



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 20 September 2022

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 20 September 2022

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that a reporter has been authorised on behalf of the Premier to take photographs of today's proceedings as well as question time from the members' and Wentworth side doors. I further inform the House that a media representative has also been authorised to take still photographs of today's sitting and question time from the gallery on a pool basis. I have likewise authorised photographers for question time today on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition and the Treasurer.

[Notices of motions given.]

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for:

- (1) The moving forthwith of a motion without notice by the Premier to take note of the Addresses of Condolence and Congratulation to His Majesty King Charles III.
- (2) Members addressing the motion to have a speaking time of 10 minutes each.

Motion agreed to.

Addresses

DEATH OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (12:16): I move:

That this House takes note of the Addresses of Condolence to His Majesty King Charles III on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and of Congratulation to His Majesty King Charles III on his accession to the throne, agreed to by the House on 13 September 2022.

Just seven months ago members stood in this Chamber to celebrate a remarkable milestone: the platinum jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, an unprecedented 70-year reign devoted entirely to the service of her people. Having so recently reflected on that life of achievement, we feel even more deeply the sorrow of Her Majesty's passing. Much has been written and said about Her Late Majesty's life. Today I reflect on just three elements of that remarkable life that earned Her Late Majesty a very special place in the hearts of the people of New South Wales: her unique connection with our State, her affection for our people and her remarkable longevity as the only monarch many of us have ever known.

First, I reflect on her connection with New South Wales. Over the course of 12 royal visits to our State and correspondence with countless members of the public, Her Late Majesty developed a lifelong affinity with New South Wales and its people. In 1954 she was the first serving monarch to set foot in Australia and open an Australian Parliament—this Parliament. Some 35,000 people gathered outside. The crowds got so big that police had to call people down from the awnings on the other side of Macquarie Street. Not far from this very place she noted proudly:

Nowhere else has Parliamentary democracy demonstrated more effectively its soundness and its adaptability to changing times ...

Her visit set the template for her entire reign, a lifetime building connections with the people that she served. As much as her role allowed, Her Late Majesty understood the importance of meeting people where they were. She inspected sheep in Dubbo. She admired the view from Echo Point. She narrowly missed flooding in Lismore and chatted across the airwaves from the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Broken Hill. She was warmly welcomed in Orange and Armidale, in Tamworth and Wagga Wagga. Her Late Majesty's legacy is bound up in the landmarks

and skylines of our State. She cut the ribbon on the Parramatta football stadium—the old one—and opened Darling Harbour. Perhaps most memorably, she opened the Sydney Opera House, noting that the building had captured the imagination of the world. She said:

The human spirit must sometimes take wings or sails, and create something that is not just utilitarian or commonplace.

Her Majesty did not reign from afar. She worked to build a sense of closeness and familiarity. I think she captured that quite beautifully in the year 2000 when she said at the Opera House:

... since I first stepped ashore here in Sydney in February 1954 I have felt part of this rugged, honest, creative land. I have shared in the joys and the sorrows, the challenges and the changes that have shaped this country's history over these past fifty years.

She will forever remain a part of this land. Last week I was pleased to announce with the Prime Minister a new public square to be named in honour of Her Late Majesty on Macquarie Street East, located between the original Registrar-General's building and the Hyde Park Barracks. In a move that I am sure the new King will approve and welcome, we will be knocking down that architectural eyesore from the 1970s to make way for the beautiful plaza in Her Late Majesty's name. Along with a statue in her honour, it will be a fitting tribute and memorial to our longest serving monarch, a queen who many of us would be proud to call an honorary Australian.

In large part that was because she conducted herself so warmly and personably. From her earliest years in the public spotlight, Her Late Majesty opened her heart. In her famous 1957 Christmas address, she spoke frankly about the limitations of her role:

In the old days the monarch led his soldiers on the battlefield and his leadership at all times was close and personal.

Today things are very different. I cannot lead you into battle, I do not give you laws or administer justice but I can do something else, I can give you my heart and my devotion to these old islands and all the peoples of our brotherhood of nations.

For the people of New South Wales, this is exactly what she did. It was evident in our rawest moments, often after a great tragedy or natural disaster. As recently as April this year, the Queen sent a message to flood-affected communities in New South Wales. She praised their "resolute spirit and community mindedness". She thanked our emergency service workers. This was her practice throughout her 70-year reign—a genuine concern born of deep empathy with people far in the distance but close to her heart. Of course, that affection was even more powerful in person. So many who met her recall a queen who listened and who, despite all the trappings of office, made people feel seen.

But perhaps what most endeared her to Australians was Her Late Majesty's secret weapon, a wry and mischievous sense of humour. She was self-deprecating and dry. Once, mistaken for a private citizen in Scotland, she was told that she looked "just like the Queen". "How reassuring," she responded. Just a few months ago she joked with Australians of the Year about Canberra's Parliament House, which she opened 34 years ago, wondering aloud how many people had fallen into the Pool of Reflection over that time. Her sense of humour put people at ease, stealing moments of real connection in the midst of formality and protocol—a humour of warmth and wit from a queen of hearts, who gave us her affection and won ours in return. She did so as the world changed around her.

At the time of her first visit, around 3½ million people called New South Wales home. In the intervening decades, our population more than doubled, our society and our economy boomed, and technology transformed the world at breakneck pace. But through it all, the Queen remained constant, the embodiment of stability and endurance. It is hard to overstate how reassuring so many people found that. She did not stand still. Holding fast to all that is good in the traditions that she represented, Her Late Majesty was a queen for our times, adapting and modernising in a changing world.

It is no coincidence that while political regimes have come and gone, the Commonwealth nations which Her Majesty served remain among the most stable and prosperous in the world. As we grieve Her Majesty's passing, we treasure her connection with New South Wales and her deep affection for the people of our State. We also carry the lessons of an extraordinary life. At her golden jubilee Her Majesty said, "Young or old, we have as much to look forward to with confidence and hope as we have to look back on with pride." As the second Elizabethan age draws to a close, we can now look forward with confidence, hope and optimism as we welcome her son, King Charles III, to the throne.

On Sunday 11 September the Executive Council met at Government House and the Governor of New South Wales accepted the Government's recommendation to proclaim King Charles III as King of Australia. On behalf of the Government and the people of New South Wales, I once again congratulate the new sovereign on his accession to the throne. His Majesty is no stranger to Australian shores. Perhaps more than any other monarch, Australia has shaped his life and outlook. In 1963 the 17-year-old future king completed two terms at Timbertop in the Victorian Alps, a school program animated by the same ethos as the Outward Bound program of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Our native fauna features prominently in His Majesty's memories. He has reminisced about

leaches and snakes, and enormous bull ants and funnel-web spiders. It was a unique primer for a king into the ecology, culture and history of our nation. His Majesty has returned many times, strengthening his connection with the Australian people. He has swum with the crowds in Bondi, opened the Anglo-American telescope at Siding Spring Observatory, met with defence personnel at Garden Island and visited residents in the Riverina. I seek a short extension of time.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will extend a courtesy to the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, but there is no provision for granting an extension of time during this debate. If a member is close to concluding their contribution, they could seek the leave of the Speaker under Standing Order 271 to incorporate the remainder of their speech in *Hansard*. However, I will reserve the granting of leave until after the Clerks and I have received and reviewed a copy of the speech. We will advise the member of the outcome of the request at a later time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Speaker. Throughout it all, His Majesty's warmth and affection for the people of New South Wales have been clear. However, not all visits have gone to plan. In 1994 at an event in Sydney a member of the public fired two blank shots from a starting pistol. The future king calmly juggled his cufflinks and was moved away by security. That calm response and his commitment to continuing his itinerary won him a great deal of respect and admiration from our people. It offered a glimpse of the same dedication and devotion to service that defined Her Late Majesty's reign. That dedication is also evident in His Majesty's longstanding support for Australian charitable causes. In 2013 he set up the Prince's Trust Australia, whose objectives offer a window into the passions of our new King. They include promoting sustainable urban development; supporting Indigenous cultural heritage, health and wellbeing; disaster preparedness for regional communities; helping ADF personnel transition into business; and assisting disadvantaged young people into employment.

As nearby as Glebe, the Prince's Trust Australia is currently delivering 75 new fit-for-purpose inner-city social housing dwellings. Our new monarch has also expressed a strong desire to contribute to the rebuilding of Lismore after this year's devastating floods. In his first address as sovereign, King Charles III pledged to imitate the Queen's "unswerving devotion" and to uphold the constitutional principles that have been the bedrock of our system of government. By his actions, we already know this to be true. On behalf of the people of New South Wales, I once again offer King Charles III and the royal family our most sincere condolences for the passing of Her Late Majesty the Queen. But as a State, as a nation and as a Commonwealth, we look to the future with great hope and great optimism as we welcome and congratulate our new sovereign. God save the King.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:30): I join with the Premier and other members of the New South Wales Parliament in paying my respects to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Australia mourns the loss of the longest serving monarch. While few of us had the opportunity to meet Queen Elizabeth, her constant presence in our nation's affairs meant we all felt that we knew her. That is why, for many Australians, the sense of loss is both deep and personal. She was a member of a very special generation—the Greatest Generation, many call them—that uniquely stoic group who lived their childhoods against the backdrop of the Great Depression, who reached adolescence just as the world was plunged into war, and whose hard work and sacrifice put back together the pieces of a broken world. Like many others in those times, her future was determined by her circumstances, not by her personal choices.

The acts of others set her on the path to become monarch. What she did choose was to accept the duties set for her and to undertake them with faultless dedication. Nothing defines Queen Elizabeth II and her generation better than their commitment to public service. Her Majesty was witness to the tumultuous events that shaped the Commonwealth that she would one day lead. In 1940 she was among the millions of children evacuated from London to escape the Luftwaffe's daily raids on the capital. Her parents, King George VI and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, remained at bomb-damaged Buckingham Palace in a show of strength. During the height of the Blitz, the 14-year-old heir to the throne made her first radio broadcast, speaking to other evacuated children. She said:

We are trying to do all we can to help our gallant sailors, soldiers and airmen, and we are trying, too, to bear our own share of the danger and sadness of war. We know, every one of us, that in the end all will be well ...

That same year her future husband, Prince Philip, completed his naval training and earned an appointment on a battleship that would escort Australian troops to the battlefields of northern Africa in Egypt. The teenage princess joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service shortly after her eighteenth birthday. She trained and worked as a driver and mechanic, earning the rank of honorary junior commander, the female equivalent of captain at the time. She served in uniform as part of the great war effort Churchill described as Britain's finest hour. Now, the Queen's passing means we have lost another witness to that time of great conflict and tragedy. There are now all too few of those for whom the Second World War is not a book or a documentary but a living memory. The loss of Queen Elizabeth must remind us all to treasure those who remain.

The princess became Queen at the age of 25, at the moment her father, King George VI, died in 1952. During 16 visits in 70 years, she forged a unique and strong relationship with the Australian people, beginning in 1954 as the first reigning British monarch to visit Australia. Displaying the energy and commitment that characterised her reign, the young Queen toured 57 towns and cities in 58 days, delivering 100 speeches. It is estimated that seven million Australians, which was 70 per cent of the population at the time, turned out to see her, including many from the suburbs that I now represent in the St George region. Among them were members of the St George Girl Guides from Bexley and Hurstville, tasked with greeting the royal family when they arrived at Farm Cove.

The Queen and Prince Philip drove down The Grand Parade and President Avenue to the cheers of more than 35,000 St George schoolkids, who were lining the streets. There was a trip to St George Hospital, before the royal party boarded a train at Hurstville station on their way to the Illawarra. Many trips over many decades helped to secure our nation's affection for its Queen. The reign of Her Majesty Elizabeth II has now come to an end. Hyde Park and Tower of London guns have been fired to herald her passing, just as they did in 1926 to announce her arrival as the granddaughter of the King. In Cardiff, Edinburgh, York, Gibraltar and Canberra, 96 rounds were fired in tribute, one for each year of her remarkable life—a life defined by duty and service, so much so that duty and service will now be redefined by her life. I join the House in mourning her passing.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (12:35): I contribute to debate on the Addresses of Condolence and of Congratulation. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II served her people with distinction, grace and sacrifice. It is fitting that we pause to mourn her loss, celebrate her life and mark the accession of King Charles III. The past 10 days have seen a range of tributes from a wide array of people, and I have read and watched many with interest. The stories that captured my attention the most, though, were not the stories told by world leaders, monarchs or celebrities; they were the stories of ordinary people, people across the world who may have had only a passing interaction with Her Majesty but it stayed with them for decades afterwards. Indeed, it brings to mind my own experience with Her Majesty.

I was a student in year 6 at Holy Family School when, standing on William Street in Bathurst, the cavalcade rolled through in 1982. Clutching my plastic Australian flag, it was a moment that I have never forgotten. The affection with which she was held was reflected by the thousands who lined the streets for her visits to our cities and towns. Her Late Majesty's first visit to regional New South Wales was in 1945, only a year after her coronation. Across 58 days she toured the nation, stopping in Newcastle, Casino, Lismore, Dubbo, Wollongong, Bathurst, Lithgow, Wagga Wagga, Broken Hill and many more towns. It is estimated that around 75 per cent of Australia's population at some point caught a glimpse of the Queen and Prince Philip during the visit.

She had a message for those who could not be part of it, using a broadcast from the Royal Flying Doctor Service base at Broken Hill to note the stories she had heard of the fortitude, courage and humour of those living in the bush. She said, "Now that I have seen from the air something of the immense and challenging country in which you live, I know they were right." Her Late Majesty certainly made her mark on the regions. In February 1954 the royal couple stayed at the Gollan Hotel in Lismore, the only pub the royals stayed in during their Australian visit. Of course, as I said, they visited my hometown of Bathurst. Their arrival was marked by the bells of the Carillon. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh's visit to Bathurst lasted just 75 minutes, but it was called by newspapers at the time "Bathurst's greatest day" and, for locals old enough to remember the historic event, it still is.

A crowd of people slept on Kings Parade, while others arrived in Bathurst at midnight on 12 February, with 4,000 members of the vanguard present. Upon the Queen and Duke's arrival in Bathurst, they met with the ex-servicemen of the Bathurst Civic Centre before visiting an assembly of schoolchildren at the Bathurst Showground. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh were welcomed by 80,000 people, in a turnout that is still regarded as the greatest crowd the city has ever known—even dwarfing today's biggest V8 Supercars gathering. I was fortunate enough to be alive for the only other time the Queen and Prince Philip visited Bathurst, which was in October 1982. There was a lot fanfare in the Toole household as my dad was the president of Evans shire at the time and he was one of the dignitaries who met Her Majesty. Dad was joined by my mum, in her bright yellow suit, and they had the honour of speaking to her. They still talk about that to this day.

While her visits will live long in the memories of those who had the good fortune to attend them, Her Late Majesty's impact will resonate well beyond those moments. She has been a constant in our lives through a time of the greatest change our world has ever known. Few days would pass without us seeing her face—on our money, on our stamps and on the news. She will be remembered for not just who she was but how she was. Her Late Majesty navigated seven decades of immense change and challenge with her trademark courage, strength and an unflinching commitment to the people she served. While she lived a life far removed from our own, there were flashes of familiarity—her love of dogs and horses; an impish sense of humour; and the obvious joy she took in her children and grandchildren. I extend my deepest sympathies to all members of the royal family. While we

have lost an icon, they have lost a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. We thank them for sharing her life with so many of us.

But the end of an era also marks the beginning of a new one. I congratulate our new monarch, King Charles III, on his accession to the throne. His Majesty already has a deep connection to Australia. Australia helped shape him for a time during his teenage years, and now he will shape the next chapter of the monarchy. He is passionate about many of the same issues that we in rural New South Wales are passionate about—the wool industry, family farms and sustainability. We hope to see him back on our shores in the years to come, to see that for himself. I look forward to furthering that friendship in the years and the decades to come. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:41): I join members of this House to pause and offer my deepest condolences to the royal family, the people of the United Kingdom, the people of all Commonwealth nations and the people of New South Wales on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. I offer my sympathy for the profound loss of Her Late Majesty and acknowledge that the Queen was the longest reigning British monarch and the longest serving female head of state in recorded history. Her Late Majesty reigned for 70 years and 214 days. This is a period running from the extreme deprivation of the British people after the Second World War to the TikTok era, in which the palace also appeared to be active. Through the sound and fury of seven decades, Her Late Majesty exhibited a deep decency and stoic calm. She has been a reassuring constant.

For so many Australians, Queen Elizabeth II was more than just an abstract sovereign. In this loss, many Australians are bound in a common feeling of grief with the royal family and the British people. Few Australians have known a world without Queen Elizabeth II as the reigning monarch. Her Late Majesty is the only Australian monarch to have visited Australia. Yet we must also remember that, during her life, Her Majesty was also a beloved daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Her Late Majesty's son King Charles III expressed vividly his personal loss in the following words:

The death of my beloved Mother, Her Majesty The Queen, is a moment of the greatest sadness for me and all members of my family.

We mourn profoundly the passing of a cherished Sovereign and a much-loved Mother.

This experience of loss is no doubt shared by millions of people around the world. The 24-hour long line, snaking through London's unseasonably hot streets, of people waiting to pay their respects to Her Late Majesty attests to the love the British people have for their Queen. Given her public achievements, it is easy to forget that the Queen was wife to Prince Philip for almost 75 years. And Her Late Majesty was monarch for almost 71 years. So we, as Australians, have in a way been connected to the Queen for almost as long as Prince Philip was. In 1946, in a letter to his future mother-in-law, who was later to become the Queen Mother, Prince Philip wrote:

To have been spared in the war and seen victory, to have been given the chance to rest and to re-adjust myself, to have fallen in love completely and unreservedly, makes all one's personal and even the world's troubles seem small and petty.

Many Australians will struggle to grapple with the loss of Her Majesty. Hopefully, however, some people may find that, for a short moment, like His Royal Highness, their own and the world's troubles may become small and quiet. In a speech on their golden wedding anniversary, Her Majesty said of Prince Philip:

... he has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years.

Those words, said remarkably after more than 60 years of marriage, no doubt can also be applied to the way many Australians feel about Her Majesty. Her Majesty has been, quite simply, a source of strength for all the people for so many years. For many of us, the passing of Queen Elizabeth II marks a moment of great sadness and grief. But this time of mourning will pass, and the deep connection and warm regard many Australians have always had for Queen Elizabeth II will not fade. May she rest in eternal peace.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:45): After more than 70 years on the throne, the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is at an end. On Friday 9 September much of the world awoke to the profoundly saddening news that Her Majesty had passed away. Over the past weeks, it has been clear the enormous impact that her death has had on many worldwide—as impactful, in fact, as her life. We have witnessed the most heartfelt outpouring of grief at the loss of Her Late Majesty. Crowds have gathered, flags have been lowered to half-mast and impromptu gardens have been made across the Commonwealth.

The Queen has been a constant in the lives of many of us for more than 70 years, and there is an immense sadness felt by many at her passing. As the longest serving monarch that this country and the Commonwealth have ever known, the Queen is assured of a notable place among the history pages. Since the dark days of the Second World War, the Queen has been the only monarch that many of us have ever known. She was a symbol of hope during the most recent COVID pandemic, echoing her late father, King George VI, as a symbol of national pride and unity. The Queen's devotion to service and duty has been an inspiration to so many across the world.

She showed the world how to give, how to love and how to serve. That is why we mourn her so profoundly. In the depths of grief, we understand why so many held such love for her. Queen Elizabeth II once said:

When life seems hard, the courageous do not lie down and accept defeat; instead, they are all the more determined to struggle for a better future.

I find those words immensely comforting, and I know that many in this place would find solace in them as we continue to work hard on behalf of our local communities. Along with many members in this place, I visited Government House to sign the New South Wales condolence book and I shared the following sentiments on behalf of the people of North Shore:

To His Majesty King Charles III, on behalf of the people of North Shore who held Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the highest esteem, I send condolences to you and your family. There will be a profound impact on all of us here in New South Wales as we mourn the loss of a life lived in service and duty. We are thankful for her dedication to Australia, her people, and the wider Commonwealth.

Many in my local community maintain a strong devotion to our royal family, which is evident in the naming of many of our streets, such as Royalist Road and Prince Albert Street. The 1954 royal Australian tour reflects the incredible royal fever that still exists often today in Australia. During that tour, the young Queen made more than 100 speeches; opened eight parliaments, including our own; and attended more than 90 civic receptions.

During the tour, my community of North Shore was fortunate enough to host the Queen at a number of events, including a parade from Mosman through to North Sydney. Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh inspected the Balmoral naval base, now known as HMAS Penguin, with thousands of children and residents lining the streets. On their arrival at Middle Head, the royal pair passed beneath a floral arch created by the Mosman Home Gardeners' Society that spanned Middle Head Road. On the last day of the royal Australian tour, Sydney turned out to catch a final glimpse before the royal couple departed for New Zealand. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh delighted more than 48,000 wildly excited cheering schoolchildren in a 10-minute drive through St Leonards Park in North Sydney, which still bears, to this day, a memory of that occasion.

Children from 131 schools across Sydney turned out to see the Queen, and St John Ambulance officials had to treat more than 250 children and adults who, in their excitement and devotion, had collapsed under the blazing sun while wanting to pay tribute to Her Majesty. Near the Alfred Street end of the procession, 550 boys from The King's School, conspicuous in their slouch hats and red-and-grey uniforms, gave a military touch to the scene, which many of us would have seen echoed in yesterday's funeral. On Monday almost 5.2 billion people watched the State funeral in London, where we farewelled our Queen. I find the following quote from His Majesty the King in his recent broadcast to the Commonwealth appropriate as we say our last goodbye, "May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

I congratulate His Majesty King Charles III on his accession to the throne. He has throughout his time been a friend to Australia and has visited regularly. He has invested significantly in the future of this country, recognising the Indigenous history, our native habitat, and the sustainability options and opportunities for other Australians. We wish His Majesty every good fortune and, as he begins his reign as King and monarch, we are confident in his ability to uphold the incredible service of his mother. I offer my condolences and the condolences of my community to you, your Majesty, and your family at this difficult time and share the thoughts and prayers of my local community. God save the King.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:50): I am pleased to say a few words on behalf of my community and myself on the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. There has been substantial comment in the media since the Queen's passing, and I do not intend to repeat those opinions and news reports. Suffice to say, I agree with the general view that the Queen has been a much-loved and respected monarch ever since her coronation in 1952, some 70 years ago. There have been many examples given on the Queen's visits to Australia. Her Majesty has been a regular visitor to our shores during her long reign. She has opened parliamentary sessions and parliaments. The opening of our Sydney Opera House was a major event in which Her Majesty officiated.

But the Queen did not only officiate at internationally recognised places like the Sydney Opera House. My electorate of Mount Druitt was the scene of a big occasion in 1982 when the Queen, in the company of her husband, Prince Philip, visited the Mount Druitt area to officially open Mount Druitt Hospital. At that time, the Mount Druitt area was divided between two State electorates. St Mary's was represented by Mr Anthony Johnson, but the hospital was located in the Riverstone electorate. The event was probably the biggest ever seen in the district. Thousands of people lined the streets and there was an overflow crowd within the hospital grounds.

At that time, I was a third year student at the University of Wollongong and was residing at the university residence. I recall that some of my colleagues were all huddled around a television set, watching the event on the news. I did not know what the attraction was, so I asked the students, "What's on the TV?" One responded that

the Queen was opening some hospital in Sydney. Before the Queen's visitation to Mount Druitt, not many knew or had heard of Mount Druitt. That visitation certainly put Mount Druitt on the world stage. My predecessor, the Hon. Richard Amery, often talked proudly of that occasion, when he, as a director of the hospital board, and his wife, Marie, joined other board members in lining up to be formally introduced to Her Majesty and the Duke.

After the official part of the day was over, members of the board and hospital officials, along with the then Premier, Neville Wran, dined in the hospital's boardroom. As I say, it was a big event. Her Majesty's passing had many locals recalling that big day in Mount Druitt when the Queen came to town to open our little public hospital. In conclusion, I pass on my condolences to the royal family on the sadness of Her Majesty's passing. I and my community wish the new monarch, King Charles III, the best of luck and good fortune. I am sure the new King would agree with me when I say that he has big shoes to fill, as his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, is going to be a hard act to follow.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (12:54): Many dedicate their life to service and duty with essentially faultless distinction. None to my knowledge has done so for 70 years under the relentless public scrutiny of global modern media. Her Majesty's finite reign was powerful indeed; however, her gift to leadership is where the enduring power reigns. A true lesson in grace, dignity and humility. Vale, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 1926-2022. I take this opportunity to congratulate our new monarch, His Majesty King Charles III. I have very much appreciated his advocacy over the years on important global issues, which reveals the monarch's personal passions and values. I wish His Majesty every good fortune and may he continue to show the adhesive qualities of true global leadership in an increasingly fragmented world. God save the King.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:55): I join with colleagues to pay my respects on behalf of the Granville community to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and recognise her incredible legacy. I also give my condolences to the royal family. Her passing after 70 years of service has touched millions. Most Australians have known no other monarch, and even those of us who desire an Australian head of State, including me, respect enormously Queen Elizabeth's diligent, devoted and calm approach to the office she held and the support that she provided to the Commonwealth. The affection with which she is held by Australians is deep and profound.

The Queen visited New South Wales 12 times, including visiting western Sydney in 1970 and 1986. On her visit in 1970, 75,000 people saw the Queen as she drove from the RAAF Base Richmond to Windsor and on to Parramatta and Rydalmere. The Bishop of Parramatta the Right Reverend H. G. S. Begbie and the St Matthews Church warden conducted the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh through the Francis Greenway-designed church. The Queen then looked at plaques honouring district pioneers and inspected the book of baptisms, marriages and burials dating back to 1810. At Parramatta the Queen declared open the restored Old Government House and their route to Rydalmere Wharf was crowded with people waving flags and streamers.

During the 1986 royal visit, the Queen boarded a launch at the Man O'War Steps at Sydney Opera House to Rivendell wharf at Parramatta and then took the royal Rolls-Royce to Parramatta Stadium. There were 30,000 fans at the stadium, where Premier Neville Wran and Federal Minister for Sport, Recreation and Tourism John Brown as well as rugby league greats Mick Cronin and Ken Thornett joined the Queen. Premier Wran announced that Parramatta "was the very heart and living centre of the vast metropolitan area of Sydney, a place which in the early days of settlement equalled the importance of Sydney town itself." Several thousand children dressed in green and gold performed aerobics to *Down Under* by Men at Work. The Queen signed the visitors' book for the City of Parramatta and left for the RAAF Base Richmond to depart Sydney for Melbourne.

On 18 January 1977 a crowded commuter train derailed and ran into the supports of a road bridge that collapsed onto two of the train's passenger carriages. This date is seared into the history of Granville and remains the worst rail disaster in Australian history, when 83 people died, more than 213 were injured and 1,300 were affected. On 20 January 1977 *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the Queen had sent a telegram to the Governor-General expressing her sympathy for the victims of the crash. The telegram read, "I am much distressed to learn of the tragic train disaster at Granville. The Duke of Edinburgh joins in sending our heartfelt sympathy to the relatives of those who lost their lives and to the injured. Elizabeth R." During her lifetime, she consulted with 16 Australian Prime Ministers and 16 governors-general served in her name. She was the patron of more than 20 Australian charities and associations. When visiting Australia in 2002 the Queen said, "For myself, I thank all Australians and declare again that my admiration, affection and regard for the people of Australia will remain as it has been—constant, sure and true."

As the Second World War engulfed Europe, the then Princess Elizabeth rallied to the cause and enlisted in the military, helping to boost the morale of the British people. In 1944, upon turning 18 she enlisted in the women's branch of the British Army, known as the Territorial Auxiliary Services. Rather than allow his daughter to be granted a high rank due to her royal standing, King George VI insisted that she be treated like any other soldier. Training as a second subaltern, she became an ambulance driver, learning to fix engines and change tyres—tasks

we have all seen her perform in the later years of her life. Princess Elizabeth saw her father's dogged refusal to leave London during wartime as an example of steadfast leadership and morale boosting. Most recently, during the pandemic, the Queen revived a World War II slogan to rouse the United Kingdom:

We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.

It is clear that the Queen's wartime service helped shape her sense of duty. The Queen regularly sent a message of remembrance on Anzac Day. In the first year of her reign, in her message to Governor-General Sir William McKell, she said:

On this Anzac Day, the first of my reign, I join with my peoples in the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand in their remembrance of those Australians and New Zealanders who died in two World Wars ...

I know that their sacrifices will continue to inspire all of us in our efforts to advance the happiness and prosperity of mankind.

The following year she wrote:

On Anzac Day in the year of my Coronation I share with my peoples in the Commonwealth of Australia and in New Zealand, the thankful remembrance of our debt to all Australians and New Zealanders who had laid down their lives in battle.

The memory of their sacrifice will be cherished for ever in all our hearts.

The following year the Queen joined more than 80,000 people in Hyde Park for a gathering of ex-service men and women, war widows and legacy orphans at the Anzac memorial. The Queen met six winners of the Victoria Cross, including Mr George Cartwright, VC. Granville made a big contribution to the effort in the Great War. Some 1,469 names appear on the honour roll for the Granville district and two men from Granville, Private George Cartwright and Lieutenant Arthur Hall, were recognised for their service, bravery and sacrifice with the awarding of the Victoria Cross.

Because she lived her entire life in the public eye, and more so than any of her predecessors, we know from the early days of her reign that she was an animal lover. She favoured horses, of which she owned more than 100, but the Queen's best friends may have been her corgis and her other dogs. On Australia Day in 1959, after the passing of her corgi named Susan, the Queen wrote:

I had always dreaded losing her, but I am ever so thankful that her suffering was so mercifully short.

Susan's tombstone notes:

For almost 15 years the faithful companion of the Queen.

Over the next six decades the Queen would own more than 30 of Susan's descendants. Susan was an eighteenth birthday gift from the Queen's father, King George VI. Almost single-handedly the Queen created a mass market for corgis. Susan was mischievous and at one time bit the royal clock winder and on another occasion bit a young palace sentry. Princess Diana is said to have coined the phrase "a moving carpet" to describe the jumble of dogs that preceded the Queen when she walked with them. The Queen called them "the girls and the boys". In all her years of breeding, she never sold any of her puppies. All stayed with her or were given to breeders, relatives or friends. Between 1933 and 2018 the Queen always owned at least one corgi, but mostly it was more than that. At the time of her passing she owned another two. During her life the Queen introduced a new breed of dog, the dorgi, which is a mix between a dachshund and a corgi. It is not an official breed but they were much-loved members of the royal household. It is said that when her last dorgi, Candy, passed, it affected the Queen very deeply.

After the Netflix series *The Crown* aired, corgi puppy registrations leapt by 60 per cent after the first season and 47 per cent in 2018 after the second season. The James Bond skit starring the Queen and three royal corgis at the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony also saw them tummy-roll back into the public consciousness. We have different memories of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II but, as a dog owner and a former owner of corgis, I think you can tell a lot about a person from how they treat animals. The Queen certainly had a lifetime love of her corgis and I cannot imagine her without those animals beside her.

She also loved horses and was a dedicated breeder of thoroughbred racehorses. In 2013, at age 87, the Queen watched the Royal Ascot race and saw her racehorse, Estimate, win the prestigious Gold Cup. The races were some of the rare occasions when the Queen could allow her guard to drop in public for a few moments. She expressed her delight as a pure racing fan. She had great success from early in her reign. She was named British flat racing Champion Owner in 1954 and 1957. With victories at the St Leger Stakes, Epsom Oaks, 1000 Guineas and 2000 Guineas, the only one of five British classic races that eluded her was the Epsom Derby. She made regular visits to the Royal Stud in Sandringham, and once the horses finished racing, they remained in her care in retirement. In her first public appearance after the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, she was riding one of her ponies around the grounds of Windsor Castle. Animals, or pets, can bring people closer together, and values such as her

love of animals and love of life underpinned Queen Elizabeth II's reign. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was a steadfast leader and one whom we felt so familiar with and connected to. It is with great sadness that we commemorate her passing but with fondness that we recall her contribution to our country.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (13:05): I only saw Queen Elizabeth II once in my life, as a young, corgi-owning boy waving my plastic flag on 29 April 1970 when she whizzed past me and thousands of others through Caringbah on her way to Kurnell for the 200th anniversary of Cook's arrival on Gweagal land. Her Majesty's death has dominated our media and public discourse over the past 11 days. Why such an outpouring of admiration and affection in Australia for a 96-year-old woman on the other side of the world? For some, it is the magic of monarchy, the razzle-dazzle of royalty, the pageantry of pomp and the sparkle of spectacle. For some, it is the reassurance of continuity, the comfort of familiarity in rapidly changing times and a monarch who, for example, saw 16 Australian Prime Ministers and the already commenced and ongoing evolution of empire into Commonwealth.

For others, including me, it is a reminder that whatever our individual positions about the detail of our constitutional arrangements, we are a country so blessed by stability, relative harmony, strong democratic institutions and the rule of law and witnessing a seamless, peaceful, uncontested transfer of title that is often lacking in other countries. For still others, including me, it is Her Late Majesty's persona as someone at the pinnacle of public life, yet removed from the rancour and ruthlessness, the intrigue and infighting and the cynicism and sarcasm that so often accompanies it. Here was a woman symbolising the best in public life with courtesy, dignity, stoicism, good grace, good humour and even an old-fashioned common touch with cardigans and corgis, and above all in the service of others. Indeed, back in 1947 on her twenty-first birthday, she famously proclaimed, "My whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be dedicated to your service." With 70 years of dedicated service as our Queen and her steady witness to her faith, she has honoured that promise. Vale, Her Late Majesty. Well done, good and faithful servant. I congratulate and offer my best wishes to her heir and successor and our sovereign, King Charles III.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:08): I make a brief contribution to the Addresses of Condolence and of Congratulation on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and I congratulate King Charles III on his accession to the throne. We have heard so much in other members' speeches and have read so much in the media about the passing of Her Late Majesty that I do not want to go over all the ground that has been covered before. I will speak from the perspective of a woman who has lived with the Queen as monarch for all of my life and, on a personal level, about the leadership and inspiration she has provided to me.

People talk about her 70 years as the monarch, but her leadership started from a very young age. When we hear the stories of her service during the war and of her broadcasts to young children in the midst of uncertainty and fear of war to give them a sense of certainty, strength and courage in a difficult time, for a young person to do that is an act of inspiration. I wonder to myself how many of us could wake up to the news that our father had passed and know that the morning that we felt that intense personal grief at the loss of a parent would have to be shared not just with our friends and family but also with a nation that we were now expected to lead—and, indeed, the Commonwealth—as she did so eloquently, strongly, determinedly and doggedly throughout her life.

None of us can experience or even properly comprehend that life of service and duty, that need to provide hope for the future and stability in such a time of uncertainty and change. As someone who leads a very small group in my community, I see that resilience and ability to exist in a situation where there are so many conversations, where so many nuances are being debated all the time about every action that she takes. She always stood resolute and did what she saw as the right thing to do, rather than just ducking and weaving with the winds and responding to that public sentiment.

It has been really wonderful to see the warm and the personal emotional response of members of my community to the passing of Her Late Majesty. I put a condolence book in my electorate, and it has been signed by so many people. We are sending it off to Canberra today so that it permanently forms part of the record. On the outside walls of the library, the Maitland City Council has displayed some of the images of the Queen that have become so iconic in our collective memory over the past 70 years. They will also be renaming Ministers Park to Queen Elizabeth Park, which I think is a great move. I warmly invite His Majesty King Charles III to come back to Maitland, as he has been there previously, to perhaps plant a tree in honour of Her Majesty. The royal family is a complex family. Not many of us have to live our lives in the limelight that they have had to experience; probably no-one on earth has had as much scrutiny of every aspect of their lives as that family has. Her Late Majesty led that family. She gave them the love and the support that she could as a mother, wife, parent, grandparent, sister and sibling, but also as a monarch who had to lead by example.

Her life as a woman doing amazing things, making sacrifices and undertaking tasks that were not expected of women when she first did them has also inspired so many women across our globe. We only have to think about the fairytales of old, which always talked about kings and queens. I still remember coming to a

consciousness as a very young girl that we did not have a king of Australia or of the Commonwealth; it was the Queen. That is a very powerful message to women in the twentieth century, particularly, as feminists started to regain a voice for women across the world. That is not to say that the Queen was flying a feminist flag, but she was just being. Not many of us in life can actually inspire others just by knuckling down and doing the job that we have been assigned to do. On behalf of the community of Maitland, I extend my most sincere condolences to the royal family. I thank Her Late Majesty the Queen for the inspiration and the strength that she has given all of us.

Debate interrupted.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR HORNSBY

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Hornsby and Treasurer happy birthday for last week.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Gerrit and Margaret van Essen, guests of the member for Ryde. I also welcome Saskia Eveleens from Sydney Secondary College, guest of the member for Balmain. Saskia is undertaking work experience in the member's office. I also welcome members of the Filipino-Australian society of the Hunter Valley Incorporated, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie.

Announcements

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE 2024

The SPEAKER (14:16): In late August I attended the sixty-fifth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Halifax, Canada, in my capacity as an Australian regional representative and member of the CPA International Executive Committee. I was accompanied by the President, the Clerk of the Legislative Council and the Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. On the last day of the conference it was announced that the New South Wales had won the bid to host the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in November 2024. This conference is the world's largest international parliamentary gathering. It will bring some 700 delegates from 53 Commonwealth countries to our State of New South Wales. I thank everyone who was involved in preparing that successful bid.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE EXECUTIVE CHEF VANESSA HARCOURT

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that the Parliament's Executive Chef, Vanessa Harcourt, was announced the winner of the NSW Chef of the Year award at the Restaurant and Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence this year. The Strangers' Restaurant was also a finalist in two categories—Contemporary Australian Restaurant—Formal, and Tourist Restaurant. I am sure that members join with me in congratulating Vanessa and our talented and dedicated parliamentary catering team. I note that there are great offerings this evening and tomorrow evening in the members' and Strangers' dining rooms.

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that pursuant to section 6 of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010 the President and I have appointed Professor Stephen Bartos as the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Members will be aware that Professor Bartos has previously served as the parliamentary budget officer in 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Members

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER THE PLEDGE OF LOYALTY OR THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER: I report that Her Excellency the Governor has issued a Commission authorising the Assistant Speaker to be a person before whom any member of the Legislative Assembly may take the pledge of loyalty or the oath of allegiance in the absence of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. That follows the recent change of Assistant Speaker.

Governor

DEATH OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III

The SPEAKER: I report messages from the Official Secretary to Her Excellency the Governor advising that the Addresses of Condolence and of Congratulation passed by this House on 13 September 2022 have been transmitted to His Majesty King Charles III.

Question Time

HEALTH POLICY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:22): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that Rebecca, who is in the gallery today, was forced to walk out of Blacktown emergency department after waiting for eight hours for treatment for gallstones, only to drive across town to Hornsby and be seen within the hour, and given that in the most recent quarter one in eight people walked out of western Sydney emergency departments without any treatment at all, does the Premier acknowledge that his policies in health are not working?

Mr Brad Hazzard: Every Labor government in the country thinks we're doing the best in the nation.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. He should know—certainly the health Minister and every Premier around the country knows—that New South Wales has the strongest health system in this country. There was a reason Mark McGowan closed the Western Australian border during COVID. He could not trust his health system. It is no accident that in New South Wales we stayed open the most and were freer than any other State in the country because of the investments we made in our health system. If we look at the health budget for this year handed down by the Treasurer we find a recurrent budget of \$30.7 billion—up \$3.6 billion. That is 13 per cent more than last year.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: At \$30.7 billion, compared to the last health budget under Labor, is that an increase of 10 per cent, 20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent, 50 per cent, 60 per cent, 70 per cent, 80 per cent or higher at 90 per cent?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No, it is a 98.3 per cent increase in the current health budget under the Liberals and The Nationals, and we know why, because members on this side of the House manage money well.

Mr Michael Daley: It's called inflation.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Inflation at 98.3 per cent? That is why you are the failed finance Minister. When Labor went in with the Parkes hospital promise, did they deliver it? No. Did we? Yes. The Northern Beaches Hospital was promised by the Opposition but was delivered by the Liberals and The Nationals.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

[*A member interjected.*]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Campbelltown as well?

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was not aware of Campbelltown.

Mr Greg Warren: I will send you the GPS.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am out there opening your hospitals.

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

Mr Ron Hoenig: The Premier has now departed. The Premier is not being directly relevant under Standing Order 129. He has been asked about his health system, not a system from 12 years ago.

The SPEAKER: The question was, "Do you acknowledge that your policies in health are not working?" The Premier is being relevant to that question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I will get more relevant. New South Wales and Victoria have led the way in taking up further responsibility with our urgent care clinics because we know the pressure that every public hospital is under in this country. The Liberals and The Nationals are leading the way, continuing to make improvements to give our people the best health care, not just in this country but anywhere in the world.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (14:26): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is working to ensure that our community is kept safe?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:26): I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question and for her strong advocacy, particularly on matters of law and order in western Sydney in her electorate. There is no role more important for any government than to keep its citizens safe and to deliver justice for the community. Tomorrow, as foreshadowed by the corrections Minister at the commencement of question time, the Liberals and The Nationals will be introducing no body, no parole laws into New South Wales. We will make it impossible for offenders to be granted parole in this State if they wilfully and deliberately refuse to disclose information about the victim's remains. Being unable to locate a loved one's body is extremely distressing and traumatic for the families and friends of victims and it denies a victim the dignity of being laid to rest appropriately. These laws will stop inmates convicted of murder or homicide offences from getting parole unless they cooperate with police to end the torment of families and return to them the remains of their loved ones.

This morning I spoke with Greg and Marilyn, the brother and sister-in-law of Lyn Dawson. I acknowledge the great work done by Hedley Thomas in his pursuit for justice of Lyn Dawson and her family. We share the same ideals. Putting a murderer behind bars is punishment, but justice cannot be truly served until families can say their final goodbyes. The wound of crimes like this is never healed; we understand that. But peace and acceptance can come when families are able to lay their loved ones to rest. My Government will work to help victims and their families across New South Wales find peace amidst the great tragedy that they have faced. This Government is focused on continuing to enhance the State's crime-fighting capability, with a strong focus on community safety.

As part of the 2022-23 budget, the New South Wales Government is investing more than ever before in our police service—\$5.5 billion, which will provide for 550 additional police in 2022-23 and deliver 1,500 new officers over the next four years. That has been the consistent record of this Government when it comes to law and order. Since 2011 we have had over 9,000 new police officers and 40 new and upgraded police stations. In so doing, our police have been given the sensible additional powers to help them fight crime and keep our communities safe every day and in every corner of our great State. [*Extension of time*]

There is legislation to ban gang colours, to reintroduce consorting laws, to tighten regulation of the security industry, for the early disclosure of any defence alibis and for adverse inference of the right to silence. We have the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act, prescribed organisations legislation, drug dog detection powers in Kings Cross and interstate recognition of criminal organisations, so serious crime prevention measures have delivered tangible improvements to safety across our entire community. Under the Liberals and The Nationals crime rates have consistently fallen. Between 2012 and 2021 the population of New South Wales increased by 873,000, but in that time assault fell by 4 per cent, arson fell by 53 per cent and damage to property fell by 41 per cent.

Members on this side of the House know the importance of keeping every single community across our State safe, whether in metropolitan Sydney or in regional New South Wales. That is why those record investments were made. We will introduce the no body, no parole laws. We appreciate and understand that we will never bring back lost loved ones and that their families have lost a lot, but those changes will make a real difference to families and friends who have lost loved ones and bring justice to people across New South Wales.

PARAMEDIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:31): My question is directed to the Premier. In June 2021 the median emergency response time for paramedics was 13.4 minutes. At the time, that was the worst on record. It is now 16.3 minutes, which is the new worst time on record. Will the Premier acknowledge that his policies in health are not working?

Mr Brad Hazzard: The last quarter in the middle of Omicron.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:31): They must be the only bunch of people in New South Wales—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Wakehurst to order for the third time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: NSW Labor must be the only people who missed the pandemic.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will remain silent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Every health system in this country and around the world has been under pressure through a one-in-100-year pandemic, which was clearly missed by those opposite. As the health Minister knows too well, and as I know from sitting through national Cabinet meetings and being the former Treasurer, the strongest health system in this country by a mile was the New South Wales public health system. That did not happen by accident. We were never on Code Brown, like Victoria, and we never closed our borders, like Western Australia.

Dr Hugh McDermott: It did. Gladys closed the border.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Okay. Yes, Western Australia closed the borders. Very good.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: What we have seen in our State are record investments—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —in our health system during the good times that laid the foundations for success in good times. As the health Minister knows, I think it was the 2017-18 budget when we made that record investment in paramedics.

Mr Brad Hazzard: It was 750 in 2017.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It was 750 in 2017-18 that, standing alongside the head of the Health Services Union, Gerard Hayes, we made that record investment. Once again, in this year's budget, there is our \$1.76 billion investment over the next four years for 2,000 paramedics. We also know that of our 1,858 paramedics, 705 are based in regional New South Wales. The other day the Leader of the Opposition was in no other place but Bathurst, making an announcement to fund one-quarter of the paramedics that we announced.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Where was his press conference in front of? The new ambulance station in Bathurst, built by the Liberals and The Nationals—showing off our investments. When did we build that one?

Mr Paul Toole: I think 2019.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In 2019. It was another great investment by the Liberals and The Nationals, who are leading the country when it comes to health investment. That is why it is no accident that when it comes to waiting times or delays in elective surgery across the country, it is New South Wales that leads the way.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:34): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Police. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what the Government is doing to keep New South Wales residents safe?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:34): I thank the member for Tweed and Parliamentary Secretary for his question. That is how you ask a question. The member actually cares about his community and wants to know that they are safe. It is the New South Wales Government that is supporting our police and giving them the tools they need to keep our community safe across this State. It does not matter whether you live in Bankstown or Bourke, the New South Wales Government supports our police, who are out there working every night and every day to ensure that our communities are kept safe.

We are continuing to invest in our police—investments like more people going into our Raptor squads. We have just announced an additional 30 officers to go into those Raptor squads. Those squads are created to help fight gangland and organised crime in the State. We continue to give our police the resources and the powers that they need to stay ahead of criminal gangs. But it is not just the city that is receiving a boost when it comes to fighting crime; it is also our regional areas. Recently, I was at AgQuip in Gunnedah, where I announced a boost to our rural crime squad. We are adding 10 new rural crime investigator police positions across the State. This is part of our half-a-billion-dollar investment, as well as creating an additional 1,500 police positions across

New South Wales. It is the biggest boost that we have ever seen because we back the blue. We back the blue with those additional numbers.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We are seeing investigator positions going into Gunnedah, Tamworth, Mudgee, Orange, Albury, Coffs Harbour and Clarence Valley. We have rural crime investigators now that total 53.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We have doubled our dedicated rural crime investigators over the past five years.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: They respond to various forms of crime, including stock and grain theft, rural arson, fraud, firearm offences, cruelty to animals, illegal hunting, trespassing and much more. I should acknowledge, of course, that the Leader of the Opposition also made a trip to AgQuip. I read about it in a profile piece in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. He told the local branch, "Apparently 100,000 people go to AgQuip every single year; the Labor stall got a grand total of eight people. One bloke wanted to know the time ... and another wanted to borrow a biro." Frankly, I am surprised that Labor even got eight people. I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition has finally seen for himself how popular Labor is in the regions. They killed off Country Labor, and there is nothing left for Labor in the bush.

Mr Geoff Provest: I seek an extension of time.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Before I grant the two-minute extension, I am happy to hear the point of order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The Deputy Premier, as he is completing his three minutes, is nowhere being directly relevant. Mr Speaker, if you are going to give him an extension of two minutes, I ask that you insist he be directly responsive to the question.

The SPEAKER: I will not impose any conditions. I grant the Deputy Premier an additional two minutes. I expect members to stay within the standing orders; there is no reason to give a specific warning.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: As I was saying, the people of regional New South Wales have woken up to what Country Labor was and saw it as nothing more than a complete sham. Our communities can see right through it.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: They have not forgotten what Labor did and did not do for the people in our regions.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. Is the member taking a different point of order?

Mr Ron Hoenig: It relates to relevance.

The SPEAKER: I am happy to hear further from the Deputy Premier. The member for Heffron will resume his seat. I have heard enough.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The truth is this: Labor treated our communities with disdain. Those opposite think now by having the Leader of the Opposition fly in and fly out they will have it fixed.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I can tell them right now that the people of regional New South Wales see right through what is going on.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order.

Mr Greg Warren: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Deputy Premier is making a personal reflection.

The SPEAKER: There is no breach of Standing Order 73. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I have also been over to Griffith, where I stopped in to visit the hardworking officers at the local station. I acknowledge the Murrumbidgee Police District Commander, Superintendent Chris McKinnon, Sergeant Ben Bailey and all of his team. It is great to catch up with our people in uniform across the State who are working so hard all the time to keep our community safe. As we approach Police Remembrance

Day, I remind everybody of the sacrifices our police make every day to keep our community safe. The Leader of the Opposition was also in Griffith. It was refreshing to see him getting out and campaigning—campaigning in electorates that Labor probably will not win: Tamworth, Murray, Kogarah.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I was looking forward to hearing his plan or his vision—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will resume his seat.

[*Interruption*]

The Deputy Premier will resume his seat.

[*Interruption*]

I call the Deputy Premier to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The Deputy Premier been asked about his portfolio and the police.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Deputy Premier's time has expired. Before I call the member for Keira, I remind the health Minister and the shadow health Minister—because I know the questions that are coming—that they are on three calls to order.

HEALTH POLICY

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:41): My question is directed to the Premier. Given Karen, whom I met with today and who is in the public gallery, found Campbelltown emergency department so overcrowded that she was forced to administer antibiotics to her 81-year-old mother with a post-surgery arm infection—after being told it would be a seven-hour wait, with people sitting on the emergency department floor and nurses forced to hand out blankets—does the Premier now acknowledge his policies in health are not working?

Mr Brad Hazzard: She should have gone to a GP.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:42): In relation to the tactic of raising specific issues, I am happy to take on board and get the details about specific matters and follow those up for the Leader of the Opposition and for members opposite if they have a genuine interest in relation to those specific matters.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: The Minister for Health said, "She should have gone to a GP." This is a serious issue and should be considered seriously.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As I said, I am more than happy to follow up specific cases. Any member in this place can raise specific issues of need with me and the relevant Minister, and we address them. In fact, earlier this week a matter was raised directly with the health Minister—a personal matter. It was specifically looked into and resolved. We have the largest health system in the country—the best health system in the country. That is why in 11 years the Liberal-Nationals Government has completed 180 health projects and is building 130 more in every section of the State. The former failed finance Minister talked about inflation. We have had inflation over this period of around 25 per cent. We have had a doubling of the health investment.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Prospect to order for the third time. I call the member for Coogee to order for the first time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The truth hurts. Those are the facts. The regional health investment is substantive across every corner of the State. This year's budget, brought down by the Treasurer, contains the biggest health army of over 10,000 full-time equivalent staff to be recruited into the New South Wales health system. To the question, we also know there are substantial issues in relation to the State and Federal health systems. They do not run in support of each other but actually run against each other. We know that the GP network is under substantial pressure, which is forcing people into emergency departments they would not have otherwise gone to. That is why the Labor Government in Victoria under Dan Andrews and the Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales announced 25 urgent care clinics, generally in the domain of Federal Government responsibility. We have made those investments to work alongside the Federal Government and Federal health system in order to give every single person a continuation of the best health care anywhere in this country.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:45): My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer update the House on the threat to the economy of the continued trade union disruption?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:45): Certainly I can do that. I thank the member for Holsworthy and the hardworking mums and dads of her electorate, who know only too well the damage being inflicted by the Labor-backed strikes across this city. That's right: The union movement and Labor's year of the strike is hitting working families across our entire city. It is preventing thousands of kids from getting to school, thousands of workers from getting to work and smashing small businesses.

The SPEAKER: The member for Prospect will come to order. It is his last warning.

Mr MATT KEAN: It is all done in the pursuit of lining the pockets of union bosses and their Labor mates. The economic impact of the shutdown of the rail network by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] is costing the State up to \$40 million a day.

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

Mr MATT KEAN: The illegal shutdown of the Opal scanner technology is costing the hardworking people of this State who do the right thing up to \$1 million per day.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the first time.

Mr MATT KEAN: Who can forget the ridiculous claim by the RTBU to spend \$1 billion to rip out sensor technology from the intercity fleet trains? To take out CCTV cameras from the intercity fleet trains will cost \$1 billion of taxpayers' money. Who can forget the damage being inflicted by the militant Electrical Trades Union [ETU]?

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

Mr MATT KEAN: The ETU's activity on the Sydney Metro City and Southwest is delaying these projects and seeing cost overruns of billions of dollars. This money is not going to schools and is not going to building hospitals. This money is not going into building the roads that this State needs. And who is endorsing, supporting and encouraging this behaviour? It is the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown has taken a point of order.

Mr MATT KEAN: When Alex Claassens says, "Jump", Chris Minns says, "How high?"

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 130. Clearly the Treasurer wishes to debate the question that was asked. He should do so by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer is answering the question. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am simply talking about the economic damage being waged on the people of New South Wales by the union movement and its mate Chris Minns. [*Extension of time*]

The union movement is encouraged, supported and endorsed by Chris Minns.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: Alex Claassens no longer calls him Chris Minns; he calls him Chris Minion! That's the reality.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. There is no remote possibility that the Treasurer is being relevant. I think you understand that, Mr Speaker. I was going to give him leniency and cite Standing Order 128 (2) and nearly everything after that because this question was designed to incite argument and debate.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer was asked directly about the threat to the economy of continued trade union disruption. I have allowed him to make some connection with the Labor Party, but I ask him to come back

to the question before the House and focus on the trade union disruption. It may be that Opposition members do not like the answer but they need to listen to it.

Mr MATT KEAN: The Labor Party is the political wing of the union movement—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: The same union movement that is causing industrial chaos—

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown has taken a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock again.

Mr MATT KEAN: —and destroying the New South Wales economy because of the behaviour endorsed, supported and encouraged by the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: No, I have just ruled on that. There is no point of order.

Mr Greg Warren: He is flouting your previous ruling.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time. The member is wasting time.

Mr MATT KEAN: When it comes to strikes, it is the Despicable Minns show on the other side of the Chamber. That is the reality.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: This Government is all about ensuring—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order of the member for Port Stephens.

Ms Kate Washington: On several occasions the Treasurer has failed to refer to the Leader of the Opposition by his correct title. The Leader of the Opposition at least deserves that respect in this Chamber by the Treasurer.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: What makes this whole situation worse is that members opposite can call it off. All they have to do is pick up the phone to the Leader of the Opposition's boss, who sits on the Labor Administrative Committee, Alex Claassens.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Charlestown has taken a point of order.

Mr MATT KEAN: Will Edmond Atalla pick up the phone to his union boss?

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order of the member for Charlestown. It had better be different to those already taken.

Ms Jodie Harrison: It is, Mr Speaker. You previously asked the Treasurer to return to the question, which was on a specific issue, and not to refer to members on this side of the House.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Treasurer did go directly back to the trade union movement. Thank you.

Ms Jodie Harrison: And came straight back to where he was.

The SPEAKER: He linked the two, but he was talking about the trade union movement. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: It is all within the power of those opposite to call this off. Why won't they do it? It is because they are all in on the racket! They are all members of the union movement. They want to shut this State down for their own political advantage. They want to use the public as their own political plaything. It is an absolute disgrace. We know that their members in the electorates of western Sydney are all members of the unions. Is Stephen Bali going to stand up for western Sydney—

Mr Jason Li: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: —or is he going to stand up for the Australian Workers' Union?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Strathfield has taken a point of order.

Mr MATT KEAN: Is Edmond Atalla going to stand up for the people of western Sydney?

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. Members will be silent. I will hear the point of order of the member for Strathfield because he does not take frivolous points of order.

Mr Jason Li: My point of order relates to Standing Order 74, which states:

74. The Speaker may intervene:

1. When offensive or disorderly words are used by a Member.
2. To prevent a quarrel between Members arising out of debates or proceedings in the House.

The Treasurer is arguing in such a way as to deliberately provoke a quarrel. It is disturbing this question time.

The SPEAKER: At question time in particular there is a fine line between being vigorous and rigorous and creating quarrels. In that fine tradition, I will not call the Treasurer's answer a breach of Standing Order 74. The Treasurer has 14 seconds remaining.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Mr MATT KEAN: I note the interjection from the member for Cremorne. What I will say is that all the Leader of the Opposition has to do is pick up the phone. We know he knows how to use it because he did it to Jodi McKay—and then he hung up on her! He should pick up the phone to Alex Claassens, call these strikes off. *[Time expired.]*

Mr Michael Daley: Stuart Ayres must have written that. It was full of lies.

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

HEALTH POLICY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:53): My question is directed to the Premier. Given an elderly patient waited over 100 hours on a Maitland Hospital emergency department trolley and was only admitted after their health deteriorated to the level that they required a bed in the intensive care unit, does the Minister acknowledge that his policies in Health are not working?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:54): I will start with the answer from my last question. If Labor members are genuine in raising specific circumstances, we are always happy to make those inquiries and look into them. As I have said, we know, and every other Premier knows, that we have the strongest health system anywhere in the country, if not the world. The health Minister knows that \$500 million has gone to Maitland Hospital. Opposition members did not even mention Maitland Hospital when they were in government. We came in and provided \$500 million to Maitland Hospital.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Come on, Mr Speaker. We know what this is going to be.

