sportsman and in 1995 Bill took up lawn bowls at Hornsby Bowling Club. He became so proficient that he went on to represent Australia and win the gold medal as a world champion Paralympics bowls player. At the age of 70 Bill retired from lawn bowls and took up sailing. Incredibly, he went on to represent Australia in 2007 at the International Association for Disabled Sailing qualifying trials for the Paralympic Games in Canada. A few years prior Bill Bradley was selected to be an Olympic torch bearer in the lead-up to the 2000 Summer Sydney Olympics. His leg through Pennant Hills was watched by an estimated 30,000 people. He was also recognised by the Men of League for his long service to rugby league, to disabled sports and to the wider community.

Being an active and enthusiastic advocate for people living with disability, Bill worked with Hornsby Shire Council for many years on its access committee. Over the past 18 months he was a member of the council's advisory committee as it worked on its new disability inclusion plan. Bill was always challenging communities' negative views on disability and was keen to reduce the stigma around disability. Through his work with the local disability community, Hornsby council nominated him and he was a recipient of the Lesley Hall Award for Lifetime Achievement, which is for an individual who has both experienced a disability and worked to improve life for others with a disability. When discussing his own disability, Bill said:

Sure, disabilities make it difficult or impossible to perform tasks that others take for granted. But I am happy to note that not only have I overcome life's challenges; I have truly succeeded.

That statement is a great way to describe Bill's positive attitude, which he passed on to so many of us. Time and again he turned his hopes and dreams into achievements. One of the last bucket-list goals Bill wanted to achieve was to return to the bushland location on Cowan Creek called Jerusalem Bay. He wanted to do it via a steep section of the Great North Walk that he had last taken in 1947. After a public appeal, a number of volunteers came forward, including members of the Cowan Rural Fire Service, and plans were made to help Bill achieve that goal. In May 2018 Bill was carried down the two-kilometre track to Jerusalem Bay in what was a special and emotional event for everyone involved. I pass on my sincere condolences to Clover; his son, Luke; his daughter, Megan; and the entire extended Bradley family and their many friends. My electorate of Hornsby is all the poorer for the loss of a wonderful community leader and a wonderful person, Bill Bradley.

GRANVILLE ELECTORATE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (21:10): The Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] found that over eight million people lived in New South Wales on census night in 2021. Of those people 104,062 were in the Granville electorate. The census found what we already knew: the Granville electorate is increasingly culturally diverse, much more so than the Australian average, and we also have larger households and lower-income households. With regard to ancestry, the top five responses in Granville were Lebanese at 14.3 per cent, Australian at 10.9 per cent, Indian at 10.3 per cent, English at 9.1 per cent, and Chinese at 8.5 per cent. Just over 80 per cent of people had one or both parents born overseas. The top responses for country of birth were Australia at 39.5 per cent, India at 10.8 per cent, Lebanon at 5.8 per cent, China at 4.5 per cent, Nepal at 3.8 per cent and Afghanistan at 3.2 per cent.

I have previously spoken in this place about Merrylands and the recognition it is receiving as a hotspot for fantastic food from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and India. I have also spoken about multicultural festivals across my electorate and some of the heroes in charitable organisations who make a huge difference to the lives of people who need help the most. I make special mention of the support provided by the Afghan community to those who fled the Taliban over the past year and settled in my electorate. The Afghan community, which has not been here very long and has its own struggles, showed so much generosity to those new arrivals, which is tremendous to see. The Granville electorate's strength is its diversity, and with that comes unique challenges.

Rental stress and mortgage stress are not unusual. Some 21 per cent of private dwellings in the electorate are owned outright—significantly less than the 31.5 per cent for New South Wales. Almost half of private dwellings are rented—significantly higher than the 32.6 per cent for New South Wales. The remaining 27.4 per cent of dwellings are mortgaged. When it comes to household income, Granville has a higher proportion of households with less than \$650 a week, compared with the New South Wales average, and significantly fewer households with more than \$3,000 weekly income compared with the New South Wales average.

The cost-of-living crisis is hitting especially hard in my electorate. The most recent figures from the ABS for June 2022 show Granville has an unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent and a youth unemployment rate of 11 per cent—both of which are significantly higher than the New South Wales average. In June 2022 an estimated 6.6 per cent of the electorate's population aged 15 to 64 were JobSeeker recipients. Our area faces higher tolls, higher Opal fares, increasing petrol prices, power price hikes and more expensive fresh food. Of course, people on lower incomes have far less disposable income and spend more on essentials like food, electricity and transport. Inflation hits them harder. That was confirmed recently in research by the NSW Council of Social Services, which found:

Over half (58%) of all respondents and nearly two-thirds ... of those below the poverty line had struggled to pay for or gone without essentials at least once in the past year. Many struggled to pay utility bills ... went without medication or healthcare ... were unable to afford essential travel ... or went without meals ...

During the pandemic, I helped pack food hampers at OzHarvest's hub in Granville and Turbans 4 Australia's hub in Clyde. I am saddened to report that the need for food hampers in my electorate has not declined, even though the Government funding has ceased. Charities are filling the void to this day. Inflation is the secret tax eating away at the ability of working families to meet their obligations to pay their mortgages and to get their kids through

school. Not much has been done by the New South Wales Premier to lower that cost of living over a prolonged period. In fact, privatisation has driven electricity and toll increases.

Recently the ABS reported that New South Wales is now the highest taxing State or Territory in the entire country. Over the last year local and State taxes and charges went up 10 per cent, clocking in at nearly \$5,000 for every man, woman and child in the State. In 2010 the Labor Government removed the toll on the M4, but this Liberal-Nationals Government brought back the toll and brought back the burden on the people of western Sydney. Families and workers face \$8.87 a trip, which is \$88 a week and \$4,000 a year. The toll is a cruel tax on our community in western Sydney. I will not hold my breath expecting this Liberal-Nationals Government—which last year divided Sydney and turned its back on western Sydney, and which has pork-barrelled unlike any other government before it—to finally act on the cost-of-living challenges that face not only the people of the Granville electorate but also those across western Sydney and New South Wales.

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (21:15): Before I begin, I acknowledge one of my local students from Canterbury Boys, Arthur Tsolakis, who is in the gallery. I also have a number of Belmore and Campsie residents sitting outside in the Fountain Court, and I acknowledge their presence in the Parliament. Recently my office conducted our annual Canterbury community survey. I have in my hand an example of the responses. The survey is about State issues, and I sent it out to 25- to 55-year-olds in my electorate. So far we have had 524 responses. The issues identified in a number of our suburbs include the cost of living, health care, local community issues, Canterbury Hospital and Canterbury Road. Ministers should await my representations on these issues very shortly. For the benefit of the House, I will read some of the survey responses. On the cost of living, one of my residents from Roselands stated:

The most important issue at present is being able to get by. I have four children and divorced over 10 years ago. I get \$6 child support a month. I feel the need to get psychological help but it is so hard to get around to do it. I can't work and cost of living and housing wait is killing me.

When asked how our area can best be improved, the resident stated:

More support for mothers, kids, families as mental health is needed.

Another response on cost-of-living issues stated:

Rising costs, fresh food supply, no need for big supermarkets to make such profits during these times.

State of roads and footpaths: are shocking!!!

Speeding and noisy cars along Bexley Rd and Homer St

Those are in addition to the cost-of-living issues. Another response stated:

Cost of living

Rising cost of utilities—

which is a State Government issue, so I hope the water Minister and energy Minister are listening to this—

fuel and groceries—

I hope the Minister for Agriculture and the Treasurer are listening to this. The resident complains that no savings are left over. Most of these are State Government fees and charges. Another response stated:

Our most important issue is managing the maintenance of our property and the rising cost of living. As parents with young children our work life has fluctuated to accommodate the arrival of our children so this pressure is felt more profoundly at the moment.

People are taking the time to write back to us as local members to express the severity of the pressure that they are feeling. Another response cites the rising cost of living and the need for access to better health care in Canterbury Hospital. For example, another resident states that we do not have an MRI machine at the hospital. We need up-to-date medical equipment. We need more schools and more funding for our schools. Members of this House continually hear me talk about the need for an upgrade to Canterbury Hospital. One of my constituents from Campsie wrote:

A visit to Canterbury Hospital for a flu for my son took four hours?

That happened in the evening. A lot of my constituents cannot get to the doctor during the day because they do not have transportation. Many are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Many have refugee status. They end up going to the hospital very late at night, and in this case the constituent had to wait for four hours. Another resident said:

Canterbury Hospital needs major upgrade and expansion. Was kept there five days with appendicitis till jaundice just to find out they did not have a doctor capable to remove to be transferred to Concord Hospital. We should be better equipped.

This constituent was in the hospital for five days before the staff realised they did not have the adequate equipment and had to transfer them. Another resident stated:

Proper funding and availability of health care in Australia. There has been a problem for years with public waiting lists.

We need to finally fix Canterbury Hospital. Another resident states:

As the saying goes "Health is wealth" and with COVID and other diseases affecting young and old alike, I believe we should improve our local health systems, especially our responses to emergency cases in our local community. Also, to contribute in our little way to the global environment issues.

I thank the residents of Canterbury for their responses to the survey.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE COMMEMORATIONS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (21:20): Today I speak about a special event I attended on 4 August: the eightieth anniversary of the passing of Lieutenant Cantello and the unveiling of the plaque dedicated to the late John Jewell. This special commemoration took place at Lieutenant Cantello Reserve in Hammondville and the service was attended by some important dignitaries: Consul General Christine Elder of the US Consulate General for New South Wales and Queensland; Councillor Ned Mannoun, Mayor of Liverpool City Council; local councillors; representatives of the Australian Defence Force and United States Armed Forces; members of the Australian Air League – Moorebank Squadron; family members of John Jewell; and fellow community members, including members of the historical society.

I had the pleasure of having a lot to do with John Jewell. He was a quiet gentleman but he was a giant of our community. Previously in this House I have spoken of his achievements and his service to the community. John was passionate about his community, particularly the history of Liverpool. In 2012 John and I worked closely together to create a brochure celebrating the following year's eightieth anniversary of the founding of Hammondville. He had so much knowledge about the history of our area and was a strong advocate. He was a volunteer for the City of Liverpool and District Historical Society. He also encouraged me to put up a display of the history of Hammondville in my office, and members are welcome to come and have a look.

John will always be remembered for his dedication to the history of Lieutenant Cantello and the memorial and reserve that is named after him in Hammondville. John was just four years old on the evening that a fighter plane crashed into a reserve near his family home in Hammondville on 8 June 1942. That fighter plane was responding to threats of a Japanese submarine sitting just four miles off the coast of Sydney and shelling Maroubra. It took off from Bankstown Aerodrome. However, the mission was not completed. The plane stalled and clipped a tree, resulting in a fatal crash. This extraordinary event was kept secret among officials at the time due to security reasons and the event was not made public. As a result, no-one knew what had happened and who, in fact, had been killed.

It was not until 1988 that the identity of the fighter plane's pilot became known thanks to John Jewell's passion for Liverpool history. He researched extensively and uncovered the pilot's name was indeed Lieutenant George Cantello. Cantello had been the only pilot at the base just after midnight when the call came through to say that Sydney was under attack. He took off immediately but his plane crashed about two minutes later. Lieutenant Cantello was truly brave. He gave his life for us, and his sacrifice and honour needed to be commemorated appropriately.

John was the driving force behind the establishment of the memorial to this pilot. The park in Hammondville is now named after Lieutenant Cantello, and the memorial site is a permanent reminder of his sacrifice and the contribution made to the defence of Australia by the United States Armed Forces during World War II. He is the only American serviceman to have lost his life on Australian soil. In 2018 John organised for the family of Lieutenant Cantello to come from the United States to Australia for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the plane crash. How special it was for his family to be there for the ceremony, especially the pilot's son, Don Cantello, who turned one just a day after his 27-year-old father died. This year marked the eightieth anniversary of both the Japanese submarine shelling Sydney Harbour and Lieutenant Cantello's sacrifice.

The ceremony commemorated not only this anniversary but also the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to John Jewell's legacy. It would be a fitting memorial for this service to Liverpool to have a plaque erected in his honour in the Lieutenant Cantello Reserve, which would not exist as it is today if it were not for John Jewell's passion to make it all happen. John will also be remembered for instigating the Moorebank Men's Shed, where he served as president. It has since merged to become the Liverpool District Men's Shed. I was involved with John when he came up with the idea and was pleased to attend the opening of the shed with him. I saw firsthand the impact it had on the men who visited. It provided them with a safe place to chat, targeting social isolation and mental health while working shoulder to shoulder to make something constructive. John Jewell played a huge role

in our local area and was a lovely man. He would have been proud of the commemoration service. It was special to have his family present for the plaque unveiling.

I briefly mention Consul General Christine Elder, who was also involved in relocating Afghan citizens who had fled Taliban rule. Together with Minister Henskens and Minister Coure, I was pleased to meet with some of those people at Settlement Services International and to see the lives that they now live thanks to the involvement of that organisation.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (21:25): Before I start I acknowledge Amara Henson, who has done some casual work in my electorate office this week. She has been really helpful in communicating with our community. I put on record my appreciation for the help she provides to our office. Unfortunately the happy part of my contribution is over. Tomorrow the Maitland branch of the Nurses and Midwives' Association will walk out of Maitland Hospital. They are taking serious action because they have been pushed beyond the limits of endurance. I massively support the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association along with its members of nurses, midwives and all our health staff. We have stood together year after year fighting against the privatisation of Maitland Hospital, fighting for more staff and fighting for those health workers to be able to give the care to patients that they want to provide.

Recent Bureau of Health Information [BHI] data has confirmed what we all know: More than one in five patients who present at the emergency department seeking help leave before they receive treatment. That is a real concern and it is the highest rate in the State. Imagine if one in five customers of a business walked away. We would say that that business is failing massively. But this is not just about getting a service; this is about addressing people's health needs. One in five people who go to emergency for medical attention just leave because they are not going to be seen. Pejorative statements are made about people who overuse emergency departments because of the chronic shortage of GPs. I understand that, but the issue is that when I speak to those people they have had major falls, they are elderly and they should have sought medical attention but they have not.

The Bureau of Health Information data has also confirmed that our nurses and midwives are working in an unsafe environment. We all know that when emergency departments are failing, it is a sign that the entire hospital is under too much pressure, and that impacts on everyone in the health system. That is why ambulances are crammed together outside emergency departments, trying to get patients into those waiting rooms, while other people who may be having heart attacks are waiting for ambulances to arrive. It is not good enough. Today the Opposition asked the Minister for Regional Health in the other place for a response to that BHI data. She failed to give an adequate answer. She blamed a lack of GPs and access to aged care but completely failed to take responsibility for the fact that the Government has failed to fund our hospitals and staffing adequately. It is not acceptable.

Anyone who has been to hospital recently will say that our health and hospital system is overstretched. The waiting rooms are full, and one feels for the paramedics, nurses, doctors, midwives and all other health staff who are doing a fantastic job under trying circumstances. They are telling me about these issues in droves. I have had many people reach out to me on the issue, but we cannot get any more staffing, which is ridiculous. The vast majority of those representations—I would say 99 per cent—expressed the dedication and care of nurses. There was nothing but praise for hospital staff. But what happens when those representations are made to the health district? They go to the Minister, the Minister's office passes it on to the local health district and the nurses, midwives and other health staff are then told that they were deficient—how disgusting. How can they be deficient when they are running around trying to cover the gaps in staffing?

I cannot believe the fact that those staff are then criticised. They have been told, "If you had been doing your job well enough, no-one would notice that we are understaffed." That is outrageous. Some 12 years of understaffing and those health workers are giving everything—this is their life's work and they are dedicated to our patients. The Government risks a complete failure. Health workers cannot continue on and on every day. Hospitals are always short staffed and those workers are always being sent text messages asking them to come back to work or not to take any leave and to keep working double shifts because everyone else has been worked out of the system. That is what is happening. The Government is not being responsible. There is a \$500,000 asset in that hospital and yet people are being left in pain because of mismanagement. I cannot make the rally tomorrow, but I stand with every nurse, midwife and health worker in my electorate. I will support them to the end.

RIVER CITY VOICES

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (21:30): Great cities have great cultural organisations. It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House one of those great cultural organisations, the River City Voices, which is Parramatta's flagship auditioned symphony choir. It was formed in

2018 by general manager Inara Molinari to meet the desire of the Parramatta community for large-scale cultural events closer to home. Led by its exceptional artistic director Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith, the company's vision is to become a permanent and relevant organisation, renowned for its vocal excellence, unexpected collaborative artistic programs and events that reflect greater Parramatta's diverse community, talent and stories.

In its brief history, River City Voices has engaged over 2,000 artists, arts workers and community members through its public performances, development programs and workshops. Performances have included curated programs, festivals and corporate and government gigs. Collaborative community events include "Come and Sing", an intensive singing weekend featuring the Parramatta premiere performance of Carmina Burana, an interactive Japanese anime music program with Taikoz for the Sydney Cherry Blossom Festival and a sold-out performance of Handel's *Messiah* at St Patrick's Cathedral alongside the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and orchestra. River City Voices has also been broadcast on ABC Local Radio following its feature performance at ABC Radio's *Sing Out Sydney* at the City Recital Hall in 2019.

Poised for further success in 2020, River City Voices was hard hit by COVID-19 and its planned programs were cancelled throughout 2020-21. Nevertheless, the organisation swiftly adapted to online rehearsals and the ever-changing recommendations regarding face-to-face singing. Throughout that time, choristers, staff and the community continued to be engaged through the production of virtual concerts and a virtual choir performance shared via YouTube and social media platforms that has reached over 2,500 viewers. Squeaked in between the lockdowns, the choir presented an open rehearsal at CommBank Stadium—formerly Bankwest—as part of a unique rehearsal and recording project that has culminated in the release of digital album *What the World Needs*. Recorded two singers at a time, and generating around 340 individual tracks for mixing, this CD is a testament to artistic resilience and creative expression in times of adversity. The album features new choral arrangements of songs composed by neurodiverse musicians from project partner Arts and Cultural Exchange's Club Weld program, made possible with funding support from the City of Parramatta Council.