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order. The Premier will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I am talking about the policies, not the ribbon cutting; I am talking about the fact that the nurses and all the other staff are at breaking point. People are waiting over 100 hours on a trolley, and it is deteriorating.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The Premier will continue. I will listen very carefully to what he says.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Everywhere one goes, across every single corner of this State, more hospitals are being built than ever before in our State's history. Campbelltown received around \$1 billion. We opened the acute services centre there.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Liverpool received \$750 million; Westmead received \$1 billion; and Tweed Hospital, in the regions, which was opposed by Labor—a unique approach at the last election. John Hunter

Hospital received \$750 million for that redevelopment. These are billions of dollars that have been invested in our health system that we are not seeing in any other State in the country because we manage money well.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Federal Labor Government has also acknowledged the national issue when it comes—

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant. I will make that clear up-front. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is about the policies; it is not about the infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: One in four people are leaving the emergency department.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As the Federal Labor Government has spoken of, there are national issues, particularly in relation to GPs. We will constructively continue, like every other State Premier—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —to make the changes, but one thing is for sure: There is no better health system in this country than in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I apologise to the member for Balmain for getting the order wrong. You may ask the next question on the Opposition side. I call the member for Wollondilly.

RAIL SERVICES DISRUPTION

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (14:57): I address my question to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the ongoing rail dispute and any other related matters?

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The question is out of order. The part that relates to "related matters" infringes on a ruling that you gave.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I call the member for Balmain. I will give the member for Wollondilly a chance to rephrase his question.

VICTORIA ROAD UPGRADE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (14:58): I direct my question to the Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport. Considering surface traffic on Victoria Road, Rozelle, will decrease by 50 per cent when the Iron Cove Link is opened, will the Government reduce the number of traffic lanes in that section of Victoria Road to make for wider footpaths, cycle lanes, native vegetation planting and to support local business activity?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (14:58): I thank the member for Balmain for his question. I also acknowledge his guest in the public gallery, Saskia from Sydney Secondary College. I ask her to pass on my regards to Ian Bowsher, who was the principal at Barrenjoey but is now at Sydney Secondary College. In relation to the member for Balmain's advocacy for improved outcomes for the local community and local businesses along Victoria Road, that is something he has been strident in his support for. Frankly, that is a question that can only be asked because of the record-breaking \$290 billion that this Government has and will invest in city-shaping infrastructure in New South Wales.

We can only even contemplate revitalising Victoria Road along the lines that are sought by the member for Balmain because the Coalition Government knows how to build transformative infrastructure. It is also because we are investing in projects like Metro West, which has a stop at Bays West, the Iron Cove Link—which the member specifically referred to, the Rozelle Interchange, the wider WestConnex network and the Western Harbour Tunnel. It is only because of these things that the opportunities the member for Balmain wants us to explore are even available to us.

Ms Jo Haylen: Yes, but you have never taken up any of the opportunities, like Parramatta Road.

Mr ROB STOKES: It is interesting that the member for Summer Hill is seeking to interject because the reality is that these are all projects that those opposite sought to stop. We are only in a position to contemplate the sort of city-shaping opportunities that—

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

Mr ROB STOKES: —the member for Balmain wants us to explore because we had the vision, discipline and budget to enable us to do these transformative projects.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: Under a Labor government, one can be sure that Victoria Road would remain a traffic snarl in perpetuity. However, it makes sense because of the transformative projects that are going on in this section of Victoria Road, Rozelle. As the member suggested, traffic volumes are predicted to drop by at least 50 per cent. It certainly makes sense to give some of this space back to the community and to give businesses along Victoria Road the boost they need to grow and thrive. I certainly agree with the member that the completion of WestConnex should result in Victoria Road supporting more generous footpaths and active transport access for people walking or cycling to the city, to their new metro station or around their community. I have directed Transport for NSW to put people first as they finalise the future allocation—

The SPEAKER: The member for Summer Hill will be quiet.

Mr ROB STOKES: —of road space along the Rozelle portion of Victoria Road.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: Of course, this will result in change. It is vital to assess the long-term impacts—
[Extension of time]

It will result in change. It is vital to assess the long-term impacts, as Peter Khouri from the NRMA has quite rightly identified, because it is an important link between western Sydney and the CBD. The Government will not shy away from the brave decisions that will make our communities safer and healthier by encouraging active and public transport wherever it is feasible and makes sense. Following the completion of the Rozelle Interchange, there certainly will be a short window of opportunity while traffic volumes change, and we certainly do not want to miss that. Because of our significant infrastructure investments, there are opportunities to accommodate alfresco dining, more trees and more landscaping to improve air quality and the amenities for residents and visitors alike.

We know that local businesses are broadly supportive of the proposal and advocacy groups like the Committee for Sydney are also supportive. Yes, there is work to be done, but I have heard the strong interest and stated desire to work together, and we will work to ensure we do our part to realise a positive vision for the people of the electorate of Balmain. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is focused solely on building a brighter future for the people of this State, liberating better opportunities for the local businesses and residents in the communities that are so ably represented by the member for Balmain.

RAIL SERVICES DISRUPTION

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:03): I address my question to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the ongoing rail dispute?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:03): I thank the member for his question and commitment to draining the swamp that hosts the murky relationship between the Labor Party and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU]. Setting aside the fact that the Leader of the Opposition and Alex Claassens sit on the Labor Party Administrative Committee and setting aside the fact that Bob Nanva, Secretary of the Labor Party, is an RTBU member, now I have found out that Bob Nanva is shopping for a seat. I have some empathy with that but there is a difference because he just wants to come to this place to serve the union movement. I want to crush it.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will please resume his seat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: He was asked about the rail dispute and to provide the House—

Mr Matt Kean: What is the standing order?

Mr Ron Hoenig: Standing Order 129, which says that the answer must be directly relevant.

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr Ron Hoenig: "Directly relevant"—those words are used to stop this nonsense.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied at this stage the Minister is not outside, but I do not expect him to continue in that vein.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to now defer to the substantive part of the question because it is with a very heavy heart that I stand here in the Chamber and explain to my parliamentary colleagues exactly what the union movement wants and what it has got. Let's just talk about what it has got already. It has got a bonus or an additional payment for accepting any overtime shift. That's \$100 for just accepting the overtime shift before workers actually get paid to do the overtime. Then they get \$150 for the second and third shift. Then they get an extra 25 per cent, which is called the call-out allowance, if they are offered overtime with less than 24 hours' notice. Now who here would like to be paid overtime? We would all like to be paid overtime.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: On top of that, they have unlimited train travel whether they are working or not. After 30 years of service, they get that for the rest of their life.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I am totally satisfied that the Minister is directly answering the question. Members opposite may not like the answer, but I expect them to be quiet. The Minister has the call.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Mr Speaker, I don't like the answer either because—do you know what?—they also get \$3,500—

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: —just to withhold from taking illegal industrial action. That is \$3,500 not to break the law.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: They get a picnic day whether they go to the picnic or not. I thought we got rid of picnic days 50 years ago. [*Extension of time*]

They are also paid a cab and security allowance of \$13. Here is one of my favourites, because it could be relevant to a few members of the Opposition: Employees who self-declare substance abuse are taken off roster and paid for 12 months. All they have to do, under their award, is go off and say, "Listen, boss, I've got a problem with chardonnay. I need 12 months off on full pay." If anybody can find me an award system in this country that is more generous than the \$120,000 plus, plus, plus, plus that we pay the railway workers in this State, I will be changing jobs quite happily this time.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the third time. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The murky relationship between the New South Wales Opposition and the RTBU, with the Opposition leader still not condemning the illegal activity which the union had to fall back on last Saturday afternoon, is an absolute disgrace. If we ever wanted a return of the bad old days of the Builders Labourers Federation and the union thuggery that occurred in the 1970s in this country, just vote Labor, because guess who's calling the shots—Alex Claassens, who wants to get Chris—

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: On 10 May—

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

Ms Anna Watson: It is taken under Standing Order 129.

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

Ms Anna Watson: I just said it was 129. On 10 May we agreed that standing orders state that the answers will be directly relevant to the question. Again, the Minister is not directly relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. I am satisfied the Minister is being relevant.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: This is the substantive part of the industrial dispute that we've got at the moment. This House needs to know exactly what extra the union movement is advocating for, because quite frankly— [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: I need to take two questions in a row from Government members. The member for Seven Hills has the call.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:08): My question is addressed to the Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's infrastructure program has transformed New South Wales?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (15:09): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question and for his strong and strident advocacy on behalf of the community he is proud to represent. Our Government is transforming New South Wales with new infrastructure designed to give us and our children better opportunities—infrastructure that keeps us safer and healthier and creates a more just society. This is an infrastructure government, a government that has transformed the fortunes of New South Wales on the back of \$178 billion in infrastructure that has been delivered since it was elected in 2011, a government that is driving more than \$112 billion in the State's infrastructure pipeline over the next four years.

New South Wales' infrastructure program has been transformed from the weakest in Australia under Labor to the strongest infrastructure pipeline anywhere in our nation, transformed from a mess of imagined projects that previous Labor governments had botched, blundered or buried. Labor promised 12 rail lines and all it had to show was half a rail line at double the cost. Labor axed the North West Rail Link, the Parramatta to Epping link, another harbour rail crossing, the CBD to Rozelle metro, the north-west metro and the western metro. Labor governments cancelled the Lane Cove expressway, the north-west expressway and the Warringah Freeway, and sold off the reserved corridors. Labor cut the Western Freeway project in half and then privatised the reservation between Pyrmont and Strathfield. The M4 East, the M5 duplication and the F3-M2 link—none of them made it past the glossy brochure. The fact is that Labor in office cannot deliver infrastructure because Labor cannot provide the fiscal discipline needed to fund it. The infrastructure machine we have built to power New South Wales is not an accident.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: It rests on two pillars: first, the wages policy that allows the Treasurer to control expense growth over time so we can plan a capital program with confidence; and our asset recycling scheme that ensures we redeploy depreciating assets to invest in new infrastructure. The Sydney Modern Project is a great case in point. I inspected it with the Premier, the arts Minister and the member for Sydney on Sunday. It simply never would have been possible if not for asset recycling, which paid for it.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: It leveraged \$100 million in private sector investment, 540 construction jobs, the doubling of exhibition space, and \$1 billion of economic value to the State over 20 years that under Labor simply would never have existed. Yet Labor wants to dismantle our infrastructure machine. It is not good enough. The people of New South Wales deserve better.

HEALTH POLICY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:12): My question is directed to the Premier. Moments ago, after a question was asked by the member for Keira in relation to Karen, the Minister for Health yelled out, "She should've gone to a GP." Karen has told us that she had written instructions that she should go straight to an emergency department if there were any signs of an infection and it was also late on a Sunday night. Many people have absolutely no option but to attend hospital emergency departments in this State. Does the Premier acknowledge that his health policies are simply not working?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:12): As I have said, if any member in this place has specific issues in relation to the health system, or any other matter, they are more than free to raise those matters and our Ministers will look into them. As I have said in relation to the previous questions in respect of this, if there are genuine issues that people would like to raise on specific personal matters that have occurred in the health system, the health Minister is available to look into those, and he will. He is happy to meet with Karen after question time today—I will make sure he is available to do that. But let's be very clear here: Playing politics with people in the health system—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was down in Victoria with the Labor Premier at St Andrew's Hospital.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There we were at a press conference and the Liberal Opposition leader had been playing the same game as the Labor Opposition is playing here. I was asked during that press conference

if the Liberal Leader of the Opposition was correct in saying that this is solely a Victorian issue in relation to pressure on the public health system at this time? I said no. The reality is that it is a national issue and it is gutter politics to play politics with individual cases to simply make out that following a pandemic a health system would not be under pressure. That is the vacuous, morally bankrupt approach of NSW Labor—always has been, always will be. That is why Labor closed hospital beds and that is why we have built more hospitals than any other jurisdiction in this country by a mile. We manage money well. We have recycled the assets, as the Minister for Infrastructure has said. That has unlocked capital—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Rockdale that he is on three calls to order. This is his final warning.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —to build a record number of hospitals across the State. We have doubled the recurrent expenditure at \$30 billion in the New South Wales health system at a time when inflation during that period has increased by 25 per cent. We are investing \$12 billion in capital infrastructure in the health system over the next four years, with \$3 billion over the next 12 months. That cannot be done if money is not managed well and that is why nothing got built under Labor.

FRONTLINE HEALTH SERVICES

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:16): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the Liberals and Nationals are continuing to invest record amounts in strengthening frontline health services?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (15:16): First of all, I thank the member for Albury for all the work he does to ensure that we provide the best services in Albury and Wodonga. It has been a challenge in that area with the current arrangements with the Labor Government but we are working with them to achieve the best outcome, and he is doing a lot of that work. Seriously, listening to the questions today, it would appear that the Labor leader is completely unaware of how bad the Labor Party is at delivering health services.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

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

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order relates to Standing Order 128.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will tell members what he is good at. Only a few weeks ago we announced that we were delivering 1,200 extra staff for the ambulance service. If we have a look here, I will tell members what he is good at—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: He is good at plagiarism.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The clock has been stopped.

[Interruption]

The Minister will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

The Minister will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

I have asked the Minister to resume his seat.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I ask the Speaker to order the removal of the props that the Minister has shown. He has other props there.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I have got lots of them.

Mr Ron Hoenig: You have, and you are not permitted to use them.

The SPEAKER: I remind the House that the use of props is not appropriate. If the Minister is reading from an authority, I am happy for that to be shown very briefly but not to be used as a prop.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I show members briefly. This is the authority of Labor's document that it put out on the internet showing exactly the same photograph with 500 staff, versus what we put out saying 1,200 new staff a few weeks ago. That is the authority—plagiarism.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, misleading the House. The Minister knows our commitment is on top of the Government's.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Last Saturday the Leader of the Opposition was talking about his reduction in the number of new paramedics from 1,200 that the Government was providing, to 500. He thinks that is good.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: At least they are honest.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: They are honest, but plagiarism is still there. I tell you what, he certainly is not up to the person I initially wanted to talk about, who was Ben Chifley. He truly was a light on the hill. What we had up there on Saturday was a lightweight on the hill—500.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the first time. The Minister will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about strengthening frontline health services. As a regional MP, I am very interested in hearing about how the Government is strengthening those—

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to come to the positive part of the question. The member will resume her seat.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will tell the member that under Labor it was 98,000 staff; under the Liberal-Nationals it is 160,000 health staff—the biggest health public service in the nation.

Mr Justin Clancy: I seek further information.

The SPEAKER: I will grant an extension of time on the condition that the Minister remains positive about what the Government is doing now.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will be positive about the Government, of course, because since 2010 when Labor was last in destroying the health system—and it did a good job of it—there are now 98,000 more people—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will hear the Minister further.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Basically, there are another 60,000 staff that the Labor Party could not afford to employ because it could not run the economy. We have 2,128 new staff in the ambulance service. That is \$1.76 billion. Those opposite could not even count their fingers with sixpenny pieces when they were in government. We are putting billions of dollars into—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Let me finish.

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order relates to relevance. A minute ago the Minister for Health basically accused this person of being a whinger, saying she should not have gone to hospital, she should have gone to a GP—

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

Mr Michael Daley: —and he still has not explained himself.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. There is no point of order.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I point out to Mr Daley, he managed to get some words wrong and that got him into trouble once before. I did not use the word that he used. He has said that.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What I would say is the number of people who are in the categories of five and six—

Mr Ron Hoenig: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The bottom line is you guys stuffed up health; we fixed it.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. That is the end of the answer.

MEMBER FOR PENRITH

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:22): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier rule out the return of Stuart Ayres to the front bench before the election?

The SPEAKER: Order! We will wait for silence. The member for North Shore will remain silent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:23): What a stupid question. What it shows is the difference between the Liberal-Nationals and Labor. We are happy to deal with individual matters. We understand that with the biggest health system in the country there are challenges every day. When there are challenges and specific issues that come up, we look into them and we deal with them. We know we have the strongest health system in the country. While those opposite are focused on our Minister, our Minister is focused on delivering record investments every day for the people of New South Wales. Members opposite play vacuous politics with no policies over the past 11 years—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It is pretty simple, the Premier just has to answer the question. The question is about integrity and transparency, and the people of New South Wales deserve better.

The SPEAKER: Premier, it was a direct question. Please answer it.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I answered it.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the answer.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: My Cabinet is unchanged. While Opposition members are focused on our Cabinet, our people continue to invest record amounts on this side of the House into things that matter to the people of New South Wales. We have made record investments in schools and hospitals. We have introduced more public transport.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Summer Hill was having a whinge about Parramatta Road. What would Parramatta Road have been like if WestConnex was not built?

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

[*Interruption*]

The Premier will resume his seat.

[*Interruption*]

If I ask the Premier to sit down, I expect him to sit down. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Ron Hoenig: The Premier just indicated he is not being relevant. He is not being directly relevant to a question that goes directly—

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. I do not think the Premier has directly answered the question. The Premier will either answer the question or finish his answer.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I answered it straightaway.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have never not been relevant in this place—ever.

The SPEAKER: I am happy for the question to be restated if the Premier needs it to be restated.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Mr Speaker, I am the most relevant person in this place. Every time I get up I pride myself on answering every question. I said my Cabinet is unchanged. I have said that my Ministers continue delivering for the people of New South Wales.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (15:25): My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is creating a brighter future for agriculture and preparing for any future threats?

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:26): I thank the member for Monaro for the question. As she well knows—and many of us on this side of the House know—no year in agriculture is the same as the previous year or the same as the next year; things change. Working with Mother Nature presents a huge range of challenges. All have been described numerous times over numerous years by numerous people in this very place. We have rolled from one significant event to another and, as we move into spring, we are coming into the pointy end of the season one might say. I am not talking about on the footy field—go the Swannies—but about harvest. It is getting to be pretty serious. We have a forecast of well above average rain for the rest of the year, and many of our farmers are hoping and praying for a bit more sunshine so that we can benefit from what is forecast as another bumper crop for New South Wales.

Despite all the challenges, the good news is that agriculture continues to shine. This year the Australian Stock Exchange launched an agribusiness index, showing the confidence that investors have in this very sector. For reference, agriculture has consistently outperformed other sectors for relative returns, including banks, real estate, industrials and even the ASX 200. The only thing outperforming it is tech. Agriculture is definitely part of our future. That is why early last month the Deputy Premier and I were delighted to announce an increase in our focus on biosecurity. We increased on \$65 million worth of new spending on biosecurity, taking our total biosecurity budget to \$229 million. That is the biggest investment by any single jurisdiction on exotic pests and disease control ever seen. I announced that with the Deputy Premier in front of more than 100 industry representatives at the NSW Biosecurity Conference, which I hosted at Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo last month. But there is another threat. It is a notifiable pest of the highest order, and I think we know what it is. It is the Labor Party. No longer Country Labor—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown will not take a point of order in anticipation.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 128 (2) (b), (c), (g) and I think (e). Clearly the question was directed and you rightfully gave leniency to—

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

Mr Greg Warren: Standing Order 128 (2). Mr Speaker, you clearly knew that the last part of the question was, "Were there any threats?" You rightfully gave leniency to the Government and the Minister to hear what they had to say. But clearly that question was to incite argument and it asked for an expression of opinion.

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: The point of order was completely irrelevant. [*Time expired.*]

RADIATION ONCOLOGY SERVICES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:29): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Griffith services a population of 80,000 people and will have a radiotherapy unit operational in March funded entirely by the Federal Government, which is wonderful news. However, patients unfortunately join those from Wagga Wagga in being the only ones in the entire State of New South Wales to pay out-of-pocket expenses for radiation. Will the State Government set up and fund these services or fund out-of-pocket expenses for people in Griffith and Wagga Wagga?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (15:30): I thank the member for her question. A lot of work has been done by the Coalition Government in regional areas in New South Wales. A major focus has been not only the brand new hospital at Wagga Wagga but also the brand new hospital at Griffith. I recollect being in Griffith with former member for Murray Adrian Piccoli to announce the commencement of the new Griffith hospital, which is now \$250 million worth. There is a real focus on what is happening in Griffith. With regard to the radiation oncology services, I know the member for Murray has written to me before and spoken to me about it, but I remind her that it was the Federal Coalition Government that committed funds to building a bunker which is necessary for a linear accelerator for radiation oncology, and that is proceeding. All of those things have happened, none of which the member appears to want to acknowledge. They were all done by Coalition governments, State and Federal.

I indicate to the member for Murray that the local health district has been working with the group that provides the oncology services—the Wagga Wagga group, Cancer Care Associates. I will make an announcement

shortly, but a lot of work has been done. With regard to finding a way forward, we cannot rely on the new Labor Government to provide the Medicare services. We are working with it. Having said that, Mark Butler is working with us on a whole lot of issues and he is doing a very good job on that, particularly around the shortage of GPs. He is genuinely working with us. Announcements will be made in due course with regard to ensuring that the State Government steps in to fill the gap and ensures that such services are available in Griffith very shortly. I will make a detailed announcement in due course but it is looking very positive, due again to the State Government.

SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:33): My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's investment in stadium infrastructure and how it benefits the people of our great State?

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) (15:33): I thank the member for Vaucluse for her unwavering support for the Government's policy to build Allianz Stadium. I know as a great sports fan that in addition to that she was cheering on the Sydney Swans last weekend when they beat Collingwood. I think all members of the House will agree with me that we hope that the Sydney Swans get up against the Geelong Cats on Saturday afternoon. Allianz Stadium was officially opened on 28 August, just three short weeks ago, but already more than 200,000 people have passed through the turnstiles, enjoying this absolutely fantastic facility. That is in addition to CommBank Stadium at Parramatta, which has been a roaring success ever since it opened.

Last weekend it saw the Canberra Raiders get trounced by David Elliott's mighty Eels in front of over 29,000 fans. Reflecting on that as the sports Minister, members can imagine my indigestion over my Coco Pops on Sunday morning when I saw that the member for Maroubra, who ran a whole election strategy against Allianz Stadium, now sees the benefits and wants the South Sydney Rabbitohs to play at Allianz Stadium. He dare not speak its name, but he now wants more content at Allianz Stadium. I wish that was the only shock that I have recently received. Another member opposite was also a virulent opponent of the stadium. I am talking about the member for Coogee. She was outside the stadium day after day and posting on social media. She said, "This community does not want a new stadium." She posted on social media that she hates it.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Guess what? She has been in the corporate box not once, not twice but three times in the past three weeks—three times in the corporate box at Allianz Stadium. Can you believe it?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order. The Minister for Sport will resume his seat.

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. It is clear that the member is creating a quarrel across the Chamber. One thing I will say about the member for Coogee is that at least she is authentic. She does not just go there for the free food and drink like you lot do. She is a true supporter.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The red wine was flowing. She was loving the caviar.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Here he goes, the man who did not want the stadium is on his feet. Can you believe it? It is just like the rail unions. Members opposite say they support workers, just not workers who get the train. They are hypocrites.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. Member for Maroubra, what is the point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: Apparently, the Minister—

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Minister is purporting to criticise the member for Coogee, which he should do by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: I am not satisfied that it was a breach of Standing Order 73.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Does she deny drinking red wine in the corporate boxes? Come on, he cannot be serious. Members opposite say one thing and do another. They are hypocrites.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I seek an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: In the interests of sanity I will decline the request for an extension of time.

Documents

OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with sections 31 and 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the following special reports of the NSW Ombudsman:

- (1) Special report entitled *Specialist homelessness services: helping people with high or complex needs*, dated 31 August 2022, received out of session on 31 August 2022.
- (2) Special report entitled *The COVID-19 pandemic: second report*, dated 7 September 2022, received out of session on 7 September 2022.

I order that the reports be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 35 of the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Act 2010, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 12 August 2022 and authorised to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 38E of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Effectiveness of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme*, dated 30 August 2022, received out of session on 30 August 2022 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 2/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services entitled *Options to improve access to existing and alternate accommodation to address the social housing shortage*, dated August 2022, received out of session on 18 August 2022 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the erratum to report No. 2/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services entitled *Options to improve access to existing and alternate accommodation to address the social housing shortage*, dated 6 September 2022, received out of session on 6 September 2022 and authorised to be printed.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to recommendation 2 from report No. 8/57 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled *Examination of selected Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports August 2019 - June 2020*, dated 8 September 2022, received out of session on 8 September 2022 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 47/57*, dated 20 September 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 46/57*, dated 9 August 2022.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following paper petition signed by 10,000 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

Forster-Tuncurry Bridge Duplication

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to fund the construction of the duplicate bridge for Forster and Tuncurry, received from **Mr Stephen Bromhead**.

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

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

Trail and Adventure Motorcycling

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly pass a resolution supporting the development of trail and adventure motorcycling in New South Wales, received from **Dr Marjorie O'Neill**.

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

I announce that the following paper petition signed by 10,000 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

Former New England Area Health Service

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to reinstate the former New England Area Health Service, directly employ doctors in emergency departments and increase the number of nurses in rural and regional hospitals, received from **Mr Adam Marshall**.

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

*Special Adjournment***SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

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) (15:40): I move:

That the House at its rising on the sitting day commencing Wednesday 21 September 2022 do adjourn until Tuesday 11 October 2022 at 12 noon.

Motion agreed to.*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Rural Fire Service Mandatory Vaccination Policy

Petition calling on the Rural Fire Service to drop its mandatory vaccination policy, received from **Mrs Tanya Davies**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. David Elliott—Proposed Wimbo Park Light Rail Stop—lodged 9 August 2022 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Blue Mountains Public Hospital—lodged 9 August 2022 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. Dugald Saunders—Native Forest Logging—lodged 9 August 2022 (Mrs Shelley Hancock)

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—Proposed Emerald Hills High School—lodged 9 August 2022 (Mr Peter Sidgreaves)

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business order of the day (for bills) No. 1 [Fiscal Responsibility Amendment (Privatisation Restrictions) Bill 2021], No. 2 [Climate Change (Emissions Targets) Bill 2021 (No 2)], No. 3 [Government Grants Administration Bill 2021] and No. 4 [Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture Review) Bill 2021] have lapsed.

Addresses

DEATH OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:42): I will make a modest contribution to the Addresses of Condolence and of Congratulation, noting that the House has already ensured that His Majesty is aware of our deepest sympathy at the loss of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, and of our congratulations to him on his accession to the throne. I confess my commitment to constitutional monarchy, which I did in 1999 as the national campaign director of the No Republic campaign and on a number of other occasions as somebody who swore an oath to Her Late Majesty, her heirs and successors as an army officer; as a Minister of the Crown; as a member of this Chamber; and in one or two other capacities.

Like most people reflect, at the age of 52 I too have reflected on the service of Her Late Majesty and the example she set. The greatest honour I have ever received in public life was being made the Minister for Veterans. In that capacity I often sit next to my fellow veteran the member for Tamworth during question time and gaze upon the commemorative plaque to Lieutenant Colonel Braund and Sergeant Larkin, two very famous members of this Chamber who served in the First World War, and who represented the people of New South Wales in their respective electorates of Armidale and Willoughby and in a number of other capacities.

I make that observation because service comes in a range of ways. There is probably not a member of this place who has not been impressed and, indeed, humbled by the service of people in their own electorates. I refer to the member for Prospect. I know of his service in the Rural Fire Service and I have met a number of his colleagues who have probably well and truly served above and beyond the call of duty in manners that I will not reflect on again on this occasion. I also have been to the electorates of the member for Blacktown and the member for Terrigal and met people who served in their electorates. Behind me is the member for Lane Cove. He and I made a modest contribution to the Australian Army. In that capacity, we were humbled by the way that people threw themselves into the service of their nation. I make those observations for those in the Chamber and those who will read this *Hansard* because I think there was no better example of service and selflessness than the late Queen Elizabeth II.

Her critics and the critics of constitution and monarchy will always say, "But it was a life of privilege." I ask: Was it really a life of privilege where at 96 she was still working? The day before she died she swore in a new Prime Minister—her first being Sir Winston Churchill. Was it really a life of privilege when every single aspect of her life was looked at through a microscope? Was it a life of privilege when she became a young woman and served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service to fight the Nazi war machine in the early 1940s? Was it a life of privilege when she sent all three of her sons off to the military? One of course was decorated, having served in combat during the Falklands War. She was the wife of a navy officer and the daughter of a navy officer, both of whom served in the respective World Wars. She allowed her son and—indeed, with her blessing—her grandson Harry to go to war with the British military in Afghanistan.

When we reflect on that service, we have to ask ourselves: What else are we doing? How can we celebrate that service and use it as an example of how somebody can dedicate their entire life? One thing that has always impressed me is her commitment to her faith. As the supreme governor of the Anglican Church, she had to face many challenges, many reforms in the Anglican Church as modernity caught up with an ancient faith. But at the funeral yesterday I was also impressed by, in my mind, the great deal of honesty and respect. So many representatives of the other Christian denominations were there. We saw Catholic cardinals, we saw

Greek Orthodox priests and we saw representatives of the Salvation Army. In my mind, I think she beamed an example of a witness of somebody who believed in the faith that she was set in her coronation oath to defend.

The age of Elizabeth II has found its sunset. The age of Elizabeth II has now passed to the dawn of King Charles III. I have had the pleasure of meeting both the late Queen and King Charles on a number of occasions. Most recently my wife and I were at a reception with King Charles and the now Queen Consort. I must say that I have never met a man who was more able to display empathy than the King. He was a man who, at this reception of about 90 people, was able to manage only one or two minutes with everybody. But at the end of that reception every single person who had met the King believed they had his undivided attention for the entire duration of the event. When His Majesty was introduced to me and he saw that I was wearing my military decorations, he immediately wanted to discuss with me the importance of managing PTSD within the veterans community. His ability to articulate the challenges that we would face with contemporary veterans—noting this was before the royal commission into veteran suicide was even considered—showed to me a man who was committed to his Commonwealth.

It proved to me that we had, in the then heir to the throne of the Commonwealth of Nations, a man who was going to provide the same level of empathy, the same level of respect that his mother had provided to us over the 70 years of her reign. These are challenging times and on Thursday the people of this nation will be asked to pause again as we have a national service of remembrance. I have asked a number of registered clubs in my community to ensure they have large screens and hospitality available. There will also be people in all our electorates who will be watching the ceremony at home by themselves and who will probably feel a great deal of emotion about exactly what we are commemorating as we celebrate the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I think the fact that we have so much emotion in our community, the fact that one in five Australians watched her funeral last night and the fact that over a billion people across the world wanted to participate in her commemorative funeral last night proves to me that we had well and truly a once-in-a-millennia leader.

I think what we will be able to reflect on—and it has been said on a number of occasions over the course of the past couple of days—and take away is a wonderful gift that Her Majesty has given us. That is the gift of memory. The gift of example. In her example and in the memories we have of Queen Elizabeth II is the fact that you can remain dignified during very challenging times. There is always a proper way to do things. We have an example in Queen Elizabeth II, and I firmly believe this is something that she has passed on to her son King Charles III. We have somebody who will always put duty first. If we need any further example of that we just have to look at the way that she insisted on serving in the British military during the Nazi threat, and of course there is that tradition of military service by every generation since then.

I join members of this House to offer my condolences to King Charles and the royal family. I hope that they can draw comfort from the fact that there is a great deal of affection and, indeed, love from right around the Commonwealth—both the republics within the Commonwealth and those that remain as constitutional monarchies within the Commonwealth. You only had to watch last night's funeral to know that you did not have to be a head of government from the Commonwealth to show your respect. I hope, of course, that King Charles continues the great traditions that we have seen Her Majesty instil in the modern, transformed Commonwealth. I do believe he will. I also say on behalf of the people of Baulkham Hills that we thank Her Majesty for her service. We acknowledge the fact that we now have a new King. Although the titles have changed, the traditions never will.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (15:52): The past 10 days have seen a significant outpouring of emotion, solemnity and respect for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as the Commonwealth, and indeed people across the world, mourn her passing. In a world of rapid change and uncertainty, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II remained a constant presence in our collective minds. It is true that many of us may have never known a world without Her Majesty. The loss is one that we, as a nation, feel profoundly. Committing over 70 years of unwavering service to her nation, the Commonwealth and the rest of the world, Her Majesty witnessed almost a century of key historic events. She rallied her nation through wars, a global pandemic and times of political or economic turmoil. Yet, through it all, she served with unmatched grace and integrity.

There are some people who recall Her Majesty's coronation in 1953—the first one in history to be televised, incongruent with royal tradition. It was viewed by over 20 million people worldwide. The modernisation of the monarchy is a direct testament to Her Majesty's willingness to fearlessly harness change. Her platinum jubilee concert in June of this year was the most watched event in England and the devastating news of her passing was viewed by 33 million people in the United Kingdom alone. She was loved by many far and wide, which is why we feel her loss so deeply.

We have heard Her Late Majesty's words echoed over the past two weeks: Grief is the price we pay for love. Even in her rest, she continues to impart wisdom and offer comfort to us all. Her Late Majesty demonstrated a magnanimous passion for philanthropy, championing hundreds of grassroots charities and was a patron of over

600 organisations. In doing so, she uplifted the burdened and espoused values of freedom and equality that underpin the Commonwealth. Her enduring attributes of sympathy and understanding have enhanced the relationship between Australia and the United Kingdom, and strengthened the bonds between our people. She was the embodiment of timeless kindness, elegance and calm.

Her Late Majesty was directly involved with the people of Blacktown council on four occasions. The first occasion was in 1954 when the royal train passed through Blacktown, with thousands flocking close to the railway line to catch a glimpse of the newly crowned Queen. At the time the Blacktown shire population was only 31,748. The second was when Blacktown council was declared a city in 1979. As a result, the Queen, through the Royal Heraldry, approved the Coat of Arms on 4 June 1981. The third was on 11 October 1982 when Her Late Majesty and Prince Philip officially opened Mount Druitt Hospital where they were welcomed by a crowd of about 1,000 people. Blacktown council's population had grown to over 181,000 people but, unfortunately, restrictions were placed on the numbers that were allowed to attend the hospital opening.

In attendance was Premier Neville Wran; Blacktown mayor, Jim Lynch; the member for Blacktown, John Aquilina; and my family. My father, Alderman Charlie Karoly Bali, was the local ward councillor and served on the Mount Druitt Hospital committee. The wow factor that Her Late Majesty was in Mount Druitt was a great uplift to the whole community; everyone felt inspired. Even though only a select few got close enough to talk to her, we all came away feeling that our presence mattered to her. That is the sign of a great leader—one that can make everyone feel valued. There are so many stories of Her Late Majesty taking the time with people, putting them at ease and making them feel like the most important person in the room.

The fourth and most widespread impact on the people of Blacktown, and probably all people across the world, were the letters from Her Late Majesty when they were celebrating their 100th birthday or a golden wedding anniversary. I have attended many of those anniversaries and birthdays, and her card is always prominently shown and cherished by the whole family. Those events are focal points in the tapestry of Blacktown's history, which we reminisce warmly. The people of Blacktown and Australia's affection towards Her Late Majesty is one that is undoubtedly reciprocated. In her own words:

Whatever the future may bring, my lasting respect and deep affection for Australia and Australians everywhere will remain as strong as ever.

I extend my sincerest condolences to the royal family, who are mourning their beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Whilst we understand and accept the formalities associated with the monarchy, it was great to hear His Majesty King Charles III refer to his mother, Her Late Majesty, as Mummy. The pressure and sadness that is placed on any family when mourning the passing of the family's matriarch is immense. The royal family have done that in the public gaze and under the spotlight of the world media while undertaking civic duties such as welcoming heads of state and making public appearances to comfort the mourning public. I place on record my appreciation and thanks to the royal family for the graceful, solemn and respectful way that the mourning and funeral was undertaken. She was their greatest source of strength and guidance. May she rest in eternal peace with her beloved Prince Philip. May she live on in the pages of history and may she be cherished fondly in our memories. Vale, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

I have no doubt that His Majesty King Charles III will perpetuate Her Late Majesty's remarkable legacy and guide us through the triumphs and challenges facing the world in this new era. I congratulate His Majesty King Charles III on his accession to the throne. King Charles has said that he will honour his mother's legacy and continue the service to the people of the Commonwealth with devotion and uphold the constitution. Today, Blacktown is the largest populated council in New South Wales, with over 405,000 residents, and it is expected to be larger than Tasmania by 2035. I look forward to one day welcoming King Charles III, the Queen Consort, Prince William or any other royals to Blacktown.

Hopefully they will have the same fond memories that Her Late Majesty had of her time in Blacktown. After all, Blacktown is home to Featherdale Sydney Wildlife Park, currently celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. It is the home of the largest collection of Australian fauna in the world. It has hosted royalty and presidents from around the world and it is time for our reigning monarch to consider a visit. The Queen proudly summed up her son's character on his seventieth birthday by describing him as a champion of conservation and the arts, a great charitable leader and a wonderful father. Issues concerning the environment, conservation, arts, Indigenous welfare and opportunity, and support for the vulnerable communities are all issues that the King previously championed before his accession to the throne. They are all valid issues today, particularly in Blacktown. I wish King Charles III, the Queen Consort, Prince William and the royal family all the support and success for the future. I commend the motion to the House. God save the King.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (16:01):
As a Minister of the Crown and a former army officer serving the Crown, I have great respect for the memory and

service of our late Sovereign Lady, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I offer my truly heartfelt condolences to His Majesty the King and his family. In the last 24 hours, who cannot have watched the scenes in London, Westminster Abbey and Windsor with anything but awe at this moment in history? In many ways it is hard to believe this moment has come, given the constant the late Queen was in the lives of most Australians. From the time of her passing in her beloved Scotland through to the ceremonies around the world, not least of which included the proclamation of the new King in New South Wales on the steps of this building, and through to the funeral service yesterday, we saw a remarkable event that we will not see again in our lifetimes.

It was a global event yesterday, one in which our nation, Australia, and our Commonwealth played an integral part. Some 5.1 billion people watched the funeral however they could—on televisions, laptops, mobile phones, screens in parks or in clubs. That is all the more remarkable given that when the Queen was crowned, television was in its relative infancy. People crowded around what now seems like a tiny screen to watch what they could of that ancient ceremony. Viewers and historians alike yesterday saw a world coming together in a way it rarely does. It is worth noting that for the first time ever a serving United States President attended the funeral of a British monarch. With our Governor-General and our Prime Minister in attendance, as well as our Victoria Cross for Australia winners and 10 ordinary but exemplary Australians, the President and all the other dignitaries were in good company indeed.

If the Queen was just a symbolic, distant figurehead—which she never was—her passing would not have elicited the kind of grief and respect that it has in her subjects and those who are lucky enough to be citizens in the stable nations of which she was Queen. There was not just ramrod duty in the Queen, but substance and achievement. Exhibitionist activists have tried to decry the passing of the monarch and attack her role, implicating her in the past tragic wrongs of governments and policies. But they miss the balanced and mainstream views of public opinion—that is, the spirit of respect for selfless service and achievement beyond partisan rancour.

The Commonwealth of Nations, one of the largest associations of free, sovereign nations in the world, remains one of her greatest legacies and the best example of that leadership beyond politics. It is that legacy that puts paid to the activist's chatter. Our Commonwealth of Nations was born out of decolonisation and acceptance of new young nations into that international and interconnected community. The Queen made them feel welcome and that those new nations were the equal of every other nation with which they joined in the Commonwealth. She made sure, using that diplomatic skill for which she was rightly lauded, that nations like ours were at the forefront of the Commonwealth and its diplomatic and human rights initiatives across the world.

As I have done before, I remind this House of the words of political scientist Luke Mansillo, who is a contributor to *Guardian Australia* and, I believe, a member of the Australian Labor Party. In his 2016 paper *Loyal to the Crown: shifting public opinion towards the monarchy in Australia*, Mr Mansillo noted in the conclusion of his academic treatise that "monarchy has become more popular in a country that is better educated". There can be no doubt the strong spirit of constitutionalism in Australia, which is enjoying a resurgence, cannot simply be explained by the vagaries of regimes around the world that remind of us how precious democracies are. Its resurgence owes much to the example of Her Late Majesty—that is, as I have stated before, leadership beyond politics, a vocation in which she was truly exemplary.

It is humbling and remarkable to think that yesterday the last major figure who served in the Second World War and had been on the international stage since that time was laid to rest. Today we speak of a world leader who in her youth was part of the great war against fascism and violent totalitarianism. Quite frankly, we simply will never see her like again. Together with former councillor Simon Frame, Mayor Zac Miles and much of my electorate, I watched the funeral yesterday, which will forever be embedded in our hearts. I happily cry "God save the King" as a loyal Australian, and I finish by simply offering, "Thank you, ma'am. You will be missed."

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:06): I contribute to the take-note debate on the Addresses of Condolence and of Congratulation on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and acknowledge King Charles III. I was very privileged on a number of occasions to meet Queen Elizabeth II. I had the honour of spending some time with her a number of times between 2001 and 2006 when I was a student and working in London. I make mention of and reflect on those comments because I spoke to Her Majesty a number of times at some length, and one of those times was after September 11 when members of our university college had been killed. To provide some context, I was very lucky to go to London to study on a scholarship. Whilst I was there, I lived in London House and William Goodenough House, which are in Mecklenburgh Square. The Queen was the patron of those houses. The houses were set up post First World War for empire students; postgraduate students. Well-known students like Weary Dunlop, Bob Hawke and others stayed in the same accommodation whilst they were postgraduate students.

Before I moved to live and study in London in 2001, I had worked for the Australian Workers' Union [AWU], and I helped to run the republican campaign in western Sydney, so I was a well-known republican amongst my colleagues at the college. The master of the college was the ex-Commandant of the Royal Military

Academy Sandhurst, Major-General Timothy Toyne Sewell. He and I had a number of arguments over a number of months. He then rang me up and said, "Her Majesty the Queen is coming to visit again. She regularly visits. She is the patron and has been since the 1950s. I would not only like you to meet her; I would like you to spend some time with her and take her around the college and introduce her to the different sporting heads and stuff like that." I was quite amazed, and I said to him then, "Listen, I appreciate the offer, but you know I am a republican. You should ask someone who is a monarchist to do this." He said, "It is because you are a republican that I want you to do this because you will spend time with the Queen and you will listen and talk with her, and I would like to see what your views are after that." I thought that was intriguing, so I did.

In 2001 Her Majesty visited the halls, the house. I met her at the gates, and we spent probably two hours together, talking, that first time. I took her through. At the time I was the boat captain of the rowing club, and I introduced her to the rowers and the cricket club et cetera. We went through and met the children et cetera, and we had many conversations. One of the things that really stood out to me was that her grandson William was about to go up to St Andrews, so she had a long chat with me about rowing up there and whether the Scots were any good at rowing and things like that. But the thing that she really loved was cricket. The cricket captain of the hall was another Australian, and she spent quite a bit of time chatting to him about that. She was a marvellous person; there is no question. She was dignified, she was intelligent, and she was very down to earth. The fact that she would talk to a 30-something-year-old ex-AWU official about all kinds of things and could relate to me and discuss things without a question was quite marvellous.

She left, and then later that year September 11 happened, the attacks on the Twin Towers. A very good friend of mine was a senior New York Police Department officer who had done a master's in Cambridge and had then gone back some weeks before and was involved in the attacks, as were other members of our college. People were killed, as we know. The United States Government and the New York Police Department made a decision to have the warrant badge of one of their police officers who was killed brought back to London House, where it would be presented to the Queen. Her Majesty visited again for that ceremony; I was also involved in that ceremony.

Sadly, in 2005 members of our college were also killed in the Russell Square bombings. When Her Majesty came to meet members of the college who had been affected by September 11, who had either been on the ground or had close friends injured or killed, once again she was so dignified. It was very interesting talking to her because you could see that she had gone through those things before. She was part of that greatest generation who fought in World War II and stood their ground against fascism. No doubt, through many decades, she had seen members of her family who had been injured or killed—I think of Lord Mountbatten and others—and it showed in her discussions. We sat and had a cup of tea with others—morning tea of scones and cream, I think it was, from memory—and it was quite amazing.

This was a woman who may have been the Queen, but she was a mother, a grandmother and a really decent person. No matter where we go with the republic or whatever, that will never change. I have the utmost respect for her from that time. I think her greatest legacy reflects where I lived at that time in London, and that was the Commonwealth of Nations that went from a neo-colonial empire to become what it is today, under her reign through the fifties, sixties, seventies and eighties. Yes, there were warts and there were problems, but we look at what it is today and that is her lasting legacy.

The Commonwealth is probably the greatest international force of good that has ever been created. The fact that countries like Rwanda and Mozambique wanted to join and have joined the Commonwealth, even with the fact that they have never been part of the old British Empire, says a lot. Groups like the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and other groups that link into the Commonwealth have an incredible influence on the rule of law, on parliamentary democracy and on bringing nations together. I do believe this is her lasting legacy, the fact that we have come to that point. I also note that no matter where we go in Australia, whether we go to a republic or not, we must always remain an integral part of the Commonwealth and have that brilliant, strong link between all of our nations. It is so important. The Queen is dead. God save the King.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (16:14): I offer my condolences and those of the citizens of my electorate following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We are remembering a remarkable person who lived a remarkable life. A black-and-white photo exists in the archives of an interactive database that chronicles the history of Hornsby shire. It is dated February 1954 and was taken during Queen Elizabeth's first visit to Australia alongside her late husband. The tour was legendary for the breadth of her travels and the estimate that at the time more than half our population turned out to view her. In the photo she can be seen standing on the back platform of a train carriage as it passes through a rail cutting at Thornleigh. The distinctive wave is evident, and despite the graininess and distance of the photo, on close inspection the smile that we all know so well is evident.

At the time, local citizens turned out in force—like the rest of Australia—to simply catch a glimpse of the young queen. Hornsby has always been a community of volunteers who believe in service, charity and contribution. I suspect those citizens recognised in Her Majesty a kindred spirit, someone who had so famously said on her twenty-first birthday, "My whole life, be it long or short, will be devoted to your service." How true she was to those words. In the final photo published during her life she was preparing to meet the new British Prime Minister with that same warm smile. It was taken just two days prior to her passing. To the very end, the Queen's commitment to duty and service, and the role she inherited at an impossibly young age, remained the same.

Imagine all that she saw: nation-states rise and fall, her own country join and then exit Europe, war, terrorism, and the rise of the internet age. We think of all the confidences she kept, from her conversations with heads of state to the 15 prime ministers of her own country who served under her reign. We remember all the comfort that she gave to victims of natural disasters and those in times of turmoil. As she famously said after 9/11, "Grief is the price we pay for love." We think of the cheer and goodwill she engendered merely through being so available and such an avid traveller across the Commonwealth.

Through it all the Queen was a selfless, untiring and dignified leader. She was of course a woman of enormous faith and, for the believers among us, a source of inspiration. For those of us in public life there has been no finer example of remaining true to one's moral compass. Despite living in an age when the public discourse can sometimes seem crass or coarse, she was a model of decency and decorum. When members of her own family revealed themselves to be imperfect or worse, she was impeccable and full of rectitude.

At a time when our politics is often needlessly divisive or rancorous, she remained separate from the partisan fray. In an era when democracy itself is being challenged across the globe, she always sought to maintain constitutional integrity and propriety. I believe the Queen inherently understood her role as monarch was derived from the free will and consent of her people. She accumulated soft power through absolute restraint. In remarks to celebrate Australia's bicentenary in 1988 she said:

Parliamentary democracy is a compelling ideal, but it is a fragile institution. It cannot be imposed and it is only too easily destroyed. It needs the positive dedication of the people as a whole, and of their elected representatives, to make it work.

But I also believe that she had faith in the model of democracy because of what it gifted to the citizens and the nations she served. In the context of Australia, Her Majesty praised its value in a speech at Parliament House in Canberra during her final visit to our nation in 2011. She stated:

It is this political freedom that leads to free expression, which encourages new development in areas as varied as the arts, sport and commercial enterprise. With this foundation, Australia has flourished and achieved excellence on the world stage.

She always seemed to sense what was good and right in people, and she wanted to shine a light on those traits. I suspect she saw that in Australia and our citizens, having visited these shores 11 times as well as receiving countless Australians in the United Kingdom. The Queen was renowned for her sense of humour and I believe she recognised the very same trait in Australians. She had a ferocious work ethic and knew that Australia was a nation of gritty and enterprising people. She was a permanent presence in our lives, which is extraordinary for someone in such a privileged position.

The outpouring of affection and love we have seen across the globe in the past two weeks is no surprise at all. I know that mix of sadness and affection has been felt deeply in my own electorate of Hornsby. People who have known no other monarch during their lifetime and people who are old enough to remember her coronation have all paused to remember and honour her. She will be recalled as one of history's truly consequential and most adored figures. We mourn her, we celebrate her and we remember her. Above all, we will always be inspired by her. May she rest in peace.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:20): It is right that this House expresses its condolences for the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II after the world watched her funeral last night. I imagine all members in this place were glued to the television all along. The truth is that over the past week I have found myself constantly coming back to the TV late at night just to see what was going on. There was a magnetic pull that drew in people from all over the world regardless of whether they were monarchists or republicans. The gravitational pull of this incredible character, Her Majesty the Queen, has come through our history. I say "the Queen" because she was always known as the Queen. She was never referred to as the Queen of England or our Queen but just the Queen. There would not be too many people in the history of the world who could just be referred to as "the Queen" and everyone automatically knew who they were.

Billions watched the solemn final procession from Westminster Abbey through London and the hour-long drive to Windsor. We saw the scenes of people lining the streets, applauding, throwing flowers, paying silent tribute and saluting. That is something pretty special. We are comforted to know that she will be buried alongside

Prince Philip in the King George VI Memorial Chapel at St George's Chapel in Windsor. The really lovely part of that is that the great love affair that lasted 70 years can continue.

The connection that millions have to the Queen is not always able to be explained. Previously I have spoken in this House about my mother's love for the Queen. My mother moved to Australia from Lebanon. When Her Majesty came on the screen one night, my mum said how much she loved her. Surprised by her reaction, I mentioned that some people might not have the same view and there might be the possibility of an alternative head of state. My mother simply said, "I don't agree with that." My mum came to Australia unable to speak a word of English. She came from a place where there was war and no rules, where people did not have an opportunity to live their best lives. Coming to Australia opened up opportunities for us, including her eldest son becoming a member of Parliament. Rightly or wrongly, she attributes all of this to the Queen and the royal family.

My mother-in-law keeps reminding us how she danced for the Queen when she was a young girl. I suppose that is her six degrees of separation; somehow she thinks that she is now related to the Queen. My mother-in-law is now close to 80 and it is one of her fondest memories. I think she mentioned it to us on any occasion that she could. She would say, "You know I danced for the Queen." Somebody else gave the Queen flowers, but unfortunately my mother-in-law was not given that role.

We seem to hear those same stories over and over again, where people talk about an interaction with the Queen, a sighting of the Queen or the passing-by of the Queen. They talk about the sheer pageantry and what it meant to them. It is pretty amazing to think about. These people are not alone. Numerous communities in my electorate with no ancestral familiarity with or connection to the Crown have expressed their deep adoration and grief at her passing. Indeed, my office has had many people contact it about photographs and plaques that they could get of Her Majesty the Queen. We saw a good response when I let people know I was going out to sign a condolence book at Government House. I was quite pleasantly surprised by the respectful way that people interacted with us.

We have seen this outpouring across the world. People lined up for up to 16 to 20 hours just to walk by her coffin. But it was not just a coffin; it was the coffin of a sovereign who symbolised the one constant that we had in our lives. She was certainly the only head of State and Queen that I have ever known in my life. Think about it—70 years. People will not have had that same experience. As I said before, millions of people have been glued to the rolling coverage of this absolutely momentous occasion in history. I do not profess to have an explanation for some of the deeply felt feelings but, as an English teacher—

Mrs Shelley Hancock: I remember that.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I acknowledge the member for South Coast. We used to work in the same staffroom. We played Pay Day.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: We did. I used to win.

Mr JIHAD DIB: You always won. The member for South Coast used to always win Pay Day, which I acknowledge on record. I can always rely on the wisdom of Shakespeare, who lived and wrote during the reign of the Queen's namesake, Queen Elizabeth I. In Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 2*, Henry bemoans his position as King as he will find no peace or repose, and he utters the famous line, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Yet for 70 years Her Majesty did not falter, and the facade did not break. What enormous skill it is to carry the Crown with the dignity and grace that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was able to do. Her first British Prime Minister was Winston Churchill, and she swore in 15 prime ministers during her reign. Her first Australian Prime Minister was Sir Robert Menzies, and her last was Anthony Albanese.

That does little to demonstrate the momentous changes she has lived through and overseen. Again, she has been the one constant. The continuity of her reign connected us to another time and another world—the Cold War, the space race, the UK's entry and exit from the European Union, the end of empire, the rise of television, the internet, the rise of a more globalised world and a global pandemic. She experienced great trauma in her personal life as well, yet she always remained steadfast in her commitment to duty. The Queen had a long connection to Australia. She first visited in 1954 and made 16 journeys, visiting every State and Territory. I must also put on record my mother-in-law and her dancing—that will keep me in the good books at least for a day.

On 27 May 1980 the Queen visited Bankstown and declared it a city. She was a signatory in our visitor's book, which sits quite proudly in Bankstown. The Crown is heavy and uncomfortable and comes with a lot of responsibility, but we can draw inspiration from her stoicism and religious commitment to duty. She remained a constant, but adapted in small, significant ways. The Queen made an address on television in 1957, which at the time was groundbreaking, and at the 2012 London Olympics she participated in a skit with James Bond. Only months ago she retained her sense of humour, appearing in a scene with Paddington Bear for the platinum jubilee.

We have heard some great stories. One of my favourite stories that I have heard over the past few days was that of a former security guard, who told a story about how he was walking with the Queen at Balmoral when a couple of American tourists came across them. One American tourist asked, "Where do you live?" and the Queen said, "I have a holiday house over the hill." They were very impressed. She said, "I have been coming here since I was a kid." One of the tourists said, "You must have bumped into the Queen. Apparently she has a place here as well." The Queen said, "I have not, but Dickie," the security guard, "has seen her on a regular basis." Of course, the American tourists grabbed the security guard and took a photo with him because they wanted to take a photo with somebody who had met the Queen.

The Queen, being humble, as she was known to be—and she has taken the micky out of herself on occasion—said, "We should take a photograph as well." After she took the photograph and the tourists left, she said, "Imagine being a fly on the wall when that person shows the photo to their family and they realise that I was the Queen." That is terrific. Obviously her world and her life were things that we will never know, but those little stories tell us that, even amidst all of that privilege and responsibility, she was a person and she went through the same pain and experiences that everybody else does. That is probably why her loss is so momentous. In reflecting on that, as I have said, I attended Government House to sign the condolence book on behalf of my electorate. We pass on our condolences and best wishes to His Majesty King Charles III and the entire family. Talk about an incredible 10 days for him and his family. For 70 years he has known that he will be king, but it is a double-edged sword because he becomes king at the same time as he loses his mother. But he will do well.

Others have outlined the ways in which they met with royalty. In 2013, when I was a member of the Community Relations Commission and before I came to Parliament, I met King Charles on his visit to Australia with the now-Queen Consort. Everyone knows where his path will take him, but everybody in my electorate and certainly in this place wishes him all the very best in his important reign, which comes at a time of incredible unsettlement around the world. May the Queen rest in peace, and I thank the Queen. I suppose there is nothing left to say other than thank you, ma'am, for everything that has happened—for trying to build a better world and for doing everything to connect us. She was the one constant, and she was one of the bright lights in the world that we have lived through over the past 70 years.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:30): I place on record a few brief thoughts and reflections on the lifetime of service given by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As has been noted by many since her passing, Queen Elizabeth generously fulfilled the vow she made upon her own accession to devote her whole life to the service of the people of her country and Commonwealth. Her devotion to this duty was unwavering, even through times of difficulty or sadness. Despite meeting incalculable numbers of people in the vast array of formal events she attended, Her Majesty nevertheless gave her genuine attention to each person with whom she spoke and listened alertly to them, demonstrating the sincerity of her commitment to the people over whom she reigned.

Her Majesty's dignity, graciousness and good humour endeared her to millions, as the outpouring of emotion since her death has made evident. For many she was a symbol of stability and security in a world full of change. For most Australians, as for most of her subjects in other parts of the Commonwealth, she was the only monarch they had ever known. I record both my admiration and sincere thanks to Her Majesty for the manner in which she upheld her lifetime vow and for the benefits to Australia that her constancy and devotion to duty facilitated through our system of government, based on the constitutional monarchy.

To His Majesty King Charles III, I first offer my sincere condolences. While time stands still for no-one, the loss of a parent is nevertheless a heavy burden whenever it has to be borne. It is a hard reality for His Majesty and his family that there is no opportunity for grieving in private. On the contrary, the grieving of the royal family is beamed all around the world on television. On a human level, my sympathy is with all members of the royal family as they come to terms with Her Majesty's passing. To His Majesty King Charles, I also offer my congratulations and my best wishes for the daunting task ahead. May he draw inspiration from the example of Her Majesty's service and be supported by the goodwill that is so clearly evident among millions of people in Britain, Australia and many other countries in recent days.