Emerging from COVID-19, River City Voices presented a major concert in May this year, which was its first since December 2019. In collaboration with Willoughby Symphony and Willoughby Symphony Choir, the concert included the world premieres of specially commissioned choral works by River City Voices from local Indigenous composers Troy Russell and Elizabeth Sheppard. In September River City Voices and Club Weld musicians will perform live songs from the album *What the World Needs* at the Granville Centre. In December at Riverside Theatres is Slam Messiah, a bold reinterpretation that combines Handel's renowned oratorio with local slam poets. The company is particularly excited about its large-scale public participatory music event, Super Critical Mass, which will be held in March and April 2023 within the Parramatta North heritage area and live streamed into Parramatta Square. I have been lucky enough to hear all of River City Voices performances since its inception. I congratulate and applaud the commitment and dedication of the choir, as well as board, management and artistic staff. I wish River City Voices all the best with its future performances.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (21:35): A fundamental part of a safe, prosperous and humane society is a place to call home. Right now, too many people in my community of Port Stephens do not have a home. They are sleeping on the street, living in tents and cars, or endlessly couch surfing and relying on the goodwill of friends and family. There is a housing and homelessness crisis in Port Stephens, and I fear it is going to get much worse because of the carelessness and callousness of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. Our only government-funded homelessness support service, Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services, is funded to help 348 people each year. But last year nearly 900 people needed its services, demonstrating how serious this is.

The changing face of homelessness in Port Stephens means that any family on any street could find themselves in this dire situation. The number of long-term renters being issued no-fault eviction notices has skyrocketed in recent times. Some landlords are moving from Sydney and taking up residence in their regional properties following COVID-19, some landlords are choosing to sell their properties while the housing market is hot, and, awfully, some landlords are evicting long-term tenants and immediately relisting the property for an additional \$200 per week. The private rental market is under strain, but it is the lack of public housing that is causing this full-blown crisis. Port Stephens has received no investment in public housing over the past decade. No new houses have been built by this Liberal-Nationals Government. In fact, some of the existing public housing stock is in such terrible condition that it has become uninhabitable. In Port Stephens public housing is going backwards. In our area, the public housing waiting list can be longer than 10 years. The helplessness and indignity of that is heartbreaking.

The Government's failure to build new public housing impacts everyone in the community, not just those on the public housing waiting list. When vulnerable families who desperately need public housing cannot get it, they are forced into the private rental market. They compete with working families for the limited number of

private rentals, and they drive the price of those rentals up. Until the Government builds new public housing in Port Stephens, the price of private rentals will continue to increase. That is the reason behind the changing face of homelessness. That is why long-term reliable renters with stable income are having to apply for 40 or 50 rentals and are still being turned down. That is why double income families are being forced to push themselves to the edge of financial ruin to secure a private rental. Those people do not even qualify for the public housing waitlist. Ultimately, that is why local families are living in their cars and tents, and sleeping in the bush.

Recently I held a roundtable meeting to bring together all the local service providers and community organisations in Port Stephens dealing with homelessness. I was joined by the shadow Minister for Water, Housing and Homelessness, the Hon. Rose Jackson, to hear from people on the front line. In the absence of any action from the Government, we brought everyone together to find local solutions to this problem. One of the recommendations from the meeting was to open Tomaree Lodge and the Stockton Centre for emergency housing as a short-term solution. Those facilities have purpose-built units and houses, which housed people with disability until relatively recently. They now sit vacant and unused.

I raised that possibility with the Government in June last year, but I never received a response. Last week I joined my Labor colleagues to once again call for those facilities to be opened up to local families facing homelessness. As a short-term measure, it would be a simple proposition. But the Government quickly rejected the plan. According to an article in the *Newcastle Herald* today, the Government claims that the sewerage system at Tomaree Lodge is not operational, despite the fact that people with disability were living on the site last year. I cannot believe the sewerage system has deteriorated irreversibly between last year and this year. I also cannot believe that the Minister responsible for fixing the homelessness crisis would rather see local families in Port Stephens live in their cars and tents instead of calling a plumber. It shows the carelessness and heartlessness of this Government.

I have serious doubts about the excuse that the Government has offered. Indeed, Hunter Water has confirmed to the *Newcastle Herald* that there are no issues with the network connection in the area. If the sewerage system is not operational, that is a decision made by the New South Wales Government. If that is the case, the Minister should hang her head in shame for peddling this pathetic excuse to avoid helping desperate families. I will continue pursuing this matter and I will continue holding this hopeless Government to account.

BONDI SURF BATHERS LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (21:40): On 24 July Bondi Surf Bathers Life Saving Club held its 115th annual general meeting [AGM]. The amazing life savers at the club have patrolled for 17,429 hours and performed 94 rescues. They welcomed 87 new bronze medallions and were overall champions at the New South Wales and Australian Surf Life Savings Championships for the fifth consecutive year. They have a lot to be proud of. Our volunteer surf lifesavers are protecting people on our beaches come rain, hail or shine. They do it with a sense of camaraderie and create meaningful communities and friendships along the way. I congratulate the club executive, most of whom will continue to serve the club in their role. I thank the president, Brent Jackson; the deputy president, Felicity MacArthur; the director of administration, Garret O'Connor; the director of finance, Thomas Wetula; the director of lifesaving, Simon Smith; and the director of surf sports, Dori Miller.

The AGM is also an opportunity to thank the club's superstars. I thank those who are residents in my electorate. I congratulate the Kevin Murray Memorial President's Award winner, Rozanne Green; the Brian Hutchings Memorial Most Outstanding Surf Sports Athlete, Dori Miller; the 40-year long service award recipients, Anthony Gordon, Nicholas Nezval and Henry Rantzen; the 60-year long service awards recipients, John Douglass and Ronald Murphy; and Bill Widerberg, who has served an amazing 70 years in the club. I visited the club earlier this year to present a well-deserved \$100,000 Community Building Partnership grant to repair the club's water damaged heritage floors. It is one part of the puzzle in renovating its clubhouse.

Last Sunday I had the pleasure of joining the North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club for its annual general meeting. Again, I congratulate the incoming executive and wish the new team all the best. I call out club president, Andrew Christopher; the head of finance, Danny Ekins; the head of operations, Raille Galgut; the head of education, Rob White; the head of administration, Joni Golan; and the head of surf sports, John Clothier. During the meeting, club member Lachlan Cooke presented a motion for the club to permanently fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at the club. The motion was passed by the club. We will now celebrate our shared history at the world's most iconic surf lifesaving club at the world's most iconic beach.

It was my pleasure to present the club with a certificate for its successful \$15,000 Community Building Partnership grant. The funding will contribute to the price of a new memorabilia archive cabinet to house the club's many awards and achievements, including items dating back over 100 years from when the club first began. The meeting was again a time to celebrate the club's achievements for the year and its members. At North Bondi, there were several long service recipients from Vaucluse residents, including the 10-year long service recipients,

Kevin Adler, Anthony Boogert, David Goldman, Nina Malmstrom, Nicole McMahon, Andrew Millmore, Sam Mitchell, Claire Owen, Sophie Thomson, John Rohl, Anton Rosenberg and Alex Smith. The 15-year national medal went to Drew Lambert and I had the absolute delight of awarding the 25-year long service medal to my good friend Waverley Councillor Leon Goltsman. John Robson and Simon Stony have also served the club for 25 years.

The 60-year long service awards were presented to locals John Cahill and Brian Powell. They are wonderful gentlemen. Brian used to own an active fashion brand and is well known in my local area. Albert Strykowski received a 70-year long service award. I congratulate all these gentlemen. That is truly amazing. They are still active members of the North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club. Both surf clubs are juggernauts in my community. They have a large membership, which can be seen by the extensive list of long-serving members that grows longer every year. Not only do they help my local community and build fellowship at some very dark times for our community, such as during COVID and other local community challenges that we have had, but also they give beyond the local community.

They helped when it came to the floods further north in New South Wales and when it came to the fires in the south. Not only do they bring people together but also they do important work across the State as well as keep our iconic Bondi Beach safe and people, who come from all around the world, safe in the water. I feel grateful to share these times when the awards go out. I know a lot of hard work goes on beyond that. I hope to continue my very good relationship with both surf life saving clubs in the future.

RURAL AND REMOTE MEDICAL SERVICES

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (21:45): Rural and Remote Medical Services [RARMS] is an organisation that I have got to know over the past few years. It was established in 2001 by rural and remote people to address declining access to health care in rural and remote communities. Over the past 20 years it has worked in some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged towns in rural and remote New South Wales to help 25,000 rural, remote and Aboriginal people retain access to local healthcare services. The RARMS program has been shown in academic research to be one of the most sustainable models of healthcare delivery in rural and remote towns in Australia. I am told that over a five-year period RARMS helped to reduce avoidable presentations to rural hospitals by 65 per cent, freeing up our emergency departments to treat the most critically ill or injured in the community.

For 20 years it has helped numerous rural and remote towns in New South Wales secure permanent doctors as many other communities saw their local health services decline or disappear. In 2019, with my colleague Mick Veitch, I had the pleasure of travelling to several rural and remote towns, including Goodooga, Bourke, Brewarrina and Lightning Ridge to talk to rural, remote and Aboriginal people about their health needs. During our community consultations we heard first-hand how much the Government has allowed our rural and remote hospitals to be run down. But we also heard about the work that RARMS was doing to keep health and hospital services accessible to vulnerable rural, remote and Aboriginal people.

Last week RARMS announced that due to the rising cost of locums it has been forced to discontinue the provision of the RARMS program in rural and remote New South Wales after 20 years. I know how difficult this decision must have been for the board and staff. At the recent parliamentary inquiry into rural health we heard awful stories about the impact that the decline of rural and remote health services in New South Wales has had on rural and remote communities. The parliamentary inquiry handed down a damning report revealing a crisis in health care and how the Government has failed residents over the past decade. The landmark inquiry was established by the Labor Opposition, and I am proud to have fought for it alongside my upper House colleagues the Hon. Greg Donnelly and the Hon. Walt Secord.

The report put forward 22 findings and 44 recommendations and made one thing very clear: Health care in rural and remote New South Wales is in crisis. The inquiry found that those living outside metropolitan areas have poorer health outcomes compared with those living in metropolitan areas. At times rural hospitals do not have basic medical supplies such as antibiotics, and kitchen staff and cleaners have been left to look after patients and newborn babies. The Labor Opposition is committed to making sure the recommendations are implemented in full. I hope the Government will hand down its response to this inquiry sooner rather than later.

The announcement by RARMS that rising costs have meant it has no choice other than to discontinue will inevitably have an impact on those living in rural and remote communities. It should never have come to this. I acknowledge RARMS CEO Mark Burdak, the board and staff, the people who work with them and the volunteers in the communities they serve. I thank the hundreds of rural and remote doctors, nurses and practice staff who have worked with it over the past 20 years for their dedication and commitment to the health of rural and remote people in New South Wales. Together they have delivered millions of healthcare services to the most vulnerable people in our community. They should be proud of their work and the lives that they have helped to save. I certainly am.

What I learnt from rural and remote communities, and what RARMS has shown us, is that we can deliver local, responsive and accessible health and hospital services in New South Wales when we listen to rural, remote and Aboriginal people, when we focus on their needs and when we give them the support they need to design their own solutions.

COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE PROGRESS ASSOCIATIONS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (21:49): As members may know, the Cootamundra electorate is affectionately known as "the seat of small communities", and the beating heart that makes many of the towns and villages across my electorate tick is the local progress association. They may also be known as community associations or advancement committees and their efforts to promote their community, engage with residents, hold local events, fundraise and advocate on local issues is absolutely worth taking a moment to highlight. The hard work of these associations has seen our small communities benefit from revitalised small halls and public spaces, updated sport and recreation facilities, new welcome signage and artwork installations.

These are the visual representations of a strong sense of town pride. Although something even more enriching and long lasting, over and above the bricks and mortar, is the strong sense of community that is achieved by being better connected and having more opportunities to come together as a community to celebrate, memorialise and plan for the future. Right across the electorate, associations are giving their all to ensure that their towns flourish despite the challenges. Not that long ago many were in the grip of drought, for example, and so to see what our progress associations can achieve and champion is commendable.

In Bland shire we have a great local event that served both as a fundraiser and to build awareness. The Wyalong Advancement Group held a Mad Hatter's Afternoon Tea as part of International Women's Day celebrations. The Ungarie Advancement Group is planning its 150th year celebrations. We also have the Tallimba, Naradhan and Weethalle Hall committees. In Coolamon shire we have the Advance Ardlethan Committee, with the building of the Ardlethan Museum a major achievement. The Advance Ganmain Committee has ensured that its patrons are comfortable with the newly installed heating and cooling in the Ganmain Hall. The Advance Marrar Committee volunteers manage and maintain the Marrar Hall and the Marrar Recreation Reserve. The Advance Matong Committee is busy working closely with Coolamon Shire Council to build the Matong Community Hall.

Meanwhile, the Advance Beckom Committee is reconnecting through a community family day. Near Cootamundra we have the Muttama Hall Management Committee, Wallendbeen Community Association and the Stockinbingal Stop-n-Mingle Group. Gundagai is glowing with the support from the Adjungbilly Coolac Advancement Committee and the Tumblong and Nangus Hall committees. Cowra shire boasts the Darby's Falls Residents Group, Gooloogong Progress and Promotion Association, and the Woodstock and District Progress Association. A number of other organisations auspice events and projects at Billimari, Morongla Creek, Wyangala and Wattamondara. Around Young we have the Bribbaree Water Progress Association that has successfully advocated for a potable water supply.

The Koorawatha Progress Association has made improvements to the public toilets at the War Memorial Park and updated its regional rooms. Milvale Progress Association has made upgrades to the community hall. Monteagle Community Hall Committee can now cook up a storm in the new kitchen and enjoy its new deck area and fencing. The Murringo Community Association and Bendick Murrell Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground Trust have also made improvements. Near Harden the Galong Progress Association hosts Clean Up Australia Day and organises a dawn service as part of Anzac Day. The Jugiong Advancement Group has encouraged and endorsed a vibrant art scene within the village. Improvements to Wombat Oval benefit the wider community by making it a desirable place for local sporting groups, thanks to the Wombat Progress Association.

Junee is equipped with the dedication from the Bethungra on the Up Committee, which has overseen the installation of an information board in Anzac Park recounting the history of Bethungra from the first written records of settlement until modern day. The Wantabadgery Hall Committee has seen the historic War Memorial Hall in the village maintained and improved, and has enabled the ongoing use of the adjoining tennis courts by local residents. The Eurongilly District Hall Committee has supported the community with the building of multipurpose courts and cricket nets within the grounds. The Old Junee Hall Progress Association and Dirnaseer Memorial Hall have seen improvements to community infrastructure, with a sporting facility refurbishment and new community hub.

The combined efforts of these associations and many others across the Cootamundra electorate and all who volunteer their time to make our "seat of small communities" such a special place to visit, live and work are to be highly commended for their efforts day in, day out.

HOMELAND PARK

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (21:54): Tonight I speak on a really important issue. . In electorates such as mine, particularly coastal electorates—but I know it also happens in many inland electorates—many very vulnerable people, usually over the age of 50, rent caravans and cabins in caravan parks. They tend to be people with medical conditions and disability, and they are quite vulnerable. More and more, those caravan parks are being bought out by new owners who then seek to upgrade the caravan parks. I suppose that is capitalism; people have the right, if they buy something, to upgrade it. But most of those vulnerable residents pay below-market rent.

One such park in my electorate is Homeland Park. In 2019 a development application was granted to the new owners to upgrade the park. Part of their development approval was that they had to do a transition plan for the current residents and assist them to find other places to live. For some people that has occurred. Originally over 100 people were living in the park. That number was reduced to 70 and is down now to 35. But they have now received eviction notices for November. The problem is the eviction notices said that, unfortunately, the owner had run out of time and there was no time to transition the residents properly. There was a list of motels and boarding houses for them to ring around and try to find somewhere else to live. Some of the residents have lived in their vans for 26 years, some for 17 years—a long time—with all of their possessions. From the stories they told me at a meeting, I can tell members that the vans are not luxurious. They leak; they have power issues. The residents were not living in luxury, that is for sure, but the park was their home. Now they have to try to find somewhere else to live.

They were telling me the stories of the people who live there, and in this job sometimes it gets very difficult to hold back the tears. We are talking about people like Kim, who is recovering from surgery; Paul, who is a double amputee; and Bill, who has a form of leukaemia. All of them will become homeless if they are not assisted. There is just nowhere for people with their sort of income to move to. The local council has come on board to try to assist. It is doing an emergency fallback where they may be able to house some of the residents in the local caravan parks, but that is temporary. As I said to these people, this is happening through no fault of their own. They should not have to move one, two, three, four times before they can find somewhere permanent to live again. As I said, they are really warm-hearted people. They live in a park that has become a community where people look after each other, and now they are going to be put out. Their greatest fear was that they would have to move away from their local networks, the health services they are used to and their family members. They were absolutely distraught.

This is not a Labor or Liberal problem. Whoever is in government, as a parliament we have to look at this type of housing and ensure that these very vulnerable people are protected, because they cannot move to more expensive places. They do not have the income. They are the next lot of homeless people. I despair for these good people. One person told me he has never owed a cent in his life. He has paid his rent on time. He actually brought in a folder with all of his bills to show that he pays all of his debts. His greatest fear was that for the first time in his life—and he was in his sixties—he would have to face his kids because he would not be able to pay his rent. That is absolutely heartbreaking. We talk a lot in this place about a lot of issues, but these sorts of people living in these conditions should be top of the list for us to try to assist.

OATLEY LIONS CLUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (21:59): I thank and congratulate Oatley Lions Club, a community-run Lions club operating within my electorate, which has shown commitment and dedication to our local area for generations. Its longstanding service to the community began in 1977, and for 45 years a team of dedicated volunteers has extended a helping hand to those in need within the Oatley electorate and the surrounding suburbs. Our local area has a range of diverse needs and Oatley Lions Club ensures that those needs are met, all thanks to the generous contributions and donations from the community. The club has provided ongoing support for nurses at St George Hospital's COVID-19 intensive care unit, recognising their hard work and dedication through the pandemic. Moreover, Oatley Lions Club continues to support St George Family Services at Carlton, which provides relief such as food, toiletries and other necessities to local families escaping domestic and family violence.

The club serves not only the immediate community but also communities right across New South Wales. Most recently, it has begun to organise a special project to help support North Coast towns such as Woodburn and neighbouring Coraki, which were badly affected in the recent flooding. It has already delivered a four-tonne truck of books to the regional library and is providing whatever assistance is necessary to ensure the towns are cared for and looked after. Oatley Lions Club understands that service to the local area also involves organising regular events, which encourage widespread community participation. Whilst its flagship event, the Oatley Village Festival, unfortunately could not be held this year due to concerns surrounding COVID-19, the club has organised a range of new community events in its place. These include a rock'n'roll fundraiser at the Oatley Hotel, multiple trivia nights, a community fair and a golf day. Through collaboration with other community organisations and

businesses, these events ensure that the community recognises the true value of service to the local area. I have fond memories of attending community events organised by Oatley Lions Club with my family over many years. The Oatley Village Festival is always a highlight of the year. Whilst, unfortunately, it could not be held this year, I look forward hopefully to its return in the future.