I found reassuring His Majesty's immediate commitment to uphold the constitutional principles on which our system of government is based. In doing so, he has provided a commitment to promoting the welfare of Australia and Australians, as well as the people of the other nations over which he is sovereign. May God guide our new King in his life's work and may his leadership be directed to the betterment of the lives of all people under his sovereignty.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:33): On behalf of my family and the electorate of Canterbury, I offer my condolences to the royal family on the passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who has been the only monarch during my lifetime. A couple of weekends ago my husband and I came down to Government House to write in the condolence book. My husband remembers that when he was a young child there was a visit by Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, who opened the Sydney Opera House. At that time, there were not many

TVs around and he has told me that very few people in the area in which he lived at the time had a TV. He remembers it was quite spectacular that the Queen opened the Sydney Opera House, something we are very, very proud of both as an institution and as a symbol that Australia is a modern young nation in a very ancient land.

Over the past 70 years, Her Late Majesty saw many changes dating from the early 1950s onwards, up until her passing, particularly in travel and the use of social media. There were many touchpoints in her life that were associated with advancement in technology, as Australia has progressed as a nation through trade, promoting Australian fashion, innovation and invention. When Her Late Majesty first came to our shores in 1954 she conducted a 58-day very exhaustive tour. Since then, Australia as a nation and Australians as people have changed for the better and made a lot of progress with the support of our constant monarch. What an amazing tour that must have been back then. Today's royal tours see the royal family slip into Commonwealth countries for three or four days and achieve a whole lot in using technology as well. I searched the State Library's website for archival material relating to the Queen's 57-stop tour in 58 days and found some amazing photos that included Her Late Majesty's 1954 visit to Bondi Beach and acknowledgement of our amazing lifeguards. I recommend the website to schoolchildren and anybody else.

Regional members of Parliament would well understand that during the 1954 tour Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Duke of Edinburgh and their entourage visited country areas that included Canberra, Katoomba, a Dubbo sheep shed, Lithgow, Broken Hill, Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Wollongong, Newcastle, Lismore and Casino. Obviously in 1954 the roads were not like they are now, so these were very remote parts of New South Wales at the time. One of the very important benefits of the 1954 tour was that while it enabled Her Late Majesty to get to know the people of Australia, it was also a showcase for Australian wool, design, manufacturing and cars, back when we made them. In fact, the tour put Australia on the map. The Queen visited wonderful places like Broken Hill, Bathurst, Wollongong, Lismore, Casino and Newcastle. Of course those regional centres have changed and progressed, but in those days the tour was a big showcase for Australia coming of age.

As the Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns, stated earlier, at the time of the tour Australia had a smaller population than it has now, but 70 per cent of the people of Australia came out to see the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. The tour was a very important visit. After that, Her Late Majesty made 15 other visits, on one of them opening the Opera House and on another opening the new Parliament House in Canberra. King Charles III has also spent some time in Australia during his youth and takes an interest in Australia. He spent two terms going to school in rural Victoria. I found it really interesting to look back at Australia's history over that 70-year period, during which the development of Australia as a country coincides with Her Late Majesty's coronation and her subsequent reign.

Looking at Australia's multiculturalism as well, at the time of Her Late Majesty's 1954 visit, Australia experienced a huge wave of immigration. In the sixties there was the uproar around the Vietnam War—so much conflict—and then there were the changes that were happening in the seventies and eighties, but Her Late Majesty was always a constant, with her stoicism, her ability to rise above and to just get on with it. What we have seen from not just the British people but from people around the world is an outpouring of love, admiration and grief. Over the past week I have spoken with local students who are seven or eight years old and in primary school, and they have expressed their admiration. They are coming into a new era of a new King. I express my condolences on the passing of Her Late Majesty and my congratulations to King Charles III.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:42): As a passionate monarchist, I speak today with great sadness intertwined with utmost respect for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She embodied a true sense of commitment, where her lifelong love for her family and the Commonwealth has inspired generations of individuals, including me and many other Australians. I believe I speak on behalf of the people of the Central Coast and of course my electorate of Terrigal when I express my immense gratitude to the Her Late Majesty for her unparalleled service to our nation as part of the wider Commonwealth. I also pass on my condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and the entire royal family, and at the same time congratulate His Majesty King Charles III on his accession to the throne.

At 2.40 a.m. on Wednesday 21 April 1926, baby Elizabeth Alexandra Mary was born to the future King and Queen of England, the Duke and Duchess of York—who later were crowned King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. She was baptised by the Anglican Archbishop of York, Cosmo Gordon Lang, in a private chapel at Buckingham Palace on 29 May. She was named after her mother, Elizabeth. The name Alexandra was taken from her paternal great-grandmother, who had unfortunately passed away six months earlier, and the name Mary came from her paternal grandmother. During her grandfather's reign, Elizabeth was third in line to the British throne after her uncle Edward—who became Edward VIII—and her father.

Although her birth generated an enormous amount of public interest, she was never expected to become Queen, as Edward was still young and was very likely to marry and have children of his own, who would precede

Elizabeth in the line of succession. When her grandfather died in 1936 and her uncle became Edward VIII, Princess Elizabeth became the second in line to the throne after her father. In hindsight, looking at her reign, it seems that she was always meant to be Queen, with natural poise, grace and intelligence, and endless generosity to her people. As we now know, the proposed marriage of King Edward VIII to divorcee socialite Wallis Simpson provoked a constitutional crisis in Great Britain, prompting his abdication. Consequently, Elizabeth's father became King George VI. Since Elizabeth had no brothers, she then became the heir presumptive.

In World War II the royal family played a pivotal role in supporting the British people and those of the Commonwealth, including Australia. Lord Hailsham's suggestion that Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret be evacuated to Canada to avoid the frequent aerial bombings of London by the Luftwaffe during World War II was swiftly rejected by their mother, Queen Elizabeth, who declared:

The children won't go without me. I won't leave the King. And the King will never leave.

That made it abundantly clear that the royal family was there to support the people of Great Britain and the Commonwealth. Throughout her reign Queen Elizabeth II embodied that mantra, always standing by her people through thick and thin. On 21 April 1947 on the Queen's twenty-first birthday, she famously declared:

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

As history will attest, it was long. Post-war, one of the greatest partnerships of all time was formed when Elizabeth fell in love with the Duke of Edinburgh. In July 1939, when Elizabeth was only 13 years old, her love for Philip began by exchange of letters. She was 21 years old when their engagement was officially announced on 9 July 1947, not long after those famous words declared by a future Queen. Of course, the rest is history: a 73-year partnership, which saw the Queen and her consort travel the globe representing the monarchy and all the Commonwealth nations.

Queen Elizabeth is the longest reigning monarch in British history. She acceded to the throne on 6 February 1952, which means that this year marks 70 years since her accession. She is also the first British monarch to celebrate a platinum jubilee. The Accession Council met in London to pronounce her the successor to the throne when King George VI suddenly passed away when Princess Elizabeth was just 25 years old. Such an enduring reign, partnered with her everlasting love for Prince Philip, is a testament to the loyalty of Her Majesty in both a personal and professional context. Always sophisticated, the Queen's humour and good nature has shone through.

When the 27-year-old Queen sailed into Sydney Harbour on 3 February 1954, she practically stopped a nation. Her arrival at Farm Cove, where Captain Arthur Phillip raised the British flag 165 years before, attracted an estimated one million onlookers in a city with a population of just over 1.8 million, which showed the love we had for the new Queen. Amalgamated Wireless Australia helped make history when it filmed the Queen setting foot on Australian soil and relayed the footage to the Spastic Centre in Mosman, and thus the arrival of the royals became the first televised event in Australia.

On 4 February 1954 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II attended the Parliament of New South Wales, where we are right now. The Queen's attendance marked the first time that a reigning monarch had ever opened an Australian parliament. Queen Elizabeth II is the first and, to date, the only reigning British monarch to visit Australia. The royals visited 57 towns and cities during the 58 days they spent in Australia. During their 10 days in New South Wales they attended 28 major programs, with events scheduled for mornings, afternoons and evenings—they were unstoppable. Queen Elizabeth's days varied from watching cultural performances to a surf lifesaving demonstration at Bondi Beach to addressing over 100,000 schoolchildren at three outdoor venues. To put this in context, the Queen visited Australia more than 15 times.

On the visit in 1973 the Queen officially opened the iconic Sydney Opera House, which has been displaying her image most recently during our mourning period. In 1977 the Queen visited Australia, marking her silver jubilee. I vividly recall the Queen's visit to Adelaide for her silver jubilee and the arrival of the royal yacht *Britannia* when I was an excited five-year-old. I recall being on the rope line in Rundle Mall when the Queen was meeting people. She became famous for making time for all. During her visit in 1977 she also opened the brand new Festival Theatre in Adelaide. The Queen attended other openings of landmarks, including the Parramatta Stadium in 1986, and she visited for the bicentennial celebrations in 1988, which commemorated 200 years since Captain Arthur Phillip's arrival with 11 ships of the First Fleet in Sydney Harbour. The Queen's most recent visit to Australia was in 2011, with her last visit to New South Wales in 2006 when she opened a new section of the Opera House.

The Queen has overseen 16 Australian Prime Ministers since her accession to the throne, and most recently her fifteenth United Kingdom Prime Minister only days before her passing. She has also seen 20 Premiers in New South Wales. Sadly, last year, after 73 years of marriage, the Queen mourned the loss of her life partner, Prince Philip. The images of her sitting alone in St George's Chapel, Windsor, mourning the loss of her beloved

Prince Philip, put into context her amazing 70-year reign of faithful, dutiful public service and the high standards to which she held herself. The Queen had professionalism, poise and compassion. There is no way anyone cannot be in awe of what she has achieved. Yet many of us remember her as a maternal figure, with a particularly kind heart and an ever-youthful sense of humour. From her performance with Daniel Craig as James Bond at the 2012 Olympics to sharing a jam sandwich with the iconic Paddington Bear, those tender moments touched all our hearts and showed us that beneath the professionalism was a truly beautiful, compassionate and humorous person.

While many of us in the Chamber come to Parliament to serve the public, none of us can imagine serving the public for 70 years. Again, it is a testament to her commitment to the people of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, which she served for so long. She was renowned and well respected by so many people, which was seen over the last week or so but especially yesterday at her funeral. On behalf of the Central Coast community and the residents across New South Wales, I thank Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for her seven decades of service to the Crown, her country and the Commonwealth. As we reflect on her life, her reign and her impact, we can all appreciate her in a professional sense as our monarch, but also the generous, compassionate and kind-hearted person beneath. May she rest in peace. Again, I acknowledge King Charles III and his accession to the throne and wish him all the best for many, many long years that he may reign. God save the King.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:51): I make a brief contribution to the Address for Condolence for Queen Elizabeth II, who reigned for 70 years from 1952 to 2022. She was the longest reigning monarch ever in Britain and, I understand, the second longest globally. She was crowned Queen on 2 June 1953 and her reign ended on 8 September this year when she passed away peacefully at Balmoral Castle, Scotland. Queen Elizabeth II lived an extraordinary life filled with so many interesting experiences—imagine being served by 15 prime ministers. She carried out more than 21,000 engagements over her 70-year reign. During her visit to Australia in 1970, the Queen set a precedent of the royal walkabout, shaking hands with the public rather than appearing at a distance, changing the way official visits were conducted. I think that went a long way to changing the way leadership was carried out and displayed, particularly by the royal family but also by many global leaders at the time.

The Queen came to the Illawarra and Wollongong in 1954, something that our community remembers. My parents certainly remember. On 20 October 1973 she opened the Sydney Opera House, a now iconic landmark. All British passports were issued in the Queen's name during her reign, but she did not need or have one. She was also the only person in Britain who did not need nor hold a driver licence. Known as having a sense of humour that we all got to share over the years, she dabbled in some acting alongside Paddington and, of course, James Bond. I heard a funny story recently on the radio. The Queen was on a low-key trip to Scotland and was out with one of her security personnel when she met some American tourists while walking. When the tourists asked whether she lived locally, she mentioned that she had a house nearby and, when asked whether she had ever met the Queen—they said, "You must have met the Queen if you live near here"—she simply pointed at her security guard and said, "No, but he has." That story says a lot about the no-frills approach that Queen Elizabeth II had to her leadership.

The Queen and Prince Philip were proud parents of four children: Prince Charles, now King Charles III; Princess Anne; Prince Andrew; and Prince Edward. She had eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. While she was our monarch and our Queen, they have lost a grandmother, great-grandmother and mother. All of us remember that, and it has been nice to hear people reflect on the importance of remembering it in this place. While she was a leader for us, to those close to her she was a grandmother, a great-grandmother and a mother. We honour her today and we will remember the long-lasting legacy she has left the people of this country and the people of this great State.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (16:55): It is an honour to be in this place to pay my respects to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and extend my deepest sympathies to the royal family, who have lost not only a great leader but also a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother. I trust that the King and his family will be comforted by the knowledge of the deep affection in which Her Late Majesty was so widely held in New South Wales. In her first official visit to Australia in 1954 she visited Dubbo after addressing both Houses of the New South Wales Parliament six days earlier, on 4 February. She was welcomed at an official reception at Victoria Park and then proceeded on a walk to the war memorial between rows of invited guests and community groups, including the Country Women's Association, Red Cross, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, before visiting pavilion exhibits and viewing ring events at the Dubbo Showground. *The Dubbo Dispatch* reported:

... the reception was among the greatest she received on her tour of New South Wales.

...

Banners and strings of coloured lights were festooned across main streets as locals and visitors cheered and shouted.

...

Her Majesty captured the hearts of western people with her friendly smile.

...

Well may we truly and loyally say God save our Queen. Long may she reign, happy and glorious.

On that trip to New South Wales, she also visited the flying doctor base in western New South Wales, where she broadcast over the network, paying homage to the fortitude, courage, humour and friendliness of the men, women and children of the outback. She visited many places. After her first tour she was quoted as saying:

The 10 days I have spent in NSW have indeed been memorable ones, and I shall remember all my life with pride and pleasure the inspiring welcome I have received.

Her Late Majesty and the late Prince returned to Dubbo on 21 February 1992. Again, she chatted with people who had waited patiently for hours. She walked through an honour guard of RSL representatives as the Dubbo City Choristers sang *God Save the Queen*. She visited the school of distance education and also toured Taronga Western Plains Zoo. She was no stranger to western New South Wales. She visited Bourke in March 2000. She toured the local public school there and was welcomed at a town reception in Central Park and addressed a large crowd of people. She was a supporter of our primary producers as well and was genuinely interested in the challenges and opportunities they faced.

In 1970 she officially opened the Sydney Royal Easter Show. As an avid horse rider and dog lover, her genuine interest in the workings of the Royal Agricultural Society was felt by all who were fortunate enough to meet her and those who merely saw her passing by. Earlier this year, as Minister for Agriculture, I had the real pleasure and privilege of meeting and spending time with Her Late Majesty's daughter, Princess Anne, when she officially opened the 2022 Sydney Royal Easter Show, celebrating its 200th year. In 2018 Her Late Majesty said her thoughts and prayers were with the many individuals, families, communities and businesses that had been affected by drought, and thanked all those who stood shoulder to shoulder showing their support. She made a private donation in support of drought relief. In May this year I wrote to the Governor to inform her that New South Wales was officially 100 per cent free of drought and requested that information be passed on to Her Late Majesty, along with my personal gratitude for her ongoing support for farmers across New South Wales.

As we have heard, she went on to become the longest reigning British monarch, Australian sovereign and leader of the Commonwealth of Nations. For more than 70 years, through the darkest of days and in times of triumph, Her Late Majesty devoted herself to her country and to the Commonwealth and, as we have heard, often with great humour. She served with dignity, courage and, above all, a commitment to all of us. On behalf of the Dubbo electorate and those across western New South Wales, I say thank you. May she rest in peace.

Debate adjourned.

Public Interest Debate

TRADE UNIONS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:59): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that industrial action by the RTBU is causing ongoing disruption for commuters.
- (2) Notes that the NSW Secretary of the RTBU, Alex Claassens, is a member of the NSW Labor Administrative Committee, which exists to coordinate Labor's election campaigns for public office.
- (3) Notes that the RTBU has paid over \$824,500 to NSW Labor since 2007 in affiliation fees and donations.
- (4) Calls on Labor to stand with commuters by:
 - (a) removing Alex Claassens from the NSW Labor Administrative Committee; and
 - (b) returning all affiliation fees and donations paid to date by the RTBU.

There has been a lot of talk recently about the close collaboration between Labor and the unions to help the Opposition win the next election. There is only one word that explains the cosiness between Labor and the unions: bromance. There are many great examples of bromances around the world. Members opposite are big fans of *Sesame Street* and Bert and Ernie. Other bromances include Fitzy and Wippa from Nova 96.9, Fletch and Hindy from *Rugby League Live* on Fox, and that other great bromance on the other side of the House, Kamper and Minns, the member for Rockdale and the member for Kogarah. That bromance has been split asunder. There are massive factional cracks in the St George Labor faction, and Chris Minns has started up a new bromance with Alex Claassens.

That bromance has led to major disruptions to our commuters, hardworking mums and dads going to work every day—trying to get to work, whether it is at a cafe or as a frontline worker. They have not been able to get

to work on time because of unions and their affiliation with the Australian Labor Party [ALP]. They are causing disruption to this State. They are costing millions of dollars to this State and local businesses throughout metropolitan New South Wales. Labor leader Chris Minns is trying to fool the people of New South Wales by saying, "There's nothing to see here." I will outline the facts and people can make up their own minds. To demonstrate this cosy relationship—this bromance—the rail union is a case in point. The rail union's website shows that its objectives are to gain as much influence as possible within the New South Wales Labor Party, which explains why it has given over \$800,000—not in Aldi bags but in affiliation and donations—to the Labor Party since 2007.

What has that bought for the union? What has that bought for the ALP? Former rail boss—good old Bob Nanva—is now the all-powerful general secretary of the New South Wales Labor Party. He is the CEO of NSW Labor; the number one job that runs the Labor election campaign. He has the power, duties and functions to lead and manage according to the directions of the State conference and Administrative Committee. He or she is also responsible for the care, control, superintendence, management and administration of the party. Before becoming Labor's general secretary, Bob was a militant union boss with the rail union. Bob's deputy general secretary, Dom Ofner, is also from the rail union. Alex Claassens, a part-time steam train driver and current head of the rail union, is the man behind the railway strikes that have disrupted lives and livelihoods across Sydney. He sits on the committee that oversees Labor's election campaign.

Old union mates are Labor's CEO and deputy CEO and are on its election committee, and the rail union has gone from wanting to gain influence to running the joint. When the rail union says, "The Government does not deserve a moment of peace between now and the next election," its true motivations are there for all to see. Make no mistake, the rail union controls the most senior roles in the Labor Party and its strikes are all about politics. Chris Minns does not have the authority in the Labor Party to stand up to the militant union bosses. The best he can do is play good cop and pretend to publicly distance himself from the strikes and hope the people of Sydney who are bearing the brunt do not turn their anger towards him.

Meanwhile, the people at the heart of Chris Minns' campaign to become Premier are playing bad cop and creating chaos across Sydney. Minns has the opportunity to break off this bromance and boot Alex Claassens from his campaign, but he refuses to act because he has the most to lose if this generous support is turned off and the most to gain if the strikes continue all the way till election day. The unions know it, which is why they will get their way. If Minns wins the next election, they will get everything they have ever wanted and the people of New South Wales will pay for it with higher taxes, poorer services and more disruption.

The latest sign of the ruthless determination of the Labor-union alliance that will cause disruption to the people of New South Wales was the announcement of the "year of the strike" in a memo from Alex Claassens to RTBU members calling for the misuse of emergency equipment to sabotage public assets at railway stations. The memo was pulled from the RTBU website and it instructed members to disable Opal machines in any way possible. He also actively suggested that members misuse the emergency egress button. Anyone who has brought up children will have given them the important life lesson that emergency equipment should only be used for the proper purpose. To misuse it is reckless, irresponsible, often dangerous and, in all cases, illegal.

Section 68B (2) of the Passenger Transport (General) Regulation 2017 provides for penalties up to \$5,500 for any person who, without reasonable excuse, uses or interferes with any emergency equipment at a station. Mr Claassens also called on all RTBU members to flick the eternal switch on legacy gates or trip the circuit breaker for the standalone Opal poles. What an absolute disgrace this man is. The offence in the regulation also applies to any person who, without reasonable excuse, operates or otherwise interferes with any electrical or mechanical apparatus or device that is on a railway premises. The memo also gave a hotline to call for members with less experience in sabotaging emergency and electrical equipment with instructions in the dark arts. This is 101 Sussex Street interfering with people's lives.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the House that nine members on both sides of the Chamber are already on three calls to order.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:07): Here we go. With six months to go the Government has sent out the member for Wollondilly to talk about bromances and to successfully google the rules of the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party—well done! It is very clear that the Government has decided to stop governing. The motion is nothing more than cynical politicking from a government that is absolutely desperate to distract from its litany of public transport failures, which have resulted in passengers being left on railway platforms, at bus stops and on ferry wharves. It has failed to deliver one of the key responsibilities of State Government: to deliver public transport services to the people of New South Wales.

The motion is an indication of the Government's real priorities. Instead of looking for solutions, it is focused on conflict. We know that this debate will not end the industrial dispute or return train services to normal,

services that literally millions of people rely on every day. It is an indulgence by the Government that passengers do not want. They do not want this distraction; they want action. They want their Government to deliver the services that they rely on. They are desperate for the Government and the Premier to end this dispute and deliver the public transport services that they rely on. The motion is an admission that they have completely dropped the ball.

Let us look at some of the public transport projects and services that the Government is currently engaged in, starting with Sydney Metro, which is currently \$6 billion over budget. We know that the Sydney Metro to Bankstown extension will be at least a year late and there is widespread confusion about whether the Western Sydney Airport metro will cost \$11 billion or \$13 billion—a bit of a difference there. The project faces scores of risks, including—and we know this from the Government's own documents—safety failures and cost blowouts, and it could totally fail to deliver the long-term benefits that the Government has promised. In addition, we know that the Government's compulsory acquisition purchases in Camellia and Orchard Hills have cost the public tens of millions of dollars, and it was rightly slammed for not negotiating in good faith with local residents. But does the Government offer any solutions to fix these problems? No. Instead of facing up to the maladministration of the Sydney Metro project, it brings forward this motion. It is choosing conflict over solutions because it doesn't have any.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Willoughby will cease interjecting.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Let us move to the new intercity fleet, the overseas-built trains that cost over 1,440 jobs in Australia. The Government has spent millions of dollars of public money on these trains that did not fit the tracks or the tunnels. Meanwhile, it is costing taxpayers \$30 million a month to store them on the Central Coast and overseas. They are two years late and they have not carried a single passenger. The Government keeps feigning outrage about making modifications to the fleet yet it has agreed to make them. In fact, the former transport Minister agreed to make them in 2018. Does the Government have a plan or a solution? No. Instead, it is causing conflict and playing politics.

Let us move to the rollout of the emissions-free buses—again, another excellent promise from the former transport Minister. The entire fleet was going to be emissions-free by 2030, but what have we discovered? "No, sorry. Not 2030 but 2047." It will be 17 years late. Does the Government have a plan to fix that? Does it have a solution? No. All it has is conflict. What about the inner west light rail, with 12 trams cracked? What about the Emerald- and River-class ferries, which are full of defects? Does the Government have a plan to fix them? No. It offers no solutions, just more conflict. It seems like a lifetime ago that this Government was proud of its transport legacy, but the Berejiklian era is well and truly over. There is no leadership from this Government. It has given up on governing and, instead, is just playing politics.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (17:12): I speak in strong support of the motion moved by the member for Wollondilly. It is rank hypocrisy by members opposite to talk about a plan. Come on. There is no plan, no policy, no homework—nothing is ever done on that side of the House whatsoever. In fact, their plan is the year of the strike.

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

Mr TIM JAMES: All they can deliver for the people of New South Wales is upheaval, disruption, delays and difficulties. That is their plan and it is utterly pathetic. We have seen the union campaign of selfish vandalism play out. The commuters of this State are caught in the union's crossfire.

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

Mr TIM JAMES: Frankly, it is extraordinary that last week the union instructed its members to commit sabotage. Try to defend that. There is no way anyone can stand behind sabotage across the State to misuse emergency equipment for the union's political purposes. Alex Claassens called on members to disable Opal machines in any way possible.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Shellharbour that she is already on one call to order.

Mr TIM JAMES: He has also actively suggested the misuse of the emergency egress button. It is just extraordinary. No-one else in this State would be allowed to get away with that, mark my words. Would it ever be acceptable anywhere else? Of course it would not. Those opposite should condemn such vandalism in the strongest terms. What's more, Alex Claassens called on RTBU members to flick the internal switch and trip the circuit with no regard for the rule of law and no respect for safety. There is no decency whatsoever. This union boss is completely out of control and Labor is entirely complicit in that conduct, such is their cosy relationship.

The New South Wales Government is engaged in conciliation with the combined rail unions at the Fair Work Commission and 60-odd meetings have been held. But the RTBU is doing what? It is going about union-led

sabotage of public assets. It is just extraordinary stuff. No wonder the public are getting very frustrated. This is turning into Labor's great political failure of 2022. What a perverse and appalling attitude it is by that union boss and, indeed, by those opposite. It has to be said that this contrast, with the attitude of many responsible railway employees—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Blue Mountains that she is on three calls to order.

Mr TIM JAMES: —including a train driver who wrote to the Premier recently. That driver, who has 10 years train-driving experience, said that he has been fortunate to test-drive the Mariyung trains. This helped establish that those trains are safe, as configured. He urged the Government to put a fair and reasonable pay offer directly to the workforce and to bypass the union, no less. That is probably what should happen. In the meantime, the union movement is running a deliberate campaign of industrial unrest for pure political purposes. We all know that if Labor was ever to return to power, the unions would have free reign. Unions, in effect, control Labor members' careers—just ask some of your colleagues who will be coming and going. Have a chat to them, as I have. There are party funds, committees, campaign workers and more.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Wollondilly will come to order.

Mr TIM JAMES: The RTBU has contributed close to \$1 million to the Labor Party in the past 15 years. Money talks. Of course it does. And you should return it. If you have got any integrity, send that money back.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Blue Mountains she is on three calls to order.

Mr TIM JAMES: There is an inherent conflict of interest that captures those opposite. Labor and the unions are two sides of the one coin. Frank Sartor knew it. Do you remember Frank Sartor? He knew it. He said that the biggest encumbrance on the New South Wales Labor Government's ability to govern was the quadrennial enterprise bargaining negotiations, during which the unions insisted on pay rises that were simply not sustainable. Frank Sartor knew what he was talking about. This current union action is a political stunt, brought by those who sit on Labor's 2023 campaign committee. Again, it is a cosy relationship. Labor and the unions have an opportunity to demonstrate that the people in New South Wales are in fact some priority.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind Opposition members that a number of them are on three calls to order.

Mr TIM JAMES: Put the people first for a moment, please. Just do that, not your self-serving industrial chaos, sabotage, disrespect for the rule of law, and it goes on.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Wyong will come to order.

Mr TIM JAMES: It is unseemly, inappropriate and really unbecoming. Members opposite should learn some lessons and start to do better.

Ms Anna Watson: You should stop talking.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Shellharbour that comment is unparliamentary.

Ms Anna Watson: I take it back.

Mr TIM JAMES: In the meantime, this Government is delivering for workers and getting on with the job of delivering essential transports and other services for the people of this State. I commend this motion to the House.

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

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:17): It is my pleasure to speak on this motion. It is obvious what it is and I think the member for Summer Hill said it well. The election is six months out and, yes, the feeling on the ground is not that strong.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Willoughby has had his turn.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The teal train is coming and what does the Premier do? He is thinking, well, we have got to pull something out of the hat. So he pulls out the old Johnny Howard playbook. You know how it goes. Demonise the workers just before an election. When things are not good, demonise the workers, pick a fight and that will give us those few points to get us across the mark. We have seen it. The stage is being set, the scheme has been engineered. They have got Minister David Elliott—Curly from the Three Stooges. Put him in there to negotiate.

Mr Nathaniel Smith: Is that a prompt?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, it is reference material. All is going well. He is loving the union, he is loving the workers. All is going very well. But what happens? They pull the rug from under him. They do that because this is all part of a scheme. It is obvious that it is all part of a scheme to keep this dispute going, to continue to demonise the workers, rather than sit down and negotiate an outcome. The safety issues are well documented. It is not as if all of these things are a revelation. You have been discussing them for a long time. You have had positive, active conversations. Minister Elliot was sent in there in the spirit of goodwill, and what happened? Perpetually we are pulling the rug out from under him. It happens every single time. The Government brings on a number of players. One minute it is Minister Tudehope—he might be Larry from the Three Stooges. The Premier is Moe. He jumps in on occasion and then Treasurer Kean is brought into the act.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will refer to members by their correct title.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. This has been going on for too long. This is a sign of a government that has really lost its way. It has definitely lost its way.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: You are much better than this.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am much better than you. We are much better than this. We are much better than this. Obviously the game has changed. Curly has cottoned onto the game. On 26 August the headline was "Elliott warns of radical options". What are radical options? What does that mean? What do we see on the weekend? A picture of all of them together. Here it is, exposed. You have got Chris Corrigan, the master of the waterfront dispute, together with John Howard. What is it all about? What is this all coming to? This is all about a delayed industrial dispute.

Mr Nathaniel Smith: Going the oracle.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, and you can continue to demonise the working people, not negotiate, and not complete what you should be completing—getting on with keeping all of our people commuting to work. All you are doing is choosing to do is to keep this battle going. You have brought in the king himself—Corrigan. What is he noted for? I was around in 1998. As a matter of fact, I was involved in that whole exercise. I know what it was all about. It was an insolvency exercise and it was an asset-stripping exercise.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Wollondilly will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was about not paying the workers their entitlements. What are they all doing together? What are they discussing? That is what it is all about. The only difference here is that you are talking about State assets, not private assets. This is all about your government having an intention to privatise our trains. That is what this is all about. You are going to drag it on.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollondilly will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You have brought in the king of asset stripping because that is your intention—to create a dysfunctional environment so you can strip the assets and privatise them. It is obvious. Why would you have those players?

Ms Robyn Preston: How reckless is that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It is not reckless whatsoever. You keep blaming the working people who are trying to fight for reasonable wages and conditions, and for the safety of passengers and safety of workers. You come up here on your high horse attacking the Labor Party and attacking the Labor movement. How about you get on with the job of running this State?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Holsworthy, who will be heard in silence.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:22): I support the public interest debate motion presented by the member for Wollondilly about Labor's cosy relationship with the RTBU. It is a cosy relationship; we have seen how close they are together. The member for Rockdale has a problem with the Premier having coffee with a former Prime Minister, yet Alex Claassens and Chris Minns are allowed to meet all the time and Alex can help Chris get elected. That is a bit of a conflict of interest, is it not? That is a bigger issue than two leaders sitting down and having coffee. I would be more concerned about that. The RTBU's industrial action and the way they are treating the public is disgusting! Its ongoing disruption has affected families, schoolchildren, university students, workers, small businesses—the list goes on. People are just trying to get to work and get home. The New South Wales Government's priority is to deliver world-class transport services at a fair cost to taxpayers with a fair and reasonable condition to employees.

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

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: The Government has continued to meet with the RTBU during this ongoing dispute and offer compromises, but nothing is ever good enough. We have met with the union movement 58 times, resolving issues only to have another put forward at every step. It is because it does not want a resolution; it just wants to help its Labor mates. Regarding this dispute, the union's leader, Alex Claassens, on separate occasions, has said, "It's all about safety issues and it has always been about the safety issue relating to the NIF," or "It's all about the people being able to have their days off," or "It's all about anti-privatisation," or "It's all about making life extremely difficult for the Government"—that might be the most concerning comment—or "It's all about hygiene," or "It's all about severe graffiti," or "It's all about wages," or "It's all about a fare-free Friday." Every one of those could have been sorted at the start but they just keep doing them by increments. It is clear that the RTBU is continually moving the goalposts of this dispute to make sure it drags on. It is a moveable feast. As the RTBU said in its recent letter, this industrial action is about bringing the Government to its knees. To put it bluntly, the RTBU is waging a political campaign against the Government and the people of this State to ensure that their great mate Chris Minns becomes the Premier at the next election.

Ms Anna Watson: Absolutely!

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: Absolutely? Is that what is happening? The member for Shellharbour says that they are doing this deal. Alex Claassens is absolutely working with Chris Minns to make him the next Premier. I thank her for putting that on record. But the commuters are the collateral damage.

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

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: Quite Frankly, New South Wales will suffer if the Opposition wins come March. It is vital to note that the New South Wales secretary of the RTBU, Alex Claassens, is a member of the NSW Labor Administrative Committee. The committee coordinates Labor's election campaigns for public office. The link between the RTBU and Labor is too interconnected. Meanwhile, Chris Minns has gaslit the people of New South Wales every step of the way. Originally, he would not condone the strikes. But then the pressure built and he had to condemn them in public and so he just encouraged them in private, sending MPs down the picket lines.

This is the reality of the snap strikes: Recently I was told by Liverpool councillor Fiona Macnaught of a situation where she tried to help a mother whose direct line from Fairfield to Glenfield was interrupted when the trains were cut with no notice. Due to the interruption, she was unable to get back to her young son. She was unable to afford an Uber or a taxi fare. Her husband was overseas and she couldn't get in touch with him to be able to afford to get to her young son. She was vulnerable, she was crying and she was confused. I can only imagine that her son was feeling the exact same way. Quite frankly, the Opposition's mates caused that. If members want to talk safety, more than the safety of rail staff is at stake here. A mother was kept away from her child with no way to contact him. Imagine being in their shoes. That is just one example.

It is time to grow up and campaign for government properly. Don't use commuters and don't use people just going about their daily lives. Chris Minns should call out this behaviour by the guy who has the key role in getting him elected, but then he would lose the RTBU's generous support. He should at least call for him to be removed from Labor's Administration Committee. He should show some integrity and stop hurting the people of New South Wales. But the Leader of the Opposition surely does not want to win by those tactics. It appears he is okay with it, but I would not want to win using those tactics.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:27): This smug, out-of-touch Government's management of public transport and public transport assets has been nothing more than a complete embarrassing disaster. The Premier came into this House at question time and bleated about the Labor Party being political and the Labor Party questioning why people are not being treated in hospitals. His response was, "You are being political." Well, what is this motion? What is this motion doing in this House that is short of time? Is this motion constructive? Is it being led by the transport Minister, the Treasurer and the Premier, who are responsible for this dispute? It is not. They have sent in the big guns: the member for Wollondilly, the member for Lane Cove, the member for Holsworthy and the member for New York—or the member for Willoughby, I should say. I do not have an MBA. The teal Independents are coming after the member for Willoughby. If the matter is of such significant impact to the people of New South Wales, why have they sent in the C grade?

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Point of order: I have listened to the debate this afternoon and, quite frankly, there have been some offensive remarks from members opposite. I take exception to those remarks made by the member for Heffron. I ask that he withdraws his remarks relating to being on the C grade team.

Mr RON HOENIG: I will withdraw the remark and indicate that certainly the Government—

Mrs Shelley Hancock: You are offensive.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for the South Coast will resume her seat.

Mr RON HOENIG: —has not sent in representatives of the Executive Government; it has sent in backbenchers. Do Government members think that this motion will have any benefit in solving an industrial dispute with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Willoughby will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: Do they think that will be productive? It is not going to be productive and it is not intended to be productive in any way whatsoever. This motion will be seen for what it is. Of course, the issue will be their word choices. That will really bring them undone.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollondilly will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: Was it last week that the Premier was seeking advice from John Howard and Chris Corrigan on how to settle a dispute? I have some advice for the Premier: Why don't you ask Gladys Berejiklian? She might be able to help you. The Government would not be in this situation if she was still in this place. Its record on public transport assets is a complete embarrassment and demonstrates why those opposite are not fit and proper members to govern this State and why they should go. This dispute centres around \$2.3 billion that bought the intercity fleet from South Korea that doesn't fit the tracks and the tunnels, rather than providing Australian jobs. It is embarrassing. They were ordered in 2017 and they arrived in 2019. They are sitting at Kangy Angy, paying \$30 million a month, and they do not fit the tracks and the tunnels. But it is not just the trains.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Rubbish.

Mr RON HOENIG: Why doesn't the member for South Coast participate in the debate, if she wants to keep yapping across the table?

Mrs Shelley Hancock: I am. You should stop being offensive.

Mr RON HOENIG: Look at the CBD and South East Light Rail that was announced at \$1.2 billion—that is now \$3 billion. Look at the RiverCats that were bought from Indonesia that do not fit under bridges, do not go in reverse and cannot be used at night. Look at the Manly Ferry that was built in China and does not fit at Manly Wharf at low tide. When it was taken out in the swells, the rudder fell off and the windows broke. Every single thing that the Government has touched in the public transport space has proved to be a disaster. Industrial relations is about resolving disputes in a proper, fair way and negotiating them behind closed doors. This is tantamount to a disaster that the Government has created through its own behaviour.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:33): In reply: I thank the member for Summer Hill, the member for Willoughby, the member for Rockdale, the member for Holsworthy and the member for Heffron for their contributions to this debate. Firstly, I start with the contribution from the member for Summer Hill and member of the Australian Services Union. She basically said that the period of industrial harmony was through the Berejiklian years. The Premier was the industrial relations Minister during that time. He was doing the bulk of the work and he has done a brilliant job. That is why he is our Premier at the moment.

I go to the member for Rockdale, who wants to continually conspire and talk about privatisation. Let's look at the Opposition's record of privatisation. During its term of government it sold off the Southern Highlands Line, which serviced my electorate for 60 years, for \$1—talk about a great deal. It put freight before passengers for \$1. The Labor Party has a poor record of putting passengers first, let me tell you. Then we have the member for Revlon—I mean, the member for Heffron, who continually pontificates to us, "Look, they bring out the backbench." Lord Ron, it was not a great contribution from you. Anyway, let us get back to the topic and that topic is about General Secretary Bob. Before he took the job as national boss of the union, Bob was one of the closest union pals of Alex Claassens, the current boss of the rail union. Boy, do they love to strike! Last year Bob backed Chris Minns in knifing Jodi—I know a lot of people on that side of the House were very much against that; I am looking at you, member for Swansea—to take the Labor leadership.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member of Wollondilly will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: They should be referring to the member for Kogarah as the member for Kogarah or the Leader of the Opposition. This has gone on right through this debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will resume her seat. I uphold the point of order. Members will refer to each other by their correct title.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: The member for Kogarah, Labor's former Transport spokesman, denies any links with Claassens while the former union boss, Bob, is now the General Secretary of the New South Wales Labor Party, and they all sit together on the Labor election committee. We are all supposed to believe that these old mates have not been talking to one another about the train strikes that have made everyone's commute an absolute misery. Does Labor think the people of New South Wales are stupid? Does the member for Kogarah owe his career to those union bosses? If he cannot stand up to them, just think of what pain Labor will cause if it comes to power.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Wollondilly will resume his seat.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Hypocrisy—I cannot stand it.

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

Dr Hugh McDermott: He is misleading the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Prospect will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Dr Hugh McDermott: A member of the CEPU, for a long time an active member and a plumber—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Prospect that he is already on three calls to order. The member for Prospect will resume his seat.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Unbelievable!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr Stuart Ayres: To the point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Prospect will remove himself from the Chamber for a period of 30 minutes.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Prospect left the Chamber at 17:38]

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: The member for Kogarah owes his career to union bosses and cannot stand up to them. We need to send a message to Labor and stop those strikes. Let us look at Alex Claassens, who regularly says that these state-of-the-art air-conditioned trains that are sitting at the moment and not being used are not safe for passengers. That is coming from a guy who spends his weekends on heritage trains over 100 years old, blowing his whistle, burning black coal. When sitting stationary these train compartments are at higher temperatures than a sauna. Do members not think that is a bit hypocritical? What does that say about Labor's virtue-signalling position on climate change? Can we trust a union Opposition after pontificating on driver and passenger safety— *[Time expired.]*

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

The House divided.

Ayes45
Noes37
Majority.....8

AYES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Crouch, A
Dalton, H
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Donato, P
Elliott, D

Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Henskens, A
James, T
Kean, M
Layzell, D
Lee, G
Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
O'Dea, J
Overall, N

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

AYES

Evans, L
Gibbons, M

Pavey, M
Petinos, E

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
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Li, J
Lynch, P
Mehan, D (teller)
Mihailuk, T

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

PAIRS

Bromhead, S
Perrottet, D

Car, P
Saffin, J

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***SCRAP METAL INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 10 August 2022.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:46): The Scrap Metal Industry Amendment (Review) Bill 2022 makes amendments to the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016 and the Scrap Metal Industry Regulation 2016 following a review of the Act by the NSW Police Force. At the outset, I indicate to the House that Labor will not be opposing the bill. The original Act was introduced to place some regulatory bounds on an industry that had historically been largely unregulated. The original Act sought to prevent the property crime that had become part of the operations of the industry by some, while allowing good operators to continue to operate businesses that provide an input into other processes while dealing with a waste stream. It sought to do this by requiring scrap metal businesses to register as scrap metal dealers, imposing duties and obligations on scrap metal dealers, and providing appropriate powers to police to administer and ensure compliance with the Act. I will return to the policing elements of this oversight regime later in my contribution.

The Act also included a requirement for it to be reviewed as soon as possible from three years after its commencement. The Act was reviewed by the NSW Police Force in 2020, with a final report tabled in November 2020. The report contained 19 recommendations for improving the Act and its operation. Predominantly, these changes were in response to the evolution of the industry and the emergence of an overlap with the motor vehicle recycling industry. The review's conclusion stated, "The scrap metal industry has evolved since the commencement of the Act." The conclusion went on to state that the policy objectives of the Act remain valid. The review also noted:

With the evolution of the scrap metal industry, the policy objectives now encompass matters not envisaged when the Act commenced. The existing terms of the Act, therefore, require strengthening. Additional terms are required to be implemented to secure the policy objectives.

The industry largely supported these conclusions. The CEO of the National Waste and Recycling Industry Council said of the report:

The proposed reforms would strengthen the integrity of the sector and help shore up the future potential of the Australian scrap metal and steel industries.

As the representative of the Wollongong electorate, within which is located the largest steelworks in the country, I am always quite keen to shore up the future of the steel industry. The CEO of the council went on to state:

The report found that legitimate scrap metal recyclers in NSW are losing a large amount of feedstock end-of-life vehicles to questionable businesses, known as 'car breakers', who rapidly strip vehicles and export their parts and materials.

An up to 40 per cent reduction in end-of-life vehicles has occurred since the commencement of the Act because illegal operators are taking business from compliant scrap metal dealers. That is having an impact on all parts of the supply chain. In not opposing the original Act, it was never Labor's intention to create the situation where legitimate businesses would have their businesses eroded by illegal operators because of the evolution of the industry. That is not what we wish to see happen and it is why we will not be opposing the bill before the House today.

To summarise the key provisions of the bill, it seeks to clarify that a scrap metal dealer is a person who carries on a scrap metal business regardless of whether the business is registered under the Act. It seeks to clarify that a business premises is not required to be classified as a scrap metal business that requires registration under the Act. The bill increases the penalties for carrying on a scrap metal business without being registered, for buying or disposing of a motor vehicle where the vehicle identification number, or VIN, has been altered or removed and failing to comply with direction to alter or dispose of scrap metal in a dealer's possession. The bill introduces new scrap metal business registration requirements. Importantly, it empowers the commissioner to refuse, suspend or revoke a registration. The bill before the House introduces a new offence of advertising payment of cash for scrap metal, which supports the existing prohibition on cash payments for scrap. It removes the exclusion of aluminium cans from the definition of "scrap metal".

Further, it removes the offences relating to false or misleading statements on record keeping as a penalty notice offence to align with other provisions of the Act relating to false or misleading statements. The bill includes a provision for the commissioner to suspend, revoke or refuse registration of a scrap metal dealer, and adds a power to the commissioner that allows for dodgy dealers to be stopped from operating. As the Minister outlined in his second reading speech, similar regimes exist in other areas, such as the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 and the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996. This is a sensible strengthening of the Act. It is supported by giving the commissioner powers to publish a register of convictions for similar offences against the Act or the regulation. Again, this is similar to approaches with respect to food regulation and NSW Fair Trading's public warning system. These, too, are sensible improvements to the Act.

However, changes to the legislative framework alone will not address all of the matters faced by the scrap metal industry. It does not deal with matters associated with transferring problems that may stem from unprocessed scrap being shipped overseas. It does not deal with making sure there is sufficient waste metal in the processing and recycling system to assist in supporting the development of industry for the secondary use of materials where scrap is an essential input. As I indicated earlier, I will return to the issue of enforcement of the provisions of the original Act and the concern that translates to the extension of provisions in the bill before us. When responding for NSW Labor in debate on the original bill in 2016, the member for Fairfield noted our discussions with the industry and stated:

... an emphasis has been placed on the need for rigorous inspections, audits and subsequent prosecutions to stamp out those who are continually doing the wrong thing. This legislation also gives the dog a hefty bark, which can certainly create some change within the industry. However, without the appropriate resources channelled into ongoing monitoring and oversight, this legislation will not have the necessary bite to clamp down on crime and initiate real change within the industry.

This concern has been repeated to me several times since the passage of the original bill. It was reflected upon when the review report was released. Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW Executive Director Tony Khoury, with whom I have discussed this matter on several occasions, commented:

Industry is urging the NSW Government to re-engage on the matter of enforcement of the Act, so that the legislative intent becomes a reality.

As I understand it, there was originally a specialised group established within the NSW Police Force to assist with the enforcement of the Act. A number of aspects of the Act and the regulatory regime are highly technical in nature and require expertise and experience. I also understand that this group within the NSW Police Force was subsequently disbanded. When Minister Elliot held the Police portfolio, I suggested to the Government that consideration should be given to bringing back this group. I repeat that suggestion to the current police Minister. While the men and women on the front line of policing in districts throughout New South Wales no doubt do a good job of enforcing the provisions of the Act—and any changes associated with it, should the bill pass the Parliament—they would be assisted, and the legislation would be assisted, in reaching their full capacity to further clean up the industry with the support of a specialist group within the police to assist in supporting the activities of those frontline police. As I said at the outset, Labor supports the intent of the bill. We recognise that it is driven by recommendations from the NSW Police Force to support and strengthen the provisions of the original Act. Labor will not be opposing the bill before us.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:55): I support the Scrap Metal Industry Amendment (Review) Bill 2022, which amends the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016 and the 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*. I put on record that I was an active player in the scrap metal industry when I was about 10 or 11, long before aluminium cans came in. I collected wire and stripped down old fridges or anything else I could find. Back in those days the only legislation was a note from our mum that said we did not knock it off from somewhere. There were very few checks and balances back in the late sixties or early seventies. We have seen the industry grow. We have seen a great deal of support for the industry, particularly in terms of recycling. As we have seen, our Return and Earn machines are going gangbusters. I do not think I have ever passed the machines in Tweed without seeing a massive queue.

I applaud the Minister and I note the bill is very worthwhile. But, as I said, there were very few regulations in the industry before. In recent times I have been horrified to note that people are taking copper out of transformer towers on rail. For a while I chaired the rural crime council. When we met I was horrified to find out that in Bathurst—that lovely area of Bathurst—the copper was stolen from the roof of a Catholic church or some other building and the proceeds were spent. Since the commencement of the Act in 2016, around 420 people have registered as scrap metal dealers. Let me be clear: Despite this being a small cohort, it is nevertheless an important one, as these dealers are doing their part to reduce property crime by conducting their businesses legitimately, thereby cutting off an avenue for criminals to make quick cash.

I am told that by virtue of these law-abiding scrap metal dealers conducting their businesses in compliance with the Act, they suffer a competitive disadvantage to the rogue, noncompliant dealers who seek to evade their obligations. A compliant dealer cannot purchase scrap metal using cash—which back in my day would have been a significant problem, particularly when we went to the lolly shop up the road—and they must also keep transparent records of their transactions, including the identification of the seller. Criminals looking to sell stolen goods for a quick dollar cannot risk selling to a compliant scrap metal dealer without significant prospects of detection. Instead they seek out and sell to dodgy dealers who pay in cash and avoid any transaction record requirements. Those dodgy dealers play a direct role in perpetuating the exact kind of property crime the Act seeks to reduce.

I am told that those dodgy dealers evade their obligations and law enforcement by taking advantage of what is currently a vague definition of "carrying on a business" when dealing in scrap metal. That is highlighted by the fact that in 2016 the number of scrap metal businesses in New South Wales was estimated to be between 600 and 700. However, as of today there are only 420 registered scrap metal dealers. Some of those unregistered dealers will seek to operate their entire business from a ute or a truck boot without a scrap metal yard. In the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes "carrying on a business", it is currently difficult for police to direct those people to register as scrap metal dealers. Those people have used that loophole to evade their obligations under the Act, ultimately profiting from those suspect activities.

Through extensive consultation, the Government has heard that legitimate scrap metal dealers are sick and tired of losing business to those dodgy dealers. The industry has demanded that the police and Government do something, and we have listened. The bill will tackle those issues by providing for more effective regulation of the scrap metal industry. It will achieve that by clarifying who a scrap metal dealer is, enhancing existing powers to strengthen enforcement, allowing for improved administration of the Act and updating certain penalties to appropriately reflect their seriousness. No longer will those dodgy dealers avoid enforcement and operate outside of the Act. No longer will those dodgy dealers undercut legitimate operators who play by the rules. The bill will leave no doubt that those who clearly carry on a business that deals in scrap metal must register as a dealer and must comply with the obligations imposed by the Act. They will face significant fines and be publicly named and shamed if they continue to avoid their obligations.

The bill will deliver support to the industry by levelling the playing field. The bill strikes at the core of the objects and intent of the Act—that is, to reduce property crime by effective regulation of the scrap metal industry. The NSW Police Force will continue to have oversight of the scrap metal industry to ensure that dealers must operate within the requirements of the Act. I commend the Minister's staff for their vast research, professionalism and dedication in putting together the facts and figures and consulting with the wider industry. Under the banner of the Minister for Police, who does an excellent job, this is what we can do to clean up the industry and make it a level playing field. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:02): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Scrap Metal Industry Amendment (Review) Bill 2022 and I recognise the work of our shadow spokesperson in the other place, Ms Sue Higginson, MLC. The Greens do not support the bill, but we certainly think it contains very worthwhile elements. The object of the bill is to make miscellaneous amendments to the Scrap Metal Industry Act and, as we heard from the member for Tweed, that is for good reason. Currently people and businesses are dealing

in scrap metal who do not fit the current legislative definition of a "scrap metal dealer" and, for that reason, those people and businesses are not required to keep records of their dealings. That has provided an avenue for property crime—the main crimes being motor vehicle theft and vehicle rebirthing. The object of the bill is to rectify that, and we certainly support that objective. However, more work must be done for the small number of operators who are certainly not criminals to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.

The bill captures unregistered dealers by defining a "scrap metal dealer" simply as "a person who deals scrap metal" and requires them to be registered with the commissioner. The bill requires the registration number of the dealer's motor vehicle if business is conducted out of that vehicle and requires that records be kept inside the motor vehicle. That is very different to the days when people could take their used cars to a scrap metal dealer. It was a very unregulated market—I am thinking of my grandfather. The bill increases penalties for dealing in scrap metal without being registered, so you cannot rock up and sell an old car for scrap metal; buying or disposing of a motor vehicle if the unique identifier for the vehicle has been removed or altered; or failing to comply with an order not to alter or dispose of scrap metal in the dealer's possession.

The bill increases those penalties from 100 to 500 penalty units and increases the corresponding penalty notice from \$550 to \$5,500, which is very high. The bill removes the penalty notice offence of making statements known to be false or misleading regarding scrap metal dealing. It removes this penalty notice because of a legal requirement of the mental element of the offence. I think the context of the city would be very different to regional areas. However, I do not know enough about it.

The bill creates a new offence for advertising the payment of cash by cheque payable to cash or in-kind with goods or services for scrap metal. Section 22A allows police to stop and search a vehicle without a warrant if they reasonably believe it is used for a scrap metal business. In The Greens view, this amendment encroaches on the right of personal autonomy and of citizens going about their business without unnecessary interference. The increase in stop-and-search powers in the past decade has damaged the relationship in many cases between police and the community. We do not think police should be given more power to encroach upon civil liberties. It also has the potential to be weaponised against minority groups, who may already be unfairly targeted by the police.

The scale of the issue of crimes associated with the scrap metal industry is unclear so the objectives of the bill seem to be aimed at a greater empowerment of police rather than the actual substantive matters. There are individuals and small operators who depend on scrap metal as a source of income when at times they may have very little other options. The Greens want to see that there is access to education and information that allows for those people who have previously operated in this industry to understand the changes so that we are not seeing people fall foul of the law simply because they do not understand the changes. We also think that, in terms of cash economies, while it may be aimed at preventing onselling of stolen items, it also provides access to resources for people on low incomes and who work in cash employment. The Greens do not support the bill.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:06): I make a contribution to debate on the Scrap Metal Industry Amendment (Review) Bill 2022 that will amend the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016 and the Scrap Metal Industry Regulation 2016. The bill focuses on implementing legislative amendments recommended by the *Statutory Review of the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016* that was undertaken by the NSW Police Force in 2020. Labor's shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the member for Wollongong, stated that Labor will not oppose the bill. I recognise the hard work that the member for Wollongong has done in consulting various organisations and associations about the bill. The bill undertakes to clarify the definition and registration process of scrap metal dealerships and associated premises. It increases penalties for carrying on a scrap metal business without being registered, for buying or disposing of motor vehicles for which vehicle identification numbers have been altered or removed, and for failing to comply with the direction to alter or dispose of scrap metal in a dealer's possession.

The bill improves enforcement requirements, particularly by empowering the commissioner to refuse, suspend or revoke a registration, and by prohibiting cash transactions and legislating for improved record keeping, among other requirements. The NSW Police Association and the Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association support the proposed legislation. The only concerns raised by the association and by many of the business operators in the industry relate to how the legislation will be enforced. Time and again laws have been introduced into this Parliament, particularly in technical areas of the law, without appropriate law enforcement. We can have all the laws in the world and have them perfectly articulated, but if those laws are not enforced, they are useless.

Unfortunately, there are some unscrupulous operators in the industry. The 2020 report found that legitimate scrap metal recyclers in New South Wales are losing a large amount of feedstock end-of-life vehicles to questionable businesses known as car breakers, who rapidly strip vehicles and export their parts and materials. The National Waste and Recycling Industry Council also urges the New South Wales Government to re-engage on the matter of enforcement of the legislation so that the legislative intent becomes reality. NSW Labor, on hopefully being elected into Government, will continue dialogue with industry representatives to ensure that

enforcement matches the law. I note the shadow Minister and member for Wollongong also addressed review of the Act over the next few years.

It may be a good start to allocate some police officers to be dedicated to the scrap industry so they develop the knowledge of industry players and processes that will assist in enforcing the law universally and consistently. I do not wish to dwell on the negative aspects of the bill. I understand the Minister and shadow Minister will address the technicalities of the bill. However, I wish to highlight a key player in my electorate of Blacktown. Sell & Parker Metal Recycling Services has been trading since 1966. It is an Australian owned and operated family company. It was set up by Max Sell and Ross Parker. Sell & Parker has over 200 employees and physical assets in excess of \$120 million, including yards at Blacktown, Banksmeadow, Ingleburn, Coffs Harbour, Nowra, Newcastle, and facilities in Port Hedland, Western Australia and Darwin. The growth of the business has been built on integrity and building strong relationships with suppliers and customers, locally and internationally. Sell & Parker is one of only three accredited suppliers to BlueScope Steel.

Sell & Parker is Green Star rated as a construction and demolition waste reporting criteria compliant organisation. Luke and Morgan Parker are two wonderful entrepreneurs who are committed to their employees, suppliers and customers, and also provide support to charities and local community organisations. I personally thank them for assisting international delegations that from time to time come to Blacktown, given that we have a large waste recycling industry. When I was mayor, I was able to lead a trade mission to India. Unfortunately, COVID prevented the Indian delegations from arriving here.

Mr Paul Toole: A junket!

Mr STEPHEN BALI: We actually generated trade.

Mr Paul Scully: Did the trade commissioner help you?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: No. Austrade helped us. We could not get the New South Wales commissioner to help us. Anyway, the consular officials helped us and now we have delegations coming to Australia. They visit the Blacktown businesses and generate partnerships that create export dollars and resources from international trade to China and India. Sell & Parker regularly export nonferrous metals to at least 10 countries across Asia and Europe, including China, Japan, Indonesia, India, Pakistan and the Netherlands. As I said earlier, they contribute great local support to our community and create local jobs and training opportunities.

Earlier this year the shadow Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, and I had a tour of the factory. Morgan Parker loves showing off his factory and going through the various processes. Sell & Parker are improving the use of technology and processes and are at the cutting edge of the industry. They are part of the association and support the bill. They and I also call on the Government to make sure it will examine how to ensure that the legislation is properly enforced. I also know the Minister is committed to that. I support the bill.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (18:12): In reply: I thank members who contributed to debate on the Scrap Metal Industry Amendment (Review) Bill, particularly the member for Wollongong, the member for Tweed, the member for Ballina and the member for Blacktown. A number of matters were raised during debate and I make the following comments. I note that the Opposition supports the bill. I also note the shadow police Minister's comments relating to BlueScope Steel—a critical business in his electorate—and particularly about enforcing the law, which was echoed by the member for Blacktown. While the member for Ballina made a contribution to the debate, I am confused as to where she started in her entire speech. She said The Greens supported parts of the bill but not other parts of it. She said that things might be different in regional areas compared to metropolitan areas but then said, "However, I don't know enough about it." The bill deals with dodgy dealers. It implements the legislative recommendations made in the report on the statutory review of the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016. It does so by making appropriate amendments to provide for more effective regulation of the scrap metal industry by clarifying who a scrap metal dealer is, enhancing existing powers to strengthen enforcement and improve administration of the Act, and updating certain penalties to appropriately reflect their seriousness.

The bill implements the recommendations of the statutory review into the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016. This review included extensive consultation with industry stakeholders. The bill will deliver support to the industry by levelling the playing field, ensuring that dodgy dealers can no longer avoid their obligations under the Act. The bill also strikes at the core of the intention of the Act, which is to reduce property crime by effective regulation of the scrap metal industry. The bill makes it unequivocal that those who are clearly carrying on a business dealing in scrap metal must register as a dealer and must comply with the obligations imposed by the Act. They will risk significant fines and being publicly named and shamed if they continue to avoid their obligations. The bill also provides for more effective regulation of the scrap metal industry by clarifying who a

scrap metal dealer is, enhancing existing powers to strengthen enforcement and improve administration of the Act, and updating certain penalties to appropriately reflect their seriousness.

The Government is committed to ensuring that our regulated industries are shielded from exploitation and ill-gotten gains. Despite this being a small cohort of around 420 scrap metal dealers, it is nevertheless an important one. These dealers are doing their part to reduce property crime by conducting their businesses legitimately, thereby cutting off an avenue for criminals to make some quick cash. The bill sends a message to the legitimate scrap metal operators that the Government supports them and is committed to removing criminality from within the industry—the ones stealing profits from hardworking operators who are following the rules. The bill will make necessary updates to the regulatory framework and will provide police with enhanced powers to crack down on dodgy dealers within the scrap metal industry. It is a sensible bill that remains true to the principal policy objective, which is to prevent property crime in New South Wales through the regulation of the scrap metal industry. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 10 August 2022.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:18): The Opposition supports the Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2022. We foreshadow that we will move an amendment about medical gas work, which I understand the Minister has agreed to. I acknowledge the work of my colleagues the Hon. Courtney Houssos and the Hon. Mark Buttigieg in the other place. This is an important tidying-up bill. It focuses on a range of different areas, including the Health Care Complaints Commission, making sure that the commissioner's remuneration is independent of the Minister. It deals with the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act, which this Parliament has identified as an issue in the past. It also deals with an important matter from my perspective. I acknowledge the Minister's office and deputy chief of staff Ed Clapin for his work and his briefing to me on the bill. One of the issues that was raised in that discussion was the amendment of Human Tissue Act 1983 No 164 in schedule 3 to the bill. This provides:

... for the *Human Tissue Act 1983*, the **principal care officer** for a child in the care of the State is the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice, rather than the principal officer of a designated agency that has supervisory responsibility for the child
...

This clarifies that responsibility for an important issue like dealing with human tissue, obviously at a time of great sadness and in consultation with family members if they are available, must rest with the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice—whoever that may be. This is obviously a very important issue at a time of often great distress, and the State must bear responsibility. It is a small but certainly important reform.

Another small but important reform is the amendment of the Mental Health Act. Schedule 4 [2] inserts a note into section 18 of the Mental Health Act to emphasise the connection between that section, which sets out when a person may be detained in a mental health facility, and section 81, which lists who may take the person to the facility. That is an important clarification around removing the requirement for the Mental Health Review Tribunal when ordering a person to be detained in a mental health facility to specify the facility in which the person is to be detained. It is about smoothing out the process and reducing some of the complications and potential oversights. It is, again, a small but important reform. I also mention the amendment of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975—the SOOR Act—particularly around the Health Care Complaints Commission and the remuneration of the commissioner. Schedule 7 amends the Act consequent on the amendment made by schedule 1 [3] to provide for the determination of the salary and allowances of the Commissioner of the Health Care Complaints Commission in accordance with that Act.

Another matter that was mentioned in the briefing and in a number of discussions I have had with the Minister's office is the amendment of the Health Care Complaints Act. Schedule 1 [1] redefines "disciplinary body" in the Health Care Complaints Act 1993 to have the same meaning as "responsible tribunal" has in the

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). It corrects a cross-reference as a result of the relocation of provisions by the Health Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2020. Again, it provides for the remuneration of the Commissioner of the Health Care Complaints Commission to be determined in accordance with the SOOR Act rather than by a contract of employment, and for the commissioner's entitlement to allowances to be determined by the Minister. These are small but important changes.

I acknowledge the work of the Minister and his office, and the work of the Hon. Courtney Houssos and the Hon. Mark Buttigieg on the amendments regarding medical gas. We know about the tragic circumstances that resulted in some of these reforms that we will discuss and hopefully pass, and I acknowledge them. I also acknowledge Jenelle Rimmer from my office for assisting with the amendments.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:23): I speak in support of the Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2022. The bill makes some necessary changes to various pieces of health legislation. I confine my remarks to schedule 4, which deals with the amendment of the Mental Health Act 2007 No 8, and schedule 5, which deals with the amendment of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 No 12. The bill makes important changes to the Mental Health Act 2007.

The Mental Health Act establishes a regime under which persons who are unwell in the community may be taken to and detained in a declared mental health facility for assessment in a range of specified circumstances. For example, a person may be taken to and detained in a declared mental health facility for assessment following an examination by a GP who finds that the person is a mentally ill person or mentally disordered person, or if a police officer finds a person who appears to be mentally ill or mentally disturbed who has committed an offence and the officer considers that it would be beneficial for the person's welfare to be dealt with under the Mental Health Act rather than in accordance with the law, or if an ambulance officer reasonably believes that a patient appears to be mentally ill or mentally disturbed.

Section 81 of the Mental Health Act includes a list of persons authorised to transport patients to and from mental health facilities. That includes a NSW Health staff member, a police officer or an ambulance officer. The bill will make it clear that, once a person is liable for detention under the Act, any person authorised to transport patients under section 81 can take the patient to a mental health facility regardless of who made the initial decision that the person requires a mental health assessment.

The second change to the Mental Health Act relates to the role of the Mental Health Review Tribunal in reviewing patients detained in a mental health facility. Under the Act, the tribunal has a range of functions, including conducting independent reviews of patients detained in a mental health facility to ensure that patients are only detained in mental health facilities if they meet criteria in the Act. One of those reviews is the mental health inquiry, which is held shortly after a patient is first detained in a mental health facility.

Following a mental health inquiry, if the tribunal considers that the person is a mentally ill person and should be detained, section 35 of the Act requires the tribunal to specify the facility the patient is to be detained in. While the tribunal should carry out the important function of confirming whether a person is mentally ill and requires further detention, the decision regarding which facility a person is detained in is best left to the treating team. As such, the bill removes the requirement for the tribunal to specify a facility for detention. Rather, this decision will be left to the treating team in consultation with the patient and their carers.

The bill also makes changes to the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020. The 2020 Act remade the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 and included arrangements for forensic patients. The bill contains amendments to ensure that the new Act operates as intended. If a person is charged with an offence and is determined to be not fit to be tried, the 2020 Act includes procedures for dealing with the person. That includes holding a special hearing to determine if the person committed the offence. If the person is found to have committed the offence on the basis of the limited evidence before a court or is subject to a special verdict of act proven but not criminally responsible, the person will become a forensic patient. Forensic patients are subject to regular reviews by the tribunal. At those reviews the tribunal will continue to consider whether the person has become fit to be tried.

Currently, if the person is found to be fit, the person ceases to be a forensic patient. If they were detained in a correctional centre or detention centre, the person remains detained until the Director of Public Prosecutions provides advice to the court about whether further proceedings will be taken in regard to the person pursuant to section 53 of the 2020 Act. However, if the person was detained in a mental health facility, once they cease to be a forensic patient they must be released even if the Director of Public Prosecutions is considering whether further proceedings will be taken against the person and before any consideration can be given to the person's risk.

The bill will amend section 101 of the 2020 Act to provide that a person who is found to be fit, regardless of where they are detained, only ceases to be a forensic patient if the Director of Public Prosecutions has provided

advice to the court under section 53. As a forensic patient, the person will continue to be reviewed regularly by the tribunal, which can make orders relating to the person's care, detention and treatment. The bill also amends the 2020 Act to ensure that the objects provision in part 5 applies to part 6, which relates to the extension of a person's forensic status. Part 5 of the Act relates to the management of forensic patients and currently includes an objects clause in section 69. Those objects include protecting the safety of members of the public, protecting victims of forensic patients, acknowledging the harm done to victims and providing for the care, treatment and control of persons subject to criminal proceedings who have a mental health or cognitive impairment.

Part 6 of the Act deals with the extension of a person's status as a forensic patient but has no objects provision. It was intended that the objects provisions in part 5 also apply to persons whose forensic status has been extended, as it did in the prior Act. The bill will correct that. I thank the Minister for bringing the bill before the House, and I thank his team for their work. The measures in the bill ensure that mental health legislation continues to operate appropriately. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:30): I support the Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2022. The bill makes a range of minor but important amendments to various health legislation, including the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009. The adoption Act originally automatically adopted the schedule to the Queensland Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act, other than part 8, as a law of New South Wales subject to any modifications made by New South Wales. Following recent amendments to the adoption Act, any future changes to the Queensland law will only apply in New South Wales where a regulation is made adopting those changes. The Queensland law, together with the modifications made by New South Wales, is known as the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW).

The New South Wales national law establishes the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health practitioners in New South Wales. New South Wales did not adopt the complaints processes of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, and so the 15 national boards, such as the Medical Board of Australia, are responsible for registering practitioners in New South Wales but do not manage complaints. In relation to complaints, New South Wales is a co-regulatory jurisdiction and we have our own complaints processes involving the independent Health Care Complaints Commission [HCCC] and the Health Professional Councils Authority.

Under the New South Wales national law, serious complaints against registered health practitioners are prosecuted by the HCCC before a professional standards committee [PSC] or the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. Less serious matters are dealt with by the Health Professional Councils Authority. In serious matters before NCAT and a PSC, the HCCC may seek to rely on information originally obtained under a search warrant issued by another agency, such as the police, to prove a complaint. Such information may be very relevant to the assessment of a complaint of unsatisfactory professional conduct, professional misconduct or if the individual is not suitable to practise in the health profession.

For example, the police may have obtained evidence under a search warrant which relates to sexual assault allegations against a health practitioner. The evidence may be relevant to the disciplinary proceedings and provide direct evidence of the allegations which may form the basis for disciplinary findings against the registered practitioner. The information may be relevant even if the practitioner is found not guilty of any criminal offence or charges are dropped. The primary concern of NCAT and a PSC is to protect the public, and there is a different standard of proof between criminal matters and disciplinary matters under the New South Wales national law, but material that has been gathered as part of a criminal investigation should be able to be considered by NCAT or a PSC in determining whether the allegations are proven and in considering any appropriate orders to impose if allegations are proven. However, there are doubts as to whether evidence obtained under a search warrant can be relied on by NCAT and a PSC.

It is reasonable and appropriate to allow for evidence acquired under a search warrant that is obtained by another agency to be placed before NCAT or a PSC so that informed decisions can be made regarding the protection of the public. The bill amends the New South Wales national law to provide that, other than an appeal on a point of law, appeals against a decision of the PSC, a health professional council or a national board must be made within 28 days of receipt of the written reasons for a decision. This reflects the reality that decisions are often handed down orally before written reasons are prepared. Allowing 28 days from the date the written reasons are received to appeal will ensure that the practitioner has sufficient time to make a decision regarding an appeal. The measures in the bill ensure that the New South Wales national law continues to operate effectively. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (18:35): In reply: Firstly, I thank members for their contributions, particularly the member for Keira, the member for Albury and the member for Camden. I acknowledge that the member for Keira has made some suggestions and worked with us on particular matters that required addressing. I indicate that the Government has considered a drafting matter concerning the appeal period

that was raised by the member for Keira on behalf of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. I will be moving a Government amendment to address that issue, and I thank the member for Keira.

Mr Ryan Park: Thank you, Minister. Thank you for agreeing.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: When sensible issues come forward, the Government is always prepared to listen. The intent of the Government is to ensure that a health practitioner has sufficient time to consider the actual written reasons for a decision of a professional standards committee, a professional standards council or a national board before making a decision as to whether they will appeal. The amendment will provide that an appeal can be made within 28 days of receipt of the written notice of the reasons for the decision, consistent with the Government's intent. I also note the intention of the member for Keira to move amendments to the bill that will amend provisions of the Home Building Act 1989 that are relevant to the medical gas licensing regime. The member has already raised those issues in his contribution to the second reading debate.

I understand that NSW Labor has consulted with the Minister for Fair Trading, and Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, as well as the Department of Customer Service. Naturally, I will address these amendments at the appropriate in detail stage. The Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2022 is an omnibus bill that makes a range of minor but important changes to legislation within the health portfolio. The bill includes amendments that will ensure that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal can consider information obtained under search warrants when considering what action to take against a registered health practitioner. This will ensure that the tribunal has access to all relevant information when deciding what action to take to protect the public.

It will also specify that the remuneration of the Commissioner of the Health Care Complaints Commission is to be set by the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Tribunal, consistent with the arrangements for equivalent positions in other independent bodies. In addition, it will make minor amendments to the Mental Health Act 2007 to clarify who can transport mental health patients and ensure that decisions about the placement of patients are made by their treating team. Further, it will ensure that the objectives of part 5 of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020, which includes protecting the safety of members of the public and victims, apply to decisions made under part 6, which relates to extending the status of a forensic patient, and to clarify when a person who has been found fit by the Mental Health Review Tribunal ceases to be a forensic patient. I again thank members for their contributions. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Ryan Park and Mr Brad Hazzard.

Consideration in Detail

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedules 1 to 7 be agreed to.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (18:40): By leave: I move amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-152A in globo:

No. 1 Notice of reasons

Page 4, Schedule 2, line 4. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead—

Omit "notice of" from Schedule 1[15], section 161(a).

Insert instead "written notice of the reasons for".

No. 2 Notice of reasons

Page 4, Schedule 2, line 13. Insert "of the reasons for the decision" after "written notice".

These amendments will make a minor change to the amendment to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009 in relation to the time to make an appeal against a decision of a professional standards committee, a professional standards council or a national board. The amendments will provide that an appeal can be made within 28 days of receipt of the written notice of the reasons for the decision. The bill currently provides that an appeal, other than on a point of law, against the decision of a professional standards committee, professional standards council or a national board is to be made within 28 days of the person being given written notice of the decision.

The member for Keira raised concerns about the current drafting of the bill, which had been raised with him by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. In most circumstances, the reason for a decision will be

provided with the notice of the decision; however, in some matters where urgent action is required, written notice of the decision, but not the reasons for the decision, will be provided at first instance. The bill as drafted does not cover these circumstances. The proposed amendments address this concern by ensuring that the 28-day period runs from the receipt of the written reasons for a decision. I note that the amendments are supported by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Health Professional Councils Authority. The intent of the Government is to ensure that a health practitioner has sufficient time to consider the actual written reasons for a decision before making a decision as to whether they will appeal. These amendments are consistent with that intent.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:42): Labor supports the amendments. I thank the Minister, his office and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association for raising these issues with us in a productive way.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-152A be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:43): By leave: I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-155B and Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-140M in globo:

No. 1 Medical gas related work

Page 4. Insert after line 22—

Schedule 2A Amendment of Home Building Act 1989 No 147

Schedule 1 Definitions and other interpretative provisions

Omit "register," and "duct," from clause 1(1), definition of *mechanical services and medical gas work*, paragraph (a)(i).

No. 1 Medical gas related work

Page 4. Insert after line 22—

Schedule 2A Amendment of Home Building Act 1989 No 147

[1] Section 33E Additional requirements for obtaining endorsed contractor licenses and supervisor and tradesperson certificates relating to mechanical services and medical gas work

Insert after section 33E(1A)—

(1B) However, if the Secretary is satisfied of either of the following in relation to an applicant for an authority referred to in subsection (1) or (1A), the Secretary may issue the authority subject to a condition that the holder must not do medical gasfitting work—

(a) the applicant has not successfully completed—

(i) for a tradesperson certificate—the units of competency referred to in subsection (1)(b), or

(ii) for a supervisor certificate or endorsed contractor licence—the units of competency referred to in subsection (1A)(b),

(b) the applicant has less than 2 years of experience in medical gasfitting work.

Note— The authority conferred by a supervisor or tradesperson certificate or an endorsed contractor licence is subject to the conditions applicable to the authority. See sections 27 and 28.

(1C) The holder of an authority subject to a condition under subsection (1B) must comply with the condition.

Maximum penalty—

(a) for a corporation—1,000 penalty units, or

(b) otherwise—200 penalty units.

(1D) Subsection (1C) does not affect section 36.

[1] Section 33H

Insert after section 33G—

33H Approved foreign qualifications

(1) A provision of section 33E, 33F or 33G requiring that an authority referred to in the provision must not be issued or endorsed unless the applicant has successfully completed a specified VET qualification does not apply to an applicant who has successfully completed—

- (a) a qualification issued outside Australia that the Secretary considers is substantially equivalent, or based on similar competencies, to the specified VET qualification, and
- (b) a competency assessment conducted by the Secretary, or by a person or body approved by the Secretary, for the purposes of this subsection
- (2) The regulations may make further provision for or in relation to competency assessments for the purposes of this section.
- (3) In this section—
specified VET qualification means—
 - (a) for section 33E(1)—a qualification referred to in section 33E(1)(a), or
 - (b) for section 33E(1A)—a qualification referred to in section 33E(1A)(a), or
 - (c) for section 33F(1)—a qualification referred to in section 33F(1)(a), or
 - (d) for section 33F(1A)—a qualification referred to in section 33F(1A)(a), or
 - (e) for section 33G(1)—a qualification referred to in section 33G(1)(a), or
 - (f) for section 33G(1A)—a qualification referred to in section 33G(1A)(a).

[2] **Schedule 4 Savings and transitional provisions**

Omit clause 158(2)(b). Insert instead—

- (b) in relation to mechanical services and medical gas work that is medical gasfitting work—at the end of 30 September 2022, and
- (c) in relation to mechanical services and medical gas work that is not medical gas fitting work—28 February 2023.

[3] **Schedule 4, clauses 158A and 158B**

Insert after clause 158—

158A Issue of authorities for mechanical services and medical gas work to existing authority holders

- (1) Despite section 33E(1), a tradesperson certificate authorising the holder to do mechanical services and medical gas work may be issued to a person who—
 - (a) immediately before 1 March 2023, holds a tradesperson certificate authorising the holder to do plumbing and drainage work, and
 - (b) meets the requirements set out in section 33E(1)(b) and (c), and
 - (c) otherwise meets the requirements for the issue of the certificate.
- (2) Despite section 33E(1A), an endorsed contractor licence or a supervisor certificate authorising the holder to do and supervise mechanical services and medical gas work may be issued to a person who—
 - (a) immediately before 1 March 2023, holds an endorsed contractor licence or a supervisor certificate authorising the holder to do and supervise plumbing and drainage work, and
 - (b) meets the requirements set out in section 33E(1A)(b) and (c), and
 - (c) otherwise meets the requirements for the issue of the licence or certificate.
- (3) An authority does not authorise the holder to do, or to do and supervise, plumbing and drainage work for the purposes of subclause (1)(a) or (2)(a) if the authority authorises the holder to do, or to do and supervise, only draining work and no other specialist work.
- (4) To avoid doubt, section 33E(1B)–(1D), as inserted by the *Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act (No 2) 2022*, extend to an authority to which subclause (1) or (2) applies.
- (5) In this clause—
draining work has the meaning given by the *Home Building Regulation 2014*, Schedule 4 as in force immediately before the commencement of this clause.

158B Issue of authorities for medical gasfitting work and medical gas technician work to existing authority holders

- (1) Despite sections 33F(1) and 33G(1), a tradesperson certificate authorising the holder to do medical gasfitting work or medical gas technician work may be issued to a person who—

- (a) immediately before 1 October 2022, holds a tradesperson certificate authorising the holder to do gasfitting work or plumbing and drainage work, and
 - (b) meets the following requirements—
 - (i) for medical gasfitting work—the requirements set out in section 33F(1)(b) and (c),
 - (ii) for medical gas technician work—the requirements set out in section 33G(1)(b) and (c), and
 - (c) otherwise meets the requirements for the issue of the certificate.
- (2) Despite sections 33F(1A) and 33G(1A), an endorsed contractor licence or a supervisor certificate authorising the holder to do and supervise medical gasfitting work or medical gas technician work may be issued to a person who—
- (a) immediately before 1 October 2022, holds an endorsed contractor licence or a supervisor certificate authorising the holder to do and supervise gasfitting work or plumbing and drainage work, and
 - (b) meets the following requirements—
 - (i) for medical gasfitting work—the requirements set out in section 33F(1A)(b) and (c),
 - (ii) for medical gas technician work—the requirements set out in section 33G(1A)(b) and (c), and
 - (c) otherwise meets the requirements for the issue of the licence or certificate.
- (3) An authority does not authorise the holder to do, or to do and supervise, plumbing and drainage work for the purposes of subclause (1)(a) or (2)(a) if the authority authorises the holder to do, or to do and supervise, only draining work and no other specialist work.
- (4) In this clause—

draining work has the meaning given by the Home Building Regulation 2014, Schedule 4 as in force immediately before the commencement of this clause.

The Opposition is moving amendments to the Home Building Act 1989 that have been developed after consultation with the unions, industry groups, training experts, the Government and the better regulation division of the Department of Customer Service. I acknowledge my colleagues the Hon. Courtney Houssos and the Hon. Mark Buttigieg for their long advocacy and work in this area. After the tragedy of the Bankstown-Lidcombe situation arose, the Hon. Mark Buttigieg has been working with the families to try to bring about reform. I thank him, and I also thank the Government for being open to this in a bipartisan way to try to make sure we improve the system.

In August 2020 both Houses of Parliament passed the Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020. The bill provided a regulatory scheme for extremely high-risk medical gas and mechanical services work. Previously anyone in New South Wales was permitted to legally perform that work. Amendments from the Opposition formed a great deal of the legislation, which created new licences for mechanical services and medical gas work, medical gasfitting work and medical gas technician work. The objective was to ensure that individuals who undertake medical gas and mechanical services work would be required to be qualified and licensed, as the work can have life and death consequences. The legislation included a transitional period, which was previously extended to 30 September 2022, to ensure that the industry and the relevant government departments were ready for the new licensing scheme.

Despite the extended transitional period, there has been feedback from the industry and the department that further changes are required to ensure a smooth transition for workers, employers and the department. The Opposition's amendments—which, again, I thank the Government for supporting—ensure that highly trained and experienced workers will be able to undertake mechanical services and medical gas work.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (18:46): I start by indicating that the circumstances that gave rise to the need for legislation in this area, and these amendments that are being moved by the Opposition in concert with the Government, are amongst some of the saddest that I think any of us could envisage. Two little babies at a metropolitan hospital were not given the appropriate gas—oxygen—just after they were born. As a result, one passed away and one has a permanent disability. I remember visiting the family of one of those children at Condell Park; the sadness and the grief was just terrible. I acknowledge that whilst the Government has sought to address necessary changes through the bill, through the various aspects of training, this is truly a bill which reflects what governments and oppositions can do when they work together. It does not happen very often. I think the circumstances that were the genesis for this legislation have driven members on both sides to try to make sure that we achieve what is needed to keep little babies safe—and everybody safe.

I thank the shadow Minister, the member for Keira. I also particularly want to thank the Hon. Mark Buttigieg and the Hon. Courtney Houssos in the Legislative Council for the work that they have done with the NSW Plumbers Union. Mark Buttigieg has worked extensively with the Plumbers Union. I acknowledge all of the goodwill that has ensured that these amendments will try to address the issue. If there are still any failings or shortcomings, then I am absolutely certain the Government and the Opposition will continue to work very well together.

Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-140M proposes to introduce a restricted mechanical services and mechanical gas work licence for those practitioners who do only mechanical services work and will not be undertaking medical gasfitting work. The amendment will ensure that the new licensing scheme does not provide an undue barrier to entry for those undertaking mechanical plumbing work outside of a clinical environment. It recognises that we must impose strict conditions on that licence to ensure that medical gasfitting work is being undertaken by only those competent to do so.

The amendment also recognises that many practitioners in Australia were trained overseas and have been a critical feature of the industry for many years. It will ensure that there is a pathway to registration for these practitioners. Indeed, to ensure that these practitioners are held to the same standard as domestically trained practitioners, the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service will be able to issue a licence where satisfied that a person has a qualification that is equivalent to a qualification listed for medical gasfitting work, medical gas technician work and mechanical services and medical gas work. In addition, the person will need to undertake a competency assessment, which will operate as a gap training assessment to ensure that person is ready to work in New South Wales. This competency assessment will occur before a person applies for a licence, to ensure that a person undertakes all necessary training before a licence can be issued. The Government supports this.

Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-140M will also allow more time for mechanical services practitioners to become licensed. This extension is limited to mechanical services work and does not apply to medical gasfitting work. This aspect of the licensing regime will commence on 1 October 2022. The Government has done significant work since Parliament previously considered this issue to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of licensed operators to meet demand in relation to New South Wales medical gas work. Accordingly, the Government supports this amendment.

Finally, Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-140M will allow existing holders of relevant authorisations to apply for a licence to do medical gas work where those persons meet the minimum experience requirement for that work and have completed mandatory modules. This is a commonsense way to retain experienced operators who have been working in the industry for a number of years, noting this has been prevented by the current legislation. Accordingly, the Government supports Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-140M.

I now turn to Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-155B. This amendment will remove ductwork from the scheme, noting that the pathway into this part of the industry is not limited to those with plumbing and gasfitting expertise. The Government is committed to a risk-based approach to regulating this part of the industry and will canvass options for the ongoing regulation of this space through its current review of the Home Building Act 1989. Accordingly, the Government supports Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-155B. Again, I thank the Opposition members whom I highlighted at the introduction of this speech for the work they have done. I again acknowledge the work of the Hon. Mark Buttigieg and the Hon. Courtney Houssos, as well as the shadow Minister for Health and the member for Keira, Ryan Park. As I said, this is good work in a much-needed area as a result of the Government and the Opposition working together.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-155B and Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-140M be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 7, as amended, be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 7, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION (DUST DISEASES) AMENDMENT BILL 2022**Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 10 August 2022.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:56): I lead on behalf of the Opposition in debate on the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022. I welcome the chance to speak about dust diseases today and note that this bill will ensure that the rectifications icare have undertaken to deal with historical mis-payments are supported by legislation; enable the continuation of current payment practices; and amend legislation to simplify benefit calculations.

Before I continue, I acknowledge that some people have been working very hard to get to this point. I thank the shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, from the other place. I thank my colleagues the Hon. Gregory Donnelly, the Hon. Anthony D'Adam, the Hon. Mark Buttigieg and the Hon. Adam Searle, who have been working very hard on the Standing Committee on Law and Justice and who over the past three to four years have put in a huge effort regarding dust diseases. I acknowledge my staffer, Bron Hanna, and Bill Hawker from the leader's office, as well as a number of people from organisations and experts I will mention in this speech. I thank everybody who put forward submissions to the committee over the past four years. I acknowledge Mark Morey, the secretary of Unions NSW, and Natasha Flores, who have a workplace safety committee that meets on a monthly basis and talks about a number of issues. It also has a relationship with the State Insurance Regulatory Authority and icare. At the end of the day, this bill is about making sure that people who go to work come back home safely and that our workplace laws are strong and effective and that people do not die from going to work.

In a 2019 review icare identified issues regarding the interpretation of the Dust Diseases Care benefit scheme. I note with concern that it appears that icare realised this much earlier, and I will give members the reasons for that. The review examined the interpretation of the Dust Diseases Care benefit entitlements provided for under the 1942 Act and the 1987 Act and the calculations used by icare to determine compensation benefits. According to the August 2021 Deloitte assessment of the Dust Diseases Care award remediation program, icare identified three issues:

1. Underpayment of participants due to an incorrect rate being used for the first 26 weeks.
2. Overpayment of participants due to an incorrect rate being used.
3. Overpayment of participants due to dependent allowances being granted in error.

In 2021 icare commenced the Dust Diseases Care award remediation program to remediate underpaid participants. It would appear that more than 1,100 New South Wales workers who have died or are suffering from deadly dust diseases such as mesothelioma and silicosis have missed out on almost \$15 million in compensation because of decades-old payment errors. About 830 workers have already died without correct compensation, and at least 300 workers who are alive have been underpaid almost \$4 million since 2014.

Given the track record of icare, I am glad that overpayments will not be recovered. That does not come because of the generosity of icare or the bureaucracy; that is because of the hard negotiation and good will from those who have suffered for many years. I acknowledge the Minister and accept that overpayments will not be recovered, which is a good thing. Icare has stated that it identified about 1,400 files that may have been miscalculated, including 800 deceased estates. PwC has overseen the remediation of underpaid compensation. The Minister's office stated that icare has contacted impacted participants and estates to make arrangements for remediation payments to be made. Payments were by lump sum, and 35 estates have been unable to be reached so far.

The bill removes references to coalminers in the 1942 Act to clarify that coalmining provisions do not apply to workers with dust diseases. 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 are paid a statutory rate 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 that partially disabled workers who are retired or unfit for suitable duties as a result of their dust diseases 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.

Expanding schedule 1 to the Dust Diseases Act is a positive but long-awaited development that arose after a loud campaign by the Labor Party, victims, injured workers, unions and endless letters. The Minister for Employee Relations has stated that I can be a pain in the neck. I continuously have been tagging him and writing to him and other Ministers about expanding the schedule of dust diseases. I note that this bill was introduced alongside the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment (Scheduled Diseases) Regulation 2022, in

which the list of diseases in schedule 1 was expanded to include diffuse dust-related pulmonary fibrosis, hypersensitivity pneumonitis, any form of pneumoconiosis, silica-induced carcinoma of the lung, and systemic sclerosis.

This was first recommended four years ago—recommendation 6 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice in its 2018 review of the Dust Diseases scheme. The review noted that the Dust Diseases Act was archaic and had not been updated to take into account modern medical understanding of dust diseases. The review called for the deemed diseases in schedule 1 to the Act to be updated to include diseases that are now known to be linked to silica and other dust exposures in the workplace and that are not listed in the Act. At the time of the review, Associate Professor Deborah Yates testified:

In the last 25 years there have been a lot of changes with regard to respiratory medicine, particularly with understanding basic disease pathophysiology. That has included occupational lung disease, and the spectrum of occupational lung disease has vastly widened.

The Government commissioned Professor Tim Driscoll to complete a review into schedule 1. It has taken too long. The Thoracic Society provided feedback on the draft evidence review report, the Driscoll report, which was also peer-reviewed by Dr Ryan Hoy in May 2021. The report was only finalised in September 2021. Taylor Fry was also commissioned to conduct an independent actuarial study, which was only finalised in October 2021. I put on the record that this happened years after it should have. The Government should have taken action a lot quicker and should not have allowed what has happened over the past four years. In total there have been four reports.

The Standing Committee on Law and Justice inquiry, which includes Government members, asked questions of victims who have since died. The inquiry should have happened a long time ago. It happened only because of the agitation of the parliamentary caucus of the New South Wales Labor Party, alongside community leaders, victims, injured workers, health experts, the legal profession and a number of unions, such as the Australian Workers' Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, and the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union. A large number of workers from those unions work in affected areas, such as quarrying, mining, construction and tunnelling. But it is not just direct workers who are affected. If members bother to look at the Australian Workers' Union website, they will see that it is running a campaign at the moment that highlights case study after case study, as well as stories of people who have dust diseases who have never come across dust diseases but who work in an office above a quarry. The Australian Workers' Union and the other affected unions are running campaigns. This issue should be apolitical. Members of everybody's community are affected by dust diseases, totalling about 600,000 people Australia-wide.

This Government needs to strengthen laws around dust diseases. What the Government has done so far does not go far enough. Autoimmune diseases linked to silicosis have not been included in the bill, making it harder for sufferers to get workers compensation. A broader definition of dust diseases would stop sufferers of silicosis having to jump through hoops and allow them to access the compensation they need to deal with such an insidious disease. I now turn to the Government's terrible record on silicosis. Silicosis is a deadly lung condition. It is an occupational disease traditionally associated with stonemasons and miners. As one labour historian noted:

The damage is not caused by dust clogging the lungs. Rather, in trying to expel the particles, the air sacs are scarred, which stops the lungs from stretching as much as they need to do to take in enough breath. Victims smother from the inside.

The disease was common in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, primarily in workers engaged in public works projects tunnelling in Sydney's sandstone. Those workers could get a decent wage but the labour historian dubbed them "the wages of death". In 1908 a Sydney contractor acknowledged that within two years of working on these projects strapping workers pined away to almost nothing.

The work of union representatives and Labor governments, including Chifley's new postwar regulatory body, the New South Wales Joint Coal Board, led to safer work practices and support for sufferers of dust diseases. Preventative measures were introduced into workplaces, including using PPE, stopping dry cutting and using water to keep the dust down. Cases drastically reduced and New South Wales finally passed the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act in 1942. Effective regulation and work health and safety legislation then meant that silicosis virtually disappeared.

Silicosis is preventable, but ineffective legislation has seen it re-emerge. I make it terribly clear that the rise of silicosis for workers from the manufactured stone industry, where Caesarstone and similar products have become popular for bathroom and kitchen renovations, but also in tunnelling and quarrying, is a failure of regulation. As I mentioned earlier, everybody should go to the Australian Workers' Union Facebook page and look at the campaign that it is running. The impact of silicosis on the people whom it affects is severe. Medical professionals, work health and safety experts, and legal experts who testified to the 2021 Review of the Dust Diseases scheme, which looked at its re-emergence in the manufactured stone industry, said that in almost all reported cases of silicosis there was little adherence to basic protection measures, such as provision of appropriate

ventilation systems and the use of personal protective equipment. Multiple experts contended, and continue to contend, even if SafeWork will not acknowledge it, that dry cutting is widespread in New South Wales in installation settings where workers install benchtops. Over and over again medical professionals have called for the need for vigorous enforcement of dust reduction regulations, particularly in the growing industry of engineered stone products.

The recent report into the 2021 review of the Dust Diseases scheme, published in June, is a shocking and damning indictment of a Government that is asleep at the wheel after 12 years. The report was very strong, especially given that it came from the Government-dominated upper House Standing Committee on Law and Justice. However, I note that it does have a number of crossbench members. During the inquiry some very good questions were asked by upper House Government members. I acknowledge all the members of that committee for their forensic and detailed work and for their consideration. I listened to a number of witnesses, particularly two 40-year-old young male stonemasons who gave evidence last year. They have families but they cannot breathe. They have no life. That is what we are facing. The majority of people who contract dust diseases are young men, but they are living a terrible life. Those who have families are living a destitute life. This bill should improve and strengthen regulations and laws in New South Wales.

As I mentioned, at the latest hearings work health and safety experts, lawyers, respiratory specialists, workplace representatives and workplace delegates told us about the terrible lack of action. It is not about blaming the Government; it is about putting forward some really important low-hanging fruit and making amendments to a number of regulations. If Government members were bothered, they could read the report of the business community, which now knows that this is costing it money. Something bipartisan should be done about this, but the Government's response to the inquiry's report was very weak. The committee's report states:

... we remain concerned that the sense of urgency and importance with which we would expect to see around these issues is not evident in New South Wales. In our view, New South Wales continues to lag behind other states in its response.

It also states:

... we cannot help but question whether the government's response to the issues we have raised in the past and our previous recommendations appreciate the seriousness of the issue at hand.

It concludes:

... there is clearly more work to be done in this area, and we hope it happens soon, so that other lives are not taken prematurely and the social, economic and human costs associated with silicosis are avoided.

The Government's response to the 2021 Review of the Dust Diseases scheme is incredibly disappointing and continues the Government's wilful ignorance of the depth of the problem of rising numbers of silicosis cases across industries such as manufactured stone, quarrying and tunnelling. We saw it again at budget estimates with SafeWork's bizarre claims, in the face of completely opposing expert evidence, that the dry cutting ban is being enforced and that it knows where all the manufactured stone workers are. The overarching message from the Government's response is that it is arguing that current measures are making a difference. Again, that is in direct contrast to the expert evidence that was given to the inquiry by medical experts, academics, work health and safety experts, and union representatives who deal with local health representatives at the workplace. This is not anecdotal. This is real, methodical and statistical. This is important work by important experts. Do not believe me, believe the experts.

The Government is not acting on key recommendations, which would effectively halt the increase of silicosis and move on areas where there is clearly not effective enforcement of regulations. There is a lack of screening in New South Wales. It will shock everyone in this place that, unlike other States, which have far better screening regimes than New South Wales, we do not know how many workers in New South Wales have silicosis. That means hundreds of workers in our State have silicosis that we do not know about. The Standing Committee on Law and Justice 2021 Review of the Dust Diseases Scheme report concluded:

Overall, however, we are concerned that New South Wales is lagging behind other states in ensuring all workers exposed to silica identified and screened using methods sensitive enough to detect silicosis, particularly for workers in the manufactured stone industry. This leads to a concern that we do not yet have a full picture of the emergence of silicosis in this state.

A number of stakeholders who made submissions to this inquiry and the previous one suggested that New South Wales is not taking a proactive enough approach to identifying cases of silicosis in the manufactured stone industry and that a more proactive and effective screening program, such as that in Queensland, would result in more silicosis diagnoses. You cannot fix a problem if you do not know how bad it is. There are three reasons why our screening is inadequate. Firstly, the 2019 review recommended a comprehensive case-finding study for silicosis in the manufactured stone industry. SafeWork NSW commissioned a case-finding study that was completely inadequate and a waste of money, even after the Dust Diseases Board wrote to SafeWork to plead with it to get it right.

It was essentially a desktop review of existing data from three New South Wales Government agencies, which failed to meet the intention of the 2019 recommendation that a comprehensive case study be undertaken. Unlike Queensland's case-finding study, which was led by health experts and found that one in four manufactured stone workers had silicosis, it did not pick up on installers who were subcontractors, sole traders or labour hire workers who do not have a direct link to a fabrication site. The Standing Committee on Law and Justice report stated:

We are disappointed that the 'case-finding study' carried out by Golder Associates was essentially a desktop review of data on silicosis cases already identified. The intention of the committee's recommendation to conduct a case-finding study, made twice, was to ensure that we build a comprehensive understanding of where cases of silicosis are emerging.

At recent budget estimates hearings the testimony given by SafeWork representatives that the case study report was the best in the country is nothing short of bizarre and delusional. We need a proper case-finding study and we need it now. Secondly, icare is relying on X-rays to initially screen workers. Expert testimony to the review stated that an X-ray does not enable early detection of silicosis and that the high resolution of CT scans is essential. As somebody who has gone through health issues, I can attest that CT is the best form of detection. CT is very important. That is why Labor is calling on the Government to look at the recommendation about CT scans. It can go to Queensland and find out how it is done up there. CT scans are used in Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland to screen workers.

The WorkSafe WA silica compliance project report released this week examined 90 workers who received a CT after being cleared by an X-ray. Seven of those workers had silicosis, and 40 per cent had other respiratory findings such as lung damage. The chest X-rays did not identify silicosis. Our screening program does not fund nor mandate that all workers exposed to silica dust should be screened using a CT scan rather than using an X-ray. That must change. Again, for the public and members listening, dust diseases do not affect only particular people who live in particular areas; it affects everyone across New South Wales. I ask the key ministers—Minister Dominello, Minister Tudehope and the Treasurer—why are we not doing this?

Western Australia used to use X-rays to detect dust diseases, but a report on commerce.wa.gov.au was released this week showcasing 90 workers who were told previously that they did not have silicosis. Those workers had an X-ray and were told that they are all good to go, but a CT scan showed that seven of those 90 have silicosis. After having a CT scan seven of those 90 have now been diagnosed with dust diseases and 40 per cent have lung damage. That is a massive statistic. It is nearly 50 per cent. The X-rays did not identify silicosis. Our screening program does not fund or mandate that all workers exposed to silica dust should be screened using CT scan rather than X-ray. I am urging the Government and whoever is giving—

Mr Geoff Provest: Just repeats.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: It might sound a bit boring to you, but this is about workers.

Mr Geoff Provest: You are repeating yourself a fair bit.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I beg your pardon?

Mr Geoff Provest: You are repeating yourself.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I want to emphasise that this is really important.

Mr Geoff Provest: We understand.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: You should understand because you have had a lot of time with deal with this. People are dying because you guys are using outdated technology.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): Order! The member for Canterbury will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I apologise. With respect to the member for Tweed, this is important. I will repeat myself for emphasis because people are dying from dust diseases. There are four reports out with recommendations and the Government has not accepted those recommendations. The Government could mandate CT scans before the next election in the four weeks left in this Parliament. It could start scanning people using the appropriate medical technology to detect silicosis so we do not have 35-year-old or 45-year-old men dying and leaving their families destitute. It is not much to ask that we save lives, particularly men's, in a democratic State such as ours. That is all.

The New South Wales Government does not even know how many workers could currently be impacted by silicosis because, despite calls over the years from a multitude of experts, it is not moving on a licensing scheme, as Victoria has done. From 15 November 2022, in Victoria all businesses working with engineered stone must be licensed. To get that licence they must demonstrate they meet safety requirements, and suppliers cannot

supply engineered stone to businesses that do not have a licence. Multiple experts at the New South Wales inquiries have found year after year that the oversight of SafeWork NSW to ensure workplaces are safe from silica dust is totally and utterly inadequate.

The current requirements for air monitoring to prevent silicosis are disastrous for the occupational health and safety of workers. Other States have more prescriptive requirements around air monitoring than New South Wales. Even with lower standards, there is still a widespread lack of compliance with air quality monitoring across industries. Businesses are not monitoring the concentration of dust and are not required to report unsafe levels to SafeWork, so any regulations are effectively meaningless. The same goes for the ban on the dry cutting of manufactured stone. Evidence to the committee showed it is widespread at installation sites across New South Wales. SafeWork inspectors are not visiting installation settings. Manufactured stone suppliers know no-one is watching and no-one is being fined, so the practice continues. Prevention is the key and that will need action. We are calling for that action to start.

Finally, there is a lack of inspection of dry cutting incidents. Dry cutting is directly linked to the development of silicosis and has been banned in New South Wales since 1 July 2020. However, medical specialists, occupational hygienists, legal, and work health and safety experts at the 2019-21 review of the Dust Diseases Scheme raised concerns that the manufactured stone industry is notorious for non-compliance with the ban, as well as not meeting its obligations to monitor for silica dust exposure. In complete contrast to the SafeWork evidence that the practice of dry cutting in New South Wales was rare, on the basis that there had been only two fines for it in two years, multiple expert submissions and testimony contended that SafeWork's inability to know the location of all the manufactured stone fabrication sites in New South Wales, along with few inspections of installation sites for dry cutting and lack of fines for noncompliance, have meant the practice continues.

SafeWork undertook only one visit to inspect installation sites for dry cutting in 2021 and only one other until April 2022. The 2021 visit following public reports of a dry cutting incident was followed up five days later—way after the incident had occurred—and no fine was issued. There have been only two fines for dry cutting since November 2021 and these were at manufactured stone factories.

The New South Wales Government said it did not support the registration of stone fabrication sites because SafeWork NSW was aware of and had visited all manufactured stone fabrication sites in New South Wales. That was completely unsupported by multiple experts at the 2021 review of the Dust Diseases Scheme. Work health and safety expert Kate Cole, an important person with a scholarly expert background, gave evidence that between 2020 and 2021 SafeWork NSW was only able to undertake inspections across less than 60 per cent of engineered stone businesses.

First of all, I welcome and acknowledge the Government's amendment about historical incorrect payments and I acknowledge all members who have worked on that issue. We are here to rectify that legally. I will outline the reasons why the Government should take immediate action on those recommendations that have been put forward in report after report. If the Government finishes this Parliament implementing one recommendation—and that is screening—we will be one step closer to saving the lives of thousands of people across this State.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (19:26): I contribute to debate on the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022. The Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Authority is responsible for administering the Dust Diseases Scheme under the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942, which is to be read together with the pre-2012 Workers Compensation Act 1987. This legislation is complex. Over time, multiple legislative amendments have resulted in ambiguity in the interpretation of provisions for the calculation of injured worker entitlements. Icare and its predecessor organisations had continued payment practices that appeared to be reasonable but became inconsistent with the legislation provisions.

The Asbestosis and Mesothelioma Association of Australia is based in my electorate. It is a worthwhile organisation, created to support victims. I meet with it a few times per year. I have been able to gain various grants for the association so that it can continue its valuable work in representing victims of these terrible dust diseases. Historical and current payment practices to injured workers have become inconsistent with the legislation as it has been amended over the years. Scheme benefits being paid to injured workers no longer align to requirements of the legislation. In some instances, changes to the entitlements under the legislation were an unintended consequence of amendments for a different purpose.

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 ensures that workers get paid a statutory rate that is 20 per cent higher than what they are currently entitled to. It amends provisions so that, regardless of the day of the injury occurring, the calculations of benefits for injured workers are consistent and in line with the rates within the general workers compensation scheme. Without legislative amendment, it would be necessary to change current payment practices and injured workers would lose entitlements that have, in practice, been paid to date.

The bill preserves the current payment practices and amends the legislation to be consistent with those practices. Without the legislative amendments, current payment practices would need to change to reflect provisions within the existing legislation, which are currently inconsistent and inequitable.

The bill before the House represents another important step in our reform agenda and will ensure that the Dust Diseases Authority delivers the scheme in line with the legislative provisions in a way that is fair and reasonable to all claimants. I thank all those who contributed to the bill. The bill amends the 1987 Act so that current weekly wage rates can be calculated according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics average earnings. Under the current legislation, totally disabled workers who are retired or unemployed are entitled to weekly benefits according to their current weekly wage rate [CWWR] during their first 26 weeks of incapacity. The CWWR is based on the value of award rates that the workers were earning when they left the occupation which caused their dust diseases. That requires workers to provide documentation from many years ago to verify in detail their historic earnings, which creates a burden for workers who may be elderly or gravely ill and results in undue delays and complexities in calculating their entitlements.

The bill amends the legislation to allow icare to use ABS average wage rates statistics to estimate past earnings as accurately as possible, thus removing unreasonable requests of injured workers. Icare will apply the ABS average weekly total cash earnings by detailed occupation for a reference period of May 2018 as the average wage rates. The May 2018 figures are the same as those used for icare's recent remediation process for underpayments, being the most recent available when the program commenced. Icare adjusts wage rates every six months for CPI, as released by the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, to ensure that the figures remain current.

The bill will contribute to improving the customer experience for workers in the scheme by removing ambiguity over their entitlements and enabling prompt payments to injured workers. Without the bill, payment practices would need to change and injured workers would lose entitlements that have, in practice, been paid to date. The bill before the House represents another important step in our reform agenda and will ensure that the authority can deliver a scheme that is fair and equitable. I thank all those involved in drafting the bill.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:31): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022. The bill makes sensible and necessary amendments to the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942 and the Workers Compensation Act 1987 regarding rates of compensation payable to workers suffering from dust diseases. The bill validates certain past payments of compensation made to injured workers by deeming amendments to have been in force on and from the commencement of the Workers Compensation Act or relevant amendments to that Act. The bill comes off the back of a big remediation project that icare undertook when transferring dust disease claims to a new IT system, where it was realised that claims had been both underpaid and overpaid.

By codifying and legislating this overpayment, the bill will ensure that payments made at a higher rate are protected, which is a welcome amendment for workers suffering from dust diseases. The bill will also make it easier for people to prove their income by allowing icare to use statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics of an occupation group to determine average income rather than requiring claimants to prove income. That is especially welcome, given that the prolonged nature of dust diseases often means a prolonged time has elapsed between the time of the claim and the proof of income documentation.

I note the incredibly strong work and powerful advocacy that the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU] has been doing in relation to the bill and the recognition of the impact of dust diseases on our community over so many years. I recognise that it sees this as a beneficial amendment for workers because it will allow easier access for workers to their entitlements and will protect payments made at a higher rate rather than removing them. The CFMEU notes that we are always in need of better protection for workers and easier access to compensation to ensure that workers are paid an amount that reflects the severity of having suffered injury or disease through work. The Greens wholeheartedly agree and support that sentiment.

I also acknowledge the workers, victims and families who have suffered as a result of dust diseases in this State and across the country. The fight for justice for victims is deeply grounded within the advocacy and the work over many years of those connected with the union movement, which has been fighting for years for people's right to be safe at work and to enjoy long, decent and healthy lives. I note that the member for Canterbury and Opposition shadow Minister for Work Health and Safety made an incredibly detailed contribution outlining the many impacts that dust diseases have on our community, not just those working on the front line of the building and construction industry and certain industries that are linked to dust diseases but also those who come into contact with them as a result of their workplace or passing through their community spaces. I think it is timely to recognise that certain members sitting on the Opposition benches right now very much have the power and strength to take on ministerial responsibilities. The member for Canterbury certainly demonstrated that in her understanding of the portfolio issues when it comes to work health and safety in this State.

It is thanks only to the long and tireless fight of victims, families and the union movement that dust diseases are now on the agenda. It is absolutely critical to recognise the many recommendations that the Government could act on to improve the lives, the safety and the protection of people who are impacted by dust diseases. It is critical that we reflect on the outrageous and disgraceful behaviour of James Hardie back in the day when it came to asbestos and its impact on so many, and the long-fought struggle to recognise the need for compensation. The Australian Workers' Union's campaign now in relation to silicosis is another example that highlights the real impact on the lives of young people who are in the prime of their working life and who are now unable to properly breathe and unable to work.

Back in 2004, I had the absolute pleasure of joining the then New South Wales State secretary of the CFMEU, Andrew Ferguson, to storm the James Hardie offices through a back fire exit, attended downstairs at a local cafe by Bernie Banton. We found ourselves locked between the lift shaft and the glass doors of the offices, which were shut, and doing media interviews in the lift foyer in that building down the road at Circular Quay. As we were doing that, one of the most powerful parts of that action, for me, was that the CFMEU members who had joined us on that action were not white, big, burly blokes. Most of them were from South-East Asia and were relatively small guys.

The reason those South-East Asian workers, who were living and working in Australia at the time, were the ones who faced the biggest risk of asbestos-related diseases on unsafe worksites was that they did not understand the risks, and they were being put into dangerous workplaces and dangerous situations because the regulation and oversight were not there. We had a community campaign where certain workers in certain industries had become aware of the risks around asbestos, and we saw that members of communities where English was a second language were being put at greater risk because there was no protection for people who did not understand all of the requirements of their worksites and the requirements of the SafeWork regulations to ensure that they were not being put at risk of dust diseases.

We now know about the impact of dust diseases—whether it be silicosis or other diseases—on workers, people and families across this State. So much more could be done to protect them. In 2004 we were still trying to advocate and highlight the issues around asbestos; everyone now is so conscious and so aware of the risks. But the Government is now disregarding the risks of other, broader dust diseases that people are facing. As the member for Canterbury identified, we can do more to ensure that there is better detection. Implementing the recommendations in reports that have looked into this issue in detail is absolutely critical.

I give my commitment to the CFMEU that if it ever wants to storm another building, I am very happy to be there. It is absolutely critical to recognise that in any direct action—whether it be like the 2004 direct action of workers in the James Hardie offices down at Circular Quay or whether it be like the actions and strikes across the State now—the reason unions are important and why it is critical that workers act and stand up together is because they are doing it for the interests and the safety of themselves and our communities. That is why industrial action is so important.

The bill is a critical reminder that our rights at work are not and have never been handed to us. Whether it is workers compensation, the eight-hour working day or leave entitlements like sick leave and parental leave, our rights have always been hard fought and won, whether it be by standing on the picket line, storming a building or taking strike action. The Greens will always support the right of workers and all people in our community to be safe and protected in their workplace. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (19:39): The Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022 seeks to amend the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942 and the Workers Compensation Act 1987 to simplify benefit calculations to ease the administrative burden on injured workers under the Dust Diseases Scheme. The proposed bill seeks to introduce amendments to allow current weekly wage rates to be calculated according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics average weekly total cash earnings by detailed occupation for the reference period May 2018—as adjusted biannually for CPI—to estimate past earnings as accurately as possible without making unreasonable requests of injured workers to provide documentation.

Currently, payments to totally disabled workers who are retired or unemployed in their first 26 weeks of incapacity are required to be calculated according to their current weekly wage rate, or CWWR. The CWWR is calculated according to the current value of the award rate that the worker was earning at the time they left the occupation that caused their dust disease. The administrative requirements to provide verifiable documentation on historical earnings would place a burden on workers who are elderly or in poor health and who may find it challenging to meet those reporting obligations. Workers are required to source records or recall information on their earnings from many years or decades prior in circumstances where many of those workers are elderly or are gravely ill. That often results in delay of payments and in additional stress on injured workers at a very difficult time.

The proposed legislative amendment will simplify the process and allow the administrator to use the ABS average earnings statistics—specifically, ABS average weekly total cash earnings by detailed occupation for the reference period May 2018 and adjusted, as I said, for CPI—to estimate the past earnings for the calculation of benefits where workers are unable to provide evidence of past income. That will provide additional certainty and reduce the administrative burden on injured workers with dust diseases, who may have limited life span due to their injuries. The bill before the House represents another important step in the reform agenda to ensure that the Dust Disease Authority is delivering the scheme in line with legislated provisions and in a way that is fair and reasonable for all claimants.

On a personal note, my father-in-law passed away with dust disease. He was a builder. As the member for Newtown spoke about, James Hardie products were the reason he had dust disease. They used to dry-cut a James Hardie product with cross saws in the building process. The end of his life was not a pretty one. He had more issues with his health due to dust disease than probably any member needs to hear about tonight. Let me just say that the end of his life was a painful and excruciating thing for the family to watch. The last gasp that he took was in an intensive care unit, where he had been for three weeks. They did as much as they could to get oxygen into him, but there was just no space left. I understand how terrible it is for people who are affected by this scourge on our community, and I hope all those people out there who are or may be affected get the best help available. I thank all those involved in drafting the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:43): I make a contribution to debate on the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022. The object of the bill is to amend the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942 and the Workers Compensation Act 1987 with regard to rates of compensation payable to workers suffering from dust disease. The bill validates certain past payments of compensation made to injured workers by deeming amendments to have been in force on and from the commencement of the Workers Compensation Act 1987 or relevant amendments to that Act. As part of that, it corrects a mis-payment that had been perpetrated by icare in payments made to workers impacted by dust disease, which is welcomed. Labor supports the bill. I support what my shadow Minister, the member for Canterbury, has said on the subject. There is a whole bunch more we could and should be doing. This bill is a step in the right direction but there is more to be done.

Alongside this amendment bill, changes are also being made to the regulations to expand the number of schedule 1 diseases listed, particularly those related to silica, which is a significant cause of dust disease in the modern world through manufactured stone and tunnelling. As we expand our understanding of the connection between dust and disease, it is heartening to see that the new diseases identified as being caused by dust are captured by the provisions of the bill. I use this opportunity to acknowledge the victims of dust diseases and their families. I also acknowledge trade union representatives, who are the driving force for action to make worksites safer and reduce the impact of dust disease but who also support workers with regulation when those workers contract a dust disease due to their work.

I acknowledge the work that those groups do through their trade unions to impact on the Australian Labor Party, to which most unions are affiliated. It is that party that saw the dust diseases Act first created in 1942. Particularly, I recognise the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia [ADFA], a group that works tirelessly to support and advocate on behalf of those impacted by the deadliest dust diseases caused by asbestos—mesothelioma and asbestosis. I pay tribute to the ADFA executive. Its current president is Barry Robson, the former senior vice-president of the Waterside Workers' Federation. The vice-president, Maree Stokes, is a resident of the Central Coast and a dear friend whose husband, a bus driver on the Central Coast, contracted mesothelioma and died. The family then contracted the disease as well because family wash clothes. Her husband's sister also contracted mesothelioma and died of the disease.

Maree leads a dedicated group on the Central Coast that advocates and continues to support one another as victims of mesothelioma. The group always attends the Workers' Memorial Day held on 28 April each year on the Central Coast. I acknowledge the other members of the ADFA executive: Kate Robson, my old comrade from the National Union of Workers; Karen Martin, the ADFA secretary; and Etta Kinnaird, committee member. They do fantastic work. Without them, we would not be here making these regulatory changes that will not only make workplaces safer but also take care of the people who contract dust disease at work. This bill is a step in the right direction but more needs to be done. In the meantime, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:48): On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022. I acknowledge the support for the bill from members across the Chamber and the insightful contributions made by my colleagues. Particularly, I note the contribution of the member for Heathcote and acknowledge his own loss within his broader family, with his father-in-law lost as a victim of a dust disease. It is contributions such as those that make it so clear how important this legislation is. As members would have noted from my second

reading speech, this bill represents an important step in our reform agenda. It will ensure that the Dust Disease Authority is delivering the scheme in line with legislated provisions and in a fair and reasonable way to all claimants.

In 2020 icare identified a number of mis-payments. A remediation program to repay those workers who had been underpaid is now complete, but during this 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 that had occurred over the years. The bill before the House amends the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942 and the Workers Compensation Act 1987.