Oatley Lions Club is part of Australia's largest service club organisation, Lions Clubs Australia. For 75 years, Lions Clubs Australia has provided service to communities in Australia and Papua New Guinea and across the world, all while consistently expanding its roster of volunteers. Within Oatley Lions Club alone, membership has grown significantly over the past four years, rising from 18 to 31 with several new members introduced over the past year. It is fantastic to see so many locals putting up their hands to serve the community, and I could not be prouder. As a member of Oatley Lions Club since 2019 and a member of Lions generally since 2002—the former St George Lions Club—I recognise the fantastic efforts of the club's president, John Morgan. I know firsthand how hard John and the team strive to make Oatley and surrounds a better place to live, work and raise a family.

This would not be possible without the tireless dedication of John's team of volunteers. They are, without a doubt, some of the hardest workers I have ever met. They ensure that each community event runs smoothly and that the club consistently achieves fantastic outcomes and results. Their work does not go unnoticed in our local community. I have had many constituents call and email my office over the years, praising the work the volunteers have put into organising many great community events. Organisations like Oatley Lions Club make me proud to call our wonderful community home. We are truly privileged in the Oatley electorate, and Oatley Lions Club reinforces a deep sense of belonging and of supporting one another in our community. I am incredibly proud of the work that Oatley Lions Club does in my community and offer it my sincerest thanks. The club consistently demonstrates time and again its ability to succeed and run to an incredibly high standard, whilst upholding its reputation within the community. I wish Oatley Lions Club all the best in its future endeavours in our local community and I look forward to working with it closely as the years go by.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (22:04): I commend the Minister and member for Oatley for recognising Oatley Lions Club. We had quite serious flooding earlier this year—in fact, it was as serious as we have ever seen. It was great that our city cousins were able to donate their time and material goods to Coraki and Woodburn to help those communities in their hour of greatest need. The Minister spoke at great length about the community spirit that Lions has. I acknowledge that the member for Lismore is in the Chamber. That help and support on a community level was felt and appreciated by all those people on the North Coast.

COST OF LIVING

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (22:05): Living in the country has always come at a cost. We drive more and generally travel further. We do not have the same level of public transport enjoyed by those in the city. We do not have bicycle networks to pedal around. Then again, even if we did, we would have to contend with the extremes of heat and cold to do it. In turn, we have to buy more fuel, service our vehicles more often and wear out the rubber on our tyres more quickly. Most of the goods we buy from stores have, on average, been transported greater distances than those in the city. Those are just some examples of ordinary costs borne by country consumers which are typically higher than costs of similar items and services in the city.

But those costs are now compounded by soaring inflation. COVID, the war in the Ukraine, natural disasters, frosty foreign relations, and other national and international factors and events have contributed to a rapid rise in the cost of living for Australians, and there is not a day in the past couple of months that this issue has not been raised with me by constituents. In Australia, the iconic Big Mac burger—McDonald's flagship burger—is reportedly one of the most expensive in the world. A few of the Big Mac's competitors have made headlines in recent months, with companies resorting to reducing the quantity of lettuce on their burgers or going as far as substituting it with a cabbage mix. Short supply and high demand saw the price of lettuce skyrocket to \$12 each.

While most of us can stomach a Zinger with cabbage instead of lettuce, many of us cannot digest the significant increase in the cost of energy—be it gas, electricity or fuel. That is where governments must step in. People living in the country, on average, have to contend with greater extremes of climate. My electorate of Orange is home to one of the coldest climates in the State. Whilst not shocked, I was concerned to learn that an increasing number of my constituents have chosen not to turn on their heaters because they cannot afford the cost of electricity or gas. This winter has been bitterly cold and it has been made even worse by prolonged wet conditions. I shiver at the thought of the long winter nights for those who are not heating their homes because they cannot afford the increased cost of gas or electricity and who have to resort to going to bed at 7.30 p.m. just to keep warm. Without a rise in income or reasonable pricing of energy, I expect that those same people will not be using their air conditioners this summer either.

Governments must intervene to better monitor and rein in the costs of those utilities. I have reviewed the NSW Council of Social Service's July 2022 paper of recommendations to the New South Wales Government. The report revealed, unsurprisingly, that those on low incomes have now been driven below the poverty line and are foregoing spending on essentials to make ends meet. NCOSS has made six recommendations to the Government which have the ability to reduce the impacts of the cost of living, if implemented. One recommendation is to raise the rate of income support. It is difficult enough for many individuals and families who receive an income, so spare a thought for those whose income is of a low award-level hourly rate or whose work is not constant or permanent. I recently met with a local, hardworking care worker. Because of routine understaffing in that sector, she is run off her feet all day looking after the elderly in an aged-care facility. Despite earning an above-award wage, because of the rise in the cost of living she needs to work at least one overtime shift each week to make ends meet.

Social and affordable housing is shrinking simply because the quantity of housing is not meeting the growing demand. Governments have dropped the ball and have failed to increase investment consistent with demand. Wait times of up to 10 years or more for suitable social housing are unacceptable, and the Government must do more to reduce the cost of energy and ensure that charges are justifiable and, more importantly, affordable. The rising cost of fuel, whilst temporarily relieved by partial lifting of the fuel excise, has been a major hit to the back pockets of country people. Nobody is immune from the impacts of inflation, but it is the average person on a low to middle income that is struggling, and it is only going to get worse unless governments take the reins and exercise control over the many controllable elements which contribute to the increasingly high cost of living.

MURWILLUMBAH SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (22:09): Tonight I will speak about the Murwillumbah district and the Tweed Valley, which are beautiful areas that I represent. I will talk about some of the great things that are happening and some of the things that need to happen. But first, having heard the member for Oatley speak earlier, I put on record a thankyou to the Oatley Lions Club for thinking of us up in the north because of the floods. I acknowledge the response of the member for Coffs Harbour. The Lions Club came to Woodburn and Coraki. They are mainly in the Clarence electorate, but East Coraki and part of North Woodburn are in my electorate, so I am very familiar with those areas.

Murwillumbah is a wonderful town, as are the villages that surround it—Uki, Tyalgum, Chillingham, et cetera. Parts of Murwillumbah got smashed in the floods. Like everywhere else, they are recovering reasonably well. I have met with people; I have gone to their homes. Some of them want voluntary house raising. Some of them want voluntary house purchase. Some of them want to relocate their home to another block; they want to do a land swap but take their home with them. That has happened before in our area and it can happen again. I have raised that with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation's chief executive, David Witherdin. I know all of that is within the purview of the corporation and is on the agenda, and I am hoping to hear some announcements of additional resources soon so that work can get underway.

Murwillumbah has other needs. First, there is housing. I have talked about housing problems as a result of the flood, but there is more than that. Across the Northern Rivers there is a housing shortage of about 18,600 homes. That has been documented by Social Futures, which presented 186 origami homes to me the other day to represent the 18,600 homes. We need short-, medium- and long-term housing solutions and responses. During the flood, the Premier visited early with me and committed to some of those options. We are still waiting to see some of them rolled out. People have been housed in emergency accommodation. We are not sure where some of them are. Some have left, but we need a lot more, and we need medium- and long-term accommodation. We need the Government to invest in housing. Housing supply is not that hard; the Government just needs to say, "That is what we have to do."

There are a few other issues. One is policing in Murwillumbah, which does not have 24/7 police station coverage. It is a growing area, so we need it. I have brought a notice of motion to this place before about the promise made by my predecessor in 2007. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition committed to an around-the-clock police station and, after many years in government, that has not happened. That is one of the things that I am driving for. At the time, it was said that it would be achieved with an additional 15 police officers. We need that to happen. I note that recently the Government announced an extra 550 police statewide. On 18 July 2022, the Deputy Premier announced that there would be 550 new positions in the NSW Police Force this financial year. We only want 15 in Murwillumbah. Out of 550, that is not too many so we are not being greedy. If the Deputy Premier is listening, we just want 15. That would help us have the 24/7 station that we need.

COOGEE ELECTORATE PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (22:14): Today I will talk about the state of the three public hospitals in my electorate of Coogee. I thank all of the healthcare staff at the Prince of Wales Hospital, Royal

Hospital for Women and the Sydney Children's Hospital for the amazing work they do under enormous pressure. We all know that they need much more than thanks. Our healthcare system is at absolute breaking point. We are in a healthcare crisis. The Prince of Wales Hospital has had an almost 30 per cent increase in patients spending over four hours in the emergency department. The Royal Hospital for Women has had a 20 per cent increase in wait times for urgent elective surgery. Sydney Children's Hospital has had an increase of over 23 per cent in patients spending more than four hours in the emergency department.

Despite the best efforts of nursing and midwifery management at the Prince of Wales Hospital, 328 hours of nursing shifts went unfilled in September 2021, and that is not uncommon. The surgical dressers in the spinal unit at Prince of Wales Hospital have had three staff leave and they are yet to be replaced. Domestic services and food services at the Randwick Hospital campus regularly complain about shifts being left vacant. Clinical support officers have become a dumping ground for any additional tasks that need doing in the wards. Subsequently, workloads have become unsustainable. This Government has done absolutely nothing to rectify this issue.

Our hospitals are understaffed and underfunded. To address our healthcare crisis we must address the staffing crisis. A healthier staffing system means a healthier healthcare system. Safe ratios and fair wages are a critical part of that. This Government knows that there is an issue with our healthcare system. It knows that emergency wait times are increasing. In New South Wales, thousands of patients are being admitted to hospital every day; nationally, thousands of healthcare workers are furloughed due to infection. Our EDs are out of control. A constituent of mine had symptomatic COVID. They went to the Prince of Wales Emergency Department for treatment. They were made to wait outside for hours in three-degree wind chill. I have heard numerous stories of similar unacceptable treatment of patients because our EDs are overrun.

The Government is leaving hospitals short-staffed and under-resourced. Our healthcare staff are burnt out and are leaving due to unsafe working conditions. It is creating an unsafe healthcare system in my electorate and across the State. Our hospitals are struggling to deal with emergency department pressures and with the pressures placed on staff from COVID-19. Earlier this year I held a community town hall meeting to discuss our healthcare system and to hear from my community about their experiences with our healthcare system over the past few years. The issues ranged from cardiac surgery services at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick; the fact that kids have to be transferred to Westmead and the near-misses that they have experienced; safe nurse-to-patient ratios and inadequate staffing in our healthcare system; emergency wait times; elective surgery wait times; and the need for a more effective response to COVID-19.

This Government knows all about those issues but it has done nothing to address them. The community, frontline workers, healthcare professionals and industry experts have raised these issues, but this Government continues to do nothing. People want their hospitals to be run effectively. To do that, hospitals need to be properly staffed and properly funded. The buck stops with this Government, but it has failed the test so far. We desperately need our hospitals to be properly funded and with safe nurse-to-patient ratios.

RESILIENCE NSW

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (22:19): New South Wales covers an area of some 800,642 square kilometres. It is a vast and beautiful place, but at times deadly. Our geography and climate often test the population with extreme heat, drought, bushfires, floods, storms, raging seas and even earthquakes. Because disasters can happen anywhere in this expansive State, when they do happen, we need a coordinated response at all levels and across a range of agencies. Ideally, all emergency response organisations in the State should come together when a disaster strikes, uniting under a single command or authority. But that is only part of the job. Between disasters, those organisations should also be working on preparedness for future events so that they can hit the ground running when the worst comes. When it is over, someone should be leading recovery efforts and reviewing to see what could have been done better and to ensure that no-one has been left disadvantaged or in need of help. That organisation should always be reviewing the performance of those coordinated efforts, making changes as needed. It should be open, transparent and invite consultation.

In 2020 the Government promised to deliver all of that when it established Resilience NSW, a body placed under the command of Shane Fitzsimmons, Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service and hero of the 2019-20 bushfires response. It took over from the Office of Emergency Management, which had fulfilled some of those functions before. Resilience NSW promised much but, according to communities, could not deliver. For two years, Resilience NSW operated but no-one really knew what it was doing. Some accused it of just being another layer of bureaucracy, while others tried to work out where the money was being spent, how the organisation was structured and what Resilience NSW was doing.

Complaints have been made that the organisation was top-heavy and that during a crisis its members were treating the work like a nine-to-five job—they are the words of flood victims and agencies, not mine—and it was hard to get hold of people after business hours. While it is acknowledged that people need downtime, especially

after great stress, members of communities were going above and beyond the call of duty. During the floods, there were stories of school principals operating evacuation centres out of their schools well beyond their normal hours and of neighbours stepping up to rescue other neighbours at any hour. People complained to a parliamentary inquiry that Resilience NSW members were not there or, when they did appear, they were more of a hindrance than a help. The flood plans they were working with were so outdated that they did not even mention the existence of Resilience NSW. How was Resilience NSW meant to operate if there were no protocols for how it should operate within the State's flood plans?

Some people in the organisation were doing a great job. I acknowledge Ken Harrison, who always picked up my calls at any hour; and Melissa Gore, who worked incredibly hard with my team. But their great work has been lost in the systemic failings of Resilience NSW. With dozens of stories circulating about the organisation and the problems with it, in March 2022 I submitted a question on notice. I asked:

- (1) Can the Minister provide a full description of the legislative instructions and ministerial instructions to Resilience NSW on its functions, responsibilities and duties?
- (2) Will the Minister provide an organisational chart for Resilience NSW?
- (3) What is the relation between Resilience NSW and other emergency services?
- (4) Are there formal agreements between Resilience NSW and other emergency services regarding responsibilities shared or separate between the agencies?

In response I was directed to a website where there was no organisational chart and no clear description of the relationship between Resilience NSW and the services it was supposed to interact with. It had only a vague idea of what its responsibilities are. The reason Resilience NSW is being wound up is contained in those questions. There is more to be answered about where the money was being spent and what Resilience NSW was able to do. The report from the inquiry into the response to major flooding in New South Wales in 2022 details those failings. The inquiry has already decided there is no clear role for Resilience NSW, that it was not meeting community needs, and it recommended it be dismantled.

Resilience NSW has little to show for its brief existence. That is because from day one it should have been given more direct connections with agencies with which it was meant to interact. That does not mean dictatorial powers to order other organisations around but something more substantial than the nebulous body it seems to have been. Someone of the calibre of Fitzsimmons needed to be given the sort of structure and legislation he controlled when he was looking after the bushfire efforts. Members in this place have all heard that there will be a new organisation called Hawk. Hopefully the rise and fall of Resilience NSW has been a learning experience that will better inform how this new organisation is set up. Hawk cannot be another Resilience NSW; it needs to be something much better.

I have just been having a chat with the member for Lismore, who told me about her experience of dealing with Resilience. I certainly do not think anything I have said in this contribution is far from the truth with regard to the inadequacy of Resilience and its lack of connectivity with other emergency organisations. I hope that in future this Parliament can deliver better services and better emergency responses to the people of New South Wales. I thank the House.

PADSTOW ROTARY CLUB SERVICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (10:24): Earlier in the year I attended the Service Officer of the Year Awards organised by the Rotary Club of Padstow and held at Bankstown Sports Club. Since 2004 Padstow Rotary has recognised the wonderful work that service officers do in supporting our community. These men and women are indeed our local heroes. The club's aim is to recognise these officers, who are nominated by their supervisors and peers as having performed at a level exceeding all expectations. The annual awards night provided an opportunity for members of the public and fellow service officers to acknowledge outstanding acts of courtesy, kindness, understanding, compassion, courage and devotion to duty by members of the NSW Police Force, State Emergency Service, St John Ambulance Australia, Fire and Rescue NSW, and the Ambulance Service of NSW.

Since 2017 the event has been expanded to include other emergency services organisations within our local area. Recognition was also given to representatives of the Bankstown Police Transport Command, Revesby Highway Patrol, New South Wales Police Aviation Support Branch, NSW Ambulance Aeromedical, PolAir and the Newborn Emergency Transport Service. Also in attendance at the awards night were David Coleman, Federal member for Banks; Acting Commissioner for Fire and Rescue Jeremy Fewtrell; Rotary District Governor Jeremy Wright; Rotary District Governor-elect Janice Hall; and representatives of the sponsors, including Motorola Solutions, RFI Wireless and Bankstown Sports Club. The entertainment was provided by the excellent New South Wales Police Band, whose performance was of the usual outstanding quality it provides at these events.

I acknowledge the hardworking Padstow Rotary organising committee, including Julie Harris, Paul McCarthy and Allyn Waters, in addition to Claire and Ross Smith, Tony Luck and master of ceremonies Bryan Doyle. The nominations and winners of the awards were: from Bankstown Police, Leading Senior Constable Amir Saffuri, Senior Constable Katherine Moss and Sergeant Michael Todd; from Bankstown Police Transport Command, Senior Constable Sarah Kemp; from Revesby Highway Patrol, Constable Lauren Bellamy, Sergeant Matthew Tracey and Senior Constable Paul Medulla; from the New South Wales Police Aviation Command, Senior Constable Kate Howe and Avionics Engineer Vincent Hew; from Fire and Rescue Local, Senior Firefighter Greg Scarfe of Bankstown Fire Station, Station Commander Martin Quigg of Revesby Fire Station; and, from Fire and Rescue Headquarters Greenacre, Team Leader – Program Administration Michelle Trajkovski.

Other nominees and winners included the very funny paramedic Josh Payne from New South Wales Ambulance Bankstown; from New South Wales Ambulance Aeromedical, station manager Vicki Castle; from the Newborn Emergency Transport Service, emergency vehicle operator Tom Walsh; and from St John Ambulance, first responder Frank Vella. An award winner from 2021 was Dr Kamarah Pooley, who joined NSW Fire and Rescue in 2012. In June this year she was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours. She completed a Bachelor of Criminology from Griffith University, First Class Honours in Criminology from the University of New England and a PhD through the Queensland University of Technology, where she received an outstanding doctoral thesis award for her study into youth misuse of fire.

While serving as a frontline firefighter, Dr Pooley has also completed secondments with the Community Engagement Unit and is currently a fire research officer with the Fire Investigations Unit. Dr. Pooley has also led research into best-practice, school-based fire safety education programs, aligning the programs with the school curriculum and creating a scalable and sustainable way for children and their families to receive critical fire safety education. I congratulate all the award recipients and again thank all the servicemen and servicewomen who do such great work in our local community.

SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (22:29): I call on the New South Wales Government to once and for all make the commitment to end the rorts, waste and pork-barrelling in New South Wales. After 11 long years, residents and business owners in my electorate of Shellharbour are fed up with the blatant and completely unfair distribution of taxpayer funds across New South Wales. The Shellharbour community should not have to wait for desperately needed schools and other infrastructure funding because they live in an electorate that is not deemed worthy by the Government. They are sick of missing out time after time—and rightly so. Their taxes are being wasted to prop up this incompetent Government, whose members provide jobs for their mates.