Briefly, I will again highlight some of the measures in the bill. It amends the rates of compensation to injured workers to align with the 1987 Act rather than those lower rates within the Workers' Compensation Act 1926. It also ensures that workers get paid a statutory rate that is 20 per cent higher than currently entitled. In addition, the bill ensures simplified benefit calculations and, therefore, eases the administrative burden on injured workers. The bill also amends provisions so that, regardless of the date of the injury occurring, the calculation of benefits for injured workers is consistent and in line with the rates within the general workers compensation scheme.

The bill further amends provisions to ensure that partially disabled workers who are retired or unfit for suitable duties as a result of their dust diseases are entitled under legislation to payments for their dependants. In addition, the bill ensures that the current weekly wage rates can be calculated according to Australian Bureau of Statistics average weekly total cash earnings by detailed occupation and also adjusted biannually for CPI. This will directly assist many of these workers by removing the difficult burden of verifying earnings by providing documentation from many years ago.

This bill will contribute to improving the customer experience for workers in the scheme by removing ambiguity over what their entitlements are, and ensure that payments are made promptly to workers who in many instances are elderly and may be gravely ill. Without the bill, payment practice would need to change and our injured workers would lose entitlements that have to date been paid in practice. 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 there will be no cost impact on employers from the recommendation. The recommended amendments do not put the sustainability of the scheme at risk.

I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Canterbury, who raised a number of matters that are beyond the scope of the bill before the House. The issues that she has highlighted relate to the Government's response to the 2021 Review of the Dust Diseases Scheme by the Standing Committee on Law and Justice. The Government response, published on 12 September, supported, or supported in part, nine of the 12 recommendations, reflecting the Government's commitment to evidence-based improvements in reducing exposure to dust diseases in New South Wales. Of course, this includes ongoing engagement with employee representatives and experts in this field.

The bill before the House today is an important piece of legislation, particularly for those who are injured and affected by dust diseases. It represents another important step in our reform agenda as a government. I again thank all members who contributed to this debate on the Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022. Particularly, I thank the department and the Minister's team, including Alex, who is with us in the Chamber today, for the work they have done on this piece of legislation to ensure the support of all members in this place. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms FELICITY WILSON: On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 10 August 2022.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (19:54): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. I state at the outset that the Opposition supports the bill. Generally speaking, the provisions of the bill strengthen protections for those who protect our community. I am in the privileged position of having spent some time as police Minister and having gotten to know the fine men and women who constitute the blue line that protects us, and I do not say that in a trite way. Having seen what they do firsthand on many occasions throughout life, I realise they really do keep us all safe. I say to all the people who are covered in the bill and who go to work to keep us safe, including those who volunteer, thank you very much from all of us.

As a proud member of the Australian Labor Party I do not say this on a political basis, but that is the core business of our party. It was founded by working people to better the lot of working people and to look after not only those who go to work every day but also those who volunteer to protect us. The bill is largely a response to a report of the NSW Sentencing Council, which was released in July 2021, entitled *Assaults on emergency services workers*. I have read the report and I thank the Sentencing Council for it. It is very educational. To put the work into context and to provide a background to the review, I will quote from page 2 of the report. It states:

Violence against emergency services workers is an issue of community concern ... The NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety ... has recently conducted two reviews on this issue, which we describe below.

Over the course of this review, we have heard strong concerns about the severe impact of violence against emergency services workers. Assaults can result in both short-term and long-term physical and psychological injuries. In the worst cases, they can end the careers of emergency services workers. We have also heard about the pressure that assaults against emergency services workers place on worker's compensation schemes, with some organisations reporting large compensation payouts in recent years.

While all physical violence is unacceptable, assaults against emergency services workers are particularly serious because the victims work, often in knowingly dangerous situations, to keep the community safe. As the Committee on Law and Safety wrote in 2017:

Our emergency services workers, both paid and voluntary, perform a vital role day in and day out to keep the community safe, and it is essential that they too are safe and secure in the line of duty.

Assaults against emergency services workers often occur in difficult, high-pressure situations. These factors pose challenges to developing effective offence and sentencing regimes for these assaults.

Notwithstanding that these factors, as the committee says, do pose challenges to developing effective offence and sentencing regimes for assaults, the bill is nevertheless the Legislature's response to those concerns. The bill recognises the vital role those workers play in our community and makes it clear that assaulting, hindering, harassing or engaging in other negative behaviour against them not only is unacceptable but also may lead to more serious criminal punishment. Acts of violence on those workers in the course of their duties is completely unacceptable. I acknowledge the presence of the Minister in the House. It is a good mark of respect when Ministers are in the House for debate on their bills.

In its review, the Sentencing Council took a number of respectful submissions from bodies, including representatives 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 most notable aspect of the reforms promulgated by the bill is that it creates offences for assaults and other negative interactions against frontline health workers and frontline emergency workers under schedule 1 to the bill.

Those new offences recognise that acts of violence and other unacceptable acts against those sorts of workers deserve a more refined and direct recognition. They also deserve the availability of higher penalties than are currently inherent in the Crimes Act for assaults against general citizens. Whilst it is already an offence in New South Wales to assault other citizens and other people, the offence charged and the penalty it may attract depend on the circumstances of the situation, including the nature of the offending and the injury—if there is one—that is caused to a person or persons who have been attacked. The reforms in the bill create specific, tailor-made offences of assault against frontline emergency workers and frontline health workers through provisions, which I will discuss, and will bring them generally into line with penalties for assaults against police officers that are already inherent in section 60 of the Crimes Act.

Under proposed new section 60AA, "frontline emergency services worker" will have its own definition, which will notably include other people whom we should also give thanks to. "Frontline emergency services worker" is defined as:

... 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 ...

For the first time it will include workers from the fire brigade within the meaning of the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989; the NSW Rural Fire Service; the State Emergency Service; Surf Life Saving NSW, which is an

organisation dear to my heart as I am a member from a coastal electorate, thankfully; the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association; the volunteer Marine Rescue NSW, which is an organisation that is dear to my heart and one that I hope I never have to call on when I take out the tinnie; an agency that manages or controls an accredited rescue unit; and a non-government agency that is prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this definition.

We thank all those bodies as equally as we thank the others that I mentioned earlier in my contribution. "Frontline health worker" is also defined in the bill and will include members of NSW Ambulance, people who volunteer for St John Ambulance Australia and provide medical care, members of Hatzolah who provide medical care, persons who are otherwise employed or engaged to provide community first responder services, and persons employed or engaged to provide medical or health treatment to patients in hospitals or equivalent health institutions and pharmacies—which is welcome, given that we are now asking pharmacists to do more public health interactions. It is appropriate that they are caught within the umbrella protections of the bill. The definition also covers 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. I take a moment to thank the secretary of the Health Services Union, Gerard Hayes, who has been fighting for a very long time for this provision for the protection of his members that provide security services in hospitals.

I have referred to the people or classes of persons covered by the bill. I turn now to conduct. I will be as brief as possible, given that the Attorney General has explained it well in his second reading speech and given that Labor supports it. 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. Those are summary offences with a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of 20 penalty units, which currently is \$2,200. The bill will also 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. Those offences will carry a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

Proposed sections 60AD (3) and 60AE (3) introduce an aggravated version of those offences that will apply if the offence is committed during a public disorder. The aggravated version carries a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. The bill will also make it an offence to assault a frontline emergency worker or a frontline health worker in the course of the worker's duty and as a result of the assault cause actual bodily harm to the worker. Those offences will carry a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. Proposed sections 60AD (6) and 60AE (6) also will 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 if they are reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or those persons. Proposed sections 60AD (7) and 60AE (7) introduce aggravated versions of those provisions that will apply if the offence is committed during a public disorder. The maximum penalty for that is a very significant 14 years' imprisonment.

Proposed sections 60AD (8) and 60AE (8) are also analogous to existing provisions that relate to police and law enforcement officers, and will apply even if the worker is not on duty at the time and if certain other conditions are met. The bill also extends the definition of "law enforcement officer" for part 3 division 8A of the Crimes Act to include a person who is employed or otherwise engaged to provide services to an inmate in a correctional centre for the purposes of education, health or rehabilitation, or for a person who may be a detainee in a detention centre within the meaning of the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987. New provisions will relate to assaults and other actions against law enforcement officers during a public disorder, which is defined in the bill to include a riot or civil disturbance at a correctional centre and a youth detention centre. That will mean that offences against Youth Justice officers and correctional centre officers will apply in cases of riot or disturbances in correctional centres and detention centres, and will be subject to greater maximum penalties.

For the sake of brevity I will not go into other provisions in the bill that consolidate existing provisions relating to assault and other offences against police officers under section 60 of the Crimes Act. Finally, the bill creates an offence under proposed section 60AC of the Crimes Act for a person who hinders or obstructs a person that comes to the aid of a law enforcement officer who is being hindered or obstructed in the course of the officer's duty. We thank those workers. It is our wish that they arrive home safely every day and every night. This is our contribution to them being able to do that. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (20:10): As the emergency services Minister and the representative in this place of our State's tens of thousands of emergency service volunteers and staff, I am pleased to speak in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. I acknowledge every volunteer and staff member from all emergency services organisations: the Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue, the State Emergency Service, Surf Life Saving, VRA Rescue and Marine Rescue. The purpose of the bill is to

provide better protection for emergency workers, including by creating new criminal offences for assaulting frontline emergency workers.

As the Premier said in announcing this important reform, frontline emergency workers perform an essential public service in keeping our community safe. They work tirelessly to protect our lives, our property and our health. One of my roles is to meet volunteers and staff in brigades, units and stations in all corners of New South Wales. They have not stopped this year while responding to flooding across this State. Before this year's flooding, they were confronted with a unique set of challenges posed by the pandemic, our most severe fire season ever and drought. I acknowledge that in the normal course of duty our emergency services personnel are sometimes confronted by the risk of violence. This Government is committed to doing anything and everything it can to keep them safe. Part of that is ensuring that the law in our State criminalises and adequately punishes assaults against emergency services workers by imposing appropriate penalties for such acts of violence committed against these workers that reflect both their important role and the wider community's expectations.

Following the work by the Sentencing Council, the Government is acting to ensure that emergency service frontline workers are also covered by a new offence of assaulting frontline workers. The bill proposes to introduce section 60AD of the Crimes Act 1900 to create new graduated offences for assaults and other actions against frontline emergency workers. The structure of those offences and the maximum penalties reflect existing offences for assaults and other actions against police officers in section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900, with maximum penalties ranging from 12 months' to 14 years' imprisonment.

Under schedule 1 [6] to the bill, the term frontline emergency worker is defined to mean members of emergency services organisations within the meaning of the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 who provide emergency and rescue services, and firefighters from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the NSW Forestry Corporation. That means that the new offences proposed in section 60AD of the Crimes Act 1900 will cover emergency services workers from the Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue, the State Emergency Service, Surf Life Saving, VRA Rescue and Marine Rescue. Although NSW Ambulance and the NSW Police Force are also captured by the State Emergency Rescue and Management Act 1989, these agencies are not captured in the definition of "frontline emergency worker". NSW Ambulance workers are included under the definition of "frontline health workers" in schedule 1[6] and the New South Wales police officers are covered by the existing offences under section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900.

This drafting choice avoids unnecessary duplication in the Act. Aligning the new offences for assaults on frontline emergency services workers with the existing offences under section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900 will provide consistency and a more targeted response to the specific circumstances in which assaults against frontline emergency workers occur. In conclusion, it is my pleasure to support the bill before the House tonight and to support the introduction of new offences for assaults and other actions against frontline emergency workers. The New South Wales Government's position is clear: There is simply no excuse for violence against frontline workers who do so much for our communities across New South Wales. The bill delivers on the New South Wales Government's commitment to ensuring these workers receive the best protection our laws and justice system can offer. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:16): On behalf of The Greens I speak to the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. I state at the outset that The Greens oppose this piece of legislation. It is important to recognise that no person should ever be subjected to violence, assault or mistreatment in their workplace. However, the way to solve the attacks and violence on frontline emergency services workers is not to simply wave a strong law and order banner around in this Chamber in the hope that it will go away.

In 2017 I took part in the Legislative Assembly Law and Safety Committee inquiry into violence against emergency services personnel. The committee heard evidence from a significant number of individuals and organisations that felt very strongly the New South Wales Government could do so much more to address the violence inflicted on emergency services personnel. The inquiry's final report included 47 recommendations. Finding number 12—which was not a recommendation—made it clear that it was not necessary to create new offences or penalties to appropriately punish offenders for violence against emergency services personnel. The overwhelming evidence was that the provisions that currently exist in the Crimes Act allow for action to be taken in relation to anyone who was to perpetrate harm or violence against a frontline emergency services worker.

Other recommendations recognised that we do not have enough data about this, and that there was not enough resourcing to our healthcare professionals, paramedics and people working in frontline emergency services. We heard of the complete inequity where the kinds of alarm systems and technology available in police cars were not available to our ambos. We heard that a lot of additional resourcing and reporting happened in some areas of the emergency services and not others. However, today we are not discussing all of the other recommendations that could be put in place to address violence against frontline emergency services workers—

the reality is that would cost the Liberal-Nationals Government money. That would require them to listen to the calls of workers and put their safety first and foremost. Instead, we have a government attempting to create a new offence through a bill that will increase penalties for people who assault health workers, correctional and Youth Justice officers, emergency services workers and volunteers.

Let me be clear. In opposing this legislation The Greens do not condone violence against any of those individuals. We clearly say that if we want to address the violence, and the hard and unsafe workplaces of workers in our community, we need to do so many more things. Simply creating a new offence is not going to solve those crises. I note that The Greens' opposition is shared by Legal Aid NSW, Aboriginal Legal Service, Law Society of New South Wales and NSW Young Lawyers. As I said, in 2017 the Legislative Assembly Law and Safety Committee inquiry into violence against emergency services personnel did not recommend the creation of any new offence types or penalties, nor did it support the creation of any further mandatory minimum sentences. In particular, the Law Society of New South Wales noted in its submission to the NSW Sentencing Council that a broad range of offences that appropriately capture violent conduct against emergency services workers already exist. The courts already have the discretion to punish the most serious of attacks, and the defendants already appear to receive harsher sentences when assaults are against police officers.

The Aboriginal Legal Service noted that the existing sentencing options available in New South Wales are already sufficient and that section 21A (2) (a) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 already provides for aggravating factors to be taken into account by the courts in the process of determining a sentence, including providing that offences against emergency services personnel will be treated more seriously by a sentencing court, and that mandatory sentencing, including the changes set out in the bill, almost always has a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Legal Aid NSW also noted in its submission to the NSW Sentencing Council in 2020 that the current regime is adequate and that existing offence sentencing regimes recognise police and emergency services personnel as victims who represent an aggravating factor, and acknowledged the need for greater punishment where they are the victims acting in the course of their public or community functions.

Everyone deserves the right to be safe at work. If the Liberal-Nationals Government was serious about protecting frontline emergency and health workers, it should start by listening to the thousands of nurses who have been on strike, demanding that this Government fix the industrial conditions needed to ensure that they can do their job safely. That will come from legislating or putting into policy nurse-to-patient ratios; listening to the desperate cries for help from those people working in our emergency departments who say they are under-resourced; listening to new graduates who are responsible overnight sometimes for more patients than they can possibly be responsible for; recognising that babies count in maternity and infant wards when it comes to the ratio of nurses to patients; recognising that we are underpaying and under-training security staff in hospitals that need more resourcing and more support; and from seeing that New South Wales police get state-of-the-art equipment to alert of an emergency if they are under attack in a police van, yet our ambos do not get the same resourcing.

These are just some of the very many things that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government could be doing if it were genuinely concerned about the work health and safety of people in health and frontline emergency services in our State—whether they be nurses, midwives, hospital workers or community health workers who are crying out for support. They are taking to the streets sounding the alarm because they are overworked, underpaid and absolutely stretched to their limits. For example, the other week nurses striking outside Royal Prince Alfred Hospital—grown nurses who deal with the most extreme and tragic emergency situations—were in tears because they are not able to give the care they want to give to patients. The stress and mental load they are carrying as a result of that is a disgrace.

The Government thinks it can address issues of safety at work by simply legislating its way out of responsibility by taking a tough law-and-order approach, rather than delivering the care that our health workers, frontline community service workers and emergency services workers need. The Greens stand firm in our support for the demands of workers in this State. We reject the unfair wage freeze. We support mandated staff-to-patient ratios. We recognise the need to fix chronic staff shortages for urgent intervention to alleviate unreasonable workloads and for genuine investment to address longstanding safety and wellbeing issues. We will always support workers' rights to strike when it comes to raising those issues.

The Greens call on the Government to provide proper industrial support to exhausted frontline workers and to ensure that our health system is fully resourced. Everyone, no matter their workplace, has the right to put their safety first. We do not do that by simply coming into this House and creating a new offence. We do it by backing in the demands of those working in frontline healthcare and emergency services who are saying that they need more resourcing, more support and more adequate equipment to make sure that they will always be safe in

their workplace. We must prevent this kind of assault, not come to this place and create new offences after the fact that will mean that people will have been assaulted by the time these laws have any effect.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (20:25): I am pleased to support the New South Wales Government's Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. The bill proposes new offences to ensure that those who assault frontline health and emergency workers, and correctional and Youth Justice officers, face tougher penalties. The bill also acknowledges that acts of violence against frontline health and emergency workers are distinct and grave offences to other forms of assault. The bill introduces reforms in three parts.

First, schedule 1 will amend the Crimes Act 1900 to create new standalone criminal offences for assaults and other actions against frontline emergency workers and frontline health workers. Schedule 1 will also improve the coverage, clarity and consistency of existing criminal offences for assaults and actions against law enforcement officers by consolidating existing assault offences against police officers; extending the definition of "a law enforcement officer"; broadening the definition of "public disorder" to include riot or civil disturbances at a correctional centre and detention centre; and creating three new aggravated offences for assaults against law enforcement officers other than police officers. Schedule 2 will amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide that some of the new proposed offences can be tried summarily in certain circumstances. That reflects the status of the existing offences on which these new offences are based. Schedule 3 will amend other Acts impacted by the proposed amendments in the Crimes Act 1900 and avoid duplication of offences across various Acts of Parliament.

The most significant aspect of the reforms is the introduction of offences for assaults and other actions against frontline health and frontline emergency workers under schedule 1 to the bill. Schedule 1 introduces new offences under new sections 60AD and 60AE for assaults against frontline workers and frontline emergency workers. The structure of those offences and the maximum penalties are consistent with existing offences for assaults against police and other law enforcement officers in sections 60 and 60A of the Crimes Act 1900. The offences attract maximum penalties ranging from 12 months' to 14 years' imprisonment. The offences relating to frontline health workers under new section 60AE will apply to assaults against those professionals who provide critical services to the community. That includes paramedics, pharmacists and pharmacy staff, community first responders, community health workers, persons engaged to provide medical treatment to patients in hospitals and other similar health institutions, and persons engaged to provide security services in hospitals and other similar health institutions.

The offences relating to frontline emergency workers under new section 60AD will apply to assaults against hardworking people who keep our community safe. That includes members of emergency services organisations who provide emergency and rescue services and who are identified under the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989, such as the NSW State Emergency Service, the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW and Surf Life Saving NSW. It will also cover firefighters from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the NSW Forestry Corporation. New South Wales police officers and NSW Ambulance are not included in the definition of "frontline emergency worker", because police officers are already covered by the offences in section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900 while members of NSW Ambulance will be covered by the offences under new section 60AE of the Crimes Act 1900.

Schedule 1 also introduces three new aggravated offences for assaults against law enforcement officers, such as correctional officers, during public disorders. To complement that, the definition of "public disorder" in section 4 of the Crimes Act is being amended to include a riot or other civil disturbance at a correctional centre and a detention centre. That means that an assault on a correctional officer or Youth Justice officer committed during a riot or other public disorder will carry a higher maximum penalty and better reflect the seriousness of that offending. Schedule 1 also consolidates all assault and related offences against police officers into section 60 of the Crimes Act 1900. That involves repealing the second paragraph of sections 58 and 54C. To ensure that relevant existing offences are not lost through that consolidation, offences for assaulting, hindering or obstructing persons who aid law enforcement officers have also been included in the bill.

In conclusion, the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022 is important legislation that will ensure assaults and other acts of violence against frontline health and emergency workers are better recognised and subject to appropriate penalties. It will also strengthen and improve the existing offence regime in New South Wales for assaults and other acts of violence against police and other law enforcement officers. I am pleased to support this reform and I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (20:31): I contribute to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. It is an important bill that is designed to protect our frontline health workers and emergency services personnel from becoming victims of assaults at hospitals, in their workplaces and at other healthcare facilities. The bill seeks to achieve those objectives

by, firstly, amending the Crimes Act 1900 to create new offences in relation to assaults on, and other actions in relation to, law enforcement officers and frontline emergency and healthcare workers and persons who come to the aid of law enforcement officers; and, secondly, amending the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 and certain other Acts as a consequence of those amendments to the Crimes Act 1900.

As a proud defender of workers' rights who advocates for frontline healthcare workers and emergency services workers in western Sydney, I strongly support the bill. I focus mainly on healthcare workers because the police, the RFS and other emergency services personnel have been spoken about in previous debates and assaults on healthcare workers, which I know occur regularly, impact my electorate the most. As the member for Prospect, I know all too well the serious staff shortages western Sydney hospitals are facing—namely, the hospitals that affect the electorate of Prospect, including Westmead, Fairfield and Blacktown hospitals.

While the bill does not directly address the staff shortages causing hospital staff the most stress, it will go some way at least to protecting staff from physically violent patients who may visit emergency departments. While every patient within New South Wales deserves medical attention, our frontline healthcare workers and emergency services personnel deserve to be treated with respect and should never have to feel unsafe in the workplace. That must be achieved through legislative reform by holding to account patients who assault emergency and health workers.

Schedule 1 to the bill seeks to protect emergency and healthcare workers by making it an offence to hinder or obstruct, or incite another person to hinder or obstruct, the worker in the course of the worker's duty; during a public disorder or otherwise, assault, throw a missile at, stalk, harass or intimidate the worker in the course of the worker's duty, even if no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker; during a public disorder or otherwise, assault a worker in the course of the worker's duty, and by the assault cause actual bodily harm to the worker; during a public disorder or otherwise, wound or cause grievous bodily harm to the worker in the course of the worker's duty, being reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person. The new sections make it clear that an action is taken to be carried out in relation to a frontline emergency or healthcare worker in the course of the worker's duty, even if the worker is not on duty at the time, if it is carried out as a consequence of, or in retaliation to, actions undertaken by the worker in the course of the worker's duties, or because the worker is a frontline emergency or healthcare worker. An offence is also created for a person who assaults, hinders or obstructs a person who comes to the aid of a law enforcement officer.

The described offences in the bill are reasonable and sufficient. Those who undermine an emergency or healthcare worker's duties or assaults them should face legal consequences. The definitions for offences in the bill are the result of sound recommendations made by the NSW Sentencing Council. In July 2020 the New South Wales Attorney General tasked the Sentencing Council to review the sentencing for offences involving assaults on law enforcement officers and emergency services and healthcare workers. It found that the current law did not appropriately recognise violence against frontline healthcare workers. The Sentencing Council recommended the introduction of new offences into the Crimes Act 1900 for assaults against healthcare, emergency and frontline workers. Furthermore, it also identified opportunities to improve the clarity, consistency and coverage of the existing offences for assaults against law enforcement officers. I believe the bill will provide the clarity that the Sentencing Council recommended.

While I support the bill and strongly agree with the recommendations made by the Sentencing Council, which are now being put into action, I believe the Liberal-Nationals Government has been very slow to respond to the concerns of emergency and healthcare workers for some time. The Liberal-Nationals Government has been the incumbent government in New South Wales for 12 years, and not once before has it considered making this reform. For a decade our western Sydney hospital emergency departments have been in urgent need of investment, especially in meeting sufficient staff numbers. Shortages of emergency and healthcare staff have caused those frontline workers to be placed in a situation of danger, where there are fewer staff members to defend themselves against challenging patients. Our hospitals deserve investment in more security to protect these workers. That shortage of staff can be seen clearly in the excessive wait times at emergency departments that were recorded between April and June 2022. Across western Sydney three in four patients requiring the highest category of emergency treatments did not commence treatment on time. At Blacktown Hospital only 26 per cent of patients were treated on time, down from 35.4 per cent between April and June 2021. This is a symptom of a healthcare system in crisis.

The decline in western Sydney patients receiving emergency treatment on time due to staff shortages is unfortunately a factor in patients becoming aggressive and physically violent towards staff. While this legislation legally protects emergency and healthcare workers from assaults, the staff shortages in these hospitals are a primary underlying cause. Further, the Government's lack of action on the findings from the ice inquiry is another factor in the aggressive behaviour of patients in emergency departments. Ice is a prevalent drug across New South Wales, with many addicts requiring emergency treatment as a result of overdosing or self-inflicted injuries. It is

also a drug that causes users to become aggressive, unpredictable and physically violent. Many of these assaults on emergency and healthcare staff are perpetrated by patients under the influence of ice. The Liberal-Nationals Government has had over two years to act on the recommendations made by the ice inquiry but it has so far chosen not to act on any of the recommendations. If the Perrottet Government is serious about protecting emergency and healthcare workers, it should take on board and act on the recommendations made by the ice inquiry. Not only will that protect and improve the lives of people addicted to ice; it will also help prevent many of the assaults on frontline healthcare workers from occurring in the first place.

The New South Wales Labor Opposition has a longstanding commitment to emergency and healthcare workers. For the past 12 years we have advocated for reforms to be made not only to protect their safety but also to reduce the unreasonable pressures they face in the workplace. NSW Labor has committed to alleviating the shortage of staff in our hospitals. We understand that this is the primary cause of wait times for patients, which may frustrate some patients to react aggressively, perhaps violently, in response to being told that they cannot receive treatment for many hours. [*Extension of time*]

NSW Labor is committed to acting on the recommendations of the ice inquiry. We understand that the prevalence and use of ice in our State is a leading cause of assaults. We also understand that acting on those recommendations will, in turn, reduce the harm caused to staff in our hospitals. To conclude, while I support the bill, which originates from the recommendations made by the NSW Sentencing Council, I would like the Perrottet Government to consider the underlying causes of assaults on staff in our hospitals. I am glad that the Government is finally taking action to keep our healthcare workers safe in the workplace, but we must all look at the bigger picture of why this has been occurring in the first place. If the New South Wales Government invested properly in recruiting more emergency and healthcare staff, it would be able to meet the demands of patients. This would reduce the risk of patients becoming frustrated and, in turn, acting violently. If the New South Wales Government acted on the recommendations of the ice inquiry, which were made over two years ago, it would seriously reduce the prevalence of ice, again reducing the risk of frontline workers being assaulted by patients under the influence of the drug. I hope the bill will keep our emergency and healthcare workers from harm, but the underlying causes of assaults must also be addressed urgently. We cannot wait any longer. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (20:42): I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. Like my colleagues on this side of the House, I support the bill because our frontline emergency workers deserve to be safe at work. Our police, paramedics, emergency department staff and volunteer emergency workers put themselves on the line in difficult jobs, and they must never be assaulted in their work. Assaults on frontline workers are distressingly common, however. A 2021 position statement from the Australian College of Nursing reported that up to 95 per cent of healthcare workers have experienced a verbal or physical assault. In 2019 a female paramedic was punched in the ribs while attending a call-out in Newcastle. She was attending to a 32-year-old patient in the back of the ambulance when he assaulted her en route to the Mater hospital. In 2021 paramedics were assaulted after attending a call at a home on Edward Street in Cardiff. A 25-year-old who had injured his shoulder became aggressive and verbally abusive before shoving a paramedic and damaging the door of the ambulance as they drove away.

I note that the bill comes after a review by the Sentencing Council, which found that the law as it stands does not adequately recognise violence against frontline health workers. The council recommended introducing new offences into the Crimes Act to address these assaults and provide ways to improve the clarity, consistency and coverage of the existing offences for assaults against law enforcement officers. The bill will expand the protections currently in place for police officers, aligning with the existing offences in section 60 of the Crimes Act. The bill also strengthens penalties for harming or hindering law enforcement officers or frontline emergency or health workers during public disorder, and it inserts penalties for hindering or resisting a police officer, a law enforcement officer, or frontline health or emergency worker in the execution of their duty.

I note that the bill expands the definition of "law enforcement officer" to include corrections and detention centre staff and it expands the definition of "public disorder" to include riots or civil disturbances at correctional centres and detention centres. It defines "frontline emergency worker" to include a member of emergency services organisations who provides emergency or rescue services beyond the NSW Police Force and the ambulance service, including the fire service, Fire and Rescue NSW, the SES, Surf Life Saving NSW, the Volunteer Rescue Association and Volunteer Marine Rescue NSW, as well as employees of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Corporation while undertaking firefighting activities.

I further note that the bill extends the definition of "frontline health worker" beyond hospital workers to include members of the ambulance service, workers and volunteers who provide medical care, including the St John Ambulance service and other organisations; community first responders where such services are defined as rendering emergency aid to sick or injured persons; and pharmacy staff, including pharmacists, assistants and others. It includes community health service workers and, crucially, security staff in hospitals or other health

institutions. The bill also aims to extend these protections to emergency workers even when they are not clocked on. For instance, if an off-duty paramedic was to witness a car accident, run over to assist an injured person and be assaulted by a bystander, the offences introduced by this bill would apply to the perpetrator. This is certainly a worthy inclusion in the bill, ensuring that the skills, the expertise and the selflessness of our frontline workers is respected, whether or not they are on duty, when they step up to do their jobs.

In short, the bill aims to protect frontline workers—the people who protect the lives, the safety and the wellbeing of this State and its citizens—from violence by serving as a deterrent. I hope that the bill does act as a deterrent and that potential offenders, knowing they will face up to 14 years in prison, do not commit assault in the first place. But let us keep in mind that in many situations frontline workers, particularly in the health space, are not dealing with people who are in any position to consider the consequences of their actions. People with learning difficulties or cognitive deficits, people in the middle of a mental health crisis and those under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol can be perpetrators of assaults on frontline health workers. A report entitled *Violence in Nursing and Midwifery in NSW* from the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association and the University of Technology Sydney authored by Dr Jacqui Pich stated:

Patients who presented with substance misuse, mental health issues, alcohol intoxication and/or cognitive impairment were perceived by participants of the study to be of highest risk for potential violence.

Take the case of an assault at the Calvary Mater Hospital in April. A 32-year-old patient assaulted four nurses in the span of just a few minutes. One of the victims, a junior nurse, resigned her position just a few days later—and we know how desperately our nurses are needed at the moment. *The Newcastle Herald* reported that sources within the hospital said that the patient was aggressive and agitated when he was placed in subacute care without close supervision. He should have been placed in a resuscitation bay or in acute care with proper supervision and somewhere that there was space to escape from. Instead, he was tucked in a back corner of the emergency department because staff were too overworked and too under-resourced to supervise him properly.

This speaks to a more deep-seated issue than there simply not being harsh consequences for committing assault. In a workplace where violence is so common, there needs to be an understanding of its prevalence and a long, hard think about how to address it, not just by punishing perpetrators after incidents occur but by doing everything possible to prevent them from occurring in the first place. We should absolutely hold to account the perpetrators of violence against workers who put themselves and their family life second so that they can put the community first. Offenders should be investigated, they should be prosecuted and, if found guilty, they should be punished. But we should not act as if legislation such as this will fix the problem completely, particularly in the context of frontline healthcare workers in our hospitals and ambulance service.

Right now, we are seeing some of the worst statistics we have ever seen in our health system, as revealed in the most recent round of figures from the Bureau of Health Information. Nearly half of patients with the highest category emergency did not start treatment on time. It is the worst result on record. One in 10 emergency department patients spent longer than 21 hours and 16 minutes in the emergency department—the longest wait on record. Across New South Wales, from April to June this year, one in 10 patients left emergency without seeking treatment. That is 76,117 patients who walked out—the highest number on record and an increase of 68 per cent in just three years. Unsurprisingly, one in five of those who left had to re-present within 72 hours. Those figures are not just in our hospitals. The percentage of ambulance call-out responses for life-threatening cases that fell within the 10-minute response benchmark was 57.6 per cent, which is the lowest on record. Almost half of patients with the highest category emergency, which is to say patients who require immediate help, did not start—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

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

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order is about relevance. This is not relevant to a debate about assaults on emergency services workers and appropriate criminal sanctions for those assaults.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I ask the member for Charlestown to come back to the substance of the bill.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: To the point of order: What I am raising goes to the relevance of the criminality and the intent of people who are referred to in the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Charlestown may continue.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: None of this excuses assault, but when staff are so overwhelmed that these are the outcomes, they simply do not have the capability to keep an eye on everyone they need to keep an eye on, and then situations escalate, as they did at the Mater in April. Our hardworking frontline emergency and health workers—the people who put themselves on the line to help others in dire circumstances—deserve so much better

than a system that is stretched to its absolute limits. They definitely deserve to be kept safe while doing their vital work. While I do not oppose the bill and I do not oppose the intent of the bill, I think we should be looking at the whole system and what needs to be fixed. I join my colleagues in not opposing the bill.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:53): I make a short contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. I am glad to speak in favour of the amendments to the Crimes Act. The bill reflects the Sentencing Council's finding that the law currently does not appropriately recognise violence against frontline health workers, and it recommended introducing new offences into the Crimes Act for assaults against these workers. The Sentencing Council also identified opportunities to improve the clarity, consistency and coverage of the existing offences for assaults against law enforcement officers. The bill is an important step in addressing some of the existing shortcomings in the Crimes Act where it concerns protecting our frontline workers.

A highlight of my role as shadow Minister for Emergency Services is the opportunity to interact with frontline responders in emergency services agencies, be they from Fire and Rescue, Rural Fire Service, SES, Marine Rescue, Surf Life Saving, Resilience NSW or the Volunteer Rescue Association, among others. Our frontline responders represent the best of who we are as a State—tireless and giving for communities and families that are not their own. Our frontline responders put themselves in harm's way to protect and serve us. It is inexcusable for anyone in this State to put our frontline responders in any further harm than they have exposed themselves to already. To do so hampers their ability to serve the community and respond to natural disasters, which has a flowthrough impact that harms all of us. When our emergency services succeed, we succeed. We must support our emergency services now more than ever.

Climate change is leaving New South Wales more vulnerable to freak weather events and natural disasters. This very minute our emergency service personnel are providing assistance to people in western New South Wales. In the past 24 hours to Monday at 3.00 p.m. there were 14 requests for assistance and three flood rescues. Between 1 June and 3 August this year, SES members responded to 13,390 weather-related requests for assistance across New South Wales. Our thoughts are always with those affected by the floods in western New South Wales and our thanks go to the volunteers who are supporting them as much as possible.

The bill is important because a number of our emergency service agencies like the RFS and SES rely on volunteers. Those agencies face a national problem—declining volunteerism. Reports compiled by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission show that the number of volunteers has been steadily falling each year. It is estimated that there were 3.3 million volunteers in 2020, and the recent census found that just over 2.9 million people had done voluntary work in 2021, or about 14 per cent of those who answered. We cannot ask people in New South Wales to volunteer for emergency services agencies if we cannot assure them that we are doing as much as we can to protect them.

The bill inserts provisions to bring penalties for assaults and other actions against the above workers in line with those for police officers. It inserts tougher penalties for harming or hindering law enforcement officers and frontline emergency or health workers during a public disorder. It inserts penalties for hindering or resisting a police officer, law enforcement officer, frontline health worker or emergency worker in the execution of their duty. The proposed sections make it clear that an action is taken to be carried out against a frontline emergency worker or health worker in the course of the worker's duty, even if the worker is not on duty at the time, if it occurs as a consequence of the worker's duty or because of the worker's occupation.

Many members have already spoken about the importance of this legislation and the protections that it offers. Members in this place must do everything they can to secure the safety of not only the volunteers but also the frontline workers who risk their safety for our benefit. We must make it clear that an attack on somebody who helps the community is considered the worst act of all. Giving them some peace, comfort and protection is the very least that we should strive for. The changes are well overdue. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (20:58): I contribute to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022. I acknowledge all of our frontline health emergency workers. Police, paramedics and emergency department staff have been absolutely critical and essential, particularly over the past couple of years. My colleagues have already listed those workers, but I thank them on behalf of my community, which was one of the 12 LGAs that were locked down. My community suffered heavily by being locked in. We could not get out, but emergency services personnel were working night and day to help our community. I have spoken to a number of our frontline workers who copped it during that period. There were far too many instances, which I raised with the Government at the time, but it is still distressing.

A position statement from the Australian College of Nursing reports that up to 95 per cent of healthcare workers have experienced verbal or physical assault. We have heard their stories in the media and through the unions or they come to our offices or see us in street meetings with their unions. I acknowledge the unions and

associations that represent those workers. Every time I meet with them, they express their concern that their members are coping verbal abuse, being assaulted, being spat at—being abused. There should be zero tolerance. We have heard about a number of those incidents and it is hard to understand. There should be no tolerance for those who abuse the people who are trying to save people's lives and make lives better.

I add my voice and appreciation on behalf of my community. I thank each and every one of those workers who have done an incredible job, particularly over the past two years. I express my heartfelt congratulations and my thanks to all of them. It is very important that they are recognised for their work, but also that there is zero tolerance for those who are doing the wrong thing against our emergency service personnel and our frontline workers. Other workers are also affected in retail and other front-facing roles. The Labor Party will have more to say about that. The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association has been working alongside its members with its campaign, No One Deserves A Serve. We will not tolerate abuse, whether it is spitting or pulling hair. I acknowledge that the bill has been introduced.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (21:02): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Maroubra, Cootamundra, Newtown, Goulburn, Prospect, Charlestown, Lakemba and Canterbury for their contributions to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill. The Government welcomes the Opposition's support of reform in this space. The member for Newtown queried the need for creating a new offence and noted that further work is required to address violence against emergency service workers. The reforms are not some kind of kneejerk frolic on the Government's part. Rather, they represent a careful and methodical approach after referring the general area for inquiry by the Sentencing Council.

The Sentencing Council, whose members are a broad and representative range of expertise and stakeholders, recommended the creation of new offences for assaulting frontline health workers. The Government has supported this recommendation and gone further to ensure that assaults and other actions against emergency services workers are also covered. As mentioned in my second reading speech, the Government has supported, or supported in principle, all of the recommendations of the Sentencing Council. That includes a number of non-legislative proposals designed to achieve societal change. For example, the Sentencing Council recommended that the New South Wales Government "develop and carry out a public education campaign about: (a) the wrongfulness of violence against emergency services workers; and (b) the criminal consequences of such violence". The New South Wales Government supports that recommendation.

The Government has also committed to monitoring the new offences, once enacted, to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, as the Sentencing Council recommended. In doing so, the New South Wales Government will have particular regard to the proportion of Aboriginal people and vulnerable people charged with those offences. Of course, this legislation alone is not the sum of the protections for those critical workers. It is, however, a crucial backbone to ensure that if violence does occur, appropriate penalties and consequences can be and will be delivered against the offenders who perpetrate atrocious behaviour against our frontline service workers.

The bill underscores the New South Wales Government's strong commitment to strengthening frontline services by better recognising in our law assaults and other acts of violence against our frontline health and emergency services workers. It will also improve the existing offence regime for assaults and other acts of violence against police and other law enforcement officers who serve our community every day despite the personal risk they face. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Community Recognition Statements

BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA COMMEMORATION SERVICE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (21:06): On Wednesday 7 September 2022 I attended the Smithfield RSL sub-branch Battle for Australia commemoration at Leo McCarthy Memorial Park at Smithfield. The commemoration marked the moment in history when Australia undertook military actions from 1942 to 1943 during World War II. Historically, the Battle for Australia was announced by Prime Minister the Hon. John Curtin

when Singapore fell to Japan on 15 February 1942. The Battle for Australia Day was proclaimed on 26 June 2008 by then Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery.

The proclamation of this day would not have been possible without the advocacy from local Smithfield sub-branch member Alex Peken towards former Federal member for Prospect the Hon. Janice Crosio, AM, MBE. It was an honour to give the Battle for Australia address in front of Smithfield RSL sub-branch members, local sub-branch representatives, school leaders and community members. Also in attendance were my parliamentary colleague Hugh McDermott, MP, State member for Prospect; former Federal member for Prospect the Hon. Janice Crosio, AM, MBE; and Ivo Crosio. Lest we forget.

MOOREBANK SPORTS CLUB

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (21:07): I commend the staff at Moorebank Sports Club for raising over \$2,000 in support of Guide Dogs Australia. The team took part in the organisation's PAWGUST challenge and made a pledge to walk with their dogs every day in August to help raise money to raise and train guide dogs. On average, it can cost in excess of \$50,000 to raise and train just one guide dog, so any funding assistance goes a long way. Moorebank Sports Club staff's efforts will make an impact on visually impaired members within the local communities and will also help to create a world where everyone who needs a guide dog has a guide dog. Overall, Guide Dog Australia's PAWGUST initiative raised just over \$1 million and had over 7,000 participants and will help many guide dogs in training. This is an important initiative, and I congratulate Moorebank Sports Club on getting involved.

MONARO ELECTORATE TEACHERS

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (21:08): Talk to someone who has been successful, and they will tell you about a teacher who set them on their path. Teaching today is complex, with an increasing range of duties and responsibilities. It is not just guiding our children's educational journey; it is admin duties, planning and even that extra step of checking in on the welfare of their charges. I am fortunate to know many teachers throughout Monaro—some of whom I have the honour to call friends. I formally acknowledge and recognise the critical role of those who work in this noble profession. On behalf of Monaro, I personally use this community recognition statement to thank each and every one of our teachers and all who work in our schools for their dedication and the incredible work they have done over an extraordinarily challenging time and all that they continue to do. They are all integral to the futures of our children. I will continue to do all I can to support them being able to focus on doing what they do best: teaching.

CENTRAL COAST SPORTS COLLEGE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:09): This evening in the New South Wales Parliament, I sing the praises of Central Coast Sports College and the fantastic work that it does to facilitate quality education alongside incredible sporting achievements. Opened in 2013, Central Coast Sports College is making dreams come true, already earning a reputation for world-class sporting education. The college's reputation is now reaping the benefits, as school and sporting leaders from across the coast apply for positions at the school. The college's talented athletes are brought together from across the Central Coast, with a unique college bus service transporting students from across the coast.

The school provides a fantastic and unique learning environment, which supplements mainstream education with excellence in sport, allowing students to select performance streams and excellent training sessions as part of their school curriculum and beyond. In turn, the growing reputation and cohort of talent the school attracts is allowing students to train and compete with some of the best athletes on the coast. I further offer congratulations to the legendary girls' team, who recently beat Hunter Sports High in the Bill Turner Cup.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (21:10): Recently I had the honour of recognising the Rural Fire Service districts of Illawarra and Sutherland Shire at the National Emergency Medal presentation. The National Emergency Medal is awarded to those who render sustained and significant service during nationally significant emergencies in Australia. Ninety-one members from the RFS brigades across Illawong, Menai, Sandon Point, Maianbar, Sutherland Communications, Waterfall, Grays Point, Kurnell, Loftus, Engadine and Woronora RFS were presented with their National Emergency Medal. Those members made significant contributions to the operations of the RFS during the devastating 2019-20 summer bushfire season. They risked their lives to help others during one of the most challenging disasters in our State's history. It was a great privilege to join Assistant Commissioner Kelly Browne at the ceremony to present those volunteers with a medal. I commend them for their dedication, commitment and service to our communities.

TIGHES HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (21:11): Tighes Hill Public School is a small school with a big heart, and that has been on full display as they support a member of their community through cancer. Kindergarten student Roxy Austin has been fighting leukemia, and it is a battle that her classmates were not going to let her face alone. From sending Roxy video messages to keeping her classroom seat safe, the Tighes Hill community has continued to stand by Roxy. When Roxy's treatment required some time away from the classroom, Camp Quality stepped in and provided education sessions so her classmates would understand things like why she was absent and why she lost her hair. Through a schoolwide pyjama day, Tighes Hill has given back, raising an amazing \$12,500 for Camp Quality and making a big impact in the lives of kids with cancer. Well done, Tighes Hill Public School.

BENDEMEER COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (21:12): I pay tribute to the Bendemeer Country Women's Association [CWA], which recently celebrated its centenary milestone. It was a privilege to be able to travel to Bendemeer recently to commemorate the milestone with the ladies of the CWA. These are hardworking advocates for our communities. Whether it is catering for wakes and events, supporting rural women and families, or raising funds and volunteering for those in need, the ladies of the Bendemeer CWA always go above and beyond for their community. I offer warm congratulations to Mrs Gwen Brett, Mrs Jan Farrell, Mrs Doreen White, Mrs Margaret Hemmings, Mrs Barbara Hughes, Mrs Tess Osborne, Mrs Susan Zdencanovic and Mrs Virginia Stuart on receiving long-service bars. I also congratulate Mrs Jeanette Dietrich on her recognition for volunteer hours. Rural communities are strong when the CWA is strong, and the Bendemeer CWA continue to ensure that Bendemeer is at the front of my mind.

VOLUNTEERS FAY AND SYDNEY WADE

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (21:13): Today I recognise long-time locals Fay and Sydney Wade for their lifetime of dedication and contribution to the Rankins Springs community. Mr and Mrs Wade have always been active members of the Rankins Springs community, dedicating countless hours to improving the town's facilities, organising events and working bees, and volunteering for local services. Sydney and Fay have worked passionately to improve amenities in Rankins Springs as members of the Rankins Springs school P&C, the Silo Committee, the local fire brigade and even local government. They have also served as long-time executives at the local war memorial hall and have volunteered hours of community service to the Rankins Springs cemetery and golf club. Most notably, Sydney and Fay are recognised for their tireless efforts to bring rural 240 volt power and water pipelines to farmers of the area. To this day, the couple remain active members of the community at 92 and 94 years of age. I commend Sydney and Fay for their lifetime of dedicated service. Their ongoing commitment has undoubtedly shaped Rankins Springs into the place it is today.

COMO JANNALI JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (21:14): I commend the Como Jannali Junior Rugby League Football Club on the outstanding Mates 4 MENTAL Health initiative. Established in 2019, the Mates 4 MENTAL Health initiative aims to raise awareness of mental health issues, especially amongst men, and remove the stigma around having those uncomfortable conversations. As part of this initiative, volunteers have implemented free programs worth around \$50,000 through sponsorships and fundraising events, with almost 700 instances of participation. The Mates 4 MENTAL Health initiative has been so positively received by the Como Crocs community that this year it was expanded to support two local junior rugby league clubs. I recognise Gareth Hughes and Matthew and Kellie Stubbs, the incredible community-minded individuals behind Mates 4 MENTAL Health. I also acknowledge the leadership and support provided by the Crocs executive, namely Hayden Garn, David Bruce, Abi Thompson, Samantha Heather, Justine Goldsbrough, Chris Bowden, Peter Anderson, Rowland Beckett, Barry Hulbert, Dennis Joyce, Gary Wicks, Steve Green, Nathan Skyes, Jason Prenzel and David Follmi. I thank the Como Jannali Junior Rugby League Football Club for shedding a light on this important community issue.

DEBBIE AGAPITOS RETIREMENT

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (21:15): It is my pleasure to acknowledge a fellow educator, Ms Debbie Agapitos. I had the pleasure of knowing Debbie in her time as deputy principal of Wiley Park Girls High School, in my electorate of Lakemba. I have always valued my relationship with the school leadership, including with Debbie. Now that she has retired, I thank her for her years of service to education and the community. In particular, she has been a champion of diversity in our multicultural community as a means of promoting social cohesion and harmony. Students under the tutelage of Debbie know the depth of her passion for respect and understanding. She has connected Wiley Park to the regions via the City Country Alliance of Schools and involved the school in the Together for Humanity Youth Summit. Debbie coordinated school iftars to celebrate interfaith and

intercultural understanding amongst students and the wider school community. She has been rightly acknowledged with community awards in Harmony Day celebrations for her commitment to this cause. Though this chapter in her life has ended, I know very well that she will continue to serve the community and the causes that inspire her and us.

PAUL SCHRODER RETIREMENT

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (21:16): I recognise Deputy Captain Paul Schroder on his retirement from Fire and Rescue NSW 280 Dubbo. Paul joined the Dubbo brigade back in 1977. He has given almost half a century of service, with attendance at countless emergency incidents, training firefighters and endless hours of educating the community on fire safety. Paul's can-do attitude has seen countless people benefit from his time with the brigade. Throughout his career he was an active member of the station demo team, competing all over New South Wales at zone and State demonstrations. He was well known for his skill with the Bedford appliance. During his career Paul was awarded the National Medal for Service with two clasps, a Unit Commendation for Courageous Action, a Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service, the Commissioner's Letter of Appreciation and the NSW Fire Brigade's Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with three clasps. I thank Paul for his commitment to Fire and Rescue NSW. Forty-four years in one organisation is a huge achievement. I wish him all the best for the future.

CORRIMAL HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PAUL ROGER

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (21:18): I acknowledge the incredible work of Corrimal High School principal Paul Roger. Several years ago a fire devastated the high school and destroyed many of its buildings. I spoke with Paul on the morning of the fire and we made a commitment to each other to work together to make sure the facilities came back better than ever. I acknowledge the work of the Department of Education, but more importantly I acknowledge the work of Paul Roger. Under his leadership, with the support of fantastic teaching and ancillary staff as well as a terrific parent and student body, the school is going ahead in leaps and bounds. If there is an example of what good educational leaders do, it exists at Corrimal High School. I am proud of him for his ability to turn the school around, continuing to drive improvement and set the standard in education across our community.

PENRITH GAELS CULTURAL AND SPORTING ASSOCIATION TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) (21:19): Tonight in the House I recognise the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Penrith Gaels Cultural and Sporting Association club at Kingswood. The association first started as a Gaelic football club in the seventies. In the eighties it grew to include a hurling site. It then branched out to Irish dancing, social golf, soccer teams and drama schools before it established its club at its current location at Kingswood. The site used to be the old Kingswood squash courts. I remember the club being established while I was a student just around the corner at St Dominic's. I give a big shout-out to all of the directors over those 25 years, but particularly to John Grieve and his current set of directors, who do such a fantastic job. If members want a great feed I suggest they get down to the Shamrock Grill. I am sure I will be sharing a pint of Kilkenney with a few people there on Friday night. I have this club to thank for the only opportunity I have had to represent New South Wales, having been selected for the New South Wales Gaelic football team whilst having a drink there on a Friday night.

NURSE ANGELA MURPHY

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:20): I congratulate Angela Murphy on a wonderful 41-year nursing career at Auburn Hospital. Angela recently retired from Western Sydney Local Health District after dedicating four decades to providing the best care for patients at Auburn Hospital and across the local health district. Angela completed both general and midwifery nursing training at Auburn Hospital before working in paediatrics and cardiology for many years. Over the past 20 years Angela was the patient flow nurse manager, where she ensured effective patient care coordination across various hospitals in the local health district. Auburn Hospital plays a valuable role in the Western Sydney Local Health District, offering vital health services to one of Sydney's most disadvantaged communities. The success of Auburn Hospital depends on the incredible work of staff like Angela, whose selflessness and service to others is an inspiration to all of us. I thank Angela for all her service to the local community and congratulate her on an outstanding career.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE YOUNG LEADERS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (21:21): Young people on the Coffs Coast are renowned for stepping up, speaking out and showing leadership in many forums and fields of endeavour. Recently I caught up with the Coffs Harbour Older Women's Network and GenHealth for the presentation of certificates to Toormina High School students Katie Homes, Ella Drewell and Maya Farmer. These outstanding young women were proud participants at the interactive Focus on the Future Through Mentoring Panel Forum in Coffs Harbour, held with the support of the New South Wales Government during NSW Women's Week in March. I commend Katie, Ella

and Maya for their important contributions at this special event. We should all be extremely proud of these young leaders. I wish them every success for the future.

TOUKLEY AND DISTRICTS ART SOCIETY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (21:21): The Toukley and Districts Art Society has been successful in gaining a grant from the Greater Central Coast community funding program. The art society operates an art gallery, tourist information centre and coffee shop on the grounds of the Wallarah Point Peace Park, located next to Toukley Bridge. The group also conducts regular art classes, workshops and competitions for established, emerging and young artists, and exhibits and sells professional artworks and craft items on behalf of its members. The coffee shop inside the gallery is also a popular venue for visitors, workshop participants and many of the family groups who come and use the children's playground located next to the gallery. The Toukley and Districts Art Society has 110 local members who support the society and numbers continue to grow. The Toukley and Districts Art Society supports seasoned artists through to budding newcomers in a supportive environment. I congratulate the Toukley and Districts Art Society.

LIONS CLUB OF RICHMOND

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (21:22): I congratulate the Lions Club of Richmond on its sixty-fifth anniversary on 12 August 2022. This milestone marks 65 years of service not only to the Richmond community but also to the broader Hawkesbury, national and international community. Lions clubs are designed to serve their communities, and I am proud to say that the Richmond Lions Club has done just that. Helping locals through fires and floods, Lions clubs volunteers play a vital role in our Hawkesbury community and are always available to support residents through some of the most difficult and vulnerable moments in life. Their mentoring and care for the youth is also admirable. I extend my thanks to the generous volunteers of the Lions Club of Richmond for their dedication and determined effort to serving the community. They truly reflect the Lions Clubs motto, "We Serve". I thank the House.

BLACKTOWN CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (21:23): I congratulate Blacktown City Football Club on winning the 2022 National Premier Leagues NSW first division grand final. Having finished the season in third place, after a heartbreaking loss in the final game of the season that saw the minor premiership slip from their grasp, the boys fought back through the finals series, under the coaching prowess of Mark Crittenden. The grand final was between Blacktown City and Manly United, resulting in a 2-0 win for Blacktown, with goals from Lachlan Campbell and Travis Major. Travis' goal was his 100th for the club, and he was also awarded the Robbie Slater Man of the Match Medal. Blacktown City performed well in the high-pressure game, and the club also won the New South Wales club championship. Bob Turner, who is in his first year as chair of the committee, the committee and the entire community of Blacktown City Council are proud of the achievements and the culture of the club. Go, Blacktown City, for 2023!

MOLLYMOOK CHAMPION SAMMY ZUSTOVICH

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (21:24): I acknowledge and congratulate Mr Sammy Zustovich, a Mollymook champion who has been named by Surf Life Saving Australia as one of 12 athletes chosen to represent our country at the Lifesaving World Championships this month. Sammy is an outstanding beach athlete and an incredible surf lifesaver, and I look forward to hearing how well he performs in Riccione, Italy, where the championships will be held. Previously he won gold at the world titles in 2018 and his record has been fantastic over the years. In 2022 he was the Australian open beach flags champion; in 2021 he was the Australian open beach flags champion and under-19 beach sprint and flags champion; in 2019 he was the Australian under-17 beach flags and sprint champion; in 2018 he was the under-17 Australian beach flags and sprint champion; and in 2017 he was the under-15 Australian beach flags champion. Apart from those incredible records, Sammy has won countless other medals at the New South Wales State titles and I know he will continue to do so. He has a very strong future. I wish him all the very best, especially in the Lifesaving World Championships this month. Congratulations to Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club.

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, WYOMING

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (21:26): I acknowledge the year 6 students of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School, Wyoming for their interest in government and attention to their studies. Recently I was invited to the school to meet the students as part of their studies of government. Students asked me a series of well thought-out questions ranging from why I became a politician, the most interesting rock I have found as a geologist and why I do doorknocking in my electorate. I was impressed with the students' knowledge and their preparation prior to my attendance. Their well thought-out questions are a tribute to them, their teacher and their

school. I thank Principal Bernard Cumming for the opportunity to speak to the students and for always welcoming me to the school.

METAL FABRICATOR LACHLAN BUTLER

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (21:26): I congratulate Inverell metal fabricator Lachlan Butler, who was named Apprentice of the Year at last Friday night's NSW Training Awards ceremony, which was held at Sydney Town Hall. Lachlan is enthusiastic, reliable and willing to learn. He takes direction and shows maturity far beyond his years. Soon after completing his HSC, Lachlan began his apprenticeship as a metal fabricator with BOSS Engineering, a wonderful manufacturing business in Inverell. He took to his trade like an expert. Lachlan has displayed excellence not only in his work; he has managed to increase productivity and garner great respect from his employer. The Inverell local has made big strides in his apprenticeship and has assumed responsibility on his family farm. For a young man of only 22 years of age, he has achieved so much personally and within his role at BOSS Engineering. I congratulate Lachlan on his award and for being a magnificent young man. I wish him well in his future career.

CAMP QUALITY FUNDRAISERS ROXY, TALON AND KIRRA AUSTIN

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (21:27): Roxy, Talon and Kirra Austin have taken on a big task this month, walking 100 kilometres to raise funds for Camp Quality. The Carrington siblings have signed up for the Big Walk for Little Kids as a way to support the charity that supported them during Roxy's own cancer journey. Just over 12 months ago, at only four years old, Roxy was diagnosed with leukemia, but she was not going to let that stop the fun of starting kindergarten at Tighes Hill Public School this year. Along the way, Roxy has had the support of Camp Quality. To say thank you, Roxy, Talon and Kirra have raised over \$2,500 for the charity, which will help them provide fun and laughter to kids battling cancer. What an amazing effort.

WESTERN SYDNEY ABORIGINAL ELDERS OLYMPICS

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (21:28): On Monday 19 September I had the honour of formally opening the Western Sydney Aboriginal Elders Olympics at Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope Gardens, an event conducted on a voluntary basis as a health promotion exercise for Indigenous people in western Sydney. The target group is Aboriginal people who are 50 years and older and have a chronic illness. The Western Sydney Elders Olympics is organised by Carol Muthunesan and her friend Narelle Holden, who both work for the Western Sydney Local Health District. Those two local heroes organise and run the event in their own time. They had support from City of Parramatta Council, which contributed with Active Parramatta Van for the day. They also had support from Westmead Private Hospital, which conducted health checks on the day; Australian Unity, which contributed lunch; the Western Sydney Local Health District diabetes clinic, which contributed morning tea; and Blacktown City Council, which waived the hall hire fee and gave out medals and trophies on the day. Congratulations to Carol Muthunesan and Narelle Holden.

BOUDDI HOME MARKETS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:29): It brings a smile to my heart to be able to share yet another wonderful community initiative that was conceived in lockdown on the beautiful Central Coast. Killcare resident Lisa Mount started a community initiative called the Bouddi Home Markets. The idea behind the markets is to have a series of home-based shop fronts advertised on a local Facebook group where people can buy from and support local businesses. The initiative grew so well that it blossomed into dozens of market stalls across the coast and it is still alive and well on weekends. People continue to buy and sell handmade, homemade and preloved goods on the home market trails and also on the directory. I congratulate Ms Mount on receiving a community recognition award from the Wagstaffe to Killcare Community Association for her inspiring project. It is people like Lisa who inspire others and bring the community together in times of hardship. I thank her so much for her contribution to our community and for celebrating the abundance of goodwill across the coast.

LAVINGTON EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:30): I congratulate two students from Lavington East Public School, Ayla Kerslake and Ella O'Connor, who were the winners at this year's Book Week Art Competition. This year's theme was "Dreaming with eyes open" and the event was sponsored by Myer Centrepoint, Albury. The talented students entered creative artwork through design process and visual media. Ayla came second and won a voucher from Myer Centrepoint and a Dymocks voucher for her school. Ella was awarded an honourable mention and a voucher from Dymocks Albury. Well done to Ayla and Ella for their wonderful efforts. It is lovely to see that they are sharing their voices through art and engaging in a creative endeavour.

WYONG ART HOUSE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:31): I congratulate the outstanding achievement of Wyong Art House, a community-centred organisation that recently received two awards at the Business Wyong Chamber of Commerce 2022 Annual Business Awards. The team was recognised for Excellence in Large Business and was celebrated as the overall Business of the Year. This fantastic achievement reflects the team's hard work and is evidence that an arts-focused community organisation can see such profound success. The Wyong Art House has a unique joint focus on hosting nationally and internationally renowned performers, as well as facilitating the community-led groups that use its world-class venue. It speaks to the flexibility of the team and the excellent programming that a Central Coast theatre may be a world-class venue while still celebrating local art. I congratulate the directors, the executive and the team on the ground. They continue to support the success of Wyong Art House. The community of workers, performers and the audience has ensured its success, which it deserves. Congratulations again on receiving the Business of the Year award. It is a fantastic and well-deserved accolade.

AUBURN ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOL AWARDS

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:32): I commend two outstanding teachers in my electorate for their commitment to public education, as recognised at the 2022 NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence. Michele Morgan from Lidcombe Public School received the Minister's Award for Public Excellence. Michele is a passionate teacher whose dedication to her work is an inspiration to the local community. Auburn Girls High School Principal Anna Tsoutsas received the Secretary's Award for Excellent Service. Anna has dedicated her career to providing opportunities to disadvantaged children in the community. Her focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills for students has helped to reap great benefits, as seen in the success of the NAPLAN results. I also acknowledge Auburn North Public School for winning the Secretary's School Achievement Award for their Collective Teacher Efficacy project. The entire staff and school community at Auburn North Public School deserve to be congratulated on their efforts in providing quality public education in Auburn.

TREBLE BRIDGE BUSTER RUNNER JON BINSKIN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:33): I applaud Port Macquarie local Jon Binskin for completing a gruelling Treble Bridge Buster challenge, finishing in first position at the Forster event on 1 August. The veteran marathon runner came home for a well-deserved victory after smashing the 21.1-kilometre half marathon in 80 minutes and 30 seconds, a 10-kilometre run in 39 minutes and the five-kilometre event in just 21 minutes, all in succession, to claim the honours. Jon is the president of the Port Macquarie Pacers Running Club and an all-rounder in marathons, having taken on the Treble Bridge Buster no less than 10 times—six competitions in Port Macquarie and four in Forster. The secret to Jon's success this year was modifying his diet and putting strategies in place to enhance his fitness and resilience. By tweaking his routine, Jon lost an amazing 10 kilograms, which increased his speed and allowed him to achieve a personal best in the five-kilometre parkrun. A passionate advocate for living a healthy lifestyle through outdoor activity, Jon coordinates the Port Macquarie Pacers Running Club, meeting every Saturday at parkrun, notwithstanding scheduled runs throughout the week. I congratulate Jon on his success at this year's Treble Bridge Buster and wish him every success in future events.

MIRANDA ELECTORATE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (21:34): I acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the justices of the peace from the Miranda electorate being honoured for 50 years of service to our community. Over the past half of a century, Terrence Crowe, Peter Mattock, Phillip Mead and Jon Treleaven have played an important part in the legal system by helping hundreds of people at key moments in their lives. They provide their services on a voluntary basis, witnessing affidavits and statutory declarations, and certifying original documents so that members of our community may buy a property, access superannuation or apply for a passport.

Whilst ceremonies typically held in the New South Wales Parliament to celebrate these justices of the peace have been cancelled due to the passing of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, it would be remiss of me not to recognise their efforts and celebrate their golden jubilee of service in this place. These individuals' commitment to provide this invaluable service embodies the spirit of volunteering, which has always been at the heart of our shire. I congratulate and thank all recipients for their dedication to our community and extend my best wishes for the future.

*Private Members' Statements***TRIBUTE TO MICK SIMPSON**

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:35): I pay my respects to a local stalwart of the Australian Labor Party who, unfortunately, recently passed away. Mick Simpson was a lifelong member of the party, held life membership and received the McKell Award for meritorious service. He also received the Paul Keating 40 years certificate of service. I have known Mick since I was about 16 years old and he has always been the rock of the Sefton branch of the Labor Party, relentlessly supporting Labor campaigns, articulating Labor's values and prosecuting what a Labor government should and could deliver to help build a more equitable country. But Mick's lifelong commitment to the Labor movement and social justice were not just about words. Mick underpinned every day of his life demonstrating these values through action.

Mick was a life member of the Convoy for Kids, Blue Light Disco and the Chester Hill RSL, where he was also a director. He also had a deep commitment to the natural heritage of western Sydney as a trustee of the Georges River State Recreation Area. But it was in the transport industry that Mick will always be remembered as a legend and indeed Mick has been inducted into the National Road Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs. In 1967 Mick obtained his driver's licence and started his long career in transport working as a tow truck driver before obtaining a motor vehicle rigid licence and beginning with Johnstons Transport in south-west Sydney. It did not take him long to move on to his semitrailer licence and move in to McVicars Bus Company on local routes around Bankstown and Strathfield.

Mick went on to work for Telecom, and then back in the towing industry working for Buckleys Smash Repairs as a field representative and then helping to build a budding business working for Wales Truck Repairs. Somewhere along the way, Mick, who can only be described as no shrinking violet, managed to convince a young Edie to marry him and set up home in Greenacre. Mick once stated that he and Edie had only one fight during their marriage: It started in 1973 and it still has not finished. But Mick adored Edie and Edie, I think we can safely say, adored Mick.

They made a formidable couple when Mick, as the local Transport Workers' Union delegate, would come to the assistance of other truck drivers, particularly those involved in accidents, dealing often with the tragedy of lives lost. One notable incident was an accident on Henry Lawson Drive at Milperra when a BMW came across in front of a heavy car carrier, causing a fire. The driver managed to unload all the vehicles but lost all his possessions in the cab. With nothing to his name and a long way from home, Mick and Edie made sure there was a bed and rest for the night and some clothes to wear in the morning.

Mick and Edie's life was also tinged with great personal sadness and tragedy when they lost their daughter, Belinda, at a young age to cancer, leaving their very young granddaughter, Charlotte, without her beloved mother. Mick, who was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis from decades of smoking, once made the point, "I had so many people telling me not to smoke, but everyone handles trauma differently and smoking was my way of handling the job. I have been to accidents where the ambos and coppers have counselling afterwards. We had none of that." Perhaps we should remember that, given some of the recent horrific accidents and the tow truck drivers, in particular, who turn up.

Even in retirement you could not stop Mick's irrepressible nature as he completed two round trips of Australia pulling the Wales Truck Repairs sign on the back of his "Big" Nissan. Mick will be sorely missed by everyone across our local community and within the Labor family, but he will be particularly missed by his wife, Edie; his children and their partners, Darren, Paul, Thuy and Marc; and his grandchildren, Charlotte, Luke, Harrison and Tyler. Vale, Michael Joseph Mick Simpson.

JAMES ROBERT LAW STEWART RETIREMENT

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (21:39): I acknowledge the long and dedicated service of Hawkesbury Local Police Command Detective Superintendent James Robert Law Stewart, fondly known as Detective Superintendent Jim Stewart. Detective Superintendent Stewart is retiring from the NSW Police Force, marking an end to his career, which has spanned more than four decades. These days, staying in the same profession for more than a few years is not necessarily common. Detective Superintendent Stewart, though, invested in his career, and his commitment to the role is an inspiration that should be admired and emulated by many. To spend so long in a life of service to one's community is also an incredible achievement. It takes a very special person to continually put yourself on the front line to protect those around you.

Detective Superintendent Jim Stewart first joined the NSW Police Force as a trainee on 14 January 1980. He began general duties in Blacktown 11 weeks later. On 29 August 1982 he began confidential informant training duties in Penrith, before carrying out criminal investigation duties at north west region and with the State intelligence group. Detective Superintendent Stewart resigned from this position in August 1991. He rejoined the

NSW Police Force in September 1995 as a Detective Probationary Constable but was quickly promoted through the ranks. He was promoted to Detective Senior Constable in March of the following year, then to the rank of Sergeant in December in 2000 at Burwood Police Station, before transferring to the crime management faculty. In October 2003 Detective Superintendent Stewart was promoted to the rank of Inspector of Police. He was appointed Superintendent Local Area Commander of Castlereagh in November 2013, where he was commander for four years before finally becoming the Commander of Hawkesbury Police Area Command on 17 December 2017. He remained officially in that position until 25 August 2022.

I have known Jim for several years, even before I was the member for Hawkesbury. I have been very aware of his involvement in our local community and the great work he has done for the people of Hawkesbury. Jim has always been a reliable source of information, especially in times of devastation such as the bushfires and floods. Today is not the first time Detective Superintendent Stewart has been honoured for his service. His many achievements in the NSW Police Force have been recognised over time. He has received a NSW Police Force medal and a range of clips, as well as the Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation, the NSW Police Commissioners Emergency Commendation and a commander's award in recognition of his diligence and professionalism in the job. Detective Superintendent Stewart had a very exciting career and was on the scene during some of Australia's most notorious incidents, including the Sydney bank robbery in 1984 and the ensuing Spit Bridge siege. This occurred just a few years after he joined the Police Force and, at the time, the robbery and siege were described as the country's "most dramatic" hostage chases.

One of the many ways Detective Superintendent Stewart was recognised for his excellence in the NSW Police Force came in 2011, when he was the only officer in the NSW Police Force to be invited to attend the fourth International Police training program at the Korean National Police Agency. There he participated with officers from around the world, including from France, Canada, New Zealand and Afghanistan. I was honoured to be invited to attend the marching out of Detective Superintendent James Stewart tomorrow, on 21 September 2022. Unfortunately, I will be in Parliament, but I send Jim and his family my very best wishes. I recognise the important role that Jim's family has played throughout his career. I thank Jim's wife, Deborah, and his children and grandchildren for the support, love and understanding they have provided. I commend Jim on his bravery and resolution to protect and serve. I thank him for his unwavering commitment over these 40 years of service to the NSW Police Force.

HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (21:44): There is no avoiding the staffing crisis in our healthcare system. The April to June 2022 Bureau of Statistics information figures paint a stark picture: 10 per cent of ambulance patients spent 51 minutes ramped at the John Hunter Hospital; at the Calvary Mater Newcastle, 10 per cent of patients spent 75 minutes ramped and 11.76 per cent of emergency department patients were left without completed treatment. The outlook at the John Hunter was even worse, with 12.6 per cent of emergency department [ED] patients leaving before treatment was finished. Only 66.4 per cent of critical cases at the John Hunter started on time over that period. Those figures point to a badly understaffed health system, putting patients and staff in danger.

On 26 April a nurse at the Calvary Mater Newcastle hospital was assaulted during a violent incident in the emergency department. A 32-year-old patient lashed out at the young woman before turning his violent attention to other female nurses. Their screams attracted the attention of a male nurse, who ran to provide assistance. He too was assaulted. Just starting her career, a junior nurse resigned from the Calvary Mater Newcastle as a direct result of the attack. The *Newcastle Herald* reported that the patient was already aggressive and agitated when he was placed in subacute care without close supervision. Hospital insiders told the paper that instead of being tucked in a back corner of the ED, the patient should have been placed in a supervised location—in a resuscitation bay or in acute care—"somewhere that there's space to escape from". The assaulted nurses were medically assessed and offered counselling through the employee assistance program.

Hunter-New England Health has a zero tolerance policy to aggression and violence. Security staff acted quickly. Police were called and the patient was restrained and later arrested. I am glad that none of them sustained serious injuries, but it should not have happened to begin with. Our nurses have put themselves on the line over the past 2½ years. An already stressful job, exacerbated by the pandemic and with increasing staff shortages, has reached crisis levels. Four nurses paid the price for understaffing, overworked emergency departments and insufficient security staff. That event is just the tip of the iceberg. Members of the Health Services Union and New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association say that workplace violence in our hospitals is often under-reported. No-one should be assaulted on the job, least of all our nurses, who work so hard to care for patients. As former New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association General Secretary Brett Holmes said:

Nurses should not be going to work at risk of being assaulted or abused. Any act of violence or aggression towards frontline staff is totally unacceptable—it must stop.

He is spot-on. It is an ongoing and worsening issue. The number of New South Wales hospital incidents has escalated in recent years according to data from the New South Wales Sentencing Council's report *Assaults on emergency services workers*. People who assault frontline workers now face 14 years in jail if convicted. While that may be a fitting punishment for brutal and cruel crimes, it will not serve as a deterrent to some of the offenders. It is beyond time for the Government to address staff shortages. Do it now.

COOTAMUNDRA GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL DEMERGER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (21:49): I speak with pride on the decision to demerge the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council as announced by the Minister for Local Government on 24 August 2022. Time does not permit me, unfortunately, to outline in great detail what has brought us to this moment, but I thought it important at this crucial juncture to make some remarks because it is the culmination of several years of toil for a great number of people. When I first came into office on 14 October 2017, the amalgamation of Cootamundra and Gundagai shires had been causing considerable angst for those communities since 12 May 2016. Elected 18 months on, it was abundantly clear that community upset remained deep rooted, with very narrow prospects for a unified future.

Eighteen months on, I had to pursue an alternative course of action that would ensure that my communities were not only heard but also afforded every opportunity within the Local Government Act to make their case for a demerger. I have been with the community every step of the way since, with the communities of Gundagai and Cootamundra doing everything asked of them as part of the process, creating a strong foundation and the legs I needed to stand on, which has ultimately brought about this result. Initially, this involved advocating on behalf of Gundagai Council in Exile [GCIE] for meetings at the highest levels of government, including with the former Premier and successive meetings with former local government Ministers Gabrielle Upton and Shelley Hancock.

In late 2019, with the full support of my colleagues in The Nationals, we secured our first major win, with the proposal to reinstate the former boundaries put forward by Gundagai Council in Exile set to go to the Local Government Boundaries Commission. This was a giant step forward for both communities, with GCIE having met the requirements under the Act for the proposal to be supported by a nominated quota against the total elector population. This was an absolute credit to GCIE's legwork on the ground. Extensive public exhibition of the proposal and 1,017 submissions lodged by the local community and council followed.

On 25 February 2020 Ms Hancock formally referred the elector proposal concerning the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council to the commission for assessment. Over coming months, the commission would examine the proposal, holding public meetings where practicable in those early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a two-day inquiry in November 2020 during which the commission heard from 73 different speakers on the issue. In July 2021 Ms Hancock released the commission's report and, despite the commissioners recommending a demerger of the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, the Minister chose to reaffirm the merger as it stood. To be fair, this was a blow. But, thankfully, the proposal was once again reviewed and the report was received by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Wendy Tuckerman. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Ms Tuckerman on her final decision.

I thank the commissioners of the Local Government Boundaries Commission. I recognise Charlie Sheahan and Abb McAlister, the respective leaders in local government for Cootamundra and Gundagai, as well as councillors current and former, and current and former staff of the council who have been doing their level best in trying circumstances. I acknowledge the ongoing advocacy of Helen Castles at *The Gundagai Independent*. It would be remiss of me not to mention Mrs Jenny Littlejohn. Jenny had carriage of this issue in my office, pursuing meetings, making representations and liaising with constituents. Although she has since retired, I remain very grateful to Jenny for her efforts on this issue.

The grit of members of Gundagai Council in Exile has been unwavering. They include Dr Paul Mara, Abb McAlister, David Graham, Gordon Lindley, Len Tozer, Peter Gain, Pip McAlister, Amy Turner, David Tout, Kate Rose, Jim Sanderson and Glen Moore. Finally, the constituents of Gundagai and Cootamundra and surrounding villages have been forthright yet fair and cautiously optimistic as we have pursued due process through the Local Government Boundaries Commission. The collective and sustained feedback from constituents, including participation in public meetings, making submissions and voicing concerns, had a significant role in securing this outcome. I will continue to support the communities of Cootamundra and Gundagai and surrounding villages as we commence the demerge process, and look forward to providing a further update in due course.

SOUTH WEST SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (21:54): I had the privilege to attend the South West Sydney Academy of Sport [SWSAS] graduation and sports awards dinner on 29 July. I attended in my capacity both as the State member for Camden and representing the Minister for Sport. While each SWSAS award night is special,

this year was particularly so because it was celebrating the academy's twenty-fifth anniversary. For 25 years SWSAS has been providing help and guidance to young athletes across an expansive range of sports. Even more, the academy, through its comprehensive approach, helps to develop the potential in athletes to contribute in both sport and community.

The awards night is a great opportunity to recognise the incredible work done by the coaches, officials, administrators, volunteers and, especially, athletes. I thank the CEO of the academy, Mr Gerry Knight, for his dedicated service to the academy and tireless effort in accomplishing its goals. I also thank the academy's board of management, who make the success of the academy possible. I thank chairperson Peter Campbell, deputy chairperson Michelle Caruso, Professor Gregory Kolt, Mr Ross Morrison, Ms Denise McGrath, and councillors from Camden, Wollondilly, Campbelltown and Liverpool councils.

The Sport Program Coaches Awards are awarded to athletes within the academy's sports programs. The criteria is determined by the coaches of the respective sports program, and they are curated according to the sport. I am happy to congratulate Alexis Paulo, women's AFL; Danielle Campos, basketball; Kai Allie, basketball; Haylee Morris, BMX; Megan Henry, golf; Charlotte Manny, hockey; Adam Nicholls, hockey; Janita-Leota Brown, netball; Hannah Green, netball umpire; Bella Ma, softball; Harrison McDonald, softball; Joel Skipper, triathlon; Sibelle Hassan, volleyball; William Chanhara, volleyball; Kayden Smith, Para-Wests Future Stars; and Dylan Andrade Paez, baseball, Wests Future Stars.

I also acknowledge and congratulate the Coach Recognition Awards recipients. The Coach Recognition Awards recognise the leadership and guidance fulfilled by the coaches and support staff. Receiving the Bronze Award, which is three years of service, I congratulate Diana Benoni, Samantha Garrido and Tenille Rowley for their work in netball; Marsheal Walker for softball; and Thomas Hine for triathlon. Receiving the Silver Award, which is for five years of service, I congratulate Cara Wilde and Fred Furner for BMX; Scott Martyn for golf; Michelle McNamara and Lisa Filby for netball; and David Hine for triathlon. Receiving the Gold Award, which is seven years of service, I congratulate Jan Cleary for Netball. Receiving the Platinum Award for 10 years of service, I congratulate Van Nguyen for netball.

The Chairperson Award is the award that recognises the exemplification of the utmost characteristics and traits of the academy. The criteria for the award involves commitment to the academy, communication and relational development, demonstrated leadership, individual skills development and community citizenship. The Chairperson Award is the utmost illustrious award that an athlete at the academy can receive. To be nominated for the award, which covers all sports programs, places the athletes in the top 5 per cent of the academy.

I congratulate nominees Hailee Meurant, women's AFL; Emily Paulic, basketball; Isaac Robinson, BMX; Noah Graham, golf; Amanda Condon, hockey; Ellie Hart, netball; Markayla Butler, softball; Ryan Carter, triathlon; Michael Bzdega, volleyball; Ethan Brooks, hockey, Wests Future Stars; and Thomas Noakes, decathlon, Wests Future Stars. I am thrilled to announce that the academy's Athlete of the Year Award is shared by two outstanding athletes: Ryan Carter for triathlon and Thomas Noakes for decathlon. Finally, I commend and applaud the parents and families for their ongoing support and commitment and the sacrifices they make for their young athletes.

DUBBO HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (21:58): Regional health has been in the headlines a lot recently, and not always for the best reasons. It is a human system and it is not perfect, but the people who work in it do outstanding work each and every day. Today I celebrate what has been achieved in Dubbo to ensure the people of the region can access the best care possible, close to home. Early this year I was really excited and proud to stand alongside Minister for Regional Health Bronnie Taylor, local Federal MP Mark Coulton and former Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce to officially open stages three and four of the Dubbo Hospital redevelopment, including the \$35 million Western Cancer Centre. The Dubbo Hospital redevelopment is the culmination of over a decade of hard work and \$300 million worth of investment from this Coalition Government.

I am incredibly proud of that achievement, but it is also very important to pay tribute to all of the many people right across the region who have worked tirelessly to make it a reality. It is fitting to start with the Dubbo Health Council, a group of individuals many of whom have spent decades advocating for improved medical services not just for Dubbo but for people right across western New South Wales. Members have included Rhonda Gleeson, Elizabeth Allen, OAM, Steve Bassett, Ronda Bramble, Shibli Chowdhury, Nola Honeysett, Robin Payne, Bernadette Underwood, Karnie Walford, Lorna White, Geoff Wise, Virginia Woodlock and Dot Martin. The health council played an integral role in advocating for the car park project. Geoff and Steve were on the local health district [LHD] working group, and their work made my job securing funding a lot easier.

A number of members were also part of the Western Cancer Centre consumer committee, which helped with the planning and design of the new facility. They included Rhonda Gleeson from Dubbo, Louise Brown from Bourke, Stephen Dutton from Cobar, Johanna Parker from Lightning Ridge and Grace Toomey from Dubbo. Tony Barlow was a community representative from Narromine who, sadly, recently passed away from cancer. Lyn Smith, along with her fellow Dubbo West Rotarians, really got the ball rolling.

It all started when Dubbo Hospital oncologist Dr Florian Honeyball spoke to members of the Rotary Club of Dubbo West about the need for a PET/CT scanner in western New South Wales. After some initial discussions the club set its sights on delivering an entirely new cancer centre for western New South Wales, and the support from communities across the west was overwhelming. Nearly 46,000 people signed a petition that helped Mark Coulton secure \$25 million in Federal funding. My predecessor, Troy Grant, and the New South Wales Government backed the project in with \$10 million and the commitment to deliver the project. The Western Cancer Centre is now open and saving lives, a true collaboration and a wonderful example of what we can achieve when we all work together. Some of the many people who played a pivotal role in the Dubbo Hospital redevelopment and the Western Cancer Centre are Dr Honeyball, Dr Colin McClintock, Dr Joe Canalese, oncology nurse unit manager Tim Williams and general manager Debbie Bickerton from the hospital; Marcus Haines and Belinda Berryman from NSW Health Infrastructure; and Kerrie O'Neill, Regan Woodman and Bonita Jameson from the LHD.

All up, we have delivered a new clinical building featuring six new operating theatres, a day-only and extended day-only ward for surgical services, an inpatient ward and birthing suite for maternity services, a special care nursery and a central sterilisation department. We then delivered a new surgical inpatient unit above maternity in the new Talbragar building as well as a new renal dialysis unit, including 14 dialysis chairs, two training rooms, two consultation rooms and an expansion zone to allow for four more dialysis chairs. Stage four delivered another three-storey clinical building, the Macquarie building. That includes a new emergency department and short-stay unit; a medical imaging unit; a critical care floor, including coronary care, stroke and intensive care units and a cardiac cath lab; an ambulatory care unit; and new front-of-house and drop-off zones. And, of course, there is the \$35 million purpose-built Western Cancer Centre, co-funded by this Government in partnership with the former Federal Coalition Government. That includes 16 chemo spaces, doubling the previous capacity; a radiation therapy bunker; a PET-CT scanner; new consultation rooms; a wellness space; and a front-of-house and drop-off zone.

It has been a drastic uplift in services, making top-notch health care more accessible for people right across our region. But more patients means more cars, and where will they all park? I am proud to say that we delivered \$30 million for over 350 additional car spaces at Dubbo Hospital, and we have delivered. In the past 12 months we have opened not one but three car parks, including one dedicated to patients of the Western Cancer Centre, and the new multi-storey complex, containing over 300 parking spaces. The Dubbo Hospital campus now has almost 1,000 spaces for patients, visitors and staff. Building top quality state-of-the-art health facilities is a recruitment strategy, and it works. I have been lucky enough to meet some of the amazing health professionals who have moved to the region to work in our new facilities, like Maddie McKenzie-Lindgren, who moved to Dubbo to work at the new cardiac cath lab. Keep it coming. Dubbo Hospital is truly a great place—still not quite done, but we will keep supporting western New South Wales.

CESSNOCK ELECTORATE HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (22:04): For the past 11½ years I have had the great privilege of representing the community of Cessnock. I have to admit, in the early years I had the good fortune of not having too much trouble and strife with the emergency departments that belonged to Cessnock Hospital and Kurri Kurri Hospital, which are both in the electorate of Cessnock, and in neighbouring Maitland Hospital across the border, where people from Cessnock with more complicated needs tend to present. They also present at John Hunter Hospital. The truth is that in recent years the frequency and number of people who have had reason to contact my office has grown astronomically. People who I might have heard from every third week, every month or every six weeks I now hear from literally on a daily basis—sometimes two or three times a day—to say that they have been completely inadequately served by our hospitals.

This stems from something we all know as an efficiency dividend, ironically named as it is. An efficiency dividend is fundamentally a budget cut. In the 2011 budget, under then Treasurer Mike Baird, a decision was made that would impose an efficiency dividend on every government department. For example, if the Health budget grew at 7 per cent, meaning a 7 per cent increase was needed just to keep up with inflation, only a 5.5 per cent increase was actually received. That meant that in real terms the budget was going backwards. In 2014, 2015 and 2016 the Productivity Commission fundamentally agreed with this when it said that at the very least the Health budget needed to increase by 6.5 per cent.

However, at that time the Government was only increasing the Health budget by 5.1 per cent. Since then the increase in the Health budget from this Government has continued to deteriorate to the point where it increases

by 4 per cent each year despite the fact that just to keep up with the consumer price index it needs to increase by somewhere between 6.5 per cent and 7 per cent. Essentially, for almost the past 12 years the Health budget has gone backwards in real terms by somewhere between 1.5 per cent to 3 per cent. Let us average it out and say 2 per cent. Today the Health budget is around 20 per cent below where it should be, where it could be and where it was when Labor was last in government in 2010.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Now he's gone and stooped too far.

Ms Gabrielle Upton: Tell the House another little—

Mr Kevin Anderson: Clayton dementia.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: If members on the other side do not understand basic economics, inflation and numbers, they should cease interjecting. These are the real terms, aspects and outcomes of what is happening under what the Government calls "efficiency dividends". To put it into very real terms that Government members might be able to grasp, in the first four years of its efficiency dividends the budget realised \$8.8 billion in what were called "efficiency dividend savings". Guess what cost \$8.8 billion to build? The north-west rail line in Sydney came at the cost of public services for people in communities not only in the area that benefited from the new infrastructure but also for those in Narrabri, Cessnock, Broken Hill and Bega. They all paid for those new pieces of infrastructure. It continues today; that was just the first example.

When people come into my office who are concerned, frustrated and unhealthy as a result of the budget cuts—or "efficiency dividends"—that have been imposed on Health across New South Wales, I remind them that the new train line in north-west Sydney is a consequence of their deteriorating health outcomes. I remind them that the stadiums in Sydney are at the expense of their deteriorating health outcomes. I remind them that a new tunnel or new tram line in Sydney is the price they have to pay so that shiny new stuff in Sydney can be provided for the people in Sydney at the cost of their health outcomes and consequences. That is what the efficiency dividend has led to. It is not just in health; it is in police, education and government services right across the board. An efficiency dividend is a budget cut in real terms. The crisis in our health system today is a consequence of that, and this Government is responsible for it.

PATRICIAN BROTHERS' COLLEGE, FAIRFIELD

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (22:09): The name of Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield has been engraved onto the Peter Mulholland Cup (NSW/VIC/ACT) schoolboy rugby league competition after an historic grand final victory at Leichhardt Oval, where the school defeated The Hills Sports High School 20-16. In front of 700 current students, Patrician Brothers, teachers, past students, parents and supporters, the Patrician Brothers players captivated the rugby league world by winning the elite schoolboy rugby league competition for a record seventh time in the college's 69-year history. The college's 2022 victory is now added alongside that of the champion teams of 1975, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1987 and 1992.

The 2022 grand final saw the two best schoolboy rugby league sides in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory meet in what can only be described as an epic contest. The Hills Sports High School took a commanding lead in the first half with a massive string of hit-ups and clever sets of play. The Patrician Brothers team held on gallantly and kept defending its line right up until the half-time break when The Hills Sports High School led 10-nil. With the score 16-nil early in the second half, the Patrician Brothers team dug deep and found its second wind to launch into overdrive and take the game to the Hills Sports High School. The Patrician Brothers players gave their all in both defence and attack. There was no doubt that patience and perseverance paid off.

Grinding down The Hills Sports High School team with solid defence and sharp attack, the Patrician Brothers team scored three tries in the last 15 minutes of the game, from captain Yehya Ayache, winger Noah Funa and prop Jordan Miller. The final two minutes saw Patrician Brothers charge the ball down from a Hills Sports High School kick. It was successfully gathered by player of the match Joshua Alhazim, who raced away to score the winning try under the goalposts. The rest is history. As one can imagine, the Wayne Pearce Hill at Leichhardt Oval erupted when the final siren sounded and the blue and blue emerged victorious. There were tears of joy from all supporters but especially from the parents who had witnessed their sons' historic contribution to the team and to the proud rugby league history of the college. Their sons would now also be in the history books.

As the team and coaching staff made their way across to the Wayne Pearce Hill following the Peter Mulholland trophy presentation, principal Peter Wade commented to me that the scene on the hill was an historic moment in time. It sure was! The victory would not have been possible without the coaching and guidance from coach Mr Frank Pritchard, assistant coach Mr Bill Bourke, manager Lisa Coluccio, senior trainer Mr Joshua Morgan and trainers Mr Andrew Khanano and Ms Bethany Neaves. I congratulate all the coaching staff for assisting the team throughout the 2022 competition. Patrician Brothers' road to glory started in pool C with

victories in the following rounds: round one, 64-nil against Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School; round two, 22-20 against Patrician rivals Holy Cross College, Ryde; and round three, 42-6 against All Saints' College, Maitland. Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield finished pool C first, with three wins, 128 points for and 26 points against.

In quarterfinal one, Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, 30, defeated Endeavour Sports High School, 10, at Campbelltown Sports Stadium. In the semifinal, Pats, 19, defeated Westfields Sports High School, 18, at Campbelltown Sports Stadium. Finally, in the grand final on Wednesday 31 August, Patrician Brothers, 20, defeated Hills sports high, 16, at Leichardt Oval. The line-up for victorious Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield team was 1, Junior Fagalele; 2, Corey Leigh; 3, Godfrey Ilavalu; 4, Sione Lolohea; 5, Noah Funa; 6, Taj'h Colquhoun; 7, Chad Daniels; 8, Massimo Mari; 9, captain Yehya Ayache; 10, Jordan Miller; 11, Jezaiah Funa-Iuta; 12, Joshua Alhazim; 13, Bailey Myers; 14, Zaidas Muagututia; 15, Matt Alhazim; 16, Jack Leigh; 17, Kohan Lewis; 18, Billy Arena; 19, Enryko Memea Epe; and 20, Dionn Haratsaris. I congratulate the team for making history to be the first Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield side to win the elite schoolboy rugby league competition in 30 years. It was certainly a proud day, not only for the college but also for everyone in the Fairfield electorate. I congratulate Pats. Maria Duce!

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (22:14): In the Vaucluse electorate we are so privileged to live amongst significant historical sites as well as national park estate, beautiful parks, Indigenous culture and stunning harbour beaches that form part of the Sydney Harbour National Park. Last month I shared some of those places with the New South Wales Minister for Environment and Heritage, James Griffin, during his visit to the electorate. The visit was a good opportunity to discuss with the Minister on site the significant progress that we are making on plans to preserve South Head and Strickland House estate through master plans. I advocated strongly for master plans to be developed for both areas. Gratifyingly, both master plans are now on track to be finalised in the coming months and will go a long way to protecting these unique places.

First, we visited the South Head precinct in Watsons Bay, which sits at the northernmost part of the eastern suburbs peninsula. We made our way from Camp Cove along the South Head Heritage Trail, which offers some of the most picturesque views of Sydney Harbour and the heads. It is no wonder the area attracts over 500,000 visitors per year, who are generously welcomed by local residents. I thank the Watsons Bay president, Roger Bayliss, for joining the Minister and I during the visit. Roger and his wife, Julie, have a deep knowledge of the area and are great advocates on behalf of the Watsons Bay community. At South Head we viewed the Lighthouse Keepers' Cottages and the historic Hornby Lighthouse. The red-and-white striped lighthouse was built in 1858 following the tragic wrecking of the *Dunbar*. It was the third lighthouse ever to be built in New South Wales and is one part of the rich cultural landscape in South Head.

Also along the trail are historic gun embattlements, which are a reminder of the area's significant military history. The South Head precinct is undergoing a master-planning process to identify necessary upgrades, such as walking tracks and wayfinding, to enhance its cultural and natural attributes and beauty. The master plan will also identify sympathetic uses for the existing buildings and facilities so that they do not fall into disrepair. The master plan is being finalised following feedback received from the community in May 2022. I am grateful for the robust community feedback and an active stakeholder reference group, which is guiding the process. I am advocating for the final master plan to be published in the coming months.

Afterwards, we made our way to the Strickland House estate in Vaucluse. There the Woollahra History and Heritage Society president, Peter Poland, OAM, shared his insights on the history of the estate with the Minister. The expansive Italian-style mansion, Carrara, was built for New South Wales colonial figure William Charles Wentworth, who is depicted in an oil painting in the Chamber. It also served as a convalescent home and aged-care facility during its rich history. It is inspiring to walk through Carrara and around the estate and down to the beautiful Milk Beach. I encourage members to do so if they have the chance. I am pleased that we were also able to begin master planning to protect the State heritage listed Strickland House estate and Nielsen Park with \$350,000 from the New South Wales Government in September 2021. The Minister and I discussed progress on the master plan on site. The next step in the coming weeks is to have the draft master plan on public exhibition for the community to have its say.

We then viewed Nielsen Park from Steele Point Cottage to check progress on the once-in-a-lifetime replacement of the storm-damaged seawall along Shark Beach. The upgrade will bring a taller and more substantial seawall structure, with additional stairs, improved and raised lawn areas, and wheelchair access to the beach with upgraded ramps. When completed, it will enhance the amenity for the many beachgoers and ocean swimmers who visit in the summer months. I acknowledge the local residents who shared their early ideas and support for the South Head and Strickland House estate master plans, and who are members of the stakeholder reference group. Community input and support is so important to the success of these initiatives. Together, we

have already achieved so much in protecting our significant natural, historic and cultural sites in the electorate of Vacluse. I look forward to continuing to build on that important task.

HEALTH SERVICES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (22:18): After 12 years under the Liberals, our healthcare system is in a state of crisis. Dominic Perrottet's Government is tired and failing to deliver the essential services that our families rely on. It is failing to train enough health workers, and now our hospitals are at absolute breaking point. There have been two private members' statements about it from this side of the Chamber and question time was all about it. The crisis in our health system is not due to COVID; it is due to a failure to invest over the past 12 years. People are now waiting longer than ever before to get an ambulance, to be treated in an emergency department and for elective surgeries. In the past three months, just over 76,000 patients left emergency without completing treatment and one in 10 patients spent over 21 hours in an emergency department waiting room.

The Bureau of Health Information quarterly report shows that the Central Coast Local Health District is the worst in the State, with 51.5 per cent of emergency department patients waiting over four hours for treatment in Central Coast hospitals. The report also reveals that waiting times for ambulances and elective surgery have blown out considerably. This data confirms that the Central Coast healthcare system has been pushed to the brink under Dominic Perrottet and the Liberals. Adding insult to injury, the Central Coast Local Health District has put medical imaging staff on notice, as it proposes to cut four full-time positions at Gosford Hospital. They are really important to our inflow into emergency and as part of our hospital, providing vital services such as X-rays, ultrasounds, MRIs and CT scans.

As well as this, pharmacies are being told that their operational costs are being cut by 15 per cent and staff are not being replaced. We have pharmacies that are now understaffed, with threats of more losses. Nurses in our community are letting me know that shifts are often understaffed and that staff are being pushed to do overtime and extra shifts on a regular basis. Like the member for Cessnock, I have people writing in every single day saying that staff are now working double shifts with less than four hours sleep in between. The other fear is that many of our experienced staff are leaving en masse and our younger staff are not being supervised on shift. That is hardly fair to our young staff if we expect them to stay in our hospital system.

I have loads of stories from my constituents, including one from Kerrie. Her 88-year-old dad was recently admitted to Gosford Hospital from his aged-care facility twice within one week, suffering pneumonia. On both occasions he did not make it past emergency as there was not a bed for him on the ward. The first time, he spent two nights in emergency—the second time, one night—before he was sent back to the nursing home. The family decided to stop sending him to hospital, where nothing was being done to help him and he was only becoming more confused and agitated. He died in the aged-care facility exactly one week after the second time he was discharged from hospital. His family is quite certain that if he had been able to be admitted to the ward and get the care he needed and deserved, he would probably be with us today.

Montana went into hospital on the direction of her doctor at 11 o'clock one night. Her son screamed for six hours nonstop, with no support, until he passed out. When she finally did get to see a doctor, who was clearly overworked—he was trying to get through the patients really quickly—he advised that her son needed antibiotics and sent them to the local GP because it was morning. That is hardly satisfactory in our local emergency department. Another lady, Gayle, had a fall down the stairs and needed an X-ray. She told the staff very clearly that she had pain in both legs, but only her left ankle was X-rayed. It later turned out that she had fractures in both her left ankle and her right leg. She returned to the hospital in July this year. She had clearly broken her wrist. She came by ambulance but was sent to wait in the main waiting room in her PJs and slippers, without a bra, at midnight.

Gayle was meant to have a follow-up telehealth appointment with a request for an X-ray. She did not receive the phone call. It took her three days and numerous phone calls to finally be able to speak to a very dismissive doctor, who did not take the time to read the notes or look at the X-rays. Maybe what the Liberal Government wants is to push our patients into the private system, because that is where she said she will be headed next time. Martine was seven weeks pregnant. She lost her baby. She had a terrible situation. She was immunocompromised and did not see the doctor from midnight until the morning. It just should not be that way in our hospitals. The Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Health Services Union know that we need safe staffing levels, and the people of the Central Coast will not be fooled any longer by the promises of this Government.

ARMENIAN AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (22:23): First and foremost, I join the thousands of Armenian Australians living in Willoughby in congratulating the Republic of Artsakh on the thirty-first anniversary of its independence,

celebrated earlier this month. While Artsakh is a sovereign state, the nation shares deep historical, cultural, linguistic and people-to-people ties with the Republic of Armenia. As such, the security and wellbeing of Artsakh is of immense importance to Armenia and the Armenian community here in Australia and elsewhere. I am proud to have been elected to a Parliament that has already recognised the Republic of Artsakh in both Chambers. Given the significance of Artsakh to the Armenian people, the anniversary of its independence is also good cause to celebrate the rich contribution of the Armenian community to Australia.

With Australia home to some 50,000 to 60,000 citizens of Armenian origin, our country has been immensely enriched by their enduring culture and contribution to our national life. Armenian Australians have distinguished themselves across all fields of endeavour, from art, sport, media and the professions to politics, business, community service and religious life. Their values of kinship and community, resourcefulness and hard work have made our country stronger and better. In my locality of Willoughby, the Armenian community has played a significant role in helping to shape its rich cultural tapestry, setting up small businesses, churches and cultural associations. The Armenian National Committee of Australia has an office in Willoughby and is a much-respected voice for Armenian Australians.

Willoughby is also home to a number of Armenian faith communities, including the Armenian Apostolic Church in Chatswood, the Armenian Evangelical Church in the suburb of Willoughby, and the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church in Northbridge. Growing up on Penshurst Street I was fortunate to have many person-to-person links with members of the Armenian Australian community. Indeed, many were classmates and friends. As the member for Willoughby today, I am proud to follow in the footsteps of two of my predecessors who championed the interests of the Armenian Australian community in this Parliament.

My immediate predecessor, Gladys Berejiklian, is, of course, a proud Armenian Australian herself. Gladys exemplified the public-spirited ethos of so many in the Armenian Australian community. My earlier predecessor Peter Collins was also a great friend of the Armenian Australian community, who cherished its rich contribution to Willoughby and New South Wales. One of Peter's great achievements was the motion he moved as Leader of the Opposition to commemorate the Armenian genocide. Moving the motion in April 1997 to mark its eighty-second anniversary, Peter told Parliament that the Armenian survivors of the genocide would serve as "sentinels, as reminders, that we must never, ever forget".

In the tradition of my predecessors, I will seek to be a voice for our Armenian community in Willoughby and across New South Wales and beyond. Earlier this year, I was privileged to join my local Armenian community to commemorate the 107th anniversary of the Armenian genocide that saw the horrific destruction of 1.5 million innocent lives. I attended a holy mass at the Armenian Apostolic Church in Chatswood, followed by a procession and poignant commemoration ceremony at Beauchamp Park, close to where I grew up. With local dignitaries and church leaders, I had the honour to speak at this solemn ceremony, where I reflected upon the scale of this atrocity and called upon all governments to recognise the first genocide of the twenty-first century for what, indeed, it was.

In the present world, the security of Armenia and kindred nations such as Artsakh is once again imperilled. Earlier this month there were reports of Azerbaijani armed forces shelling villages within the Republic of Armenia. I publicly condemned this attack on Armenia by Azerbaijan and urged our Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Federal Parliament to call out the violation of the ceasefire. It must be stopped, I said at the time. The great Spanish philosopher George Santayana famously warned that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it". With Armenia and Artsakh once again under siege, Australia and the world must stand with the Armenian people against any repeats of aggression or oppression. I will continue to stand with my community and the Armenian community across New South Wales and Australia towards those essential principles.

WERRIS CREEK FIRE AND RESCUE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing) (22:28): In every rural community, you will find a group of dedicated, hardworking and self-sacrificing men and women. They are men and women who contribute to the safety and wellbeing of their community, not for financial gain but out of the sense of community service and helping their neighbour. Being a firefighter is a very special job, and the men and women of Werris Creek Station 496 and the Werris Creek Rural Fire Brigade are very special people. From train drivers to tradies, the Werris Creek Fire and Rescue team are a melting pot of skills and experiences, all bringing their own knowledge and expertise to the role. That is what makes our emergency service personnel so special. They do this because they love their communities. They want to serve. They do this because they know they have the skills to help their neighbours. That is why it was so important that I took our emergency services Minister, Steph Cooke, to Werris Creek on Friday 16 September to visit our firefighters.

Captain Shawn Cain met us at the entrance of the heritage-listed Station 496 at Werris Creek. He took the Minister and I on a tour of the station, showing us where they squeeze their trucks through the main entrance, where they get ready and where they have a cuppa. It was great to sit with the crew and share afternoon tea with them: a full spread of wraps, homemade rocky road biscuits and, of course, Saos, tomato and cheese—and onion, as Captain Cain likes it. We talked all things Fire and Rescue and discussed the role of the Werris Creek crew.

Because the role of a firefighter in rural and regional New South Wales has changed, our firefighters do much more than put out fires. They are what I like to call a community support unit. If the Werris Creek community is ever in need, the men and women of Fire and Rescue respond. Whether it is through fires or a range of emergencies, the team are first on the scene, doing what they can to support the community and doing it well—preventing potential loss of life and property. They may be required to be on call day and night, but they front up time and again because they love their community and they care.

I thank Captain Shawn Cain, Deputy Captain Brianne Atkins and their team for the work they do for their community. I pay tribute to the men and women of the Werris Creek Rural Fire Brigade, who also provide critical support, care and compassion to the Werris Creek community. It was great for the Minister to also visit our RFS team on Friday. We heard stories of the Black Summer bushfires, just a couple of years ago, when members travelled across New South Wales to support the communities worst hit. We heard stories again of RFS members going above and beyond and travelling to help their neighbours. When one person said, "What are you blokes doing here?", another replied, "I saw some smoke. I thought you might need some help."

We heard stories of people waking up in the middle of the night to attend a motor vehicle accident or help a family affected by flooding, putting others above themselves. Whether it is through fire or flood, storm or car accident, RFS members are always there, ensuring that their community is supported in times of need. I give sincere thanks to Superintendent Paul McGrath and Captain Greg Gillies and his dedicated, professional team. It was great to catch up on Friday afternoon. I thank Werris Creek Fire and Rescue and the RFS members for hosting us during that day. I also thank the Minister for taking the time to meet our crews. I say thank you to our emergency service workers and our firefighters for the work they do supporting us. I am looking forward to working with them well into the future to see what can be done to better support them and the wonderful Werris Creek community.

NEWCASTLE WORLD PRIDE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (22:32): The exciting news that Sydney will be hosting World Pride has got even better, with Newcastle to be the location of the satellite event the Pink Salt outdoor long table dinner. I could not think of a better city to host a satellite event, especially as the Word Pride festival coincides with the fifth birthday of local organisation Newcastle Pride. Newcastle Pride is going from strength to strength. Established in 2018, Newcastle Pride's growth sees its members foster an inclusive and proud LGBTQIA+ community across the entire Hunter region.

In fact, the members are now travelling so far that they needed their own van to be able to transport equipment. I was pleased that I could support that purchase with a Community Building Partnership grant. I am certain that the van will get a workout next month during Newcastle Pride Festival, which is back after two years of COVID cancellations. It will be awesome, with parties, formal events, performances, bike rides, a gin blending class and a fair day—which I will be going to. I know for certain that the festival will be embraced, because that is what we do in Newcastle. After all, it is the place that returned the most resounding yes to same-sex marriage in New South Wales, outside of Sydney.

Supporting LGBTQIA+ people is about more than fun and the fun stuff, though. It also means supporting the services that provide tailored care for members of that community. ACON also has a presence in Newcastle, providing a massive range of health services for people of diverse sexualities and genders. We are also very fortunate in Newcastle to have Maple Leaf House, which provides gender-affirming care for trans and gender-diverse young people and is a health service that has bipartisan support. Newcastle will always be a place where people of diverse sexualities and genders are welcome and wanted.

WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE HEALTH AND HOUSING

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (22:34): As the Fifty-Seventh Parliament comes to an end, I update the House on the challenges now facing the Wagga Wagga electorate. It has been a tumultuous period, with severe drought, catastrophic bushfires, floods and the once-in-a-century pandemic. However, it has been a period of achievement and advocacy, and we must now keep working for our future. Tonight I speak about the issues of health and housing. As the recent rural health inquiry so manifestly demonstrated, health care remains a key concern for rural communities. In particular, the situation with a lack of health workforce has become dire. Health

workers across the electorate and, indeed, across rural New South Wales are desperate. After two years of COVID, the current health worker shortages have nursing, medical, allied health and paramedic staff exhausted.

If we are to fix rural health, we must have the staff for the services we need. Above all, we must train our rural health workforce in rural areas, by rural professionals and for rural people, because rural health care is different to city-based care. We should have a separate rural health department to make sure that we have that workforce and the Commonwealth and State should work together. We should advocate for rural health at all levels of government and we must expand, not contract, rural health services. We have seen energy, commitment and a real sense of purpose from the new rural health Minister. We have seen a division of rural health, a commitment to proper funding for patient travel, a dramatic increase in palliative care funding, and a plan and funding to increase the health workforce. I have advocated for those issues and I am pleased to see a start has been made. However, we must see that work through.

My electorate has seen strong, long overdue investment in health building, including the new \$430 million Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and car park and the new \$50 million Tumut hospital and ambulance station. We have seen funding to develop the first regional health precinct. It is an initiative I have fought hard for. It holds the promise of rural solutions to rural health issues because it will be based in the regions where those issues are. It will come up with the innovative solutions we need to the health workforce challenge. It will integrate and coordinate services and it will research solutions. The work has begun. We must make sure we complete this task so rural people can get their fair share of rural health care.

I now turn to the issue of housing. The people of my electorate have been extremely concerned with the rising levels of homelessness, the cost of rentals, the difficulties of finding accommodation and the struggle for many—including young people and older singles—to finance a home. The causes are multiple: housing shortages, population movements, natural disasters, mortgage stress and an all-time low rental vacancy rate—just 0.3 per cent in Wagga Wagga and almost zero in Lockhart. But make no mistake: A chronic underinvestment in social housing lies at the heart of the issue. According to Shelter NSW, the total number of social housing properties in Wagga Wagga has gone from 1,314 in 2011 to 1,197 in 2019, a drop of nearly 9 per cent when the population has increased by 10 per cent.

Wait times range between two and 10 years and there are nearly 400 people on the waitlist. It is time we increased our social and affordable housing and made it more suitable to today's families and living arrangements. My fellow Independents and I have advocated on this issue for some time, including directly with the Premier. There must be better support for women escaping domestic and family violence. Social housing must come with stronger support for the vulnerable and our disadvantaged young, especially those afflicted by drug and mental health challenges. We must proceed apace with plans to revitalise our suburbs. In particular, the Tolland Renewal Project in Wagga Wagga must be funded and progressed as a matter of priority.

But we also have to improve the total supply of housing. We must remove the unnecessary barriers we have to building. The booming infrastructure projects in our region will put even more pressure on housing supply. The people running those projects must help provide the housing for the workers they need. As the chair of the Regional Housing Taskforce said, "Safe, secure and affordable housing is critical to the wellbeing of individuals and local communities, and to the broader prosperity of New South Wales." The Government has outlined a plan to improve housing supply, but we must hold it to account. We need to press hard; we cannot waste another decade. Nothing less than the future of our region is at stake.

KERALA FRIENDS CLUB NORTHWEST

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (22:39): On Saturday 17 September I, along with the Minister for Multiculturalism, Mark Coure, was a guest at the Kerala Friends Club [KFC] Northwest's Onam celebration, which was held at the John Paul II parish hall in Marayong. It was a lively family-oriented event with lots of excitement and enthusiasm from a group of people who enjoy coming together to celebrate the feast of Onam. The Kerala Friends Club is made up of people from Kerala, which is a south-western State of India. It is a coastal region that is typically exposed to monsoons from the Indian Ocean. Kerala Friends Club Northwest is the pre-eminent organisation for Malayalees—Malayalam-speaking people or the people from the South Indian State of Kerala—in the north-west area of Sydney and has served them for more than 10 years. It has served as the bedrock organisation for all types of arts, cultural, literary and sports activities.

The first time I came across this group was when I was invited to open a badminton tournament that it was conducting at the sports stadium at South Windsor. It was a gathering of people from that culture to play a sport that they enjoy participating in. KFC—and that is Kerala Friends Club, not the chicken outlet—is a registered non-profit organisation and provides a forum for its members to meet and exchange views, and to foster a spirit of friendship, goodwill and understanding. The primary and distinguishing purpose of a cultural heritage

organisation like KFC is to bind the community together by promoting and preserving its identity, traditions and values. It provides public programs through which cultural heritage can be shared.

KFC is a leader in building bridges between various cultural groups and the larger community, and is committed to serving the community through its far-reaching programs and endeavours. In spite of its humble beginnings, KFC has now grown into an organisation with a core group of more than 60 particularly active families and a multitude of other associate members who come along to various events. It has always been very nimble and has adapted its activities to the changing times and needs of the community. The vision of KFC is to develop and maintain a forum for Malayalees to come together to celebrate, preserve and promote the rich traditions and cultural values of Kerala among friends, families and the younger generations in and around north-west Sydney.

Kerala was the home of one of the earliest Christian churches so, apart from Hindu events, KFC also has Christian traditions as well. It celebrates both Onam and Christmas in the traditional ways. Tradition has it that Saint Thomas travelled to Kerala in 1 AD. While there is some dispute about that specific claim, there is no doubt that Christianity arrived in Kerala very soon after its emergence in the Holy Land and in Rome. When Europeans arrived in Kerala in the sixteenth century, they found an ancient Christian community already there. I acknowledge the executive members of the Kerala Friends Club Northwest: Beby Joseph, Geevarghese Kollannur, Ginni Gandhi, Johnykutty Thomas, Jose Sao, Jose Thembra Chacko, Ligo John, Manoj Kookkal, Renjith Radhakrishnan, Renju May Jose, Sandhya Ginni, Sangeetha Karthikeyan, Shaiju Paul Palace, Sunoj Sebastian, Sureshababu Nair, Ushadevi Padmanabhan, Vino Varkey and Steny Sebastian.

The festival of Onam is an important festival throughout the State of Kerala. It is marked by happiness, excitement and enjoyment. It has its mythical origins around the legends relating to King Mahabali, or Maveli. Just like how Santa Claus appears at Christmas, King Mahabali appears at Onam celebrations among Malayalees. He is regally dressed, as only an Indian king can be. He is attended by a great number of attendants and welcomed by drums as he makes his grand appearance to each of these festivals. I have been a witness to that on a couple of occasions at Onam festivals and it is a most impressive occasion. Of course, the other element of Onam is that it is a harvest festival. It coincides with the time of year when traditional societies were able to celebrate most—when the harvest had been gathered, food was plentiful and it was time to celebrate through song and dance. I wish the Kerala Friends Club all the best and thank them for their invitation on what was a very enjoyable occasion.

BLACKTOWN EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (22:44): In my last private member's statement I spoke on the inequity and atrocious distribution of education infrastructure spending, which is significantly skewed to the northern suburbs to the detriment of western Sydney, and particularly the electorate of Blacktown. According to the budget papers, by electorate, during the 12 years of this Government zero additional dollars was provided to the electorate of Blacktown from the education infrastructure budget—yes, zero. But the electorate of North Shore received approximately \$150 million, which has resulted in substantial rebuilds and upgrades to various schools across the North Shore for administration blocks, science labs, performing arts centres, toilet blocks, food technology rooms, storage rooms, the replacement of demountable classrooms, covered outdoor learning spaces and staff rooms.

As the local member said, the Government is "making sure we are responding to population growth". I also note that residential properties have been purchased to expand green school space. Meanwhile, in the electorates of Riverstone and Blacktown, school sites are being sold off, yet the population is growing massively in real terms in the City of Blacktown. The budget seems to be unfairly balanced towards Liberal electorates, with a view to selling school sites in Blacktown and Riverstone and using asset recycling to redistribute that funding to the North Shore. The Government has starved the electorate of Blacktown of any funding for upgrades so that hundreds of millions of dollars can be spent across the northern suburbs of Sydney. The Government talks about the value of education and the fact that it is an opportunity for children to improve, but the Liberal Government selects the postcodes and electorates that it spends its money on. This is an absolute disgrace. Liberals and Nationals members ought to hang their heads in shame.

Even Taronga Zoo received \$113 million from the Government to improve the visitor experience. To put that in perspective, the new Sydney Zoo, which is located in the Blacktown area, cost \$50 million through private investment. So \$113 million was spent to improve the visitor experience at a government zoo, but not a single cent was spent to address school toilets in the Blacktown area, where many of the schools are now aged in excess of 60 years. Over \$150 million was spent to improve schools in the North Shore, but nothing was spent to ensure that asbestos was removed from schools in Blacktown. The Government has purchased new school sites in the North Shore and expanded existing school footprints to accommodate population growth of only 20 per cent of the growth that Blacktown is experiencing, yet sites in the Blacktown city area are being sold.