Whilst the Government may think \$1.5 million for an overseas trade commissioner role is insignificant, I will outline what that amount of money could do for the people of Shellharbour. Last weekend members of the junior and senior Stingrays of Shellharbour Rugby League Football Club invited me to inspect the so-called facilities at Flinders Field in Shellharbour. The junior and senior clubs work closely together and there is strong support for the club from both players and family members. Like most community-based sporting groups in my electorate, the Stingrays are growing rapidly as the population of Shellharbour increases every year. The club is a true success story, with hundreds of players from the under 6s all the way through to the first grade team in the group 7 competition.

The Stingrays also have junior girls and senior women's league tag competitions, which are growing rapidly. The players are supported by a dedicated team of hardworking volunteers including Matt Port, Stephan Wood, Donna Singleton, Les McGregor and Steve Eade. But the facilities at Flinders Field are a horror show. The players are forced to change and shower in crumbling, overcrowded dressing rooms, and there is not enough room to house a full team of kids, let alone a team of senior players. Referees currently use the one and only disabled toilet to change, and there is no dedicated female changing room, despite the rapid growth in participation of girls and women across all versions of the game.

It is hard to imagine such poor facilities in a marginal Liberal electorate. My residents are rightly angry about being treated like second-class citizens. They are fed up with the Government treating the allocation of their taxes like some kind of joke. For \$1.5 million, we could build a brand-new amenities building that all users of Flinders Field could access. They are not asking for toilets made of solid gold, just modern facilities that are fit for purpose. Those facilities would benefit not only the local teams but also the hundreds of players from all over New South Wales who visit the area for competitions such as the upcoming over 35s Rugby League Masters Carnival, which will be held on the weekend of 8 and 9 October 2022. That is just one example of what could be achieved with that \$1.5 million under a New South Wales Labor government.

This morning over Facebook I asked my community to nominate other projects where \$1.5 million could provide better value than an overseas trade commissioner position. I will continue to fight for the Shellharbour community. I assure every resident, community group and local business that they will get a fair go under a Labor government led by Chris Minns.

Community Recognition Notices

BANKSTOWN SPORTS ATHLETICS CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I take this opportunity to congratulate the Bankstown Sports Athletics Club [BSAC] 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 BSAC in their 2021-22 Local Sport Grant Program application to secure \$2,200 in funding to supply of tracksuits for their junior athletes, and \$2,500 for the purchase of track and field athletics equipment. I wish to acknowledge Bankstown Sports Athletics Club President Colin Whitbread and Secretary Matthew Whitbread for their terrific work in promoting athletics throughout South West Sydney. I am proud to support the Bankstown Sports Athletics Club and wish all the Executive, coaches, volunteers and athletes a successful upcoming season.

BANKSTOWN DISTRICT AMATEUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION [BDAFA]

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I take this opportunity to congratulate the Bankstown District Amateur Football Association (BDAFA) 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 BDAFA in their 2021-22 Local Sport Grant Program application to secure \$2,000 in funding to organise a Grade 6 Introduction to Football Gala Day and Coaching Course. I wish to acknowledge BDAFA Chairman Dimitri Hursalas, Deputy Chairman, Laurie Warner and the BDAFA Board of Directors, James Bowmaker, Andrew Skaltsounis, and Marianna Konidaris, as well as the General Manager, Leanne Millar for their terrific work in promoting football in our local community. I am proud to support BDAFA as a patron of the Association, and I congratulate all teams, coaches, staff and players on a successful football season.

CEREBRAL PALSY ALLIANCE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to meet with staff members and clients of Cerebral Palsy Alliance's Chester Hill Disability Respite House, and inspect the new upgrades completed in July. Cerebral Palsy Alliance was established in 1945, and the organisation assists in meeting the treatment, education, equipment, employment, recreation, independent living, and research needs for individuals living with cerebral palsy. Their Chester Hill Disability Respite House provides much needed respite for children and adults living with a disability, whilst also providing families and carers a break. I was delighted to support Cerebral Palsy Alliance in their 2021 Community Building Partnership Grant application to secure \$16,500 in funding to upgrade their Disability Respite House in Chester Hill, including the repainting of internal walls, ceiling, doors, and the installation of new windows and skirting throughout the home. I wish to congratulate the Cerebral Palsy Alliance on a successful application and for their efforts in supporting their clients and their families.

ROTARY CLUB OF KIAMA'S 70TH ANNUAL CHANGE OVER DINNER

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I was extremely pleased to attend the Rotary Club of Kiama's 70th Annual Change Over Dinner held on Monday 27th June 2022 at Kiama Leagues Club. I congratulate Carol Jagger on being elected as the incoming President, Secretary Marilyn Jarrett for her many years of hard work and dedication at the Club, and Treasurer Geoff Cole and the hard-working former Councillor and Mayor of Kiama Brian Petschler, and other directors including Errol Chopping, John Kenny, Pat Smith, John Worstencroft, Murray Smith and David Russell, Anne Doorn and Helen Stirling for their ongoing hard work and contributions at the Club. I also acknowledge and sincerely thank the outgoing President Trevor Phillis for his absolutely outstanding and distinguished contribution to the Rotary Club of Kiama over many years. Trevor has achieved a lot for the local Kiama community and should be incredibly proud of his efforts. The Rotary Club of Kiama members and volunteers really do set the standard for helping to make the world a better place. A huge thank you to all members and volunteers at the Club and please keep up the great work and keep doing more great things for our local Kiama township.

THURGATE OVAL NEW DOG PARK OFFICIAL OPENING

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—On Saturday 2 July 2022, I joined with representatives from Bomaderry Community Inc. and braved the pouring rain to officially open Stage 1 of the new Bomaderry Off Leash Dog Park in Thurgate Oval. You could say that we were all barking mad however it was also a wonderful opportunity to

come and meet the individuals, businesses and dog owners and volunteers who have helped make the park possible. An inaugural Gumboots & Dog Bowls Canine Crusade was also in the works with all proceeds planned for the Shoalhaven Branch of NSW Animal Welfare League. A huge thank you and acknowledge to local Bomaderry resident Kylie Knight for her wonderful strategic coordination and dedicated efforts to make this project happen and well done to the other Bomaderry Community Inc. members and volunteers on their wonderful involvement and participation.

BERRY ROTARY CLUB'S 63RD ANNUAL CHANGE OVER DINNER

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I was extremely pleased to attend the Rotary Club of Berry's 63rd Annual Change Over Dinner held on Friday 8th July 2022 at Coolangatta Estate Winery. I congratulate Haseena Tweddle on being elected as the incoming President, Secretary Suad Haddad and Treasurer Bill Seelis and the hard-working Paul Anderson, John Brentnall, Shona Gibson and Grahame Sweeney for their ongoing hard work and contributions at the Club. I also acknowledge and sincerely thank the outgoing President Phil Crocker for his outstanding and distinguished contribution. The Berry Rotary Club volunteers really do set the standard for helping to make the world a better place. A huge thank you to all members and volunteers at the Club and please keep up the great work and keep doing more great things for our local Berry and surrounding local towns and communities.

WORLD-STAGE WIN FOR RHYTHMIC GYMNASTS

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)—With little fanfare or recognition, five young Australian women have recently become the first Australian Rhythmic Gymnastics team to ever make a final on the world stage. Competing at the International Gymnastics Federation World Cup Circuit in Artistic Gymnastics in Pamplona, Spain, Taylah Smith, Ainsley Barker, Ashleigh Law, Charlotte Wong and Laura Gosling displayed their talents across two apparatus, qualifying for the final in Ribbon and Ball, where they finished in eighth place. The team went on to compete in a smaller, yet still international, competition in Greece, where they achieved their highest overall score this year and a golden trifecta for their Hoop, Ribbon and Ball routines. At 18, Taylah Smith is the youngest member of the team. Taylah is from Queanbeyan, learning her skills at the Queanbeyan YMCA, Canberra Rhythmic Gymnastics Club and more recently the new PCYC in Queanbeyan. Apart from her dream of making the Olympics, Taylah's short-term goal is to make it onto the walls of the Queanbeyan Sporting Gallery, where more than 100 Queanbeyan sporting greats are on display. Taylah is now in Brisbane, training with her team to compete in the World Cup in Bulgaria, in September.

RETIREMENT OF WENDY CARVER OAM

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—The extraordinary service Lifeline provides to the community cannot be overstated. Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury, now located in my electorate of Davidson, commenced its operations in Hornsby in December 1967 with just two full time staff and 250 volunteers. Since moving to Gordon in 1996, volunteer numbers have grown to over 700, all with a purpose of helping those most in need. This dedication has never been more evident than in recent years, through the mental health challenges brought about by fires, floods, storms and the ongoing stresses of the Covid pandemic. Wendy Carver, who retired at the end on July, has been a mainstay of Lifeline H2H for over 30 years, first as volunteer and then as CEO for the past twelve years. Wendy was awarded an OAM in the Australia Day Honours in 2021 in recognition of the service she has given to the community through Lifeline. Wendy is also a constituent in my electorate and it has been an honour to have known her over the years. I commend Wendy Carver on her many years of service to Lifeline and to the community and wish her well in retirement.

KILLARA HIGH MATHS EXCELLENCE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Killara High student, Tony Yuzheng Wu, was awarded a gold medal at the recent International Math Olympiad in Oslo. The Year 12 student was presented with his gold medal in the same hall where the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded each year. The award officially recognises Tony as one of the brightest young mathematical minds on our planet. This is a wonderful validation of the excellence of the NSW Public Education System, including at Killara High, in my electorate of Davidson. In comments after his win, Tony acknowledged the support and encouragement of his Killara High teachers and wider school community. Tony also mentioned two past Killara students, Wilson Zhao, and Jongmin Lim, who previously had the opportunity to represent the school at the International Maths Olympics. Tony is humble about his achievement and hopes that his success motivates other Killara High students. Congratulations to Tony and to the teachers and school community of Killara High.

ROSEVILLE PARK TENNIS CLUB CENTENARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—The Roseville Park Tennis Club is celebrating its centenary this month. As part of the celebrations, a dinner will be held on 20 August at Roseville Golf Club. I acknowledge their

members and committee, led by President Carolyn Gardiner-Hill. Notable mentions go to Tony Sanbrook, member for over 64 years, Craig McGregor, member for 50 years, and Barry Farr, the immediate past President of 10 years. Through the Community Building Partnership Grants program, the NSW Government assisted the Tennis Club with a \$30,000 grant to help construct a new Tennis Pavilion. This facility is enhancing the Club's continued operations in the local community. Congratulations to the Roseville Park Tennis Club on their significant milestone and I wish everyone involved an enjoyable celebration.

MURWILLUMBAH SERVICES CLUB – PERFECT PLATE AWARD

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—At a time where the Northern Rivers communities have been devastated by the humanitarian flood disaster, to congratulate Murwillumbah Services Club in being the recipient of the Perfect Plate Award for New South Wales Far North Coast Region is very welcomed news. The Award is judged entirely by diners by scoring competition dishes through a voting portal. The dishes with the highest average score from the public will then be crowned the winners. The Award is NSW club industry's premier cooking competition showcasing the best of club dining and driving patrons into venues. In this year's competition, chefs at 164 participating club eateries across the state put their best plate forward, enticing members and guests to taste their culinary creations and vote for their delicious dishes. 40 per cent of entering clubs were new to the competition this year. Despite an incredibly difficult few years of fires, floods, pandemic and border closures in the Northern Rivers, Murwillumbah Services Club contribute funds to organisations who provide a community service and promote core community values such as health, education, safety, children and town prosperity. A special thank you to Manager Ashlea Hancock and the staff.

RHONDA BROWN – 3BRIDGES COMMUNITY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Rhonda Brown of Gymea Bay, who is a finalist in the 2022 Westfield Local Heroes Award. This award acknowledges and celebrates the work done by local individuals and organisations who drive positive impacts for their community. The program, now in its fifth year, awards a successful hero with a \$20,000 grant for the group or organisation they represent as well as a \$5000 grant for each finalist. Rhonda runs popular social groups for seniors through the charity 3Bridges Community. 3Bridges Community is a charity that offers early years support, before and after school care, vacation care, disability support, and senior support services. In her role at 3Bridges Community, Rhonda plans more than 30 weekly social groups that attract 500 people aged 65 and older collectively. These social groups bring people together, reduce loneliness and promote wellbeing within our senior community.

KAREN TSOUMBARAS – PROJECT YOUTH

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Karen Tsoumbaras of Gymea Bay, who is a finalist in the 2022 Westfield Local Heroes Award. The Local Heroes award acknowledges and celebrates the work done by local individuals and organisations who drive positive impacts for their community. The program, now in its fifth year, awards a successful hero with a \$20,000 grant for the group or organisation they represent as well as a \$5000 grant for each finalist. Karen is the Employment Education and Training Manager at Project Youth. Project Youth is a non-profit organisation offering programs for local youth aged 12-24 facing disadvantages such as mental health, homelessness, family dysfunction, lack of education, abuse, neglect, poverty, and involvement in the criminal justice system. In her role at Project Youth, Karen helps youth to access education and improve their employment prospects. The Labour Y and Café Y enterprises support the education and training of young people and collaborates with companies who offer employment opportunities.

JOHN MAGUIRE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I pay tribute to John Maguire, a former teacher and rugby league player for the Cronulla Sharks, who died in July. John moved to St George in 1965 and made his first-grade debut at the Dragons in 1966. He returned to Cronulla in 1968 and went on to play 175 games with the Sharks, 137 of those in first grade. In his eight-year career at the Sharks, John is best remembered for his role in the 1973 Grand Final against Manly. John captain-coached Corrimal in the 1976 Illawarra competition and played with Parramatta in 1977. John is also remembered for his achievements as a teacher and principal. Alongside his rugby league career, John was a mathematics teacher at Endeavour High School. He was later the principal of De La Salle College Cronulla, from 1996 to 2004. John is remembered as a hard-working, knowledgeable and thoughtful teacher by his students and colleagues. I extend my sincere sympathy to his wife Maria; his son Damien; his four grandchildren; and all family and friends.

DR JACQUELINE SPURWAY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise Dr Jacqueline Spurway of Orange. Dr Spurway, Orange Health Service's Chief Sonographer, was recognised by the Australasian Sonographer's Association as the 2022 New South Wales Sonographer of the Year. During her 21-year career at Orange Health Service, Dr Spurway

has been a driving force for implementing improved policy, procedure, and developing best practice ultrasound services throughout the Western New South Wales Local Health District. Dr Spurway obtained her doctorate while working at Orange Health Service, and still pursues further study and research. She plays an essential role in clinical education, sharing her knowledge and experience as the district's clinical co-ordinator for ultrasound services. Dr Spurway should be commended, particularly for her work in obstetrics, paediatric hips, and dialysis. I congratulate Dr Jaqueline Spurway for her tireless effort in supporting the health and wellbeing of all those in Orange, and for bringing high quality care as close to home for all in Western New South Wales. Well done.

NATALIE LETCHER

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise Miss Natalie Letcher, of Orange. Natalie is pursuing a career in nursing, seeking to look after people who are ill and make a difference to people's lives. She is presently studying a Diploma of Nursing to achieve her ambitions for a career in nursing. Natalie applied for the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales Foundation's Rural Scholarship program, and she was recently announced as being one of 82 successful scholarship applicants. The scholarship will help financially support Natalie while she devotes herself to her full-time studies, as she steadily progresses toward attaining qualifications to then pursue work opportunities to realise her professional nursing ambitions. Congratulations, Natalie. I wish you well in your studies and future career in nursing.

MR NEDD BROCKMANN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise Bedgerabong-bred and philanthropist, Nedd Brockmann. Having moved from the Forbes district to Sydney to pursue his tradecraft as an electrician, Nedd bared witness to the overt homelessness seeing people living on the streets in the city. Nedd felt compelled within himself to do something to help homeless who are in desperate need of food and shelter. In 2020 the then 21-year-old initiated a fundraising campaign in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, raising over \$100,000 by running fifty 42km marathons in fifty consecutive days – an extraordinary physical and fundraising effort. Nedd has now embarked on another fundraising initiative, in partnership with the charity We Are Mobilise. Commencing September 1st, he will run from Australia's west coast to the east coast, in just forty days! Nedd will set-off from Cottesloe Beach and plans to run 100km per day until he arrives at Bondi Beach less than six weeks later. Nedd is endeavouring to further raise awareness of homelessness and fundraise \$1 million for charity in the process. This is a herculean quest by a herculean human; I admire Nedd's extraordinary efforts to help Aussies in need and wish him well on his challenging journey. Bravo.

RIP PETER WAITE AO

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—I acknowledge a well-respected member of the Hornsby community, Peter Waite, who passed away recently after a period of illness. Elected as a Hornsby Councillor for two terms (serving 1980 to 1987), Peter had a reputation for examining local issues in close detail. He kept this reputation for decades after serving as a Councillor regularly speaking at Council meetings. He took a particular interest in Hornsby Quarry and his advocacy was one of the reasons I was determined to find a final solution for the benefit of the community. He was also a passionate advocate for Hornsby Hospital, and in 1996, when the then Labor Government proposed its closure, Peter led a community campaign which stopped the proposal from progressing. As well as being very active in the Rotary Club of Pennant Hills, Peter had a 60-year association Scouts. As a professional builder he put his skills to work as a volunteer when he helped build the Cherrybrook Scout Hall. Peter Waite was awarded an Order of Australia in 1996, for his work on behalf of the community. The Hornsby community is poorer for the loss of Peter Waite.

GIBBERAGONG SCHOOL'S 50 YEAR MILESTONE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—Through the vision of Allen Strom, the Environment Education Centres [EECs] were created in my electorate 50 years ago. Strom was a former teacher and when he came up with the idea for EECs, he was the Adviser in Conservation to the Education Department. In 1972, Gibberagong School was established. Strom's words about the EEC school were, "The problem, which future generations must resolve, is how to ensure that these good things will always be available. The present generation must learn, and learn quickly, to use and manage the good things of nature so that quality of life in the future is at least as good as it is now". These were insightful words 50 years ago and Gibberagong, continues today as a unique education facility where tens of thousands of young students have been inspired. Today the school's vision statement is, Inspiring school communities to know, value and act for the environment. I thank everyone involved with Gibberagong over the years, for their important educational work. The school has now taught across several generations, and it is crucial that schools such as Gibberagong, continue to operate for generations to come.