I agree with the member for Pittwater, the Minister for Cities, who said in question time today that "the people of New South Wales deserve better". I would take that one step further and say that the people of Blacktown deserve better. Discussions with teachers across Blacktown have also raised concerns about teacher shortages. It is not unusual for 20 per cent of classes to not have a regular teacher present. It is clearly concerning that there are not enough casual replacement teachers available to cover those classes. Many of those students are shared across other classes or year groups or placed in the library with their workbooks. Schools have reported that some students are up to their sixth workbook. So we get no facility upgrades and teacher shortages are wreaking havoc on student learning. How can a student in the electorate of Blacktown have any chance of fulfilling their full potential?

We have wonderfully committed teachers, and many are starting at five in the morning and often working back until 10 at night. The teacher shortage has resulted in support classes being cancelled from time to time and requiring students to be placed in other classes. That disrupts students with autism, causing significant difficulties in maintaining consistency in their learning development. Having larger classes with students who need assistance in their learning also places additional strain on teachers. It is great to see electorates getting additional funding but we need fairness and equity across the State, not just the favouring of some electorates.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (22:49): I put on record my disappointment with the commentary of the member for Blacktown, because when we look at the facts, the Labor Government closed 90 schools across New South Wales—

Mr Stephen Bali: The facts are we got zero.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I was silent for your contribution. You could show me the same respect. The Labor Government closed 90 schools across New South Wales—1,000 or more classrooms—while this Government, the Liberal Government, has invested in 200 new and upgraded schools.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has a right to reply.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: While members opposite make dishonest slurs against our education system and the record investment that this Government has put on the table for students across New South Wales, we will remember that Labor closed 90 schools for our students, including in my own community, and more than 1,000 classrooms were closed. I note that the member for Blacktown—

Mr Stephen Bali: How much have you put into Blacktown? Zero—\$150 million versus zero. You're a disgrace.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I ask that the member for Blacktown withdraw that comment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Blacktown, the member has asked you to withdraw the comment.

Mr Stephen Bali: No.

FATHER MAROUN YOUSSEF

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (22:51): Tonight I speak about a dear friend of mine and that of the local community. Back in March 2015 Father Maroun Youssef and I were starting new jobs. Having just arrived from the Maronite headquarters in Lebanon, he took on the role of youth chaplain and choir master at St Charbel's church in Punchbowl; I had just started my new role as the local member of Parliament. From our first meeting, we hit it off. I saw the passion he had for improving community and the ingrained desire to help improve everyone's life. He spoke in a soft voice, but his intention was clear: to do all that he could to create a success story within our local community. As members can imagine, we would bump into each other on many occasions and even worked together on youth and community projects over the years.

It did not take long for his talent to be noticed in that first year. As time passed, we saw positive changes and clear evidence of his ability. Father Maroun was so impressive that he was invited to shadow the principal of St Charbel's College. As circumstances would have it, he was asked to fulfil this new role in 2016, as well as remaining the choir master. Anyone who has ever been to a service at St Charbel's knows just how important that choir is, and anyone who has ever been a principal knows just how big a responsibility that is, too. On top of that, he had some very big shoes to fill—a previous well-loved principal of the school just happened to be the now Bishop of the Maronite Church in Australia, his Eminence Antoine-Charbel Tarabay. But Father Maroun was not fazed by it all. He took the opportunity to refine his skills and learn all he could in order to make a success of his most recent post.

Father Maroun knew the magnitude of the task ahead of him. He sought out people for advice, not to replicate them, but to learn a variety of strategies from different people. He became a role model to his staff by setting himself as an example of a lifelong learner. Over those years we became trusted friends and, truth be told,

I have enormous admiration for him. After all, he had assumed a heavy responsibility and did not shirk away from the possibilities of what could be achieved. He thrived on the challenge and would always look for further ways he could innovate the teaching and learning practices at the school. I learned that Father Maroun is very much a strategic thinker. He does not rush to a decision; he plots his course in a studied, patient and sensible way. He is not afraid to listen and certainly not arrogant to think that he knows it all. As a former principal, I know that success lies in being able to bring the entire school community on the journey with you, and I saw this in him every single day.

What a journey it has been. Father Maroun has led organisational change through restructuring to ensure that the school was geared up for contemporary learning and achievement. But what I really admired was his shared vision of academic excellence through strategic planning and learning. Early this year, I joined the school community in celebrating last year's HSC successes. Whilst a high level of students achieved in 90s and the highest levels, band 6, what I really picked up on was how much the school culture has developed in the years of Father Maroun's leadership. I especially love the way he has placed so much value on the importance of being a good and well-rounded, caring citizen as he does on academic results.

Researchers will tell us that, if we have a great school culture and look to educate students in a holistic way, the academic results will flow. And flow they did. Father Maroun worked with his staff to create a genuine sense of possibility at the school. It was not easy and not without some tough decisions, but the results speak for themselves. This once very good community school with good results has been able to continuously improve to the point where it is now the highest achieving of the non-selective schools in our local community. This is an outstanding result and should be rightfully celebrated. Father Maroun has created a stronger belief in the students and teachers and the results speak for themselves. The whole school community pulled together during the COVID-19 pandemic and the brave new world of remote learning.

The impact Father Maroun has had on the school is well summed up in this direct quote from members of his executive team, "We will terribly miss a great leader, one that didn't force a vision but rather listened, observed, built trust and drove a shared vision." This is so important because it encapsulates what makes great leaders. Leadership is not about standing out the front and issuing edicts. It is about working together, building the strength of individuals and helping improve shortfalls. It is about creating a sense of shared responsibility and ownership. Most importantly, it is about taking everyone on the same journey. Schools are often measured by raw scores and blunt instruments, but there is so much more to a great school than a great education. The role of school leaders is to develop students into the best people possible so that they can charge the world with skills, confidence and self-awareness. Father Maroun well and truly did that.

Our local community and St Charbel's College will lose Father Maroun in a bittersweet way. He has been appointed to the role of Father Superior within the Lebanese Maronite Order and will be leaving our shores this week. This is an excellent personal achievement. After 11 years as a monk, Father Maroun will assume a senior leadership position. The community is sincerely happy for and proud of him. But we are saddened as a community and especially as the school community of St. Charbel's College. What this man, my friend and a friend of the community has achieved has been quite phenomenal. We will miss him, and we will always appreciate and value him. As they say in Arabic, "Shukran. Allah yehmik. Mein shoofak al arib", which means, "Thank you. May God protect you. We will see you soon."

NORTH SHORE BEAR PIT PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (22:56): As we are on an education theme this evening, recently I was proud to host in this place the sixth annual North Shore Bear Pit Public Speaking Competition. After being unable to host the event in person last year, I was heartened to see how excited this year's students and their families were at returning to the Chamber. I must say they are much better performers than anybody here. It is inspiring to see what the next generation will bring forward. I host this competition each year to encourage our local primary school students to step out of their comfort zones and challenge themselves and take on the risk of public speaking in this domain. I am particularly passionate about this competition, as I have always seen the opportunity for public speaking to resonate and express people's ideas. Vocalising them leads to making a difference.

After competing in several rounds at local schools, the finalists were able to present their speeches here in the Chamber. They spoke on a range of topics, including what makes a good friend, what they would change about the world, what makes someone a hero and what they would do if they were Premier. I am sure many members in this place would agree that not all of these topics are as easy to answer and debate at first glance. However, the students addressed these challenging issues head-on with impressive and insightful arguments well beyond what most would expect of their age.

The students spoke with passion and humour, from celebrating our emergency service heroes and environmental crusaders to tackling the cost of living. One of my favourites, which I must pass on to the Minister for Health, was installing chocolate fountains in hospitals in New South Wales. They said that would improve mental health and wellbeing through endorphins. As a lover of chocolate, I must agree. It was remarkable to see how clear and articulate they were in their delivery, speaking with such confidence and surety. I congratulate our winner and runner-up from stage two. The winner, Mila Apps from Middle Harbour Public School, spoke on what makes a good friend, and the runner-up, Andrew Micallef from St Aloysius' College, spoke on the same topic. Congratulations to our stage three winner and runner-up. The winner, Oliver Lee from St Aloysius College, spoke on "What I would do if I were Premier". The runner-up, Ruby Cameron from Middle Harbour Public School, spoke on "What I think makes someone a hero".

Congratulations to all our speakers, who did an incredible job with their speeches. Well done to all our finalists: Kabir Khaira and Erol Jackson from Neutral Bay Public School, Bethany Hickson and Archie Lund from Marist College St Mary's campus, Mitchell Ward and Harley Collier from Mosman Preparatory School, Scotch O'Connor and Jasmine Larcher from Sacred Heart Mosman, Billie McConkey and Mackenzie Maher from Blessed Sacrament Clifton Gardens, Amalie Ruberry and Aurelia Stewart from Mosman Public School, Andrew Micallef and Oliver Lee from St Aloysius College, and Ruby Cameron and Mila Apps from Middle Harbour Public School. All the students showed incredible courage and talent, standing up before a full audience in this place and a live stream going out across the community, delivering intelligent and articulate arguments. It was a testament to the effort that has been put in—particularly by their schools, the teaching staff and their wonderful families—and to their own outstanding abilities.

I also thank and recognise the three judges, who gave of their time freely but also had an incredibly agonising job of picking from the pool of memorable speeches. After hearing those speeches, there would have been some very challenging deliberations. I am glad that I got to sit in the Speaker's chair, rather than having to adjudicate. I say a special thankyou to our very own Serjeant-at-Arms, Simon Johnston, who joined us; the *North Shore Living* editor, Stephanie Aikins; and James Mullan from the *North Sydney Sun*. I thank the Parliament staff who assisted on the day, including the catering team and the front desk staff. I particularly thank Peter Tuziak, who engaged our students in a wonderful mock session where they debated the sensitive issue that he raised, "Kids should not have to clean their room". I think at the end of the day those who proposed that motion were successful, to the chagrin of all of the parents watching in the Chamber and at home.

I particularly thank my electorate office team. There is a lot of work that goes into this. We do it every year and it is incredibly special. All the schools across the community are involved for many months in advance. The event would not have been possible without them. I say a special thankyou to Emily Pavey on my team, who took the lead in organising this year's event. I thank all the school staff and teachers who assisted in running this event at the school level. We know that the last couple of years have been particularly challenging for our school staff and our schoolteachers. For them to continue to be invested in this initiative is really motivating for me to continue to pursue and expand this initiative locally. The amount of effort required from them really shows that they do value it, so I thank them for all their work. I especially thank the friends and family who joined us on the day. Public speaking is a powerful and valuable tool, and it needs to be used even more by young people whose voices are not heard enough. I look forward to hosting next year's competition—hopefully, here again in this place—and hearing more incredible insights from our primary school students.

CITY OF CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN MAYOR KHAL ASFOUR

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (23:02): It is exceptionally difficult for me to have to raise this matter in the House and, effectively, to have to rebuke the Labor Party or, more poignantly, the New South Wales right's recent decision to endorse the mayor of the City of Canterbury Bankstown council, Khal Asfour, to represent the great Australian Labor Party on the Legislative Council ticket. Candidacy for such a privileged position, you would expect, warrants comprehensive scrutiny, particularly given Labor's recent ICAC woes and the well-documented ICAC findings against former Ministers, which marred the last New South Wales Labor Government. Former Premier Nathan Rees is giving evidence tomorrow against a former member of the Legislative Council and Minister, Ian Macdonald, in the Supreme Court. Tonight, I raise my legitimate and longstanding concerns regarding Asfour's character and his unprincipled actions in furthering the interests of developers and identities, in particular Eddie Obeid, who went to his wedding, adorning him with a generous gift, as Asfour boasted at the time, and remained steadfastly committed to ensuring Asfour would be mayor throughout the period of redeveloping the landholdings in Bankstown.

Here are the facts. In 2012, Redpoc submitted an expression of interest to Bankstown city council to redevelop the West Terrace car park. To understand this, it is imperative to note that Southern Terrace Properties Pty Ltd, formerly known as Restwell Properties Pty Ltd and Redpoc Pty Limited, owns the lucrative neighbouring site Bellevue Venue, which is next to the Bankstown train station. This is a company that Eddie Obeid and Walhan

Wehbe established in 1987. In 1993, Eddie transferred his half of the shares to his son, Paul Obeid, for \$1. In 2017, Paul Obeid transferred his shares to his brother-in-law and Obeid corporation financial controller, Hassam Achie, also for \$1. In 2018, Hassam Achie sold his shares to Walhan Wehbe for \$1 in what can only be described as the sale of the century. In 2018, Canterbury Bankstown council adopted the Bankstown CBD renewal strategy, which set out council's direction for its existing property assets. In that report, it was proposed that the West Terrace car park be converted into a redevelopment.

In 2021, the Bankstown City Centre Master Plan resulted in significant discrepancies in planning controls between sites. The site of the Bellevue Venue is the highest proposed building height in the southern part of Bankstown CBD, a whopping 25 storeys being earmarked. Neighbouring sites are only approved for 22 storeys or lower. This is despite all of these properties having the same planning controls in 2015 as the Bellevue Venue: V2 zoning. Similarly, the building on the corner of Restwell Street and Stanley Street, Bankstown—previously V2 zoning—is proposed for a lesser 18 storeys. During my time as mayor, I refused to sell the West Terrace car park. Asfour, on the other hand, had a different plan.

What is most alarming is that in 2015 the West Terrace car park was characterised as V2 zoning, a zoning that permitted 38 metres—very valuable land for ratepayers. Now, in 2022, the space is reclassified as open space. Council is prepared to forego very valuable land in the CBD instead of seeking its full value for the benefit of the ratepayers it has rendered it virtually worthless for. This must be investigated. No-one can claim they did not know about my concerns and misgivings about this man. I have either written or raised matters in meetings. I remember raising my concerns early on with Jamie Clements, who was, unsurprisingly, uninterested. But I thought Bob Nanva, tasked with the challenge of cleaning up Labor post ICAC, would be different. I met with him on 7 February 2020 at 2.30 p.m. I relayed my concerns about the horrific influence with respect to developers, the pressure on councillors, the unusual party members joining up and the myriad of documents that have been presented to party office and respective authorities over the years.

What has happened in recent months that the New South Wales right believe that Asfour's apparent star quality warrants not being a candidate in a lower House seat within his boundary such as East Hills, but rather being offered an eight-year term on the Legislative Council? Should his name remain on the Labor ticket at conference, it will be cemented by the leadership of our party. And indeed the wider public would have to question what the Labor Party's operation mantra is going to be under a potential Minns Labor Government if we can't deliver new blood that is not tainted. I have never taken a backwards step against corruption, and I never will. The recent attacks against me have strengthened my resolve. I will have more to say about Asfour and this council in the coming weeks. All of this puts Barilaro's issue into the shade. A 500,000-grand-a-year job versus tens of millions—potentially hundreds of millions. It pales into insignificance. Can we truly cry foul of our opponents? I think not.

NEW SOUTH WALES PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATOR KAREN JONES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (23:07): I acknowledge a fantastic member of the Central Coast community, Mrs Karen Jones. Karen is a well-respected education leader and has left a positive and lasting impact in her long résumé of roles in schools and for the Department of Education. I have had the pleasure of working very closely with Karen in the past in her role as the director of education on the Central Coast. Her current role is in the Department of Education as the Executive Director, Aboriginal Outcomes and Partnerships. But she began her career in education all the way back in 1982 as a special education teacher. In her many roles since then, Karen has dedicated herself to improving the education systems to meet the needs of all students. She has led numerous large-scale changes and reforms as a principal, director and executive director, to the benefit of the public education system across the Central Coast and the State.

In her role as Principal of Wyoming Public School, on the Central Coast, she was able to significantly transform the school community. Karen implemented a range of teaching and learning initiatives which resulted in the percentage of students achieving literacy growth between years 3 and 5 increasing from 12 per cent to above 86 per cent. Her work at Wyoming saw her named as the 2003 Principal of the Year by the NSW P&C Federation. After her time at Wyoming Public School, Karen became Principal at Terrigal Public School for a short time before being seconded into a State office position. In 2021 Karen won a Meritorious Award—the Public Service Medal—in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for her outstanding public service to education in New South Wales.

Karen's current role is well deserved, as a result of her strong commitment to public education, with a particular focus on Aboriginal education. In that role of executive director of Aboriginal outcomes and partnerships, she has been able to promote the education of 64,655 Aboriginal students who attend New South Wales public schools. One program she initiated was facilitating partnerships across 16 schools to improve reading skills through collaboration. That resulted in a significant decrease in the number of students performing below the minimum standard.

Karen was also instrumental in developing the 10-year formal partnership agreement between the Department of Education and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. The 2020-30 partnership agreement aims to support teachers and educational staff with appropriate cultural knowledge from the local Aboriginal community so that Aboriginal children and young people will have education outcomes as good as the general student population in New South Wales, as well as feel confident in their own cultural knowledge throughout their schooling. This is a significant example of one way Karen has delivered quality education experiences and engaged positively and genuinely with Aboriginal communities to maximise outcomes for all students.

On a local level, Karen's recognition as the 2022 Australia Day Ambassador for Central Coast Council highlights her positive impact on local students. Some 40 years of service to public education is a fantastic achievement and shows outstanding commitment to students and the wider community on the Central Coast as well as New South Wales. I reflect personally on the contribution that Karen has made. When I was elected in 2015 she was my local director of education on the Central Coast, and it was a delight and pleasure to be able to work side by side with her with all the schools in my electorate. After becoming the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, I was able to expand that involvement with Karen more regularly on a broader basis with the schools across our region.

She is truly an outstanding educator of the highest calibre. I come from a family of teachers, as I have said before, and I have had the privilege and pleasure of knowing Karen personally and working with her. Her passion and drive to deliver the best educational outcomes and her ability to maximise the flexibility of the New South Wales public education system is second to none. She is a truly outstanding asset to the Department of Education and it is a privilege and honour to spend time with Karen. In a short amount of time with her one can understand her passion and dedication to all the students she has ever encountered and will work for in the future. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the incredible work that Karen Jones does for the New South Wales education system. I wish her all the best to continue in this role well into the future.

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (23:12): The entirety of the electorate that I represent is within the Liverpool City Council area. I raise governance issues of concern relating to Liverpool City Council that have been raised with me by my constituents. I hasten to add that the Government and I are on a unity ticket in relation to the governance issue concerning advice to councillors and the payment for such advice. The core of the issue is that a cabal of conservative councillors on Liverpool council, although not all conservative councillors, has decided Liverpool council ratepayers should pay for the private legal, financial planning and other advice obtained by councillors. That is a substantial misuse of public money for the private purposes of individual councillors. It also raises questions about why those councillors are on council. If they do not know the difference between right and wrong without asking a lawyer, maybe they should not be there.

In July this group of councillors supported a proposal tabled by the mayor to adopt a policy on individual councillors seeking what was termed professional advice, the cost of the advice being picked up by the council—that is, the residents of Liverpool. The policy was subject to a rescission motion in August, but the same group who originally supported the proposal voted down that motion. The policy is wrong at just about every level. I note the Office of Local Government is extremely critical of the proposal. As currently expressed, there are no restrictions on what sort of advice could be sought or when it could be sought. It is literally giving a blank cheque to councillors' mates to give them advice and then send a bill. It also suggests councillors are on council as individuals rather than as a collective group.

If councillors are concerned about professional advice they have received, they can, by council decision, request a second opinion from an alternative source. In some circumstances that may well be entirely appropriate, and certainly it happens from time to time. That is vastly different to the unrestricted proposal, which allows individual councillors to forum shop to get the advice they want and get the public to pay for it. If councillors want to forum shop for advice, they can pay for it themselves out of their council salaries. Councillors each get in excess of \$30,000 per annum and the mayor over \$123,000. They can pay for it themselves if they really want.

No other council has a policy like this for the obvious reason that it is outrageous. Local Government NSW opposes it. The Office of Local Government [OLG] has made clear its reservations about the proposal. The OLG has issued guidelines for the payments of expenses for mayors and councillors. The guidelines must be complied with by councils. The Liverpool proposal seems to go beyond the guidelines. The Office of Local Government says it will monitor this closely. Should this proposal proceed and be in breach of the guidelines and thus the Act, I urge the Office of Local Government to pursue recovery proceedings against the councillors concerned, presumably as a surcharge under section 435 of the Act.

The truth, I suspect, is that this particular cabal is consistently getting professional advice that it does not like. Believing that it should not have to obey the rules, it is trying to find ways to get around the rules. After all, this is the group whose first action after the last council election was to sack the then general manager, who had a reputation for following the rules and for giving frank and fearless advice. Three of the councillors who voted to sack him were new to the council and they had not actually worked with him. The proponents of this nonsense argue that directors of corporations can get individual professional advice and therefore councillors should as well. Perhaps those councillors have images of themselves as wolves of Wall Street or high-flying corporate heavyweights. They are not. They should not waste council funds on private expenses.

The issues faced by the directors of corporations have far more significant legal consequences and complexities than those faced by councillors, and they are governed by different legal structures—completely different legislation. The sort of advice allowed for directors is, in fact, dramatically less than what is allowed for in this council proposal. Another governance failure at Liverpool relates to a quite preposterous proposal to spend, reportedly, \$25 million to purchase a site for another council depot on Cowpasture Road. The majority group on council are engaged in a restructure process to allegedly reduce debt through reducing staff numbers, conditions and remuneration. Yet at the same time they are spending \$25 million on a site that currently does not make much of a return to the current owner. The current owner, whoever that may be, must feel like all their Christmases have come at once. Their connections with councillors should be examined and the proposal should be subject to a comprehensive inquiry.

Likewise, there seems to have been a failure in governance at Liverpool council in relation to the connections and meetings between people in senior positions of council and a representative of Coronation Property. Recent media reports have highlighted the connections of Coronation Property. The mayor and acting CEO had a meeting with the representative of Coronation followed by lunch but then failed to make the appropriate disclosures of the meeting. They blame their failure on their executive assistants, forgetting the fact that the obligation of disclosure is on them, not their secretaries. Liverpool council deserves much better than this, especially in the context and in light of the other issues that I have raised.

AUSTINMER RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (23:16): Austinmer Rural Fire Service first asked me to visit its premises in August 2015. At that time it discussed how its facilities were problematic for a number of reasons. The road to the station is very narrow, making it impossible for a car and a fire truck to pass at the same time—fairly problematic. Adding to that, the road winds up the escarpment of Buttenshaw Drive, making it impossible to respond to an emergency in a timely manner. There are no female change rooms. They had to move the lights off the firefighting vehicle to allow the truck to fit into the station. At the time I made relevant representations to the then transport Minister and emergency services Minister requesting that the brigade move premises to land located at Sea Foam Avenue, Thirroul.

I have made continual representations to the Government on this issue since. Under section 22 of the Local Government Act, Wollongong City Council is responsible for providing accommodation for RFS. The council made an offer to purchase the land and has been in negotiations now for a number of years. The Transport Asset Holding Entity of New South Wales, or TAHE, is the official owner of the land and believes the land is worth millions. That is completely ridiculous because the land is unused and not commercial. Wollongong City Council does not have millions to buy this parcel of land, nor should ratepayers be subject to this cost.

The Government wants to charge Wollongong City Council full market value, despite the fact that the land cannot not be used for other purposes. I understand the council has acted with due diligence and met with TAHE officers on site. I thank Minister Stokes, the current Minister, for enabling that to happen. We could not make this stuff up. Now in 2022, seven years later, we are still fighting for Austinmer RFS to relocate to land near Thirroul train station, which is a move that is supported by the council and the Rural Fire Service. We now have a situation where this Government is trying to sell the unused land at market value despite the fact that another public agency, the RFS, is requesting to use the land, which is supported by the council. My electorate is unique. It is in a very narrow corridor between an escarpment and the ocean. It does not have surplus land. Other options have been explored, and the RFS and council keep coming back to the land owned by TAHE as the best and most appropriate place for the relocation.

To date, Wollongong City Council has developed a concept plan for the site, costing thousands. It is critical that the issue is sorted and resolved in a timely manner. It has been an ongoing and lengthy negotiation for way too many years. The fire season is fast approaching. With increased pressure on the RFS to protect the escarpment surrounding properties, it is imperative that a mutually agreeable outcome is determined as soon as possible. The people of my electorate and the northern suburbs of the Illawarra deserve that, but so too do the hardworking RFS volunteers, who for too long have put up with a station that is not fit for purpose. They too deserve to be listened to and respected, and we need the Government to make this a priority over the next few weeks.

FAIRFIELD LIVERPOOL CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (23:20): I recognise Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association, which is celebrating its 100th year as a sporting club. That is a very impressive achievement. During my time as the member for Menai and the member for Holsworthy, it has been an honour to be a patron of the association and to work with it to deliver important cricket facilities across our local area. But it is even more special for me to be asked to be its patron for its 100th season.

I congratulate all of the executive, the coaches and the volunteers for all the work they do. The current president and secretary, Mr Peter Moore, is a strong advocate for the association and is currently the longest serving secretary in the association's 100-year history, as he has held the position for 15 years. I have met with him multiple times over the years and I have seen firsthand his passion for cricket and the association. I also recognise Mr David Millot, who was the senior vice president until this year, and Mr Anthony Ferraro, who is the junior vice president, for the effort they have given in overseeing the running of the competitions with the assistance of their committee members.

The association's team numbers have continued to grow, even through the COVID-19 pandemic, which is incredibly impressive. The club was established in 1922 as Southern Districts Cricket Association and changed its name in 1991 to Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association. The association provides matches in summer for children as young as five years old and all the way to open age players and covers all of the Fairfield and Liverpool local government areas. It provides opportunities to have fun, engage in a team sport, gain some skills and get fit whilst making new friends as well. Many clubs are involved in the association spanning right across the Holsworthy electorate, including the Casula Giraffes Cricket Club, Moorebank Sports Cricket Club and Prestons Hornets Cricket Club. The association provides centres for Woolworths Cricket Blast, junior cricket, senior cricket and representative cricket.

It is fantastic to know that the clubs offer players the opportunity to pursue the sport at a more serious level if they would like to, and as a result we have seen some of our best Australian cricketers come from within the association. They include Michael Clarke and Steve Smith, who both captained the Australian cricket test team. Ben Rohrer, who captained the New South Wales cricket team, started his playing career at Moorebank Juniors, and Jason Krejza, who began at Prestons, also played for Australia.

I am proud to have been able to help many of our sporting clubs right across the electorate expand through funding and grant opportunities, including through the Community Building Partnerships Program, which has been responsible for assisting this association with many projects. That includes \$18,500 in 2015 to renovate Childs Park, \$13,300 in 2017 to upgrade Ernie Smith Reserve, \$13,000 in 2019 to purchase a ride-on mower, \$19,613 in 2020 to upgrade Amalfi Oval and \$25,000 in 2021 to upgrade the cricket nets at Amalfi Oval. The Prestons Hornets Cricket Club was also the successful recipient of funding through the Local Sport Grant Program and other government grants. Through that funding it has been able to purchase new uniforms, trophies and equipment.

I regularly hear the members, the players and the executive talk about their club with passion and pride, and I am sure many stories and memories have been built up over the 100 years. Our local clubs have so much history, and it is important that we continue to support them so they can cater for our local sporting community long into the future. I look forward to seeing the association grow and develop and watching our local cricket clubs encourage everyone to get involved in the sport. Once again, I congratulate Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association for the milestone and thank it for making me its patron in its 100th year.

Community Recognition Notices

TEACHERS FEDERATION SYDNEY SECONDARY COLLEGE BALMAIN

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the work of the Teachers Federation members at Sydney Secondary College Balmain, who continue to fight for decent working conditions as part of the More Than Thanks campaign. I recently had the privilege of supporting their motion to address the teacher shortages impacting classes at Balmain campus and I want to extend my gratitude to every teacher involved in creating better working and learning conditions at our schools. I want to particularly recognise David Clarke, the Teachers Federation Representative at SSC Balmain for his advocacy efforts. Our teachers deserve more than thanks!

LEICHHARDT ROWING CLUB

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Leichhardt Rowing Club and the recent Formal Grand Opening of their new land acquisition, which will provide space for extra facilities to serve the Club and broader rowing community. The Leichhardt Rowing Club has an important place

in the community as one of Australia's oldest rowing clubs that has been welcoming members since 1886. The supportive social environment of the Club provides a special foundation for the sporting achievements of its members who compete at regattas across the country and range from juniors to retirees of all skill levels. I was grateful to attend the Grand Opening and celebrate this milestone, as well as the christening of 9 new boats. I would like to particularly acknowledge Club patron Lionel Robberds as distinguished guest and ribbon cutter, Club President Steven Duff and the efforts of all the Club members who make Leichhardt Rowing Club so special.

MICHAEL AALDERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Michael Aalders on being awarded Life Membership of the NSW Police Association for his significant support and contribution to the police family. Michael graduated from Redfern Police Academy in class 181 and joined NSW Police in 1982. He was first posted to Phillip Street Station before moving to Surry Hills Station in 1985. At Surry Hills, Michael founded the police social club and became a branch administrator for PANSW. Between 2006 and 2016, Michael was an executive member of the Police Association. Throughout his 35 years in the force, Michael served at stations across Sydney including Cronulla. Michael retired from the force in 2016, and since then has voluntarily served on the board and as treasurer for NSW Police Legacy. I thank Michael for his contribution to NSW Police and the local community.

SHARON COLLON - THE FUNCTIONAL FAMILY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I congratulate Sharon Collon of Caringbah South, who won three awards at the 2022 AusMumpreneur Awards for her business The Functional Family. Sharon won gold for Disabled Business Education, silver for People's Choice—Leadership, and silver for People's Choice—Making a Difference (Education). Presented by The Women's Business School in September, this award celebrates Aussie mums who have achieved outstanding business success in the areas of technology, product development, customer service, and innovation. The awards also recognise the growing number of women who balance their business in ways that suit their life and family. Sharon founded The Functional Family in 2017 to support parents of children with ADHD. The Functional Family provides practical strategies that help make home environments more functional and parents understand the "ADHD brain". In addition to these services, The Functional Family supports the local community with a free private Facebook group that has more than 7000 members, free blogs, newsletters, and podcasts. I thank Sharon for her dedication and contribution to our local community.

MAT DUFF - SUTHERLAND DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)—I recognise Mat Duff for his contribution to Sutherland District Cricket Club [SDCC] as president and committee member. Mat recently stood down as president of SDCC after 27 years on the club committee. This included 7 years as president and 11 years as deputy president. Mat played 296 matches for SDCC over a 21-year career from 1983-84 to 2003-04. During this time, he captained 66 matches and played in 8 premierships-winning teams, the equal highest for the club. Mat was made a life member of SDCC in 2009. I commend Mat for the impact his work has had on Sutherland District Cricket Club and the wider Sutherland Shire community and wish him luck for his future endeavours.

GEORGES RIVER THISTLE FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I had the pleasure of watching a Georges River Thistle Football Club [GRTFC] game on Saturday 6 August 2022, where I took the opportunity to congratulate the Georges River Thistle Football Club 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 wish to acknowledge Georges River Thistle Football Club President David Lidgard, Secretary Martin Breuer, Treasurer Trevor Puckering and Terry Lidgard for their efforts in promoting football in our local community. I also take the opportunity to congratulate the Georges River Thistle Football Clubs All Age Women's Division One team on winning the Minor Premiership and commend the Club, the players and volunteers on a successful season. I am delighted to be able to assist in the development of grassroots sports in the Bankstown and East Hills region and as such will continue to support the Georges River Thistle Football Club into the future.

BANKSTOWN WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE "LET'S TALK" EVENT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to attend the Bankstown Women's Health Centre "Let's Talk" Community Event at Bankstown Sports Club on Tuesday 19 July 2022. The aim of the event was to increase awareness of domestic violence and family violence, and to raise awareness of sexual assaults which are unreported to the Police. I wish to recognise the community leaders and stakeholders who supported this event and were in attendance including representatives from Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital and other health services,

Executive Members from Women's Health NSW, and Police Officers from Bankstown Police Area Command. It was wonderful to see the talented students from Wiley Park Public School and my old primary school, Punchbowl Public School performing as part of Outloud's R.E.S.P.E.C.T program. I also had the privilege of participating in a Panel which discussed how to better address community awareness of domestic violence, as well as how we can support the work of our local Women's Health Centres. I wish to thank Bankstown Women's Health Centre CEO Mariam Mourad and the incredible team members at Bankstown Women's Health Centre, Fairfield Women's Health Service and Liverpool Women's Health Centre for their tremendous effort in supporting our region.

BANKSTOWN STRIKERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to attend Bankstown Strikers Football Club's [BSFC] Gala Day at their home ground at The Crest in Georges Hall on Saturday 20 August 2022. I also took the opportunity to congratulate BSFC 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 congratulate BSFC on a successful season with the following teams reaching the Semi Finals; Grade 13 Div 3, Grade 14 Div 1, Grade 14 Div 3 Minor Premiers, Grade 15 Div 1 Minor Premiers, Grade 17/18, Grade 21, MPL 1st Grade Minor Premiers, MPL Reserve Grade, All Age Mens Div 4 Premiers, All Age Mens Div 6, 13 Ladies, 15 Ladies Div 1 Team A, and 17/18 Ladies. I wish to acknowledge BSFC President John Dacciaro, Secretary Mark Merlino and Treasurer Andrew Skaltsounis for their efforts in promoting football in our local community. It is under their stewardship and leadership that BSFC has become one of our leading football clubs in the region.

GERRINGONG RURAL FIRE BRIGADE 'GET READY' COMMUNITY OPEN DAY AND NEWEST FIREFIGHTERS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I would like to congratulate the Gerringong Rural Fire Brigade who recently hosted a 'Get Ready Weekend Open Day' and a community barbeque on Saturday 17th September 2022. It was a great opportunity to meet and get photos with 'Smoky the bear' and have a chat with our local firefighters about how we can better prepare our properties for the summer bushfire season ahead. Congratulations also to Ayden, Dan and Hannah who completed their final assessments and a big welcome to them as the newest firefighters at Gerringong Rural Fire Brigade. Importantly, they all bring with them a range of different skill sets, knowledge and experience and this also represents a fantastic and very welcome addition for the local Gerringong brigade who do so much good work in our community. Congratulations and well done to Ayden, Dan and Hannah.

BERRY BRANCH OF THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF NSW

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the Berry Branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW who hosted a fantastic 'CWA Centenary Celebration High Tea' event on Saturday 17th September 2022 held at the Berry School of Arts Hall. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Berry Branch of the CWA NSW office bearers including the President Marie De La Torre and the Secretary Joan Cooper for inviting me along to attend such a terrific and enjoyable afternoon of fun and celebrations. It was a wonderfully joyous afternoon of singing and various musical performances including the Nowra Town Band, a Parade of Fashions through the decades from 1922 to 2022 and included an excellent historical display.

ROTARY CLUB OF GERRINGONG OFFICE BEARERS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—On Saturday 25 June 2022, I attended the Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise 2022 19th annual Change Over event held at The Mercure Resort in Gerringong. A huge thank you to the Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise Change Over club and its office bearers including Club Service and Administration Director Astrid Quinn, its Youth Director Sue Thomas and its Community Services Director Jennie Hannah. The Gerringong Sunrise Rotary Club continues to do some wonderfully important and selfless work right across our local communities and I sincerely thank them for their ongoing hard work and dedication to helping others and for helping to make our local community a better place. I thank each and every one of them.

KOGARAH'S STOREHOUSE OF COMPASSION TURNS 30

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—The home of St George battlers, the Kogarah Storehouse celebrates its 30th anniversary this month. The not-for-profit outreach mission of the Kogarah Uniting Church, has been providing support in many ways for thousands of people struggling to meet life's challenges; more than 6,000 people a year are helped by the Storehouse's staff and volunteers. The Storehouse provides over 3,300 free food parcels a year, has provided free Wednesday community lunches, offers payment assistance for electricity, gas, water and Telstra bills for people in need, offers case management and support for victims of domestic violence, and has a No-Interest Loan Scheme, providing Centrelink clients with loans of up to \$2,000 for medical expenses and emergency home repairs. The Kogarah Storehouse's popular Storehouse Charity Market offers low priced

items and affordable gifts for people on low incomes. A thanksgiving service to mark 30 years will be held at the Kogarah Uniting Church on 11 September at 10am. On 12 and 13 September, Kogarah Storehouse will host a Charity Market Bazaar, part of a Community Connections Festival, from 10am to 2.30pm. Congratulations Kogarah Storehouse on 30 years of community service for which we are all extremely grateful.

DR GUNU NAKER (CARLTON)

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Sincere congratulations to Dr Gunu Naker who at 78, retired on 31 May after 50 years of service to the St George community, where he has treated several generations of families. Born in Tanzania, Dr Naker arrived in Australia in 1971 with his wife Usha, having gained his medical degree from the University of Bombay's Grant Medical College. Dr Naker first worked as a senior resident at Canterbury Hospital but then opened a general practice in Hurstville. He also operated an after-hours service at St George Private Hospital and taught at the Universities of NSW, Sydney, New England, Macquarie and Newcastle. He has also spent time in Fiji and India as a volunteer working with disadvantaged communities. At the Australia Day Awards 2020 Dr Naker was deservedly honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for his service to the international community and medicine. Dr Naker has been a dedicated GP to the local community and become a friend to many. I would like to thank him for choosing to make Australia his home and for his 50 years of committed service and to wish him all the very best for his retirement.

THE HIGHLAND SINGERS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—A local music group in my electorate, the Highland Singers, are deserving of recognition for their service to the community by providing wonderful music for all to enjoy. The Highland Singers was formed in 1988 by a group of friends who banded together to sing Celtic tunes and has since evolved into a larger musical group that has performed at local events such as Tulip Time, the Bowral Art Gallery and a Christmas in July event. The Highland singers have also been involved in sharing their voices at nursing homes in the area and have used their talents to fundraise for charity. The group has raised money for Can Assist, a charity that supports those with cancer and their loved ones. They have done so for over three decades and continue to do so, having raised \$1720 in June. The group will raise more funds by holding an annual Christmas fundraising concert in December. Thank you, Highland Singers, for serving our community in a melodious and meaningful way.

NSW VINNIES COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT 2022

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—It is the dead of winter. The night is cold. The only source of warmth is a sleeping bag as you try to sleep on the street's cold ground. Or maybe you are spending the night on the uncomfortable seats of your car or the couch of one of your friends. This is the daily experience of over 37,000 people living homeless in NSW. To bring attention to this problem, Vinnies held the annual Community Sleepout in August, where nearly 400 participants in NSW braved the cold to help raise money. The Southern Highlands sleepout was held virtually, where participants, including myself, showed their support by sleeping in their backyard, car, couch or garage. I commend participants for their acts of empathy and demonstration of solidarity. The Sleepout has raised a total of over \$240,000 that will be used to develop and continue Vinnies programs and services across the state. Thank you to all those who donated. My appreciation and thanks are given to Vinnies for their continual hard work. They hold a special place in my heart as my Grandmother Noreen Smith worked with them for many years.

WOLLONDILLY AND WINGECARRIBEE R U OK? TRADIES' BREKKIE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—In support of R U Ok? Day and to recognise our hard-working Wollondilly tradies', the R U OK? Tradies' Brekkie was held on the 8th of September. The event was hosted by my office, alongside the Wingecarribee Shire Council, Wollondilly Shire Council and the Picton Chamber of Commerce. The early wakeup call was well worth it, with 300 early risers coming together to have a chat and connect over free coffee and a delicious breakfast. As part of the event, tradies' were also given the opportunity to connect with representatives from R U Ok, TAFE NSW and access the Service NSW Business Concierge. It was great to be able to thank the tradies' in person and to see members of the community checking in with each other, particularly in light of the recent tragic Buxton accident that has left our community reeling. Thank you to everyone involved in bringing the breakfast to life and to all attendees, including Minister Damian Tudehope and Minister Victor Dominello.

LILY MCQUALTER RECEIVES A QUEENS SCOUT AWARD

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Lily McQualter from the Ettamogah Scout Group, who has received the highest recognition for a Venturer Scout: The Queen Scout Award. This particular award carries an outstanding reputation within the Scouting community and requires demonstrated commitment and completion in areas such as: Adventure Activities, Community Involvement, Leadership Development and

Personal Growth. Lily's scouting adventure first began in 2014, and prior to that her mother was also a scout and received the same award. The award is a representation of her progress as a very active leader amongst other attributes. Through scouting Lily has also discovered her passion for the stage and acting and has taken leading roles in many productions such as the well-known Albury Gang Show. Well done, Lilly, may you continue your journey as one who has reached the pinnacle of scouting as a Queen Scout.

MULWALA - THE EVA MAY FOUNDATION

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Glenys Davis from Mulwala whose passion over the past sixty years has been her charity work throughout the community of Mulwala, the broader region and internationally. Ms Davis created and manages 'The Eva May Foundation', which was named after her grandmother, who was her inspiration and driving force. Ms Davis is a true local who has been assisting those in the community struggling financially, providing assistance from clothing to furniture and those suffering from medical conditions and requiring help with travel and accommodation expenses. The foundation has also provided assistance in Myanmar to help purchase equipment for people living with disabilities and in education for leadership. Thank you Glenys for your generosity and valuable hard work in many communities.

SHARON DEVOY OF HEATON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—My congratulations to Sharon Devoy of Heaton Public School on being awarded the Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Sharon has been named as a highly valued, trusted and respected member of the Heaton Public School teaching staff and community. According to her colleagues at the school, Sharon has worked tirelessly to nurture and educate our diverse student community which consists of many refugee students and English as a second language or dialect learners. Sharon sees each child's strength which allows her to make them shine, working quietly yet confidently with the Heaton Public School staff and community to get the job done. These Awards showcase the wonderful people and extraordinary talent across NSW public education, and Sharon's integrity and hard work throughout her career have rightly been recognised and celebrated. The Award for Excellence in Teaching is given to teachers who deliver the highest quality education to their students and contribute to their professional communities, and I cannot think of a more worthy recipient. Congratulations, Sharon.

THOMAS MUGGLETON-RYAN OF LAMBTON HIGH SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement recognises outstanding Year 12 students who have excelled in their secondary years across academic excellence, sports, cultural, community and leadership. These Awards showcase the wonderful people and extraordinary talent across NSW public education, and Thomas Muggleton-Ryan is a worthy recipient. According to the school, his outstanding, highly motivated and dedicated student with an enquiring mind, high achiever in all his academic endeavours, Thomas has made significant contributions and led improvements to his school and community, through committed leadership in the SRC and as School Captain. Thomas is a passionate, inspiring and enthusiastic leader, who has shown great initiative throughout his years volunteering and participating in numerous school and community events and organisations. I am informed that Thomas has an excellent perspective on leadership, advocating for and respecting others while addressing their needs. He has inspired students across all year levels and their future aspirations. Congratulations, Thomas!

VIV ALLANSON - MAROBA AGED CARE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Maroba Aged Care has been recognised in the Presidents Award category in the 2022 Hunter Business Awards. Maroba's CEO, Viv Allanson is not just the leader of a highly successful Aged Care facility, she is a staunch advocate for the entire sector and has stood up for the rights of older Australians for many years. She has been called a "CEO who never accepts the status quo", and was previously named as the Game Changer of the Year and Visionary CEO of the Year in the 2020 NSW/ACT Regional Achievement & Community Awards. Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic when the Aged Care sector was suffering immensely, Viv was an extremely vocal advocate for the need for additional resources to go into the troubled sector. When the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety released their report titled: Neglect, Viv's advocacy was only spurred on, writing letters to the local newspaper, and standing up for the beleaguered sector. We need more strong community advocates like Viv with her fierceness and dedication. I am glad that Viv's outstanding work and the work of the entire team at Maroba has been recognised in the Hunter Business Awards.

LONGTIME FOODSHARE BOSS ON TO RETIREMENT - PETER MATTHEWS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge chief executive Peter Matthews of Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare, who has decided to retire after more than ten years at the helm of this vital organisation. Peter began his journey with FoodShare in 2010 and has experienced many changes over the years.

The organisation now distributes 1.3 million kilograms of food in a year, relying upon food donated from the community and businesses. It was Peter Matthews who led this service to become the force for good that it is today. He has been driven by his passion to make sure no one goes hungry in our community, and along the way to combat food waste. FoodShare has played a leading and important role in our community with its practical assistance during the bushfires and the Covid pandemic that impacted enormously along the border. FoodShare's food relief deliveries and supermarket have been lifesaving. Peter believes everyone has the right to healthy food and diet and he has acted magnificently on his beliefs. Well done Peter and Team, may FoodShare continue its mission in assisting the vulnerable in our community.

CAVES BEACH SLSC IRB TEAM

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge the Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club IRB team on their recent achievements. It was fantastic to hear that the Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club IRB team dominated the 2022 Sharkskin NSW IRB State Championships at South West Rocks. The Club finished second overall in the point score, as well as a close second in the Sharkskin NSW IRB Premiership. In addition to this success, Oliver Kleyn, Luke Warzecha and Luke Walmsley were selected in the 2022 NSW State IRB team, and Sam Hallet, Elke Wallace-Smith, Liam Kleyn and Flynn Wallace-Smith were chosen to be part of the 2022 NSW IRB Development Team. Both of these squads competed at the Interstate Championships at Mollymook from 21 to 24 July, and each of these athletes should be extremely proud for being given the opportunity to represent their club at this event. I congratulate the Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club IRB team on these achievements and wish them all the best for future competitions.

LAKE MACQUARIE LIFEGUARDS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge Lake Macquarie lifeguards who have been working hard to prepare for the 2022-23 beach season. With the new season due to kick-off on 24 September, the region's lifeguards participated in a number of drills, such as simulated surf rescues, jet-ski operations and quad-bike manoeuvring, to ensure that they are ready for the busy season ahead. Lake Macquarie is home to some of the greatest beaches in the state, with more and more visiting them each year. I know that the lifeguards are expecting more than one million visitors to our beaches this season, so there is no doubt that they will be busy ensuring that each beach goer is safe. The lifeguards play an important role in the local community. I thank them for their hard work and wish them all the best for the 2022-23 season.

KY WILLOTT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge Ky Willott, who was selected in the Australian A Men's hockey squad that competed in a 4 match series in Japan last month. This event was a great opportunity for Ky to compete alongside some of the country's best hockey players and get some further exposure to international hockey. I know that the squad dominated the event and finished as the champions. Ky is an outstanding young athlete who has always represented the Swansea electorate with great pride. It is great to see his hard work and dedication paying off with him now excelling at hockey at an international level. I congratulate Ky on being selected in the Australian A Men's hockey squad and the team's success at the 4 match series. I also wish Ky all the best for future team selections and competitions.

DAPTO CANARIES – U/18'S 2022 PREMIERS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I take this opportunity to congratulate the under 18's Dapto Canaries who are Illawarra District Rugby League Premier's for 2022. The Canaries defeated the Thirroul Butchers by 28 points to 16 at Win Stadium in Wollongong on 4 September 2022 with the man of the match honours going to Jaxon Lavender. The Canaries are a fantastic club and continue to develop the stars of the future. I hope to see at least a few of the under 18's Champions in the National Rugby League in the years to come. Congratulations to all of the Canaries players, coaches and volunteers on a magnificent season.

WARILLA-LAKE SOUTH GORILLAS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—Congratulations to the Warilla-Lake South Gorillas who have advanced to the 2022 Group Seven Rugby League Grand Final after beating the Gerringong Lions 32 to 20 in the qualifier at Michael Cronin Oval in Gerringong, in a game that saw it all. There were two sin-bins, two send-offs and plenty of tries, before the Gorillas were able to hold off their opponents to qualify for the Grand Final. The team and entire club should all be incredibly proud of themselves for a fantastic game and much-deserved win, as I'm sure their coach Tony Grant is. Congratulations again to the Gorillas on this great result, and best of luck in the Grand Final this Saturday, where the Gorillas once again clash with the Lions to decide who will be crowned Group Seven Premiers.

IWHC ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I was honoured to attend the Annual Illawarra Women's Health Centre fundraising dinner on 18 June. This is a fantastic event that always raises much needed funds for the centre and their services, this year raising over \$22,000. The centre works to improve the physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing of women and girls, and advocates for positive change for women in the community and the health system. With a focus on women and girls who are at high risk or have special needs, the centre stands with women in their struggle for justice, safety, and equality. By providing a caring, non-judgemental and person-centred approach to service delivery the centre can respond to each woman's individual circumstances. The centre was overwhelmed by the support from the community and businesses, who donated items and prizes for auction on the night. I was very glad to contribute to the fundraiser myself, winning a bid for a fantastic artwork during the event's auction. I was very proud to support this important fundraiser because I know so many women in our community need the services this centre provides.

ST MARY'S ASSUMPTION CHALDEAN CHURCH

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise the St Mary's Assumption Chaldean Church, located in Polding St, Fairfield. The Church held its Annual Festival on 14 August which celebrated the Parish Patron Day, the Feast of the Assumption. The Church is part of the St Thomas the Apostle Chaldean Catholic Diocese of Australia and New Zealand. The festival included a Vigil High Holy Mass celebrated by His Grace Mar Amel Nona, Bishop of Australia and New Zealand. There was also a procession of the statue of the patron and other festivities. The celebration of this event is typical of the diverse and vibrant multicultural society of South West Sydney and of communities happy to celebrate their faith and traditions.

ISLAMIC SCIENCES AND RESEARCH ACADEMY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Islamic Sciences and Research Academy known as ISRA. ISRA was established in 2019. Since that time it has worked with Charles Sturt University [CSU] and have established a Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation [CISAC]. This Centre has allowed Australian Muslims to study Islam in an Australian University and to attain university qualifications. CISAC aim to maintain integrity in the Islamic scholarly tradition. It also helps enable Muslims to develop an Australian Muslim identity. On 17 August, at the ISRA office in Auburn, ISRA and CSU signed a renewed partnership agreement. The signing ceremony included Her Excellency, Governor Margaret Beazley AC QC, Professor Renee Leon, Vice Chancellor of CSU, Professor Graham Brown, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic CSU, Dr Naing Win, ISRA President and Associate Professor Mehmet Ozalp, Executive Director, ISRA and Associate Professor Zuleyha Keskin, CISAC. ISRA has done very good and impressive work and CISAC is an important achievement.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC COMMEMORATION SERVICE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Victory in the Pacific Commemoration Service held on Sunday 14 August 2022 at Cabravale Memorial Park, Cabramatta. The Cabra Vale Ex Active Servicemen's Club has been hosting this service for 19 years, although due to the pandemic no Service could be held in 2021. The Organising Committee for the Service consisted of representatives from Smithfield RSL and Sub Branch; St John's Park Bowling Club; City of Campbelltown RSL Sub Branch; Mounties Group and Mounties Group of Clubs; Ingleburn RSL and Sub Branch; City of Liverpool RSL Sub Branch; and Bankstown RSL Sub Branch, as well as Cabra Vale Ex Active Servicemen's Club Group. The event was an important reminder of the 77th Anniversary of the Allied Victory in the Pacific and the end of the Second World War with all that means for Australia.

EXCELLENCE IN NURSING & MIDWIFERY AWARD NOMINATIONS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I would like to congratulate my local 2022 Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards finalists. The Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards celebrate and recognise the outstanding nurses and midwives of NSW Health. Living and working through a global pandemic – suffering with staff shortages and intense workloads – our nurses and midwives have borne the brunt of Covid. Despite this their hard work, dedication and compassion prevented a catastrophe. I cannot think of a profession more deserving of celebration for their excellence. Congratulations and thank you to all the finalists who were nominated across NSW – but I wanted to specially call out my local finalist nominations - Beckie Petulla - Nurse of the Year; Kate Frampton, Lenore Maitland and Mary Mulcahy - Healing Heart Award for exceptional care (nominated by colleagues); Hayley Fisher, Danielle Gardner - Healing Heart Award for exceptional care (nominated by patients/consumers or their families/carers). Thank you for everything you've done for our community & good luck for the awards in November!

BONDI PREVENTION AND RECOVERY CENTRE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I was honoured to visit the Independent Community Living Australia's Prevention and Recovery Centre in Bondi and talk to the team of Mental Health Support Workers, Peer Workers and Clinical staff about all the amazing work they do in the community. The Bondi Prevention and Recovery Centre is giving people with mental illness the support they need to recover and build independence while easing the burden on our hospitals. They aim to improve mental health outcomes of people with a severe mental illness who become acutely unwell and prevent avoidable admissions to acute units and avoidable re-admissions following an acute episode. Whilst talking to the staff I was briefed on some of their amazing early successes in keeping people out of hospital and helping those leaving hospital transition properly back into their communities. With hospitals across the state at breaking point and a mental health crisis still lingering from the pandemic it is fantastic to see initiatives like this gaining prominence throughout NSW's Health system, especially here in the Eastern Suburbs. Thank you to the team at the Bondi Prevention and Recovery Centre for all the amazing work!

60TH BIRTHDAY WAVERLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Happy 60th Birthday to the Waverley Historical Society! Last week I had the honour of attending and speaking at the Waverley Historical Society's 60th Birthday Event. It was a wonderful occasion to celebrate the hard work and research of the society. The society's work has significantly advanced our understanding of our local history and heritage – something which is celebrated both in our local community and internationally. There was much discussion of the multicultural history of our community and international pilgrimages to pay respect at the Irish Dead of the 1798 Revolution Monument in Waverley cemetery. The society's work has also resulted in successfully advocating for the preservation of local heritage such as the heritage restoration and upgrade of the Boot Factory, the last remaining examples of Victorian industrial architecture in Waverley. Thank you so much to the Waverley Historical Society for all your incredible work and here's to another 60 years!

CAMPSIE POLICE 2022 OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—On 16 August 2022, I had the pleasure of attending the Campsie Police 2022 Officer of the Year Ceremony hosted by Rotary Club of Campsie at the Chester Hill RSL. It was a wonderful ceremony which highlighted the Rotary Club of Campsie's 75-year service to our community. It also showcased the work that police have done throughout the pandemic for our community. For the time spent delivering hampers and goods to the vulnerable I am grateful. The ceremony was a recognition of service, courage, and dedication to the protection of our state and local community. I thank each officer and congratulate all recipients of medals and awards. Whilst police do not serve us for awards, or promotion this was a wonderful way of saying thank you to members of the Police Force, sworn and unsworn. I look forward to continuing my work with Superintendent Sheridan Waldau and Campsie Police Area Command to ensure our community continues to be safe. I also want to thank Rotary District Governor, Janice Hall, for everything she and the Rotary Club of Campsie do to better our community.

PARRY PARK PLAYSPACE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—Not long after entering Parliament, I began advocating for Parry Park to be a space where families can gather and enjoy their weekends. It bothered me that as one of the most used parks, there was not one swing set. Over time, it has been resurfaced, upgraded with new cricket nets, a walking track and improved parking. On Friday 12 August, I joined Canterbury-Bankstown Mayor Khal Asfour, Deputy-Mayor Bilal El-Hayek, and Councillor Karl Saleh OAM to open the new and improved Parry Park Play space. It is a fantastic all-ability addition to our local community and it is the first in Lakemba. Joint funding from Council and State Government ensured the new additions could happen for our community and I am so happy we have been able to secure this together. It was fantastic to see so many smiling faces, kids big and small, enjoying the new play equipment, bike paths and entertainment. I encourage everyone across the community to go to Parry Park, enjoy the new facilities and whip up a BBQ with their family.

AL NAWAWI CENTRE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—June brought to an end the OzHarvest Emergency Food Hampers at the Al Nawawi Centre. There have been thousands of hampers packed and distributed to the local community. Every week, volunteers have been there. I joined the Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, Canterbury Bankstown's Deputy Mayor Councillor Bilal El-Hayek and Councillor Rachelle Harika, and Cumberland Councillor Glenn Elmore for a thank you BBQ with all the volunteers that have worked hard to support our community. I thank OzHarvest for their generosity during this most difficult past year. Even though the project has ended, the Grand Mufti and Al Nawawi Centre are working hard to keep the Food Hamper Hub, through

donations, operating for the community. Many families are still trying to recover from the lockdowns and with the cost-of-living rising families need the assistance. I am glad that the Grand Mufti is working tirelessly to make sure the Al Nawawi Centre can still provide hope and support to our community. I deeply value the relationship I have with the Grand Mufti and the leadership he provides. It is an honour to be part of his community and I thank him for the invitation.

WILLIAM ANDERSON

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—There is so much rich history on the beautiful Central Coast, and today I would like to acknowledge the rich historical contribution of local William, or as we knew him – Bill - Anderson. Anderson and his wife Dorothy moved to Booker Bay in 1932 and began what would be a life-long effort of building connections for the community. Anderson's first project was building the general store on Booker Bay Road, followed by a dance hall and tennis court. Later they built and ran the local real estate, boat shed and even a jetty. To this day the boat shed is still running strong, with over fifty boats and canoes for hire. Amongst all of this, Anderson still had time for more community work and was a long-standing member of the Woy Woy Rotary Club. It was with joy that the Woy Woy Rotary Club funded and refitted the stone recognising Bill in Anderson Park, and it was a great community gathering to celebrate it's 'unveiling'. It's with pride and joy we commemorate the late Bill Anderson in the NSW Parliament, and congratulate his family for the new Rotary Stonework that has been placed in Anderson Park Woy Woy.