ST STEPHEN'S NORMANHURST ANGLICAN CHURCH CENTENARY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)—Today I would like to recognise the St Stephen's Normanhurst Anglican Church. The parish is taking the time to recognise the centenary of their church. Recognition of this significant milestone was delayed by the pandemic as St Stephen's parish in Normanhurst was established in 1920. Anglican services have been held in the area since 1919. The church has grown steadily and now on a weekend around 700 children, youth and adults regularly meet across five services. The parish also has a thriving youth group and children's ministry and outreach to the local community. The current Rector, Rev Dr Baden Stace has been Rector since 2019. His steady leadership has successfully guided his Parish community through the difficult period of the pandemic. The church's centenary will be celebrated with a special service at Barker College for which the Archbishop of Sydney, Rev Kanishka Raffel will be attending along with other dignitaries. I recognise the many parishioners who have contributed to help St Stephens, Normanhurst achieve their centenary and become the large and vibrant parish that is today. All the best for the next hundred years!

FAREWELL TO 'FANTASTIC' AND HUMBLE MANAGER

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge General Manager of Greater Hume Council Steve Pinnuck, who has entered into retirement. Steve has been a natural leader in our community and has served Greater Hume with great enthusiasm, intelligence and integrity since being appointed in 2006. Previous to that Steve served with Culcairn Council between 1998 & 2004. To uphold such a high-profile role has had its many challenges, but Steve has consistently demonstrated his dedication to his community, with his skilful management and hard work. He is extremely well respected by local government professionals as well as within his community. I wish Steve a most enjoyable retirement and thank him for his support. I will miss his stamina and commitment.

ROLE OF A LIFETIME EARNS GUILD APPLAUSE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Jan Skinner of Albury, who has received a 'Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa', from the Australian Guild of Music Education. This honorary doctorate has been bestowed in recognition of Jan's fifty years of excellence in speech and drama. The presentation of the award took place during an online ceremony attended by many globally. Ms Skinner has produced more than thirty musicals and twenty plays in Australia. To add to her accolades Ms Skinner holds a fellowship from the London College of Music and an Examiners Licentiate. Fifty-four of her students have successfully obtained Australian Guild of Music Education Associate Diplomas. This doctorate highlights the regard in which you are held by your peers and acknowledges the academic contribution you have made to your community and to your students who have been taught the skills of effective communication through speech and drama.

SPECIAL PAUL HARRIS FELLOWS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate the incoming President Stephen Apps and the new Board of the Rotary Club of Corowa for 2022-2023. During this year's eighty-third changeover dinner, Rotarians David Talbot and Bill Bott AM were both awarded the highest Rotarian honour of being named a 'Paul Harris Fellow' in recognition of their exceptional contribution and work in the community. In addition, David was also presented with the 'Sapphire Paul Harris Fellow' award. The Corowa Rotary Club has seen an increase in number and diversity of its membership, and I acknowledge this success. The club is involved in many activities such as monthly markets, youth programs, and a unique program assisting with the cleaning of sections of the highway. Well done Corowa Rotary Club.

BOB MCDONAGH

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The Campbelltown City Kangaroos Rugby League Football Club is one of the Macarthur region's great success stories. Always a force to be reckoned with, the Kangaroos are famous for banding together, and continually showing up for their teammates when they're needed. Unfortunately the club said farewell to one its stalwarts – Robert 'Bob' McDonagh. Bob spent much of his early playing days in Sydney with the Eastern Suburbs Roosters, before moving to Campbelltown and signing up as captain-coach in 1962. His impact was immediate as the Roos made the grand final in both 1962 and 1963. Unfortunately they succumbed to Mittagong both times. One of Bob's football career highlights was leading the Southern Division side to a famous victory over the touring Great Britain side in 1962. McDonagh is also held in high regard by the Campbelltown Collegians Rugby League Football Club following his appointment as coach in their inaugural Group 6 first grade season in 1970. I offer my condolences to Bob's family – including his wife Dorothy – and his loved ones. I also applaud the Roos for holding a minutes silence for Bob during one their recent games. Rest in peace, Bob.

KINGSGROVE HIGH SCHOOL'S CAREER

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—On 10 June I had the great pleasure of attending Kingsgrove High School's career expo, "Future Links". The theme of the expo was "Linking Futures" and the students from every year right across the school – and not just senior students – were given the chance to understand what life beyond the classroom could hold. This is a new school initiative and only the second time it's been hosted as part of careers week, which encourages students from Year 7 through to Year 12 the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions with post-school providers. The event also assists students in making suitable choices for their futures, which is such a positive, particularly as it gets the students from as young as Year 7 thinking about the world of opportunities available to them. I would like to congratulate the school on its forward thinking and innovative careers expo and to thank them for inviting me to attend; I experienced first-hand the enthusiasm and commitment of the school and of the students to the students' future. A job well done.

BLAKEHURST ACCIDENT: WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL NSW EMERGENCY STAFF

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Shortly before 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 23 June, NSW Ambulance paramedics were called to a Blakehurst property where it was reported that a car had flipped and crashed into a house on Kings Georges Road. Three paramedic road crews and a NSW Ambulance Inspector were dispatched to the scene. On arrival, paramedics found a patient trapped in a car on its side, up against the front porch of the house. Paramedics cared for a female patient, while officers from Fire and Rescue NSW worked to remove her safely from the vehicle. The woman was provided with pain relief and treated for neck and limb injuries and then taken to St George Hospital in a stable condition. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the emergency staff who rushed to the scene and also to all emergency staff across NSW for their commitment to the community and their diligence to helping others in what are often very distressing and difficult times. There are many occasions where they place themselves in harm's way to help others and so we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude.

A GOLDEN JUBILEE FOR ST MARK'S KINDERGARTEN AT SOUTH HURSTVILLE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Congratulations to St Mark's Kindergarten on celebrating 50 years of educating children. The kindergarten is co-located with St Mark's Anglican Church. Things have changed dramatically since its early beginnings. In 1975, there were three groups of children - four-year-olds who had the choice of attending either four afternoons or three mornings per week, while three-year-olds were there on two mornings each week. The cost of sending a three-year-old to the Kindergarten was only four dollars per week and six dollars per week for a four-year-old. The Kindergarten was a top centre of education within the Child Welfare Department and also a training centre for kindergarten union students. Former staff helper and long-time member of St Mark's Church, Betty Dayes, 88, has been a member of the church since she was 21 years of age. "I loved being with them [the children] and interacting with them. I would make playdough and glue with cornflour and water and help the children with painting and puzzles. The kindergarten is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a spring fair on 10 September. Congratulations on a wonderful milestone.

STARSTRUCK LAMBTON HIGH SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Each year various schools from around the electorate compete in Star Struck, and 2022 was no different. Lambton High School gave this year's program their all, with a truly impressive number of students completing performances in Star Struck. Amelia Arcadi, Lucy Phillips, Eve McNeil, and Lucas Millington performed as featured artists. They were joined by the core choir of Isabella Atkinson-Dousha, Olivia Harrington, Isabella Pateron, and Elana Zhang. Mhairi Hammond and Charlie Farmer participated in the orchestra. Holly Couper, Bailey Kidd, and Max Moloney contributed a rock band to the school's repertoire. Lily Campbell participated as a featured dancer. Last but not least, the large drama corps consisted of Lauren Anderson, Thea Barron, Annika Bastian, Elise Borg, Amalie Brown, Lily Campbell, Samiksha Chawla, April Rose Contempree, Natalia Diaz, Sofia Domingues, Sahra Garside, Genevieve Graham, Kate Manning, Lucinda McClure, Darcy Mitchell, Isabell Mulholland, Grace Pagoulatos, Alexis Pagoulatos, Asha Peterson, Sophie Robinson, Sam Rollings, Mickyla Roots, Heidi Russel, Prakriti Sathish Kumar, Candace Smith-Velich, Sylvia Stamm, Sarah Stokes, Phoebe Ulph, Ivy Wickman, and Charlotte Zinke. I would like to congratulate Lambton High's students for their performances in this long-running program.

JIE TANG

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—For many people, COVID-19 put a complete halt on their life in the community. Not so for TAFE NSW student Jie Tang, who spent the pandemic supporting his Chinese neighbours and friends. Concern about older people with Chinese backgrounds is what sparked Jie's altruistic efforts. Mixed messages from the Chinese government about going out and the impacts of COVID, as well as a fear of being blamed for the virus due to their nationality, led to considerable concern within the community. Jie's

efforts included collecting groceries for his community members and providing clarification on the restrictions and rules around the virus, all while studying a Certificate IV in Community Services at Glendale TAFE. More recently, he approached the Hunter Multicultural Communities at Waratah to help open a Chinese community garden. The project has been a great success – community members have started going outside again and interacting socially, while providing for the community. People come together to plant herbs and vegetables, and to share recipes. I would like to thank Jie for his efforts during a very difficult time for many communities. Well done!

ISABELLE BOULTON

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—At the end of June, Glendale East Public School kindergarten teacher Isabelle Boulton was selected by a panel to receive a Regional North Directorate Executive Director Excellence Award for her outstanding skills, dedication and contribution as a classroom teacher. Mrs Boulton, who I have been told is a "superstar" at Glendale East, is a highly skilled classroom practitioner who continually supports all students across our school. She runs countless exciting initiatives across the school, helping to ensure that Glendale East Public School is a fun and welcoming place to learn. As a former teacher, I know how hard Mrs Boulton has to work—and that she puts in so much extra effort is very commendable indeed. While the Glendale East school community is very familiar with Mrs Boulton's extraordinary contributions, it is lovely to have that recognised across the whole directorate. Congratulations to Mrs Boulton, and I would like to add my thanks you for everything she does for the Glendale East Public School community. The school is incredibly lucky indeed to have you on staff!!

CHAMPAGNAT AWARDS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I acknowledge the successful students from St Gregory's College who were recently awarded the prestigious Champagnat Award for displaying attentiveness to learning and respect for their teachers and peers. The annual Founder's Day festival held by St Gregory's College awards students who display a willingness to learn, joyful manner, passion for life, compassion for others, emerging sense of self and faith, community orientated, trustworthy, exemplary manners and respect towards their peers and adults. I congratulate Jackson O'Hehir, Kristian Katramados and Sebastian Sia from Lord Howe Island who have excelled as role models and demonstrated an eagerness to learn to achieve the coveted Champagnat Award. Sebastian Sia was named the most outstanding student for Year 9 and was presented with the highly esteemed Champagnat Medallion. Jackson O'Hehir and Kristian Katramados were also acknowledged for always putting others before themselves and leading by example through their passion for education. As we all know academic excellence is not always the only key to success and I therefore applaud Sebastian, Kristian and Jackson for their dedication and commitment towards their studies and their contribution in helping others to succeed.

HOMELESSNESS WEEK 2022 ROADSHOW

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate the Port Macquarie-Hastings Homelessness Committee for coordinating a program of activities including a travelling roadshow during Homelessness Week 2022. Ending homelessness is top of the agenda for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Homelessness Committee as they toured throughout the Hastings and Camden Haven offering food, donated items and support services to our rough sleepers. Committee members Deb Tougher, Alex Wade, Elle Wilkins, Kerry Etherington, Chris Mauler and Tracey Rogerson were instrumental in coordinating the Homelessness Week Traveling Roadshow which ventured into targeted areas where our most vulnerable are living. It is important to note that homelessness has many faces today from cost-of-living pressures and lack of affordable housing options to domestic violence, unemployment, drug and alcohol dependence, family break-ups, couch surfing, sleeping in cars, overcrowding and the list goes on. Taking the lead this year for Homelessness Week was Elle Wilkins from New Horizons. Through her line of work, Elle has built relationships with government agencies and local charities in efforts to house our rough sleepers and create awareness on a growing issue in our region. Role models in our community, I thank each and every volunteer for their invaluable contribution in tackling homelessness.

PORT MACQUARIE GARDEN CLUB

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate the Port Macquarie Garden Club on celebrating 60 years of horticulture in the beautiful Hastings community. Founded in November 1962, the Port Macquarie Garden Club have moulded and shaped our town's parks and gardens for over half a century thanks to the dedication of many volunteers. Foundation President at the inaugural meeting was Mrs Mary St Clair, with Mrs A. York taking on the Secretary role and Mrs I. Keena elected as Treasurer. The first garden competition was held in 1964 in conjunction with the Carnival of the Pines and grew in popularity over 40 years amongst the community's gardening enthusiasts. The Garden Club was instrumental in many projects and events including the establishment of Mrs York's Garden, involvement in the sesquicentennial-centennial celebrations for St Thomas's Church, the Floral Festival for Port Macquarie Lions Club, U3A courtyard rejuvenation and revamping the

gardens at the Women's Refuge. Congratulations to the current management committee under the leadership of President Mary Biden - Jeff Lynne, Kaye Koning, Karen Mann, Pam Koivu, Karen Pick, Dave Blackstock, Hans Koning, Linda Tory and John and Monica O'Reilly for keeping the love of gardening flourishing in the Hastings region.

FESTIVAL OF CHARIOTS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise the Fifteenth Annual Festival of Chariots at Liverpool held on Saturday 2 July. The Rathayatra Festival is a significant Hindu festival. Its history dates back thousands of years. In more recent times its celebration has not been restricted to India and the festival has spread world-wide. It's an important part of Indian cultural heritage and functions as a demonstration of Liverpool's multicultural identity. The festival helps promote peace and harmony. There is a significant emphasis in the event on communal harmony. Music and cultural beliefs are a prominent part of the festival which features pulling a vehicle - a chariot - through the streets of Liverpool CBD. This commenced at Bigge Park. Traditionally, several thousand people attend the event. The event occurred in the presence of a number of guests including the Indian Consul-General, Mr Manish Gupta. The organisers of the Festival should be congratulated and special acknowledgments should go to Govardhan Das.

SERBIAN FOLKLORIC FESTIVAL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I am delighted to recognise the 34th Serbian Folkloric Festival on 6 and 7 August this year. The Festival was held at Bonnyrigg Sports Club. The Festival has a long history and I have had the opportunity to attend quite a number of the Festivals over my time as a member of this place. The Festival is a two day celebration of Serbian culture. The Festival's stated vision is "to celebrate and preserve our Serbian folkloric heritage and culture in Australia." The Festival showcases presentations, performances and videos that aim to display the rich history, culture and attractions that Serbia can demonstrate. The performances include both local and interstate groups. The Festival is one of the largest Serbian events in Australia and a good reminder of the positive role of the Serbian community especially in South-West Sydney.

GOOLOONGONG RECREATION PARK MARKETS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I take this opportunity to recognise the fundraising efforts of the Gooloogong community through their bi-monthly Gooloogong Recreation Park Markets. I particularly wish to commend the efforts of co-ordinators Lynne Dowd and Michele Spicer who do a tremendous job in pulling this event together, as well as promoting it as a great day out in Gooloogong. The next markets are being held this Sunday 14th of August, with all funds raised through site fees set to benefit local organisations including Gooloogong Public School P & C, Gooloogong Log Cabin Hall, Gooloogong Memorial Hall and the Gooloogong Historical Group, amongst other local projects. These markets are incredibly well-received by all who attend, with an array of baked goods, coffee, music, plants, Bric-a-brac and much more. It is fantastic to have such a lovely local event to draw vendors and visitors from nearby towns, allowing them to spend time and money locally. Congratulations once again to the community of Gooloogong on your drive and I encourage anyone and everyone who has the opportunity to visit these markets to get involved.

50 YEARS OF SHOOTING TIN CANS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I wish to recognise the fantastic efforts of those from the Ardlethan-Beckom Sporting Clays Association on another very successful Golden Can and Clay Shooting Event. This year was an extra special event as it marked the 50th Anniversary of the competition. Originating as a fun game of shooting tin cans and soft drink cans in Matong. The game was introduced to the Ardlethan community in 1990 and is now a fun charity event where competitors come together from right across the State to partake in the event raising much needed funds for local charities, like the hospital auxiliary, schools, and red cross. The aim of the event is to see who can shoot the tin can with a shotgun from the furthest distance which derives into a point system. The person with the greatest number of points at the end of the competition is deemed the winner. This years Golden Can Shoot-Australian Can Shooting Champion was Adam Shale. Congratulations once again to all involved in organising such a fantastic event. I look forward to hearing about next years event and catching up with you all very soon.

UNGARIE DEBUTANTE BALL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—It is my absolute pleasure to congratulate 10 young debutants and their partners on, what am advised was, a glamorous debutante ball held recently in Ungarie. Tess Henley, Ruby Henley, Ella Payne, Natasha Spencer, Hayley Wallace, Rachel Spencer, Prue West, Kadee Gerhard-Scali, Molly Bryant and Abby Wason were officially welcomed into society on the night. The young women and their partners; Lewis Henley,

Riley Glasgow, Damon Imrie, Angus Williams, Ned Whiley, Jack Mitchell, Edward Patton, Tom Roscarel, Luke Cameron and Hugh Williams were presented to Mr and Mrs Rob Rattey, The Hon. Michael McCormack and Mr and Mrs Stephen and Marie Cooke. I am sincerely sorry to all that I was unable to attend on the night. A special congratulations to all involved in ensuring this incredible occasion could go ahead, with special thanks to the Ungarie War Memorial Hall executives Mr and Mrs Jason and Nicole Lewis, Mr Reece Archibald and Mrs Vanessa Williams. Congratulations once again to all involved especially the debutantes and their partners, I am sure you all made your families and community incredibly proud.

SALLIE WEBSTER

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)—I would like to congratulate Ms Sallie Webster for recently accepting an award given to her by the Ulladulla Marine Rescue Unit and I would also like to acknowledge her for becoming a lifelong member of the community group. Sallie has been a member of the Ulladulla Marine Rescue Unit for 11 Years having joined the group with her partner after moving here from Sydney and both wanting to do some volunteer work. Sallie started as a radio operator and now helps with the group's monthly market which brings the unit important funding. For Sallie being a volunteer is not about acknowledgements its about helping the community and being part of a group that gives her "mental stimulation". So, I again congratulate Sallie for her constant commitment to her community and to the Ulladulla Marine Rescue Unit, her outstanding efforts and ongoing hard work has proven her a great member to the Marine Rescue Unit.

NAISDA GRADUATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Allow me to celebrate the graduation ceremony of NAISDA Dance College, an organisation which showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture. NAISDA is a leading Australian arts training organisation on Darkinjung land that works to provide nationally accredited qualifications for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Established in 1976, the college has a proud history in educating future generations and celebrating rich cultural tradition through creative means. The graduation ceremony, which I was fortunate to attend, welcomed Elders, elected representatives, the Barang Regional Alliance, and community members to support the young graduates. The event was a stunning reflection of our Indigenous heritage, reflecting on stories of connection to Country and culture. This year for the first time, the institution celebrated Advanced Diploma graduates whose hard work has already been rewarded with professional opportunities. The graduation ceremony was also the perfect occasion to unveil and celebrate the work of Grant Molony. A Guringai man raised on Darkinjung Country, Molony's large-scale artwork represents our rich Indigenous history. I would like to take this opportunity to thank NAISDA college for their contribution to the Central Coast, continuing to educate and celebrate Indigenous culture.

UON PLACEMENTS HELPING CCAS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I acknowledge the exciting partnership between the University of Newcastle and the Central Coast Academy of Sport. Tye McGann, the Programs and Strength/Conditioning Manager at CCAS and UoN Alumni has been the mastermind behind the partnership, coordinating and organising the program. As a result, five students have been welcomed to the Academy of Sport as part of the partnership. Here, the students will be able to engage with data from athletes. They are to aid in the establishment of open strength and conditioning sessions for CCAS athletes, exposing the students to new skills and opportunities while simultaneously supporting the development of local athletes. This renewed focus on data analysis is essential, with the current partnership working to improve the performance of athletes through targeted review and unique training programs. The fantastic work-integrated program offers a point of difference for the CCAS administration and a wide breadth of new opportunities for university students to gain experience and form industry connections. Congratulations to UoN, Tye McGann and the team at CCAS on this excellent collaboration, set to have mutual benefits for the students, CCAS, and the Central Coast Community.

GILLIAN NEWHEY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Allow me to celebrate the immense contribution of Gillian Newhey. Across her life, this exceptional woman has consistently supported her community to excel. A teacher at heart, Gillian has led a 64-year-strong career in education, from high schools to community classes. Gillian began learning to play the piano at four years of age, leading to her placement at the Sydney Conservatorium High School. With a scholarship, she went on to study at the University of Sydney's Teacher's College and Sydney Conservatorium of Music, completing four years of tertiary education to qualify as a Secondary School Music and English Teacher. Gillian taught in music classes in high schools for 33 years, inspiring young minds. Despite retiring, her passion for sharing wisdom has not stopped continuing to teach ceramics and music in the community. Gillian is an integral part of our community, participating in East Gosford Art Gallery events where her own works were exhibited and sold, and supporting the Davistown Progress Association's ARTY-CRAFTY days. She

continues to encourage seniors to stay active, standing as an inspiration to people of all ages. I would like to thank Gillian for her contributions to our local community.

FLYNN WALLACE-SMITH

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Flynn Wallace Smith, who was named the Newcastle Permanent Senior Athlete 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. Flynn has excelled in both surf and beach events since he started competing as a nipper for Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club. He continues to make the Club proud as a senior athlete, with him being selected in the 2022 NSW IRB Development Team. Flynn is an outstanding young man who represents Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club with great pride. I am sure he will continue to thrive in this sport. I congratulate Flynn on this achievement and wish him all the best for future competitions.

GAIL HENDERSON

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Gail Henderson, who was named the Facilitator 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. Gail has been heavily involved in Redhead Surf Life Saving Club for many years, with her displaying great passion and pride for her role as the Club's facilitator. Gail has made a great contribution to the Club in this position by ensuring that everything is well organised and is running smoothly. I know that her efforts are greatly appreciated by the Club's members, as well as the broader Hunter Surf Life Saving community. I congratulate Gail on her achievement and thank her for her service to both Redhead Surf Life Saving Club and the Hunter Surf Life Saving Community.

SHANE DOWSETT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I acknowledge Shane Dowsett, who was named the Official 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. Shane is dedicated to his role as a volunteer surf life saver at Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club, with him also giving up his time to officiate surf carnival events to ensure that our up and coming surf life savers have the opportunity to strengthen their surf skills and compete. Furthermore, Shane constantly goes above and beyond to help those in need. Many of you may even recall seeing him on the news recently, after he helped rescue a sick baby boy and his mother from Hunter flood waters last month. I know that Shane's efforts are greatly appreciated by our local community. I congratulate Shane on this achievement and thank him for the contribution he has made to Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club and Hunter Surf Life Saving.

COMMUNITY CONNECT

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the life-saving initiative known as Community Connect in Lennox Head. The project, organised by local community groups The Boaty Boys, The Healthy Minds Club, Le-Ba Boardriders, Golden Oldies, The Ball & All and Club Lennox, in partnership with local Nyangbal man Kris Cook, is aimed at offsetting some of the "darkness" that has come to be associated with Lennox Headland following the suicides of several people there. The site is known as "the place of our ancestors" in Bundjalung lore and Community Connect seeks to uphold and learn from the traditional custodians of the land by providing knowledge, strategies and tools to parents, teachers and other community leaders to help local youth. Community Connect and Kris Cook will share the rich history of the pre-colonial nation to change the narrative of how some see Lennox Head, via free events such as a smoking ceremony, breathwork, meditation and sound healing. I commend Kris and all members of Community Connect for this incredible initiative.

JOANNE NIKI

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Congratulations to Wagga Wagga artist Joanne Niki, whose artwork "Commitment" was selected as the winner of the St George Dragons' 2022 indigenous jersey competition. This beautiful work graced the field on the players' jerseys during round 12, which was the indigenous round of this year's NRL competition, and again in round 15. Ms Niki, who was one of 22 artists to enter the Dragons' 2022 competition, is a proud Torres Strait Islander, from Saibai in the Torres Strait. She moved to Wagga Wagga in the early 1980s and has lived there ever since. Having spent the last 25 years working with youth, Ms Niki started out working in primary and high schools and for the last 14 years working with young people. During her time working in Youth Justice, Ms Niki developed a love for painting and was encouraged by Wiradjuri older Auntie Pat Dacey to explore and expand on her artistic abilities. This talented artist has since gone on to create dozens of

artworks with young people within Youth Justice and has also completed several artwork designs with young people that have featured prominently on uniforms currently worn within Youth Justice.

MARTY LONGMORE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Like many children, Marty Longmore dreamed of being a firefighter. Mr Longmore, who grew up in Junee, not only achieved his dream, but went on to serve for 21 years and one month with Fire & Rescue NSW. He retired last month from his role as captain of 480 Station, known in Wagga Wagga as The Esplanade station. Mr Longmore has been described by his former workmates as "dedicated to assisting the community, a great leader, always there for the crew when needed, a mentor, a friend to all and a great larrikin". His former colleagues say he attended many incidents during his time with Fire & Rescue NSW as part of the crew and if given the opportunity he would jump to get on the end of the hose. Mr Longmore will be sorely missed by the crew at 480 Station. Now that he is retired, Mr Longmore told The Daily Advertiser he was looking forward to more time with his family, and to enjoying some more time out fishing, with his mobile phone switched off. I commend Mr Longmore on his years of dedicated service to his community and wish him all the best in retirement.

WAGGA WAGGA'S CARING COMMUNITY

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Wagga Wagga is a big-hearted community of people looking to lend a hand. In recent weeks, Wagga Wagga's Reddies Netball Club have raised more than \$5000 at a silent auction at the city's Sportsmen's Club Hotel to assist a bereaved family. Club president Kerry Thomas said the event had been well supported by the community. The Wagga Wagga community also threw its support behind a recent car boot sale organised to help Riding for the Disabled raise money for important maintenance work. Stall holders had a good day, as did sale visitors, according to event organiser, Lizzie Macquarie. Sales were also very impressive for some of Wagga Wagga's youngest fundraisers. With the chilly July school holidays in full swing, 10-year-old Milla Whyte and her best friend, Lucas, who was visiting from the Central Coast, decided to pool their creative resources and help out Lifeline. The enterprising pair made 30 glass dome fridge magnets, which they then sold on the street. To complete their donation, both youngsters also added in \$10 of their own money. I commend everyone involved in these three activities, along with everyone in Wagga Wagga who is doing their bit for someone else.

JACK CRUTCHLEY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I congratulate Jack Crutchley, a 16-year-old boxer and West Dapto local who has recently been selected to represent NSW at the under 19's National Youth Titles in Victoria. Jack is currently part of a young NSW contingent and recently joined the rest of the NSW team at pre-national's camp at the Southside gym at Sutherland PCYC. Jack has been a boxer for 8 years, has competed in 9 fights, and has represented NSW at the national level once before. All these achievements are even more outstanding when considering Jack is currently completing High School. It is clear Jack is extremely dedicated and talented, and this opportunity will give him the skills and experience he needs to develop as a professional boxer. Congratulations to Jack, and the other members of the NSW team.

ST JOHN'S EAGLES JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—On Tuesday 2 August I had the privilege of attending St John's Eagles Junior Rugby League Club in my electorate of Lakemba. I met with Club President Nasser Matta, George El Agha, the Club Secretary, and Rodney Van Schellebeck, Committee Member. I presented the Club with a certificate recognising their receipt of a sports grant for \$2950.00 for the purchase of equipment. I wanted a go at the tackling bags but settled for a kick. Let's just say I make a better MP than football star. St John's Eagles is based in Punchbowl. The club is part of the Canterbury District Junior Rugby League and was formed in 1954 originating from the school, St Johns Lakemba. St John's has won 109 premierships and the Club Championship over six times in the last 10 years. It is the proud home for aspiring young rugby players in community. St Johns has survived on the generous support of friends, local sponsors, and hardworking members of the community. There are more than 350 registered players, 28 Teams, and at least seven hundred parents. We wish the club the best in its future endeavours.

SOUTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I am pleased to recognise the work of Southside Montessori School. Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting the school to meet the staff, tour the school and listen to the students. The school was established in 1979 in Riverwood. The Montessori programme is child-centred, teacher facilitated and suitable across all socio-economic and cultural boundaries. I have always been a fan of Montessori principles in education. I thank Principal, Charisse Sweeney and her staff for inviting me to visit the school. This visit gave me an opportunity to again see first-hand the school program and facilities and to meet the young students over a

picnic. I am incredibly impressed with how the students facilitated the welcome to country ceremony by singing the Australian national anthem in English and an Indigenous language. The children contributed to the picnic by serving cuisine from their cultural backgrounds. It was an honour to hear them share their dreams for the future with clarity and honesty. More than ever, we appreciate the vital role our teachers play in our community. I thank the dedicated educators at Southside Montessori for continuing their work in nurturing and educating our future leaders.

REFUGEE WEEK CELEBRATION DINNER

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—There is a global need to ensure that people who are fleeing their home are treated with dignity. Everyone who comes to Australia does so in the hope of a better life. For some it is a choice to leave their homeland and for others, it is necessitated by horrific circumstances. I have always believed we are our best as a country when we open our hearts and value everyone and when we see possibilities in everyone. This year I joined Metro Assist for their Refugee Week celebration dinner. The evening provided ample inspiration and proof of the contribution each person can make when given the chance. As one of the speakers, George Najarian, said at the dinner "give me an opportunity and I will make it a future" - amen to that. Refugees have been arriving in Australia for a long time. Some people demonise refugees. Others, like Metro Assist and myself, see the best of humanity like Anh Do or Deng Adut. Thank you to CEO Michael Szafraniec and everyone at Metro Assist who do whatever they can to help people thrive.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE CUMBERLAND DISTRICT AWARDS CEREMONY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—It was an honour to attend the NSW Rural Fire Service Cumberland District Awards Ceremony with Nick Lalich MP, Member for Cabramatta and proudly watch our parliamentary colleague Hugh McDermott MP State Member for Prospect receive the National Emergency Medal and the National Medal for significant service and actions as a NSW RFS Volunteer in protection of life and property during the Black Summer Bushfires 2019-2020. I congratulate Hugh on this wonderful achievement and thank him and all the members of the NSW RFS for their service, particularly during that challenging time that will be etched in our memories forever. The 2022 NSW Rural Fire Service Cumberland Districts Awards Service was held to thank the volunteers for their service to the community. During bushfires, floods and other emergencies the RFS volunteers are there to help with rescue missions, evacuations, risk management measures and clean-up after natural disasters. I commend all NSW Rural Fire Service members for their dedication to their communities and thank them for their commitment and service.

WELCOME DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT COMMANDER MICHAEL MCLEAN APM

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish to welcome our new Fairfield City Police Area Command Detective Superintendent Commander, Michael McLean APM. Mr McLean has hit the ground running, meeting stakeholders and engaging with the community at events. I would like to congratulate and welcome Supt McLean on his appointment and wish him well in his tenure as our city's police commander.

CHALDEAN NATIONAL DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—The Chaldean League of Australia together with the Telskuf Chaldean Association and the Batnaya Chaldean Association celebrated the "Chaldean National Day" with an inaugural festival at the Fairfield Showground on Sunday 10th July 2022. Locally the Chaldean community have been positive contributors and I commend the Chaldean community on their commitment towards working towards social cohesion and harmony. It was a pleasure to join in with my parliamentary colleagues Hugh McDermott MP and Nick Lalich MP to celebrate with the community. The highlight of the festival was the presentation of the Kings and Queens of Babylon in traditional dress. The parade of the Kings and Queens was presented on the replica Babylonian chariot accompanied by Babylonian soldiers. It was an honour to present several Chaldean committee members and local doctors with official Hansard Transcripts of Community Recognition Statements and Certificates of Appreciation for their efforts during the COVID-19 lockdown in supporting the community. I would like to congratulate Chaldean League of Australia President Mr Samir Yousif and Secretary Mr Laith Alchinno and their committee of volunteers for organising and hosting the inaugural "Chaldean National Day" Festival.

TALDUMANDE YOUTH SERVICES

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Local charities are the great 'little platoons' of our communities, and I would like to pay tribute to the work of Taldumande Youth Services, based at St Leonards in my electorate. Taldumande supports, encourages and empowers vulnerable children, young people and their families through crisis response, residential care and specialised case work. Providing full-time accommodation services, two semi-independent accommodation programs and community housing programs, the charity provides a streamlined pathway from homelessness and family breakdown to independence and stability. In addition, Taldumande

provides residential support to young people who are under the supervision of Juvenile Justice in its Young Offenders Intervention Program. Committed to strengthening families, the charity focuses on young people aged 12 to 15 in its Family Restoration and Preservation Program. The work of Taldumande is widely appreciated with the charity attracting both government and non-government support. I applaud the wonderful work that Taldumande does for young people and families in my community and beyond.

JOHN COUANI

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I pay tribute to the outgoing Principal of St Pius X College Chatswood, John Couani, who is stepping down after leading the College for twelve years. In the words of Dr Craig Wattam, the head of Edmund Rice Education Australia, 'Mr Couani's contribution to the St Pius X community has been immense. Under his stewardship, College enrolments have never been stronger and John has been passionate in his desire to see all young people experience success in their lives. Overseeing the transition of the College from the leadership of the Christian Brothers to lay leadership, John Couani served as the first lay Principal of St Pius X. Since commencing in 2011, John has presided over a school with a flourishing academic, pastoral and co-curricular program. Located in the heart of my electorate, St Pius X College is a non-selective Catholic school for boys in the Edmund Rice tradition with a proud 85-year history. I am grateful for the rich contribution that Principal John Couani has made to this distinguished school in my community of Willoughby.

TONY SNOWSILL (CHATSWOOD RSL)

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Chatswood RSL is one of the great clubs in my electorate and I would like to pay tribute to Tony Snowsill who has recently retired after serving a marathon 38 years as its CEO. Tony Snowsill commenced his leadership of Chatswood RSL in 1984 after managing a Services Club on the South Coast and various resorts in Fiji. Under his leadership the Club transformed from being a modest property on Victoria Avenue to a large, multi-property venue boasting several bars, restaurants, function and gaming rooms including Shimmers, Shades, the Dragons Den, Golden Bell restaurant, the TAB and Diamond Lounge. Tony has not only been a great innovator of the Club but also a community-minded leader who has harnessed the resources of Chatswood RSL to support many local community groups, schools, charities and networks of returned servicemen and women. As head of Chatswood RSL, Tony has naturally played a lead role in the coordination of local ANZAC and Remembrance Day commemorations to honour our diggers. Tony has brought great vision, enterprise and dedication to his leadership of Chatswood RSL and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY KANISHKA RAFFEL VISITS ST MARK'S DARLING POINT

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—On 10 July 2022, I joined the St Mark's Anglican Church, Darling Point for a special visit by the new Archbishop of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel. It's the first time since the 1990s that a sitting Archbishop has preached at St Mark's. It was lovely to meet him with my son Nicholas and hear of his journey of faith. 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 last couple of years impacted by COVID-19. There were over 40 women parishioners who came together for a cuppa led by Dr Megan Best. I want to acknowledge the leadership at St Mark's who make it such a strong community. They include Rector Reverend Dr Michael Jenson, his wife Catherine, Assistant Ministers Rev Dr Tim Escott, Rev David Crain, Michael Figueira, Children's Minister Stephanie Leung, Parish Administrator Wendy Jarratt, Communications Administrator Wendy Mulder, Verger Annette Jones and Pastoral Care Coordinator Alicia Watson OAM.

CAMDEN VALLEY INN DONATION

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I thank Camden Valley Inn who donated \$20,000 towards a local charity, The Kids for Macarthur Health Foundation. This donation will help the important work carried out by the Foundation who raise funds each year to buy equipment for the paediatric unit at Campbelltown hospital. This \$20,000 donation by Camden Valley Inn is one example of the kind of support they extend to the community. I thank them for their dedication and support. I would also like to thank the Chairman of Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation Bruce Hanrahan, their board, CEO Denise McGrath, and all of their volunteers for the support that they provide the Camden and Macarthur community.

MOUNT ANNAN PUBLIC SCHOOL MACARTHUR ZONE CROSS COUNTRY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Well done to the students at Mount Annan Public School in their efforts in the Macarthur Zone Cross Country Carnival. Congratulations to the following students who battled their way through tough conditions of the wet and muddy track to come through and place in the Top 8: Tara-1st place, Ethan- 3rd place, Lily- 4th place, Alina- 4th place, Zac- 7th place, Ashleigh- 7th place. Well done on these incredible results, one that you should all be very proud of, especially through the conditions on the day. I wish Tara, Ethan, Lily, Alina, Zac and Ashleigh the very best of luck as they move onto the Sydney South West Cross Country Carnival.

HAWKESBURY SHOW RESULTS 2022

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—In May this year 22 students from St Gregory's College and 17 head of cattle exhibited at 135th Annual Hawkesbury Show. Well done to the students who prepared the cattle to their absolute best. There were some great results for the students in the Paraders Classes that I would like to name: Jake who placed 3rd, Ivy who placed 5th, Alex who placed 1st, Harry who placed 3rd, Massimo who placed 1st and Reserve Champion, Marc who placed 3rd, Justin who placed 4th, Cooper 1st and Champion, Angus who placed 2nd, Nathan who placed 3rd, Jackson who placed 4th, Vincent who placed 1st and Champion, Will who placed 3rd, Jacob who placed 4th, Joel who placed 2nd, Toby who placed 3rd, Jayden who placed 5th, Luke who placed 6th, Riley who placed 1st and Reserve Champion, Thomas who placed 3rd and Macs who placed 4th. Congratulations to all of the St Gregory's College students on a very successful weekend of showing.

GLEBE ART SHOW

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Glebe Art Society who organised the Glebe Art Show which I had the pleasure of attending on Wednesday 22 June. The Glebe Art Show is an important celebration of emerging and established artists currently living, working or studying in the City of Sydney and Inner West Council areas. It has been held annually from 1997 and made its comeback this year after two years of COVID hiatus. I want to particularly thank all the volunteers in the Glebe Art Show Committee, the President of the Glebe Art Society, the City of Sydney, Inner West Council, Derivan, Dr David Nguyen, Belle Property, The Glebe Society and Glebe Medical Practice for their contributions to this event. I want to congratulate all the talented artists, and especially the high school students who received High School Encouragement Awards, Ellis Cummings, Marina Seet and Hannah Rodiss.

GLEBE NAIDOC WEEK

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the community celebration of Glebe NAIDOC week from 3 to 10 July. The Balmain Electorate is on the land of the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation. It always was and always will be. This year's NAIDOC theme of 'Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!' served as a powerful reminder for our community to continue showing up in working for First Nations justice and celebrating the diverse history, culture and achievements of First Nations people. I want to particularly acknowledge the performers who came together for NAIDOC Community Day at Glebe Public School – Jarjums Dance & Baraya-la Performing Arts, Buuja Buuja Butterfly Dancers, Kobie0Dee, Mi-Kaisha, Lil Rascal. I also want to recognise the efforts of the Glebe NAIDOC Committee in creating so many ways for the community to engage with this important celebration.

YASSER ABED - CONSUL GENERAL OF EGYPT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 27 June 2022 I had the honour of meeting with Yasser Abed, Consul General of the Arab Republic of Egypt to thank him for his service as Consul General, with his term of office coming to a conclusion. In my capacity as Co-Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Egypt, I presented Consul General Abed with an award expressing our heartfelt thanks in recognition of his service and contribution to the Australian Egyptian community in New South Wales. I was honoured that Consul General Abed also presented me with a certificate of appreciation for my role in strengthening the ties between the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Egypt and the Consulate of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Sydney. It has been a pleasure to work with Consul General Abed during his term of office. Thank you to Consul General Abed for meeting with me and making such an important contribution to the Australian Egyptian community, as well as strengthening Australian-Egyptian relations. Congratulations on leaving a strong legacy at the conclusion of your term as Consul General. I wish you all the best in the future.

ASSYRIA DAY 2022

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was an honour to contribute as a keynote speaker at the virtual event commemorating Assyria Day, organised by the Assyrian National Council Australia, on Monday 4th July 2022. My fellow NSW Labor colleagues were also in attendance including Chris Bowen MP and Councillor Carman Lazar OAM. The Electorate of Prospect has the largest Assyrian community in Australia, and our Western Sydney community is very proud of the contribution they make. As a keynote speaker, I paid tribute to the oppression the community suffered for hundreds of years, as victims of religious persecution and genocide. I also recognised the Assyrian people's right to self-determination through the establishment of their own autonomous state in their ancestral home in the Ninevah Plain, now in Iraq. Congratulations to the leadership team of the Assyrian National Council Australia including Hermiz Shahan, President, and David David, Vice President, on a very successful Assyria Day event. Thank you for inviting me to speak at this very important event for the Assyrian community. I look forward to contributing to further Assyria Day events in the future and will continue to advocate for the Assyrian people's right to self-determination.

PATRICIAN BROTHERS COLLEGE BLACKTOWN -70TH ANNIVERSARY MASS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was a pleasure to attend the Patrician Brothers' College, Blacktown, 70th Anniversary Mass and Community Day on 22nd June 2022 with my fellow NSW Labor Parliamentary Colleagues Stephen Bali MP and Guy Zangari Member for Fairfield. Patrician Brothers' College Blacktown was founded on the rich traditions of the Patrician Brothers. The College actively practises social justice within the Catholic faith which is demonstrated by values of caring for others, the way students learn and through their Service Learning Programme. As a school that values community, the College collaborates in partnership with parents and carers. The College has high expectations of students. Boys are challenged to be the best person and student they can be. This is demonstrated by impressive attitude, respect, grooming, attendance, and application to studies. This was a moving ceremony paying tribute to this College. It was great to hear Bishop Vincent Long, the Bishop for the Diocese of Parramatta, speak at this mass. Thank you to Frank Chiment, Principal, Patrician Brother's College, Blacktown, and his staff for hosting us at this mass. Congratulations on the 70th anniversary of the founding of this great Western Sydney Catholic School.

SHE CWA

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Once again, the Country Women's Association [CWA] has demonstrated their generosity and kindness to those in need. In the wake of one of the most difficult times for the people of Lismore, the members of the Southern Highlands Evening [SHE] CWA branch have banded together to demonstrate their support by creating eight rugs to be donated to flood victims via distribution by the Lismore Evening CWA branch. The messages and hearts crafted into the rugs are symbolic of the outpouring of love being sent to those devastated by the flood events. I am sure that the rugs have not only provided physical warmth but a sense of comfort to those who have received one. I thank the SHE CWA and all those involved for their continual contributions to the local community, in addition to the NSW community at large.

HIGHLANDS CRICKET ACADEMY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—My congratulations are given to the new head coach of the Highlands Cricket Academy- Jason Krejza. Krejza is a former Test cricket spin bowler, notably during the 2008-9 series in India. The acclaimed coach has also played for the Leicestershire County Cricket Club in 2005 and the Tasmanian Tigers between 2006/07-2012/13. Krejza will be responsible for coaching players of all levels for the next three years, passing on his skill and knowledge to a new generation of cricketers. This is an exciting opportunity for the Academy, being relatively nascent as its launch in 2020 meant that COVID disrupted its development. Now the Academy will be able to bounce back, with Krejza's appointment creating the opportunity of specialised clinics and developing a cricket school in the Southern Highlands. The young and upcoming generation of cricketers in the Highlands will not only be inspired by the great achievements of Krejza but also the long tradition of cricket in the area, with Bowral being the stomping grounds of the great Sir Don Bradman. I look forward to watching the development of future cricketing 'greats' that our region will produce!

COLO VALE RFS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—The Colo Vale RFS is deserving of recognition for its recent fundraising success, having held a member run trivia night last month. The RFS fundraising efforts were not immune to the effects of the Black Summer fires and COVID-19 pandemic, with the trivia night being the first fundraiser held after these extremely challenging events. In great news, nearly \$4000 was raised to help fund lockers for volunteers to use, a reversing camera for the club's CAT1 vehicle and to build a retaining wall inside the facility which will mitigate against the effects of the heavy rains. No doubt community spirit was also raised on the night, as locals came together for an evening of neighbourly fun and competition. It is wonderful to see how generous the community has been in supporting their local RFS, an invaluable organisation to our society.

JENNIFER COOTE - PEPPER BOX GALLERY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Mrs Jennifer Coote for her creative expertise in opening the Pepperbox Gallery in Warialda, giving artists, creators, start-up businesses and young entrepreneurs space to display their works and wares. The building on Stephen Street has enjoyed an authentic makeover and will be an attractive venue for both artists and events. Jenny and daughters, Ms Laura Cush and Ms Maryloo Coote, are loyal Warialda locals who saw a need to attract travellers through the main street to support businesses. What better than a colourful, welcoming place to discover local goods to take home as a specialised reminder of Warialda and continue on to browse and explore the rest of the town. Additionally, the gallery will offer opportunities for workshops, evening events, meeting spaces, school-based entrepreneurs, hot desks and more! Laura's imagination runs wild with projects that could include guest chefs, children's art classes and a multitude of serendipitous possibilities. I congratulate the Coote women, Jennifer, Laura and Maryloo on the

opening of the Pepperbox Gallery. I commend Jenny and daughters Laura and Maryloo for making a great idea a splendid reality.

THE SMITH FAMILY-WARIALDA

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Mrs Jackie and Mr Tom Smith with children Tex, Ivy, and Tate as an inspirational story of family ingenuity during challenging times, as in the years of Covid-19. The Smith children got together during one lockdown and came up with an idea. With quite a bit of help from mum and dad, a candle business came into being. An anagram made from the compilation of the children's names, the Silter Shop offers an imaginative array of candles scented and dyed as Tex, Tate, and Ivy's signature fragrances. Tex loves Tie-Dye and he created Tex-Dye scented with his favourite Vanilla. Ivy's life is full of energy and colour and she designed a stylish black tin with the trendy fragrance of bubble gum. Little Tate just keeps everything going with his enthusiasm and his contribution, Tate's Tri-Coloured. I congratulate the Smith family on their successful business enterprise. I commend Mr and Mrs Smith on encouraging their children's ingenuity and sense of enterprise and contributing their own professionalism and creativity in developing an online business that gives the whole family pride.

ELIZABETH ADAMS-GOLD & AN OLD BUSH SCHOOL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Mrs Elizabeth Adams who has just launched her historical book depicting not only the history of the early gold rush in the Bingara district, but the impact it had on the area now known as Upper Bingara. Elizabeth was born in the Bingara district, was educated at the Bingara Central School, and now farms with her husband, Steve, at Windi. Her love and historical knowledge of the Bingara district comes through in her book, *Gold & an Old Bush School Upper Bingara 1852 – 1965*. Great stories come out of a gold rush but the adventures from the one teacher, old bush school and the relationships borne of early Australian struggles makes this narrative a compelling read. I congratulate Elizabeth on the immediate success and popularity of *Gold & an Old Bush School*. I commend Elizabeth on her historical research and bringing the stories of early times and people alive.

VISIT TO 3BRIDGES YOUTH GROUP

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—Today I thank the 3Bridges organisation for hosting me at their Youth Facility, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The past few years have been particularly tough for young people, which is why it is so important that local youth have their own dedicated space within the community, where they can switch off, hang with their friends, and enjoy themselves. This is the type of space that 3Bridges provides. A welcoming and positive environment which helps young people to build new friends and relationships, gain confidence and build resilience and aspiration. They do this by offering a range of fun, relaxing activities at their Youth Zone, such as pool, video games, a music area and a chill-out room. It has always been a priority of the NSW Government to support Youth in our local communities and I am so proud of 3Bridges for rising to the challenge, providing a safe and fun environment for youth within the community. I would like to thank all the team at 3Bridges for the wonderful work you do in supporting local youth. I look forward to visiting again soon.

VISIT TO KOGARAH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I recognise and thank Kogarah Community Services, a non-for-profit organisation that does fantastic work through supporting our local community. Whilst they were established in the St George area and still continue to support locals, they now operate all across Sydney. Kogarah Community Services offer a range of services, including aged care, childcare services, an intergenerational program and a range of other community engagement initiatives. I recently visited the centre and got to see some of their amazing facilities. They continue to focus on enriching the lives of community members, including the impoverished and disadvantaged. Through the hard work of their wonderful team of volunteers, they also offer support by providing mental health services, Centrelink and employment services. I'd like to thank the executive officer of Kogarah Community Services, Kelly Ross, for being an accommodating and welcoming host. You should be so proud of your team of volunteers and all the hard work you do. I'd like to thank Kogarah Community Services again and look forward to future visits. I wish them well in their future endeavours.

STUDENT LEADERSHIPS AWARDS AT OATLEY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I extend my warmest congratulations to the newly appointed Student Leadership team at Oatley West Public School. I recently visited Oatley West to meet the Leadership team and I must say, I was very impressed with the care, commitment, and dedication they showed to the role. I presented each of the students with a school leadership award and had an engaging chat about what they do as school leaders, which high schools they were going to and

what type of future careers they were interested in. These are the future leaders of our country, and it is so important to nurture and develop these leadership skills. This ensures that the next generation is confident and competent to take on any challenge that may come their way. I would like to congratulate Avi Hockey, Zen Soto, Cristopher Jackson, Jemma Pekert, Sophia Mah and Elsie Gibb. It was fantastic getting to meet all of you and I wish you all the very best moving forward.

MAITLAND-RUTHERFORD GIRL GUIDES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Maitland-Rutherford Girl Guides' very own Queen's Guide and past senior Leader Charlotte Weatherall on being elected to the board of Guides NSW, ACT & NT. It's terrific recognition for Charlotte, who continues to stay involved in the Maitland-Rutherford district. She recently took on the role of Leader-in-Charge for the organisation's senior Girl Guides camp in April, which was extremely well-received. In 2021, Charlotte and her good friend Jodie Chilvers also received the Banksia Award for their work in co-writing the FLY program, a leadership course for senior Girl Guides. That, in itself, provides an important stepping stone. Guides NSW, ACT & NT empowers girls and young women to discover their potential as leaders of their world. So, I know Charlotte will make a positive contribution moving forward as a board member.

CRAZY SOCKS SUPPORT TYPE 1 DIABETES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Today I acknowledge the Maitland Rugby Blacks Netball Club and their efforts in fundraising for the Type 1 Foundation – Hunter New England Region. Established in 2008 the Maitland Rugby Blacks Netball Club is one of the largest netball clubs in Maitland and consists of 37 teams and over 350 members and players. Every year the Club holds a crazy socks and hair event as part of their weekly Saturday competition. This year the club's dedicated volunteer committee decided that they would use the event to raise much needed funds for the Type 1 Foundation. The club raised \$400 for the Type 1 foundation, through the sale of their 'Crazy Blacks Socks'. The club also invited the team from Type 1 Foundation – Hunter New England Region to join them on the day and sell their fundraising beanies with funds going towards the outstanding work they do in acknowledging and supporting the 'human element' of a diagnosis of this life-long disease. I sincerely thank the Maitland Rugby Blacks Netball Club for their initiative and efforts in supporting this important foundation.

ROTARY CLUB OF EAST MAITLAND

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Rotarians are passionate people with diverse perspectives and experiences who exchange ideas, forge lifelong friendships and, above all, take action to change the world, our communities and ourselves. So, it was great to see a number of youngsters, aged from 18 to 30, being inducted into Rotaract (Rotary in Action) at a specially-convened meeting by the Rotary Club of East Maitland earlier this year. District Governor Amanda Roach welcomed Anabel Holle, Cheyenne Tebbutt, Kate Rutledge and Phoebe James-Gillman to the Rotary family at a time when many service groups are struggling to attract new members. I'm sure the enthusiasm and passion of the latest Rotaractors will bring about positive change not only in the East Maitland community, but the electorate in general. I wish Anabel, Cheyenne, Kate and Phoebe all the best in their future endeavours.

PIAC 40TH

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to congratulate the Public Interest Advocacy Centre on turning 40 years old. PIAC has been operating since 1982 and has fought passionately to build a stronger and fairer society by helping to change systems, laws and policies that perpetuate injustice and inequality. Beginning with just four staff members, PIAC has grown to 40 workers as well as interns, secondees and professional placements. PIAC is an independent non-profit organisation that works with marginalised communities and people who are facing disadvantage. PIACs work combines policy development, research and analysis, legal advice and representation as well as advocacy for public interest outcomes and policy change. Recently, PIAC has prioritised equality and non-discrimination, First Nations justice, reducing homelessness, fair use of police powers, climate change and social justice and government accountability, tackling these areas by exposing laws that entrench disadvantage, challenging decision-makers over unlawful or unfair actions and empowering people to initiate, inform and influence positive change. I thank all those associated with PIAC for their impressive work and commitment to social justice, equality and consumer rights for 40 years.

STREETCARE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to acknowledge the great work of the PIAC StreetCare program. StreetCare brings together a diverse group of people with experience of homelessness, working alongside PIAC's Homeless Person's Legal Service to promote structural and systemic reform to homelessness and housing. This excellent project supports members to be active advocates and advisors

to government and other stakeholders on law reform, decision-making, policy analysis and training on homelessness and housing. The service was strengthened under the leadership of project officer Charmaine Jones, and I acknowledge her passion, advocacy, and long-term commitment to assisting marginalised people become involved in finding sustainable and lasting solutions to issues that affect themselves and their communities. I commend the StreetCare project for their impressive work helping to nurture and promote the voices of those with lived experience. This is a vital step to improving government policy and service responses by making sure decision makers hear directly about the importance of having a home.

CANICE'S KITCHEN

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to recognise the continued commitment of Canice's Kitchen at St Canice's Catholic Church in Elizabeth Bay to responding to people in need in our community. Throughout the pandemic the support and community service of Canice's Kitchen has continued to grow. Guests have enjoyed and relied on access to fresh food, health support, employment training, legal advice and an extensive library. During the extreme wet weather, Canice's Kitchen adapted to the needs of people experiencing homelessness, opening their doors early to provide hot showers, dry clothes, shelter and hot drinks. Canice's Kitchen's newest services include unlimited free wi-fi, making it easier for guests to access support and maintain connections with friends and family. The Health and Wellness Team of two counsellors, a social worker and life coach are onsite to support visitors every week and the new community pantry makes donations of non-perishable food items available six days a week so guests can take whatever they need. These additions recognise the community's evolving needs. I commend the passionate and committed team of workers, donors and volunteers of Canice's Kitchen who provide practical support and friendship to everyone who visits.

SAILABILITY TORONTO

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I acknowledge and thank Sailability Toronto for the incredible service they provide to the Lake Macquarie community. As most of my constituents live on or near the beautiful lake, sailing has always been a facet of our community which many people enjoy either from the water or the shore. Unfortunately, there are barriers and limitations for people with disabilities which restrict their chance to enjoy sailing on the lake. Sailability Toronto has been providing opportunities for local sailing enthusiasts with disabilities since its launch in 2008 under the then guidance of Geoff Thornley. Under the direction and hard work of the current President Lyn McAllister the crew has built on that exceptional service to the local community. A fantastic team of volunteers help these budding sailors to enjoy the thrill and fun of sailing on Lake Macquarie without fear of exclusion due to their physical barriers. I extend my greatest thanks and admiration to everyone at Sailability Toronto for their commitment to providing a safe, supportive and enjoyable sailing experience to those who are often unable to do so under their own steam.

MR AND MRS CHATER'S 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Kenneth and Mrs Carol Chater of Woronora Heights on their 60th Wedding Anniversary which was celebrated on 4th August 2022. 60 years of marriage is a wonderful milestone and I hope they enjoyed their Diamond Anniversary. I wish them many more years of fun, enjoyment, happiness and good health.

CLIFTON SCHOOL OF ARTS 111TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—It was a pleasure joining Clifton School of Arts [CSA] for their 111th anniversary celebrations with Ben Franklin MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Arts and Regional Youth. To mark this momentous milestone, an historical exhibition with photos, videos and memorabilia were displayed and their activities and future plans were showcased. Clifton School of Arts has serviced the local community as a cultural and events facility for more than a century with exhibitions, workshops, art and yoga classes, small concerts, film screenings and a range of education and community events. I thank the CSA Committee members, particularly President David Roach, for their significant contribution and for ensuring CSA continues to serve the community now and into the future!

BEN MALLIN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Emu Plains Lions run an annual Youth of the Year Event where one talented and passionate individual is chosen as Youth of the Year. This year Ben Mallin was selected to be bestowed the honour of Youth of the Year. Ben is an extraordinary individual, he has participated in a Senior Year's fundraising of over \$15,000 for the Starlight Foundation and Parkinson's NSW. He participated in a service trip to Cambodia, serving Children in children by helping to build concrete pathways, toilet blocks, teaching lessons and playing with the kids. Ben also participates in a wide variety of sports including Football, Cricket and Futsal. On top of these incredible efforts, Ben runs two businesses, one a clothing brand for active-wear and a

Math tutoring business. Somehow, in his spare moments Ben does have after his commitments to school, sports, extra circular and service, Ben is also a volunteer with the Rural Fire Service. I am incredibly proud of Ben and wish him every success going forward.

THOMAS CASS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—The Western Sydney Academy of Sport has been delivering high quality development programs for the region's talented young athletes for over 18 years now and can currently lay claim to six Academy Alumni who have gone on to represent our great nation at the Olympics. A testament to the success of the Academy's programs I am so proud to promote in this chamber that Glenmore Park local Thomas Cass has been selected by Softball Australia to compete in the U/23 Men's World Championships being held in Argentina in September this year. This is an incredible achievement and one that Thomas should be very proud of. His talents have shone so brightly that he is now part of a select few that have the privilege and honour to represent this great nation in a sport that is so passionate about. Congratulations Thomas and I wish you all the best in your upcoming World Championship."

EDEN MICALEFF

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—A big congratulations to Eden Micalfeff from Caroline Chisolm College who was one of three students to be nominated for the Youth of the Year honour sponsored by the Penrith Lions Club. Eden was subjected to an interview by a panel of judges in front of teachers, family and members of the Penrith Lions Club. After which, Eden had to respond to two impromptu questions and present a five minute prepared speech on a topic of their choice. The skill and preparation that goes on behind the scenes for students like Eden that were nominated for this special honour is significant and I congratulate Eden on this wonderful achievement.

MS TAMARA RICHARDSON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)—Today I recognise Ms Tamara Richardson. Ms Richardson is employed at the Yass Montessori Pre-School, which provides a learning environment combining self-directed play and group activities for children aged three to six years. Ms Richardson's submission was selected from a large field of talented applicants to become a recipient of a scholarship to complete her higher education studies in early childcare. The scholarship will provide the opportunity for Ms Richardson 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 Richardson on her commitment to education, her receipt of the scholarship and I wish her every success with her career pathway and studies.

MS JEORDIE CARSON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)—Today I recognise Ms Jeordie Carson. Ms Carson is employed by the Crookwell Mobile Children's Service Early Learning on Rossi at Yass, which provides a wide range of educational experiences for children from birth through to school age. Ms Carson was competitive in her submission, being selected from a competitive field of talented applicants to become a recipient of a scholarship to complete her higher education studies in early childcare. The scholarship will provide the opportunity for Ms Carson 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 Carson on her commitment to education, her receipt of the scholarship and I wish her every success with her career pathway and studies.

MR MARK DARBY

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—In just under two weeks' time Tathra resident and local Lions Club member, Mark Darby will be embarking on a mammoth journey along the Murry River in nothing more than a kayak. The Murray River is the 3rd longest navigable river in the world, flowing over 2,500kms from Australia's Snowy Mountains west along the borders of New South Wales and Victoria, and into the sea in South Australia. The arduous paddle will take up to two months to complete and will be a unique fundraiser for environmental conservation organisation, Trust for Nature, with Mark hoping to raise 10 thousand dollars to assist with restoration works at Neds Corner Station. Also coinciding with the Lions Club national 75th anniversary, Mr Darby plans to visit up to 25 clubs across three states along his route. I wish Mark all the best for his trip, and I look forward to following his adventure via his blog - Mark's Murray Paddle.

FREYA PRUMM – AUSTRALIAN SURF CHAMPION

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—Merimbula local Freya Prumm has been surfing the waves on the Far South Coast for 13 years and this weekend secured her first Australian Title at the 2022 Australian Surf

Championships. Held at North Haven Beach just south of Port Macquarie, Freya swept to victory in the shortboard opens with a score of 12.4 under small 1-2 foot conditions, leveraging her game-day experience to clinch the title. Although the World Surf League tours and qualifying events were bought to a standstill during the COVID-19 pandemic, Freya wasted no time at home continuing her training up and down the coast. During this time, she also completed her Pharmacy training at the Prumm's Family Chemist – a family business that has been operating in the Pambula community for close to 30 years. I would like to congratulate Ms Prumm on her victory and her newly minted World Champion title and wish her the best of luck for her future tours.

REPURPOSING FOR RESILIENCE [RFR]

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—I would like to commend Eurobodalla-based organisation Repurposing for Resilience, a local not-for-profit social enterprise finding creative ways to recycle panels to provide power for community facilities and bushfire impacted families. Helping tackle the problem of solar panel waste, RfR and their team of community volunteers are creating innovative designs from discarded panels to build everything from garden furniture that can charge your mobile devices, to alfresco barbeque awnings that powers lights and an under-bench fridge. More than 540 panels have so far been recycled which have come from residential households in the Eurobodalla after upgrading or expanding existing solar systems, with several of these being fitted to the households of families who lost their homes during the Black Summer Bushfires. Residents can help reduce solar panel waste by dropping off their used panels and associated solar waste to the RfR Bodalla site and can consider purchasing used panels which have been tested as still being fit for purpose. I applaud the groups ingenuity and initiative, not only contributing these fantastic designs back to the community, but also for their resourcefulness in keeping these viable assets out of land fill.

JANICE MONK

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—At the recent Dubbo City Eisteddfod, the committee recognised the contribution of Mrs Janice Monk with Life Membership. Public speaking is not an easy task for many of us, however according to Janice, she cannot sing, dance, or play a musical instrument, and so became involved in a public speaking group when teaching in Tamworth. This is where her training began. Janice went on to train with the Department of Education and still to this day is involved with debating within schools located in regional NSW. Janice was teaching at West Dubbo Primary School in 1970 when she entered a voice speaking choir in the Dubbo Eisteddfod and in 1976 she joined the Committee, immediately taking on the role as Speech and Drama Co-ordinator. She held the role of Speech and Drama Co-ordinator and Secretary at various stages throughout on her time on the Committee of the Dubbo Eisteddfod and although retiring from the committee in 2015, still assists where she can with the running of the Speech and Drama section. I would like to congratulate Janice on her Life Membership and thank her for her dedication and commitment to the Dubbo Eisteddfod Committee.

JANELLE PATTINSON

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I congratulate Dubbo's Janelle Pattinson for being recognised with Life Membership of the Dubbo Eisteddfod Committee at this year's Eisteddfod. Janelle joined the Committee in 1987 when she was asked to help with the catering and was poached to assist with the speech and drama section with a view to becoming the Co-ordinator. She has always been involved in choirs, and was a member of the Wesley Players, a local drama club. Her interest in the speech and drama section stemmed from her love of poetry and English. Writing poetry is a passion of Janelle's, and she has written quite a lot of it, including a couple about the Dubbo Eisteddfod. Janelle was co-ordinator for 20 years of the Speech and Drama section, and in her 20th year as a committee member she was part of the 49th Annual Dubbo City Eisteddfod. Although Janelle retired from the committee in 2020, she still contributes where possible, and I thank her for her dedication and commitment to the Dubbo City Eisteddfod, ensuring that the community has the opportunity to develop and display their skills and talents.

BARBARA REDGRAVE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)—I congratulate Dubbo's Barbara Redgrave on being recognised with Life Membership of the Dubbo Eisteddfod committee at this year's Eisteddfod. Barbara joined the Committee as a representative of the Dubbo City Choristers on 16 November 1976. Music has always been Barbara's main interest, and the piano has been her main instrument, although she also plays the organ and did learn Clarinet. She has always been involved in choirs and is still a member of the community choir and in her teaching career she has conducted school choirs, percussion bands and a school bush band. Barbara's dedication to music and the Eisteddfod Committee has seen her serve as President from 1996, a role she still holds today. She was the Vice President from 1992 to 1995, and she is the current Vocal and Instrumental Co-ordinator, both are roles that she has held in the past. Her dedication

to the Arts and Music, as well as the Dubbo City Eisteddfod is commendable, and I thank her for her commitment to ensuring that performers can showcase their talents and her willingness to share her knowledge.

CASTLE HILL AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I am delighted to recognise the Castle Hill locals who wore the green and gold for Australia at the recent Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Matthew Gonzalez, who plays for Eastwood in the Shute Shield, was a part of our Rugby 7s team, and is known for his lightning pace. The team topped their group with 2 wins and a draw, before losing to South Africa and New Zealand in the knockouts, reaching a commendable 4th place. Alexandra Hulley threw a massive 66.26 metres in the Women's Hammer Throw, which was good enough for 6th place. Julie Charlton threw 6.26 metres in the F55/57 Women's Shot Put, putting her in 9th place. Julie is a tremendous advocate for people living with a disability in my local area and has been chair of the NSW Youth Advisory Council. I would also mention the terrific work of Nathan and Rob Katz, from the local Budokan Judo Club, who both secured bronze medals in their respective Judo competitions. Both Judokas are testament to the hard work of the club and coach Rob Katz. Congratulations to all these athletes and best of luck for the future.

JOHN AND JODIE PAYNE - GRIFFITH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise the contribution of John and Jodie Payne to the NSW Rural Fire Service. John has held captaincy of the Widgelli-Wumbagal brigade for 10 years and Deputy Group Captain for 3 years. He is part of the MIA District Training Group assisting with and leading a variety of courses, from Basic and Village Fire Fighter through to Group Leader. John also assists and helps co-ordinate monthly training for Whitton, Darlington Point, Gogeldrie and Widgelli-Wumbagal. Since June 2012, Jodie has been secretary and treasurer for the Widgelli-Wumbagal brigade. She has worked as a scribe and driver for her husband and Group Captain, John Payne. Jodie is often behind the wheel of a fire truck. The pair have attended multiple incidents in the local area, as well as multiple fires interstate. In the 2019-2020 fire season, Jodie and strike team leader, John, attended a number of fires. They are big advocates for emergency services seeking help for their mental health and participated in the Frontline publication – Murrumbidgee Suicide Prevention and Self Care Guide to First Responders.

BENDON 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.

CONGRATULATIONS TO QUEENWOOD PRINCIPAL ELIZABETH STONE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—It is with sadness and joy that we will soon say farewell to Queenwood School Principal Elizabeth Stone who will be taking up the post as Head of Winchester College in the United Kingdom. Founded in 1382 as a boy's boarding school, Winchester has the longest continuous history of any English school and is poised to introduce girls to the college for the first time. Elizabeth has been chosen to lead this significant change which will offer young women the opportunity to experience a unique education at Winchester. After nine years of service to Queenwood School I know many in my local community are going to miss her leadership of the school and community, which has been described as one of integrity, inspiration, energy, and intellectual rigour. Queenwood is a school that was founded in 1925 on enlightened women's aspirations for the leadership and education of girls and young women. I pass on my congratulations to Elizabeth on this ground-breaking appointment and the achievement it represents for women's leadership. Congratulations Elizabeth and good luck on the next stage of your journey.

LOCAL STUDENTS AWARDED PREMIER STUDY TOUR SCHOLARSHIPS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I recognise two local students in my community who have been chosen for highly selective study tour scholarships. I want to congratulate Gabriel Fernandez, from St Aloysius College, on being selected for the Premier's WWII Memorial Tour. This study tour program is highly

selective, with students chosen via an essay submission, and it is extremely exciting that a local student was chosen as one of only 6 participants. Gabriel has recently returned after his visit to Japan and Hawaii and I am sure that he was able to gain further understanding of the significance of the Second World War, particularly in the Pacific conflict. I also want to congratulate Aaron Rucinski, from SHORE, on being awarded the 2022 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. Successful recipients were considered for their positive contribution to their local communities, respect for our veterans, and passion for studying history. I hope you enjoy your time in Darwin visiting and learning about historical sites associated with World War 2 in light of this year marking the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin in 1942. Congratulations again Aaron, I hope you enjoy this exciting opportunity.

WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Wanda Surf Life Saving Club ("Wanda") for providing essential services during the NSW Floods in March. As a designated first responder organisation, Wanda has the resources and abilities to have an on-call team of highly regarded members. Earlier this year, several Wanda volunteers were distributed to assist emergency services personnel in flood and storm rescue operations throughout Nowra and Hawkesbury. The teams navigated dangerous conditions to provide relief and assistance to vulnerable communities by protecting properties from flooding, helping residents prepare for the floods, delivering administrative support, cleaning debris and frequently updating residents. I commend Wanda's selfless volunteers who were involved in the March flood response. I recognise Denny Rowlands, Natalie Buckley, Andrew Gooley, Brett Porteous, Riley Porteous, John Wilde, Mark Lloyd, Peter Daras, Guy Bland, Cromwell Ollivier, Stephen Trembath, Mikaela Sutherland, Mark Lake, Adam Buckley, Josh Crowther and Ken Smith. I thank the community minded individuals from Wanda Surf Life Saving Club for their exceptional service to our community.

JADE REEVES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—When Jade Reeves was two years old, she was diagnosed with neuroblastoma. She, alongside her mum and dad, Mark and Hayley, were helped through the difficult time by local charity Charlie's Run 4 Kids. That was in 2015. Jade, now aged ten and going strong, is an ambassador for the charity. Mark and Hayley took to the tarmac to help raise money for young people in a similar position to Jade, and over the past few years Jade has joined them. Earlier this year, the Redhead Public School student even represented her school at the zone cross country in the first all-abilities category event. On the back of that performance, Jade represented the Hunter at the NSW cross country state titles—and came home with the bronze! Congratulations to Jade on this outstanding achievement, and to Mark and Hayley for raising a young woman with such extraordinary determination and resilience. Jade's bravery and strength is a great inspiration to our community, and I join with the Run 4 Kids team in being so proud of Jade and what she has accomplished. I can't wait to see what comes next!

LAKE MACQUARIE SES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—I am forever grateful for the work done by our incredible SES workers, and in particular I would like to note the incredible work of our NSW SES Lake Macquarie Unit during the storms and flooding which have recently battered our state. Even once Lake Macquarie's danger period had passed, the crews remained hard at work—as they always are when the state is facing severe weather conditions. A perfect example of the diversity of their actions they were required to undertake during the recent floods involved rescuing miniature horses from a submerged property Millers Forest on Sunday, 10 July. The Unit shared pictures of their equine rescue on Facebook, reminding the community that while some areas were out of the woods others still had a long way to go. I am always blown away by the volunteers, not only within SES but from other voluntary organisations, giving their labour to keep others safe in emergencies. It is reassuring to know that, when the community is in need of help, the SES is always there. Thank you once again to the Lake Macquarie Unit, and to all the SES units across the state.

1ST WARNERS BAY SCOUT GROUP QUEEN'S SCOUT AWARD

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—On 17 July I caught up with the 1st Warners Bay Scout Group at the Warners Bay Scout Hall in Eleebana to help celebrate four members being recognised with the Queen's Scout Award. The Queen's Scout Award is a major milestone in a Venturer's Scouting journey. The program aims to widen the interests and knowledge of Venturer Scouts and encourage them to 'look wide'. The award is designed to be challenging and encouraging for Venturers over a wide range of activities, and I want to congratulate Natalya Morgan, Max Goldsmith, Sophie Vuillemin and William McGuinness on this outstanding achievement. I would like to thank Group Leader Nevell Leverton for inviting me to the event, and the entire 1st Warners Bay Scout Group for their work in supporting and encouraging these young people as they have worked towards the Queen's Scout Award. It is not an easy pathway, but it is one these young people have travelled well. I wish Natalya,

Sophie and William the best for their university studies, and best wishes to Max for his HSC. No doubt we will be hearing more from these young leaders in coming years!

NORTH TRACK

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—North Track is a local program that has been established voluntarily by a group of Northern Rivers community members. It offers an ongoing program to young people who are disengaging or are already completely disengaged in schooling. North Track helps them build skills that will lead them towards employment and achieving their life goals. The program runs on a Monday and Wednesday with a small group 13-16 year old boys in the Lismore area. It's currently running two programs with Animal Rights and Rescue and with the Lismore Men and Community Shed. I would like to thank the working committee made up of Patrick Higgins - Director/Chairman, Diane Parker - QUOTA Representative, Robyn Power – QUOTA Representative, Amanda Flanagan – Distance Education Teacher, Bill Burns - Volunteer Youth worker, Lester Moran- DCJ, Scott Tanner – Superintendent / Area Command Lismore Police, Grant Erickson- Detective Inspector, Brother Paul Hough - Juvenile Justice Support Officer, Phil Hilliard - Director/Public Officer, Charlene Emizin Boyd - Retired Teacher, Kevin Bell - Director/Secretary (Current Teacher), Scott Johnson - Director/Treasurer (Accountant), Tony Mannering - Retired Solicitor and Youth Worker Josh Barrett. I thank the participants, working committee and local organisations for their work supporting this fantastic initiative.

VALE RON WOODHAM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to pay my respects to the life and service of Commissioner Ron Woodham, PSM. Ron passed peacefully last year in Lismore and I was honoured to attend his state funeral with my husband Jim last month in Sydney. We were fortunate enough to be his friends when he moved to Lismore. Ron served the people of New South Wales for 46 years in Corrective Services including ten as Corrective Services Commissioner. Affectionately known by many as Big Ron he was a hard bastard but fair. He started off his career as a shearer in Inverell before becoming a prison officer at Long Bay prison in 1966. Appointed as Commissioner in 2002 he left a lasting legacy in NSW transforming the focus and ethos of Corrective Services to be more inclusive of women, young people and First Nations people. Ron learned three Aboriginal languages and introduced 'no walls' prisons for young Koori inmates. Incorporating elders teaching culture and lore in the rehabilitation of Koori people in prison. During his career Ron received five citations for devotion to duty including a Ministerial Commendation for Bravery. I extend my condolences to his family, some members whom I know.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:35 until
Thursday 11 August 2022 at 9:30.**