NAMBUS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I would like to send my sincere thanks and congratulations to everyone involved in the NAMBUS on the beautiful Central Coast (and beyond). The NAMBUS is a sensational mobile museum that has been developed and run by Vietnam Veterans, to educate students across NSW about Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War and its impact on our nation. The NAMBUS started as a vision and a dream, with years of hard work, collaboration and a dedicated effort by return servicemen on the Peninsula, culminating in the bus being gutted and rebuilt internally as a museum. Fabulous paint efforts were added both inside and out, along with complex displays of significant memorabilia. The NAMBUS has toured both local schools and those further afield, with return servicemen leading discussions and educational presentations to school students across NSW. After a hiatus of two years during COVID, the NAMBUS is back in action and veterans are keen to continue educating and inspiring young people. Whilst both the bus and the veterans are ageing, the importance of the education and information received by students is unwavering. I sincerely thank everyone involved in the history of the NAMBUS for your generous contribution to our society.

PAINTING THE OVAL PINK

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—It was a sea of pink and festive feels that greeted players, friends and family of the Woy Woy Football Club's Paint the Oval Pink fundraising event on the weekend of 4-5 June 2022. Nearly everyone got into the spirit of dressing in pink – from the players socks to wigs or even a feather boa and I was impressed with the array of pink items in the canteen and fundraising stall! It's a privilege to be invited to this special event to raise funds for Breast Cancer Network Australia. We have all been impacted by a cancer-related death in one way or another, so it's great to see our men's and women's football teams getting together to help support and raise awareness for this important cause for a second year. A big shout out to the Club President, Peter Chippindale, the Secretary, Katrina Hogan, and all of the players for organising such a great fundraising effort. And congratulations to Terrigal and East Gosford for winning the Butler Memorial Pink Day Trophy. Together, let's give cancer the boot!

MULTICULTURAL SENIORS ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—For a decade, the Multicultural Seniors Association has consistently providing a warm and welcoming space for our multicultural residents. MSA is a non-profit organisation run entirely by volunteers seeking to support elderly residents of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The association connects these seniors to resources and helps them develop social connections within their communities. Over the last 10 years, MSA has built strong ties within the multicultural hub of the Inner West. In recognising the rich cultural diversity of the area, MSA facilitates weekly community services in both Marrickville and Ashfield. These include ballroom dance classes held at Marrickville Town Hall as well as choir rehearsals at Ashfield's Presbyterian Church. I extend my sincere gratitude to MSA for providing these services and congratulate the association for its 10th year in operation. MSA certainly has an exceptional decade behind it and I look forward to seeing the organisation continue to grow and help seniors in the Inner West for years to come.

HURLSTONE PARK WANDERERS FAMILY FUN DAY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to the Hurlstone Park Wanderers Football Club for a fantastic season this year! The Wanderers are a community-based club run entirely by football-loving volunteers in the area. The club displays strong, inclusive values and have been an active force in bringing the Hurlstone Park community together. On Saturday 3 September, the club hosted its 2022 Family Fun Day following some smashing end of season results. Families were invited to enjoy a free sausage sizzle and participate in fun games for the kids. Between the club's End of Season presentations, families also caught sightings of the club mascot, Hurlo the Lion. Thank you to the young volunteers who made the Family Fun Day possible: Briana Wong, Killian Douglas, Rato Byrne, Mali Stevens and Bronwyn O'Callaghan. Finally, a huge congratulations to the Wanders 12/5s team for winning their grand final and bringing it home!

DULWICH HILL ART TRAIL 2022

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The Dulwich Hill Art Trail took place on the weekend of 17th and 18th of September, covering the suburb's streets with brilliant community creations. Initially hosted as a distraction from the 2021 lockdown, the first Art Trail was a huge success, prompting a follow up event in 2022 - this year to simply celebrate the inventiveness of the Dulwich Hill area. It was a fun and free event aimed to shine a spotlight on the suburb's creative flair. Residents were invited to display all kinds of homemade artworks outside their houses and apartment blocks. This year over 20 stops were registered ahead of the weekend display, allowing residents to map out fun and exciting routes during their explorations. All in all, the Art Trail was an excellent opportunity for the Dulwich Hill community to get inspired, creative and active. I thank Claire West for organising last weekend's festivities and also extend appreciation to all the households that participated in this event and showed off their lovely artworks.

5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COOPERNOOK OP SHOP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I recognise the Coopernook Op Shop that recently celebrated the significant milestone of five years of operation on September 27. This volunteer run, not-for-profit organisation was formed by the Lower Manning Uniting Church in 2017. Their objective of connecting and serving the community, within the Lower Manning area, through a quality "op shopping" experience has seen the doors open three days per week. I commend the following dedicated volunteers from Coopernook, Moorland, Harrington and Lansdowne: Mrs Verlie McKay, Mrs Dawn Ruprecht, Mrs Aimee Wilson, Mrs Carol Millar, Mr Simon Millar, Mrs Kim Pavitts Di Harvey, Mrs Gwen Issac, Mrs Pat Bean, Mrs Helen O'Connor, Ms Natalie Armstrong, Mrs Marianne Enright, Mrs Karen Rock and coordinator Ms Elaine Windred. These exceptional people devote hours to ensuring that the donations are sorted making sure quality items are available for resale while aligning their activities with recycling, re-using, re-purposing. Coopernook Op shop also support other local organisations including supplying unwanted fabrics for handmade floor rugs and providing toiletries distributed by Orange Sky. I congratulate these wonderful volunteers and acknowledge five years of supporting the community by putting the 'opportunity' into the Coopernook Op Shop.

LACHLAN MICALOS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I recognise Hastings Secondary College student Lachlan Micalos for his selection to umpire the Combined High Schools [CHS] Netball competition. Lachlan recently represented the North Coast in a three-day tournament overseeing State and National elite athletes all competing in the CHS Netball championships. During the tournament Lachlan was awarded 'Umpire of the Tournament' and the 'Most Improved Umpire' for his unmatched adjudicating skills. A young man experienced at all levels of competition, Lachlan is literally having a stella year of umpiring after being awarded his National B Badge from the Hastings Valley Netball Association for setting the standard of umpiring. Recognised for his talent and sharpness on the court, Lachlan's recent success will now see him umpire the Tri Series Tournament to be held in Sydney as part of the Open CHS Team where the elite players from Catholic and Independent Schools compete for the ultimate prize. Although umpiring is Lachlan's passion, he is also quite gifted as a player and this was evident in his selection in the U15 Team and his representative level participation in Canberra at the Australian All Schools Netball Championships. Congratulations Lachlan.

STEVE WILLDERN – COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I recognise a local hero from Port Macquarie Steve Willdern on receiving a Commendation for Brave Conduct from Governor-General David Hurley recognising his involvement in supporting a neighbour through a life-threatening situation on 3rd November 2016. Mr Willdern was recognised for his bravery and swift actions that saved his neighbour Dr Angela Jay from an attacker who had stabbed her 11 times and doused her with petrol. Mr Willdern heard his neighbour screaming and leapt to action grabbing a small pinch bar to fend off the assailant and take her to the safety of his garage until ambulance

and police arrived. Fast-forward six years, Mr Willdern was honoured in August for the prestigious Commendation for Brave Conduct with Governor General David Hurley acknowledging "The awards recognise people who, in a moment of peril, were selfless and brave. Confronted with danger, they chose to help others." Previously Mr Willdern was awarded an NSW Police Commendation for his selfless and brave act to save a life. A role model in our community, I thank Mr Willdern for his outstanding act of bravery and courage which saved a precious life in our community.

ROTARY CLUB OF INGLEBURN

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—Ingleburn Rotary Club has been recognised for its RU OK youth mental health initiative. The club donated a \$350 grant to four local schools: Sarah Redfern High School, Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Passfield Park School, and The Grange Public School. The initiative promoted mental wellbeing, connection and hope following Covid-19 lockdowns. Passfield Park School used the grant to create a YouTube video and care packages for its students and carers. The Grange Public School made care packages for its kindergarten students. Hurlstone Agricultural High School and Sarah Redfern High School promoted wellbeing among students through social media, Spotify playlists and a podcast featuring uplifting messages. The initiative was well-received, and Ingleburn Rotary took out the award for best youth project at the 2022 District 9675 changeover dinner. Rotary District 9675 includes 60 clubs in the metropolitan area. Ingleburn Rotary also won the District Award for Best Community Project for its 'Books to Change Lives' project that has donated 2,000 books for Passfield Park School's new library. Congratulations to Ingleburn Rotary on these wonderful initiatives making a positive difference in the lives of young people.

RAINER WHITE HORSEBALL WORLD CUP

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to congratulate 14 year old Junee local Rainer White on her selection as part of the Under 16's Australian Team at the 2022 Horseball World Cup in France. This sport is fairly new and emerging, created 30 years ago, it combines elements of polo, rugby, netball, and basketball while players ride on horseback. Two teams of four players work together to pass a ball that is fitted with 3 handles to score in hoops. Players must slide from the saddle to collect the ball when it's dropped, and the small size of the pitch makes apparent the requirement of possessing a superior ability on horseback. Rainer has been playing horseball for the past two and a half years and finds the team environment to be her favourite aspect. She has been riding horses and competing in horse sports such as polocrosse since she was four years old and will be a formidable opponent in the upcoming World Cup. Once again, I would like to congratulate Rainer on her selection to represent Australia in this sport. I am sure you will do Junee, the Cootamundra electorate, and the whole of Australia proud.

YOUNG MEALS ON WHEELS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I would like to congratulate Meals on Wheels in Young which has been successfully operating in Young for 59 years and deliver meals every single day, all year-round. National Meals on Wheels Day was also held last month on 31 August in recognition of the dedication, commitment, and resilience of over 45,000 volunteers who tirelessly support vulnerable members of the Australian community at over 590 service locations. I too would like to recognise the significant efforts that Jenny Rea, Service Coordinator of Meals on Wheels and all of the wonderful volunteers for the work they do in my local community, their efforts are greatly appreciated and don't go unnoticed. Other services provided by Meals on Wheels include regular social outings arranged in conjunction with Young Community Transport including the monthly "Meet and Eat", social bus outings, information days and welfare checks on clients. Volunteers are always needed in every community and Young is no exception. Once again, I would like to thank every individual, who donates their time not just for Meals on Wheels but for any community group or organisation.

CSU GRADUATES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)—I extend a huge congratulations to two residents of the Narrandera Shire who have recently graduated from the Charles Sturt University. Mr Rob McLay and Ms Emma Charles were among the 770 students who graduated from 2020 and 2021 celebrating their graduation from Charles Sturt University. Rob graduated with a Master of Secondary Education and Emma with a Bachelor of Education Technology. Rob is working at Wagga High School and Emma has returned to Narrandera and is working at Narrandera High School.

I commend both Rob and Emma for their tremendous commitments to their education and for sticking with their dreams throughout the Covid Pandemic. The Bachelor of Education (Technology and Applied Studies) program offers the opportunity to select and develop skills and knowledge from a broad range of technology fields. Emma undertook the 4 year degree and gained the experiences and knowledge needed for her everyday

job. Rob with his Master of Secondary Education qualifies him to teach one or more subjects to secondary students and support their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Congratulations once again to Rob and Emma on their graduation and I wish them every success for the future."

WAGGA WAGGA SHOW'S YOUNG WOMAN OF THE YEAR ENTRANTS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Congratulations to Isabella Batcheldor, the Wagga Wagga Show Young Woman of the Year 2022 who will attend the zone finals in February 2023. An additional congratulations to Teagan Colless, the Wagga Wagga Show Young Woman of the Year 2022 runner-up and Gracie Goodyer, the Wagga Wagga Show Junior Young Woman of the Year 2022. Congratulations also to entrants Kylie Wessels, Annalise Robertson, Penelope McMillan and Preshika Wagle. Isabella works as an all-rounder at Teys in Wagga Wagga. On any given day you might find her scanning cattle, grading carcasses, completing administration tasks or moving livestock. Although passionate about agriculture and cattle production, Isabella plans to study nursing at university in 2023. Teagan is currently in the second year of her bachelor of Veterinary Science/Veterinary Biology at Charles Sturt University. In addition to studying, Teagan works as an equine nurse at the Charles Sturt University veterinary clinic centre, a swabbing attendant for Harness Racing NSW and a barrier attendant for Racing NSW. Gracie, a year 12 student at Kildare Catholic College, is looking to stay local to Wagga Wagga and complete her studies at Charles Sturt University in nursing and paramedicine.

NOEL COMERFORD

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Wagga Wagga's Noel Comerford is being remembered as a great man who was devoted to his family, business and community. Mr Comerford, who died in August at the age of 81, was born in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland, just south of Dublin, and emigrated to Sydney at the age of 14. After a move to the Wagga Wagga area, initially for a job as a jackaroo, Mr Comerford later moved into the auto parts management. In 1961, Mr Comerford married wife Maria and they established their own business, Noel Comerford's Auto Parts in 1978.

Mr Comerford retired from the business at the end of 1994, but it continues to thrive under sons David and Shane. Away from his family and business, Mr Comerford enjoyed his football, taking the field for both the Wagga Wagga Kangaroos and Wagga Tigers at different times. Over the years he became involved in a number of initiatives around Wagga Wagga, teaching at TAFE, and helping out local AFL and rugby leagues clubs. In retirement, Mr Comerford was able to spend more time on his interest in breeding and training racehorses. I extend my sympathies to Mr Comerford's wife and whole family on their loss."

2022 WAGGA WAGGA NAIDOC AWARD WINNERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—It was a great pleasure to attend the recent 2022 Wagga Wagga NAIDOC Ball and Awards. Congratulations to Wagga Wagga's Aunty Isabel Reid on being presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Malcolm Charles was named as the winner of the Young Person of the Year Award, while Deb Evans took home the Speak Truly Award. The Caring for Country & Culture Award was presented to Shyheim Little, while Luke Wighton was awarded the Yindyamarra Award. Jasmine Williams was named as Community Person of the Year for 2022 while Rosie Powell and Angelo Galluzzo's company, Prickly Lizard Events, took out the Innovation Award. My congratulations to Megan Norton and Colette Geier, who took out Reconciliation Awards. Congratulations too to all of the nominees, including Aunty Jackie Ingram, Aunty Fay Moseley, Aunty Gail Manderson, Aunty Kath Withers, Aunty Elaine Lomas, Aunty Mary Atkinson, Uncle James Ingram, Tyronne Hoerler, Vanessa Robb, Anna Gannon, Melita Bethany, Owen Lyons, LaToya Terry, Chrissy Harris, Judy Solomon, Troy Pietsch, Ashleigh Pengelly, Shelby Lyons-Kschenka, Dr Elmine Bruce, Therese Reid, Dane Simpson, Jeremy Hampton, Jessica Murray and James Evans. The evening was a wonderful celebration of culture and community and country.

WANGI WANGI BAKEHOUSE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—It is always pleasing to see local businesses stepping up to help their local community so I'd like to acknowledge Wangi Wangi Bakehouse for doing just that. Over the past four years, the bakehouse has donated more than 2.5 tonnes of bread, rolls, cakes and other bakery treats to local charity Southlakes Incorporated, which in turn distributes it to people across south-western Lake Macquarie who are in desperate need of food. The baked goods are also handed out to members of the breakfast clubs at Toronto High School and Arcadia Vale Public School to ensure that each and every student can start the day with a full belly. David Woods and Dale Lewis who own and manage the business say their generosity is simply motivated by a desire to help local people who are doing it tough. The pair say they will continue to donate food every week as long as there is a need for it. I thank Wangi Wangi Bakehouse for their ongoing generosity and their willingness to help local people in need.

VICKI CARR

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of an amazing Lake Macquarie local, Vicki Carr. Vicki is the vice-chair of Southlakes Incorporated and over the past decade she's been a constant source of encouragement, help, humour and at times tough love for the most vulnerable people in our community. She has supported thousands with food, clothing and housing and always goes the extra mile to help people in need. During the COVID-19 pandemic Vicki compiled and delivered free food packs to 21,000 people. Those efforts saw her named as a finalist for the Lake Mac Covid-19 Hero Award in this year's Lake Mac Awards. Vicki has also been instrumental in the success of the Community Hair Project which has provided haircuts to more than 50,000 people in crisis throughout Australia. In August Vicki secured a \$5000 grant for Southlakes Incorporated after becoming a finalist in the 2022 Westfield Local Heroes award. Vicki is currently working on the Share Your Home project which aims to get homeless women and teenagers off the streets and into safe accommodation. I thank Vicki for all that she has done and continues to do for our community.

EDDIE WESTFALL

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to congratulate 18-year-old Eddie Westfall from Morisset High School who recently took out the gold medal in the NSW State Open Boys Tennis Championships. Eddie was the top-ranked player in the Hunter team which remained undefeated during the State Carnival held at Wagga Wagga in August. While Eddie has long been known for his phenomenal talent, his unwavering dedication to tennis this year must be considered in concert with the fact he's also completing the HSC and is a Year 12 Big Picture Learning Australia student. Eddie is extremely well regarded by both teaching staff and peers and is known as a quiet achiever who is always quick to encourage and support others. After the State Carnival, Eddie's coach said that he represented Morisset High School and the Hunter Region with honour, demonstrating amazing skills, sportsmanship and teamwork on the court. Off the court, he demonstrated impeccable manners, maturity beyond his years, resilience and a sense of responsibility. I congratulate Eddie on his achievements so far and I look forward to seeing where his talent takes him next.

CONGRATULATIONS SARAH ROSE – QUEENSLAND COUNTRY LIFE SHOWGIRL 2022

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate Murwillumbah local Sarah Rose on being named the 2022 Queensland Country Life Showgirl at this year's Brisbane Ekka. This is a fantastic achievement after a rigorous selection process. Sarah grew up in Murwillumbah and attended Mount Saint Patrick College before moving to Queensland to study to be a vet. She now works across shows in New South Wales and Queensland. She recently told the Tweed Valley Weekly that it is great to see country shows coming back after COVID and I agree. They are central to country life and country communities. Sarah encourages young women to get involved in their local show as a great way to give back to their local communities and have a new experience. The young women get a unique experience to represent and be ambassadors for their communities. She is already expecting record numbers at the next Murwillumbah show in November this year. We all are working for this. I hope to see Sarah then and join many locals who will be celebrating the best that Murwillumbah and Tweed Valley has to offer.

THANK YOU JOHN MCKENNA – NORTH COAST COMMUNITY HOUSING CEO

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—After 13 years as Chief Executive Officer of North Coast Community Housing John McKenna has hung up his boots and is going to his Fiji home. I know he will not be idle as he has many much he wants to do. John performed as CEO with distinction, leading the lead North Coast Community Housing body and becoming a strong advocate on housing and homelessness in our region. He worked to provide creative ways to address the housing crisis that engulfed our region pre the humanitarian disaster that ensued from the February 28th flood. John served on the Board of the NSW Federation of Housing Associations and the Community Housing Industry Association, including time as chair of the latter, ensuring a regional focus. I wish John well in this next phase of his life. I know our region will enjoy the benefits of his years of experience, skills and knowledge, in particular his unique combination of 'can do' and lateral-thinking. I thank John for his service, his advocacy and his friendship over many years. His legacy is to those who need a safe, secure and affordable place to call home.

KYOGLÉ HOSPITAL AUXILIARY AGM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate Kyogle Hospital Auxiliary on holding their Annual General Meeting and place on the parliamentary record my appreciation for the work they do. I thank the elected executive made up of President Margaret Mitchell, Vice President Elaine McIntosh, 2nd Vice President Norma Wilson, Secretary Jan Harlum, Assistant Secretary Liz Moore, Treasurer Cherie Heath and Publicity Officer Carolyn Barnard. A big thank you and shout out to Elaine McIntosh who was President of the Auxiliary for

11 years. Thank you for your service. The Kyogle Hospital Auxiliary work tirelessly raising funds for Kyogle Hospital to provide care for locals in Kyogle and Villages. They have raised over \$20,000 for the hospital which has helped purchase an ultrasound probe, blanket warming cabinet, shower commode chair, 2 bariatric chairs, high back drop armchairs, a portable wheelchair, anaesthetic cart, instruments needed to cannulation and a blood collection chair. A special thank you to Kyogle IGA for their generous support of the Auxiliary through their community benefit fund. I congratulate these wonderful women and I look forward to catching up soon.

CHARLESTOWN NETBALL ASSOCIATION FINALS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The Charlestown Netball Association hosted 13 deciders, across the juniors, intermediates, cadets and seniors divisions, at the Bula Street Netball Complex in Charlestown at the end of August. Despite rain on the Friday night, clear blue skies greeted the players on Saturday morning—and they played some fantastic netball. The first grand final in years, thanks to COVID-19 shutdowns, there was amazing energy on the courts and amongst the crowd. There were some nail-biters over the course of the day, with CNC Caution ultimately claiming the win in the senior A honours. Caution's Emma Campbell picked up the 2022 Irene Murray Medal, recognised as the most valued player decider, while Renee Keast was recognised with the 2022 Sportsmanship Award. The Umpires Encouragement Award went to Ella Ham, while Alison Prestwidge claiming the coaches' award, and Ella Young was presented with the 2022 Marie Caddies Umpires Award. Although this marked the end of the main competition season, the Charlestown Netball Association will still be busy—and I'm looking forward to the twenty-first Koori Netball Tournament in October.

SAPHI ENGINEERING

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—It was my pleasure to go along to the Hunter Business Awards gala on 26 August. The Hunter business community's night of nights is a great showcase for our region. It is wonderful to see the innovation that our region is producing, as well as the job opportunities that local businesses are creating as they embrace new ideas and technologies—and SAPHI Engineering is at the cutting edge of these advances. After scoring a hat-trick at the Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards in July, scoring wins in the Outstanding Business Leader for founding partner and Director Cameron Owen, the Excellence in Sustainability gong and the coveted Business of the Year nod, Warners Bay-based SAPHI Engineering has been awarded for Excellence in Innovation at the Hunter Business Awards. SAPHI Engineering delivers integrated hardware and software to meet the evolving needs of the international marketplace. SAPHI is leading technical integration for Australia's largest smart green infrastructure project (SIMPACT), which seeks to address heat islands in major cities and water conservation. SIMPaCT aims to reduce ambient temperature and water consumption across 40 hectares of Sydney Olympic Park using irrigation, environmental sensors and artificial intelligence. Congratulations to the SAPHI team!

LAKE MACQUARIE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The 2022 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards were held at Belmont 16s on Friday, July 29. It was my pleasure to go along and celebrate excellence in local business. I had the pleasure of sponsoring and presenting the award for the Outstanding Business Leader for 2022. It had a very worthy recipient in Cameron Owen, founding partner and director of Warners Bay-based SAPHI Engineering. Co-founder and managing director of Jaegersoft, a software engineering consultancy team based in Warners Bay, Vivek Jayachandran, was awarded a Commendation in the category. Charlestown-based Lake Group Strata, named Employer of Choice; and Jaegersoft was named Outstanding Start-Up; innovative Dance4wellbeing won for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion; and Mount Hutton Salon Ten won for Excellence in Small Business. SAPHI Engineering had a great night, with Cameron's win being bolstered by an Excellence in Sustainability nod and the coveted Business of the Year. Congratulations to all the winners and nominees.

COLYN AND HEATHER MCELROY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I would like to congratulate two members of the local community, Colyn and Heather McElroy, who are about to celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary. The pair met at the Rockdale Town Hall in 1959 and were married just three years later. The ceremony was hosted at Carlton Methodist Church on the 29th of September and the couple soon jetted off to Lord Howe Island for their honeymoon. They bought their first house at Miranda in the mid-60's and raised three sons, Brad, Stuart and Gavin. Retired now, the couple now have two beautiful grandchildren, Larissa and Luke. Of course, all marriages have their ups and downs, however the couple has said the key to a happy marriage is making each other laugh, spending quality time with each other and having a deep love for one another. I must say, this is fantastic advice. 60 years of marriage is an incredible achievement by any merit, and I would like to congratulate the pair once again. I wish Colyn and Heather all the best in the coming years of marriage.

SAM DABBOUSSY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—I would like to congratulate Sam Dabboussy, an artist within my electorate who recently won the 2022 Australian Muslim Artists Art Prize. The \$10,000 prize was awarded for his portrait of Lebanese-Australian doctor, Mr Jamal Rifi from Belmore, who transformed the driveway of his home into a pop up vaccination site during the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak last year. Dr Rifi is a highly respected member of the Muslim Community and advocates strongly for interfaith initiatives, whilst founding many Islamic community groups. The painting by Mr Dabboussy holds great value to the communities which have been touched by the work of Dr Rifi. As the Minister for Multiculturalism, Islamic art is so important to our State. It expresses important truths and fascinating stories, hardships and celebrations. I am so thankful for the work that the Islamic Museum of Australia does to host this competition each year. This is a fantastic achievement and one that deserves praise and recognition. I congratulate Sam and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

LUGARNO FOOTBALL CLUB 60TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)—Today I thank the Lugarno Football Club for hosting a night of laughs, memories, and good food at their 60th Anniversary Dinner, to which I was kindly invited. Started in 1962 by four local men who wanted to bring the game of Soccer to Lugarno and neighbouring areas, the Lugarno Football Club has grown over 60 years to a local institution. Whilst the club has faced their fair share of challenges throughout the years, the spirit of volunteering and participation is still very much going strong. Grassroots sport is so important to our local community, as well as communities across the state. It gives both young and old the opportunity to stay fit, make life-long friendships and get involved in this wonderful sport. I'd like to thank the President of the Club, Michael Jarevski as well as the Vice President, Atef Elassi, club Secretary, Katie White and the Treasurer, Tim Roff. You all do such a fantastic job, and this night wouldn't have been possible without you all. I look forward to many more anniversary dinners that I'm sure Lugarno Football Club will continue to host over the coming years.

HANGING UP HER WHISTLE AFTER 27 YEARS ON DECK

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)—After 27 years watching over Queanbeyan's swimmers, lifeguard Julie Lewis is hanging up her whistle. Julie has clocked up almost three decades on patrol at the Queanbeyan pool. Julie will call it a day in March, swapping the pool deck for a well-deserved break. Born in Bangalow and raised in Byron Bay, Lewis has always loved the water and, for a time, was a competitive swimmer. Lewis would later come to the Canberra region when she joined the Navy, serving at HMAS Harman as a leading seaman for eight years. She would swim in Queanbeyan and play water polo for the local side. After leaving the Navy and starting a family, they started swimming at Queanbeyan also. Few know the Queanbeyan pool better than Lewis, who has held various roles at the facility over many years. She started in 1995 as a seasonal lifeguard, then became a duty manager, and when the indoor pool was built in 2004 she became a senior pool attendant. Julie is also a swimming teacher and swim-club coach, and is highly regarded by many in the local community.

AWARDS FINALISTS THREE YEARS RUNNING

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)—The restaurant and food service industry is an integral contributor to the economy of NSW and provides a large number of employment opportunities. Over the past two years the restaurant and catering industry has been one of the hardest hit industries by Covid-19. The pandemic meant lockdowns and loss of livelihoods and the resulting staff crisis has left businesses crying out for workers to help keep the doors open. There has also been a huge surge in the takeaway and home delivered food market. Without a doubt, the hospitality industry has undertaken one of the largest pivots in how it operates in its history in this country. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Thirty 4 Café owner Mert Toplu and his amazing team for being a finalist in two separate categories – Breakfast Restaurant and Café Dining/Patisserie – in the ACT Restaurant and Catering Awards for the third year running. This family owned and operated café, located in the heart of Queanbeyan, opened its doors just as the pandemic hit. There is no doubt that the friendly staff who always welcome you with warmth and a smile, have contributed to its success.

VALE ALLAN HAWKE

Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)—I wish to remember Dr Allan Hawke AC, who passed away aged 74. Born in Queanbeyan, Allan's influence on Canberra cannot be underestimated, whether it was through his role as a senior public servant or as chairman of the Canberra Raiders. Despite his influence, he was very much an everyday man, mixing with footballers one minute and senior government officials the next. Allan loved the Canberra Raiders. His presence on the board created stability that was the envy of practically every other club in the competition. But his success always rested on more than his ability to connect with others. He was captain of Queanbeyan High School before graduating with First Class Honours from the ANU, followed by a Doctorate.

In 1965 he was the NSW Royal Life Saving Society's Iron Man Champion. Allan had a stellar public service career, where he served as secretary of three Federal Government departments. His final government posting was as High Commissioner to New Zealand. On retirement he became the ANU Chancellor for three years, followed by undertaking 21 separate major reviews and reports for the Federal and ACT governments. Allan is survived by wife Maria, daughter Stephanie and her family.

REBECCA MILLER

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise Rebecca Miller of Parkes for her outstanding philanthropic contributions to the Central West community. Rebecca's selfless and tireless work has made a real impact to the communities of the Central West. Rebecca Miller was recently recognised nationally for her founding of The Ripple of Kindness Project with the Humanitarian of the Year award at the Annual Australian Beauty Industry Awards 2022. The Ripple of Kindness Project launched in 2018, raising money and awareness for cancer charities, placing an emphasis on the importance of early detection. In 2021 Rebecca completed a 355km run from Parkes to the Westmead Children's Hospital, raising funds for the Bandage Bear Foundation, Carrie's Beanies for Brain Cancer, the Leukaemia Foundation and Parkes Can Assist. Most recently Rebecca has raised funds to support salon owners impacted by floods to help them rebuild and to continue to support themselves, their families and the community.

CITY OF ORANGE EISTEDDFOD

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the enormous contribution to the cultural enrichment of the City of Orange by volunteers of the City of Orange Eisteddfod. Led by President Meaghan Cooper, this dedicated team of volunteers work year-round organising this major event which runs for four weeks, fostering performance in dance, music and drama. Several volunteers have contributed for many years. In 2022 the event attracted an extraordinary 5,000 plus competitors, many of whom travelled long distances to attend this event which is held in high regard throughout the state. Volunteers meet year-round to organise the Eisteddfod and work to support the event, contributing to the 400 plus shifts for the duration of the event. At a time in our society when our young people are facing many challenges, it is heartening to see an event where they are able to express their passion for the arts in a highly supported environment.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the tireless work of the Country Women's Association branches in my electorate as they continue to fight for improved services for rural women and their families. More than a hundred years after the death of 60,000 infants during WW1 – the same number of deaths as soldiers on the front, the CWA continues to focus on the disparity in services for women and their babies in rural and regional NSW. The CWA is not just about tea and scones. The organisation continues in its advocacy by supporting families during the record-breaking drought, followed by devastating bushfires, then Covid 19. With the erosion of specialist medical services in small towns in our region they continue as a powerful voice. I congratulate members of the CWA in my electorate for their unwavering efforts in bringing to the fore the urgent issues facing rural communities.

MOSMAN ART SOCIETY EXHIBITION AT BATHERS' PAVILION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—The Bathers' Pavilion at Balmoral is currently home to an exhibition from a group of members from the Mosman Art Society. The Serendipity Art Exhibition is showcasing fifty one artworks from August thirty-first until October twenty-ninth. A special congratulations to Antoinette McSharry, Isabel Gaven, Rosemary Christmas, Liz Mather, Pauline Nolan, and Helen Alajajian were chosen to have their works displayed. I congratulate one of the founding members Isabel Gaven who was awarded Life Membership after almost three decades in the Mosman Art Society. Since 1995, Isabel has been an active member of the committee and a loyal and enthusiastic exhibiting member. Membership for the Mosman Art Society is open to all creative artists from beginners to professionals and all mediums are welcome including watercolour, oils, pastels, charcoal, photography, sculpture, and many more. Congratulations to these members of the Mosman Art Society who have been chosen to have their works exhibited, and I look forward to seeing many more local exhibitions in the future.

MOSMAN YOUTH AWARDS IN LITERATURE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I congratulate the recent winners of the Mosman Youth Awards in Literature. The competition, which is in its 30th year, attracted a high standard of entries across a wide variety of topics, with over three hundred and six entries from local schools and across Sydney. Congratulations to the Primary Prose winner and place getters, Violet Bloxsom, Lachlan Heezen, and Roxalana Burton. The Junior Secondary Prose winner and place getters, Elizabeth Boydell, Lexie McCoy, and Georgia Gao. Congratulations to the Senior Secondary Prose winner and place getters, Tara Seymour, Abigail Mills, and Elizabeth Sutherland.

The Junior Secondary Poetry winner and place getters, Arianna Rich, Nour Alkakouni, and Bryan To. The Senior Secondary Poetry winner and place getters, Maia Berry, Jessie Varde, and Kit Vanner. I also recognise this years major sponsors for their support the Rotary Club of Mosman, Mosman Lions Club, Oracle Books Mosman, Northern Beaches and Mosman College, and Constant Reader Bookshop. Congratulations to all the entries on their outstanding efforts.

MOSMAN RUGBY LADIES DAY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I congratulate Mosman Rugby Club who recently hosted their Ladies' Day in support of the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation. With over two hundred and fifty guests, including myself, in attendance at Rawson Oval, we were able to raise over \$13,000 for the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation, which is an incredible effort. A special thank you to all the supporters on the day, Peter Wiggs and Eden Road Wine, Moan and the team at Chargrill Charlies, The Buena Gin Bar, generous prizes thanks to Peter Lind, Artarmon Mazda, Bodyfirst Pilates, Venroy, Orange Theory, Balmoral Boarshed, and City Cave. A special thank you to our MC on the day Melissa Hoyer, and the social committee Tony Sambell, Ben Jev, Mark Evans, and Bryn Pritchard. I would also like to recognise Lynne Crookes OAM who is the Chair of the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation who unfortunately was not able to join us this year. The Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation continue to do amazing work supporting patients and their families in the fight against breast cancer. Congratulations Mosman Rugby Club for an outstanding day, and I look forward to joining you again next year.

CAMPBELLTOWN PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The name of Campbelltown Performing Arts School is a great indication of the number of talented students at the school. Recently, the skills of several of those students were on show during the Ultimo VET Awards. There were 68 finalists as part of the award with six of those from Campbelltown Performing Arts High School. The nominees were: Kimberley Scott-Castle for business services; Lucas Cowan for entertainment; Marli Ashby for hospitality, food and beverage; Nathan Star for kitchen operations; Sorin Szabo for information and digital technology; and Aaliyah Faaa'a for sport coaching. Sorin and Aaliyah were also crowned the winners of their respective categories. Campbelltown Performing Arts High School students and staff also provided the entertainment for the Ultimo VET Awards. The Senior Dance Company and Senior Drama Company were both involved whilst Riley Lattuga also performed. Andrew Dates said the acknowledgment of country whilst Mariah Alone performed the Australian National Anthem. Well done to all those student and staff that were involved in the Ultimo Vet Awards. You did you school and the entire community of Campbelltown proud.

ALFRED CARPENTER OAM ED

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Our state and our nation farewellled one of last remaining WWII veterans recently. Alfred 'Alf' Carpenter OAM ED was a much loved figure in the Hunter and dedicated almost 60 years of his life to his beloved Merewether Hamilton Adamstown RSL Sub Branch. There is no doubt that Alf left a lasting impression on many, many people as a result of his 105 years on this earth. In 1934, aged just 18, Alf enlisted in 56th Battalion Militia Forces despite the opposition from his parents at the time. Alf rose through the ranks quickly, becoming a sergeant by 1939 in what was an indication of his leadership qualities and the high regard in which he was held by his superiors. During the War he worked on anti-aircraft equipment during his deployment and was even subjected to bombing by the Italians whilst in North Africa. Alf stared down German tanks whilst in Greece and trained in jungle combat as a means to fight the Japanese forces in the Pacific. Alf's contribution to defending our nation will never be forgotten. Vale Alf Carpenter OAM ED. Lest we forget.

TRIMS FRESH MERRYLANDS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Joanne and Talal Khanafer started Trims Fresh Merrylands almost ten years ago. Talal first started working at a greengrocer when he was 12 years old, collecting trolleys for pocket money and over the years, with support from their two children, who also work in the business, they built the business up from scratch to now include over 50 staff – including several who have been there from day one. Among the many other awards and local business awards they have won they were recently the winners of A Better Choice's NSW Retailer of the Year Award for best fruit and veg shop in the state. The award is recognition of the hard work of Talal and Joanne and their staff and a well-deserved recognition of the role they play in our community. 2022 marks 10 years since the couple opened their store at Stockland Mall in Merrylands. I congratulate them on their win and I wish them another 10 years of success into the future.

GREATER CUMBERLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 22 August 2022 I attended the "Towards New Horizons" event held by Greater Cumberland Chamber of Commerce at Wenty Leagues Club. Following the compulsory amalgamation of Holroyd Council with parts of Auburn and Parramatta City Councils, the Merrylands Chamber of Commerce

has become the primary council within the Cumberland LGA. The Chamber represents predominantly small and medium sized businesses in the LGA but also several large businesses. I was delighted to join members to hear from guest speakers Mr Chris Minns MP, NSW Labor Leader and Ms Alexis Bowen, 2022 NSW Environmental Citizen of the Year. The Granville electorate has 10,637 small businesses, a labour force of 51,126, the largest small business industry is construction, followed by transport, postal and warehousing, and then followed by professional, scientific and technical service. The top occupation is professionals – who make up 20 per cent of the workforce, however we still have an unemployment rate higher than the state average. And I know every single one those businesses their owners worked hard to stay afloat during the hard times of the COVID-19 pandemic. My thanks go especially to President Immanuel Selvaraj for the kind invitation.

GORDON BROWNE - GRIFFITH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise the late Gordon Browne of Griffith for his contributions and involvement in the Cricket community. Mr Browne gave more than 60 years of service to the sport in Griffith and surrounding areas. Mr Browne first became involved in the Griffith Cricket Association in 1962. He became president of the Association before moving up to become a representative at Murrumbidgee Cricket. There, he was chairperson for 25 years. In 1991, Mr Browne gained the position as chairperson for Riverina Cricket, which he held for the following 11 years. Mr Browne was presented with 6 Life Memberships, awarded the Australian Sports- Medal in 2000 and awarded the Distinguished Long Service Award from Sport NSW in 2017. Mr Browne's leadership in cricket was a gift to the game. His commitment and passion created enthusiasm for those who travelled the journey with him. He was a hands-on president and a great umpire, administrator and curator, preparing wickets and organising carnivals. The cricket community was incredibly lucky to have Mr Browne and will forever carry on his amazing legacy.

MARIAN ALIENDI

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Marian Aliendi and her extraordinary career of more than 48 years as a nurse in the Leeton community. Mrs Aliendi has cared for many patients, helped deliver babies, and has been a friendly and caring presence at both Leeton hospital and at the Carramar Aged Care facility. Mrs Aliendi began working at the Hospital rotating around the wards that were then known as the children's ward, maternity, acute care, long stay and surgical ward. Later in her career Mrs Aliendi cared for patients who became like family to her, in her aged care work at Carramar. Mrs Aliendi has embraced the change that she has seen over her nearly 5 decades of service, and continues to be an inspiration to young nurses or those considering entering the profession. On behalf of the people of the Murray electorate and the Leeton community I wish to congratulate and deeply thank Marian for her dedication, care and compassion for her community.

MAUREEN DUNCAN - WENTWORTH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate Mrs Maureen Duncan of GlenEsk Station, Wentworth. Maureen has been a major contributor to the Wentworth Show for more than 35 years holding various volunteer positions commencing as a Steward in Needlework, progressing to now the Chief Steward of Needlework. In 2018 Maureen was awarded 'Royal Agricultural Society' medal for her valued services to the Wentworth Show. Not one to shy away, Maureen also took on the major role as Schedule Secretary, embracing the new concept of 'on-line' scheduling in 2019 and has continued in that role for the 2022 show. Maureen was recognised with an Honorary Life Membership at the 2022 Wentworth Show for her truly valued services. On behalf of the electorate of Murray I wish to congratulate and thank Maureen for her long-standing energised contribution to the Wentworth Show.

CHERYL LINDEMAN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I would like to recognise Metford local Cheryl Lindeman's long-standing service to the Maitland community. Cheryl picked up an NSW Government Community Service Award, acknowledging her outstanding contribution to the city as a member of the Maitland Women's Cancer Support Group for more than a decade. She is one of those quiet, tireless workers who never claim any credit for, or perhaps even appreciate, their valuable efforts. But, over the past 11 years, Cheryl has been the group's treasurer, assistant secretary, membership officer, morning group leader, welcome pack coordinator, craft teacher, undertaken home visits to members and acted as a liaison with the Morpeth Men's Shed. On top of that, she has organised a number of prominent events such as Relay for Life, Daffodil Day and the Biggest Morning Tea, which have raised much-needed funds to those organisations. Thank you, Cheryl, for your selfless contribution to the Maitland community and I wish you all the best on your retirement.

RUTHERFORD-TELARAH LADIES PROBUS CLUB

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—The Rutherford-Telarah Ladies Probus Club is a not-for-profit social organisation, catering for both semi-retired or retired ladies who are interested in social interaction, to expand interests, participate in activities and outings which offer opportunities to enjoy the company of others. I was honoured to speak at their meeting earlier this year, and I am very grateful for their contributions to many of my community drives for back-to-school resources for school students and the Share the Dignity Drive. I was pleased to see that the ladies have now lent their support to two other community issues that I'm extremely passionate about, the Maitland Hospital's MRI licence and Gillieston Public School's infrastructure. They were very supportive of a full Medicare licence which will enable bulk billing of the brand-new MRI machine at the new Maitland Hospital. They were also very supportive of the need for an urgent upgrade of Gillieston Public School. I thank them for their advocacy on behalf of our community and for the opportunity to address their members.

AARON GOLLEDGE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—In these times of keyboard warriors and social media trolls, it is great to see someone who has used the power of social media to enhance community. Aaron Golledge started the "You know you're from Maitland when..." page on Facebook back in April 2014 and within ten days there were 3,800 members, and with the help of a dedicated team of volunteer administrators Mary Morgan, Johnny PaLooka, Louise Bedford, Tony Teresa and Sandy Miles has now grown the page to more than 18,600 followers. Based on local history, the group captures the nostalgia of many people who have lived, worked or visited our beautiful city. The page provides a space for people to share instances and insights gathered along their personal journeys which then prompts others to join in and share with an online connected community developing as a result. The group also deliberately declares itself "unapologetically positive, inclusive and respectful". Thank you Aaron and the team for developing this unique collective space for that facilitates the valuing of our history, the enriching of our sharing and the continuation of our stories.

RECOGNISING MS JUTTA FILLA

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—It was recently my pleasure to welcome Ms Jutta Filla into my Electorate Office of Castle Hill, in order to present her with two awards in recognition of her continued volunteering efforts. Jutta is one of my constituents, and she is 79 years old, yet continues to volunteer with Easy Care Gardening, a charity on Sydney's North Shore, which provides gardening services to senior citizens (many of whom are younger than Jutta herself!). Jutta came by my office for morning tea, and told me some of her incredible life story, from tales of her native Germany after the war, to how she eventually settled in Australia, arriving here by herself. I was delighted to present Jutta with a Community Hero Award, and a NSW Senior's Festival Award, and I would like to thank Jutta for her continued efforts, and the efforts of all those in The Hills who volunteer their time, and in turn make this great part of NSW what it is.

FRANK PACE MUSEUM

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I recently had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Frank Pace Truck Museum in Oakville, just outside of my Electorate of Castle Hill. Frank is a 'National Road Transport Hall of Famer' and has been assembling his collection on Old Pitt Town Road for many years prior to the Museum's official opening. Frank's love affair with trucks started when he would drive vegetables from his parent's and other farms in Western Sydney, to Haymarket in Central Sydney for sale. Frank would later start a successful egg business in the 70's, and would eventually need a great many trucks to manage the freight side of the business. Frank's love of trucks went far beyond seeing them as mere tools for transportation however, and I understand he was particularly enamoured with the 'International Harvester AR160'. Frank would then spend many years buying and restoring historically important trucks, and now has a collection of 150, many of which can be seen in his museum, including Commer's and Bedford's. It truly is a great museum, and I would like to thank Frank for inviting me along, and wish him all the best.

MR AND MRS ROBERTS 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Peter and Mrs Sandy Roberts of Stanwell Park on their 60th Wedding Anniversary which will be celebrated on 22nd September 2022. 60 years of marriage is a wonderful milestone and I hope they enjoy their Diamond Anniversary. I wish them many more years of fun, enjoyment, happiness and good health.

BRENDA ARMFIELD

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Brenda Armfield of Casino who was recently named a Local Tourism Hero, at the North Coast Tourism Symposium and Awards Gala Dinner.

Brenda is locally known as Casino's "Town Crier" and she gives liberally of her time to help out at numerous organisations within the Casino area and she is a life member of the Casino Show Society and also of the Casino Beef Week Festival. Brenda can often be seen driving around Casino in her green Mini Moke, which she has decked out in balloons, promoting any number of the activities that are being hosted in Casino. I wish Brenda many more years of supporting her local community in her very own unique way.

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY COMMEMORATION SERVICE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—It was an honour to attend the Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration Service at Camden R.S.L. It is important to continuously remember the great sacrifice paid for by those with resounding bravery and selflessness. The Vietnam War was protracted and difficult lasting 10 years. As time passes, we shall not forget that 512 Australians died and that approximately 3,000 soldiers were wounded. Sixty thousand Australians served in the Vietnam War. We must always remember the sacrifice paid for, and always endeavour to lead lives that honour those sacrifices. I thank Iain Richard-Evan, President of the Camden R.S.L. Sub-branch for hosting the Commemoration Service and for the work he continues to carry out. Let us not forget.

MACARTHUR TOGETHER FUND RAISER EVENING – RAINBOW CROSSING INC.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—It was a pleasure to be able to attend the "Macarthur Together" evening hosted by Rainbow Crossing Inc. The variety evening raised funds for disaster relief through the Shining Stars Foundation to assist local families affected by the recent flood events. It is always refreshing and inspiring to see great people in the great Camden and Macarthur community come together and extend help and friendship. The night was a success raising more than \$23,000. I thank Warren Morrison and Rainbow Crossing Inc's Chairperson, Brian Laul, the Secretary Christine Laul, and board members Kylee Bentham, Rolf Fuchs, and Christopher Laul. I also would like to thank all the sponsors of the event.

SENIOR CONSTABLE MARK SCAMBARY RETIREMENT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I take this opportunity to pay tribute to a very special member in the local community of Camden and Macarthur. Senior Constable Mark Scambary, after 34 years in service, Senior Constable Scambary has retired. Truly an impressive act to carry out selfless and dedicated service to the community for more than three decades. The impact he has had on the community has been nothing short of great. Before completing his early years in general duties, Senior Constable Scambary became the Youth Liaison Officer in 1999 in the Camden Police Area Command. He continued in that position until his retirement. Thank you again for your service Senior Constable Scambary, and to all other officers who have served with you and to those who continue to serve our local communities.

TEAM GUYRA - RIDE FOR THE CHOPPER

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Team Guyra who will take part in a bike ride to raise much needed funds to support the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service [WRHS]. The WRHS provides emergency aeromedical services to 1.5 million people across Northern NSW 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The bike ride will commence on September 9, from Dubbo to Tamworth covering the distance of more than 500km and run over six days. Team Guyra consists of 13 cyclists and one support crew, and have raised close to \$12,000, with each rider committed to raising \$500 individually. I congratulate cyclists Leanne Mayled, Mick Mayled, Garry Mayled, Jodi Mayled, Donna Mayled, Michael Kirk, Wayne Jenkyn, John Newsome, Jeni Hinkley, Dave Mills, Jenni Jackson, Pip White, Meryl Zuill and support person Paul Hinkley on their dedication and support to keep the service flying. I commend the Lions Club of Guyra on donating \$750 in support of Team Guyra and to show their support for the prodigious work the WRHS do. I wish Team Guyra all the best on their bike ride and note their commitment to a lifesaving service that anyone could need at anytime.

OLIVER JEFFREY – JUDGING DEBUT

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise well-known Hereford breeder Oliver Jeffrey of Eathorpe Poll Herefords, Armidale, who judged the Hereford section of the beef cattle classes at the Royal Queensland Show in August. Mr Jeffrey put a lot of emphasis on commercial relevance and profitable traits. He said "it was a an honour to have judged the breed he holds close to his heart". Being involved in the beef industry most of his life, Oliver spent a lot of time alongside his family preparing stud animals for shows which saw him go through the Hereford Youth program, attending many junior events. Mr Jeffrey was named one of the Hereford Youth Ambassadors for the 2016/2017 term and served as the Herefords Northern NSW Youth Group President in 2017. Oliver also had success in junior judging competitions at several youth and local shows as well as at the Sydney Royal Show placing fourth in the RAS/ASC beef cattle young judges state final in 2018. I commend Mr Jeffrey for his passion and dedication to the beef industry and his many accolades achieved to date.

ARMIDALE CITY BOWLING CLUB

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Armidale City Bowling Club for its support of the Norm Bourke Box initiative. Years ago the Club became aware of Ms Nicki Scholes-Robertson's idea to make packs available for renal patients undergoing peritoneal dialysis in their homes. These are simple hygiene items yet costly when needed on a regular basis. Armidale City Bowling Club CEO Walter Sauer, the staff and board members have been supportive from the beginning, donating \$5,000 to make-up and distribute the first batch of Norm Bourke Boxes. Nicki launched the Rural Kidney Association in 2020 for those needing renal treatment in regional and rural areas and the Bowling Club immediately offered to support accommodation costs for those in need and a meeting place for the kidney club. I congratulate The Armidale City Bowling Club for contributing to the success of the Norm Bourke Box initiative. I commend CEO Walter Sauer on his leadership, committing the Armidale City Bowling Club to community support and to backing valuable initiatives.

NORMA WINDLE 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—It is with great pleasure that today I acknowledge Mrs Norma Windle of Heathcote as she celebrated her 100th birthday on Sunday 28th August 2022. I trust Norma celebrated this special occasion accompanied by her closest family and friends. I take this opportunity to again extend my sincere congratulations to Norma and wish her good health and happiness for the future.

VALE KAY PURTILL

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—15 September 2022 marked the first anniversary of Mrs Kay Purtill's passing. Kay was a much loved resident of Broken Hill and was not able to receive an appropriate farewell, due to restrictions from COVID-19. Kay is described as a phenomenal person, with a heart as big as Broken Hill. She volunteered for the Far West HACC Service for over a quarter of a century, and her work for the community did not stop there. Kay was named Citizen of the Year in 1991, along with being nominated for the BHP Bicentennial Award for the Pursuit of Excellence. She volunteered her services during the 2000 Olympics when it stopped through Broken Hill and later on volunteered for the Broken Hill Scouts. Kay led a tremendous life and so much of that life was spent giving back to her community. I am sure she will be truly missed. Vale Kay Purtill.

HURSTVILLE TEENAGER SELECTED FOR 2022 SYDNEY EISTEDDFOD KAWAI JUNIOR PIANO SCHOLARSHIP FINAL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Congratulations to rising piano maestro Joshua Zhi, who was one of four finalists selected to compete in the 2022 Sydney Eisteddfod Kawai Junior Piano Scholarship Final on 4 August. This event made its debut last year and Joshua, 15, is one of four finalists to compete for a total prize value of \$6000. The musical scholarship aims to discover talent, and encourages promising young pianists aged 11-16 years to help each grow further in their musical endeavours. The Eisteddfod gives the young pianists an opportunity to perform, compete against and learn from fellow musicians. I'd like to wish Joshua all the very best in his preparation for the Eisteddfod and also for the competition itself on 4 August.

WESTERN SYDNEY MRC

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I would like to acknowledge the Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre for all the hard work they do within the community. The organisation is comprised of passionate and caring individuals who work towards the vision of a socially inclusive Australia where diversity is celebrated. The Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre recently hosted an event which allowed community leaders, staff, and VIPs to come together and share a meal. It was an opportunity to celebrate and to remind them of the connections they have and the importance of these connections. The Premier and I were looking forward to joining them, however, due to the unfortunate and sad passing of Queen Elizabeth the Second that morning, we were unable to attend. Whilst the event became a little more solemn and reflective, I am happy that they still went ahead with the event, and I look forward to seeing them soon.

MS COURTNEY HIGGINS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I would like to congratulate Ms Courtney Higgins, a teacher at Prestons Public School, for recently being awarded a Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. The 2022 Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence was held at Sydney Town Hall and recognised students, teachers, and parents right across New South Wales for their outstanding achievements, resilience, and contribution to public education. These awards are a terrific way to highlight efforts in academic, sporting, cultural, leadership and commitment to school community. It is fantastic to have one of our local teachers recognised at these awards. I think we can all agree that students and teachers have faced difficulties over the past two years with the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacting schooling and learning, so to have their achievements celebrated is fantastic.

Congratulations again to Ms Higgins for this deserved recognition, I know the Prestons Public School community is very proud of their teacher.

PHILLIPS PARK OPENING IN LURNEA

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I would like to highlight an important community event I attended on 3 September 2022. Along with my Council and Federal colleagues, we officially opened Phillips Park. This was a \$16.5 million investment as part of the Western Sydney City Deal which is a shared commitment between all three levels of Government. Phillips Park has been transformed into a fantastic community space with sporting facilities, playground and exercise equipment, a new hall for birthdays and weddings, a boardroom, meeting room space and a coffee shop! There was a community event following the ceremony, and it was great to see so many locals turn up and enjoy the new recreational hub. Whenever I held a street stall in Lurnea, one of the main things I would be asked is for a new community space, so I am proud to see it finally become a reality. I'd like to thank the Council for putting on a great event and am excited to see the community enjoy this brand new space.

GLENMORE PARK REDBACKS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—As the Glenmore Park Redbacks begin their season of cricket, I want to wish the club every success as they take on the competition for the 2022/23 season. This season is set to have the greatest number of junior players and teams in the district. New female players will also benefit from a free cricket kit to the value of \$200. I encourage all young girls to participate in their favourite sports and if Cricket is your thing, Go Redbacks!

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—This year is a very significant year for Surveyors Creek Public School as they celebrate their 20th anniversary. I want to recognise all the amazing staff at Surveyors Creek Public School who work tirelessly day in and day out to help create a high-quality learning environment for their students. Our teachers are the guiding lights for our children, keeping the ship on course for success. To the families that have chosen to send their children to Surveyors Creek Public School, can I also thank you and recognise the contribution you make the school and the whole community. Parents play an integral role in every school and support schools achieve significant milestones like Surveyors Creek Public School's 20th anniversary. Congratulations to the whole Surveyors Creek Public School community on this magnificent milestone.

GLENMORE PARK REALTY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I want to congratulate a local business in my electorate who for the past 90 years has been active in my electorate, in Glenmore Park. Glenmore Park Realty were recently awarded Agency of the Year for their suburb. The winner of this award is chosen based upon reviews from clients who have purchased or sold with through the agency. It is very humbling when a business is rewarded and recognised for their great service when their customers return positive feedback and express their satisfaction with the service they received. Glenmore Park Realty is a business that is committed to its community and for that I congratulate them.

CHATSWOOD TENNIS CLUB

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I am delighted to recognise the Chatswood Tennis Club, a long-standing community club in the Willoughby electorate, keeping locals both young and old active and social on the tennis court. I visited on 7 September to present a cheque of \$198,543 for the successful grant to fund the installation of poles and LED lighting through the ClubGrants Program. The Club features 12 courts across two locations along Fullers Road, Chatswood, with its main facility providing coffee and an outdoor seating area. Eager to welcome new members, the Club offers a free introductory session for new players which enables them to be matched with the right program. Thank you to Past President Terry White and recently appointed President James McMorron, all club leaders and the dedicated team of coaches who train and help players of all abilities. I am grateful for the contribution that Chatswood Tennis Club makes to our community. It is important that community sporting organisations can be supported, and in this case, to keep the lights on.

LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS STORE OPENING

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Last Saturday I attended the opening of a new store in Roseville called I am Project Australia, which is a wellness-based small business. It provides selfcare treatment products, natural skincare and makeup workshops. I acknowledge the business owner Mary Alonti, who has studied fashion, skincare and makeup and holds an MBA. She was assisted at the opening by a fellow local resident and friend Anita Chronis. Mary has been running workshops (including at Pymble Ladies College as part of their

co-curricular activities) for a number of years and has been a professional makeup artist for more than 25 years. I wish Mary and her small business all the best, as I do for all small businesses in my electorate of Davidson.

THE MODERN NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SYSTEM-10TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 4 July 2022, I attended the launch of the Injured Workers Compensation Report at the Parliament of New South Wales. I was joined at this launch by my NSW Labor Parliamentary colleagues Michael Daley MP, Clayton Barr MP, Sophie Cotsis MP, Daniel Mookhey MLC, Mark Buttigieg MLC, and Adam Searle MLC. This report was released by Unions NSW in conjunction with The McKell Institute on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the modern NSW Workers Compensation System. The report details the massive failings of a broken workers compensation system in New South Wales and the devastating impact it has had on injured workers. I joined my NSW Labor Parliamentary colleagues in signing the 'Pledge to Injured Workers' card. This pledge promises our continued support and advocacy for injured workers, in our respective Electorates. Congratulations to Unions NSW and The McKell Institute on the successful launch of this report. I renew my commitment to this pledge and look forward to further working closely with both of these organisations to improve the lives of injured workers in the Electorate of Prospect and across New South Wales.

SRI OM CARE – MEETING

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was a pleasure to speak at the Sri Om Care meeting at Toongabbie Community Centre with NSW Labor Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns MP and Shadow Minister for Small Business and Multiculturalism, Steve Kamper MP on the 27th July 2022. Sri Om Care is an aged care foundation, using spiritual techniques to not only care for the elderly, but to also nourish their spiritual wellbeing. This is so important as the quality of life of the elderly in our community can be greatly assisted by these relaxing spiritual and cultural techniques, improving their mental health. We had a productive discussion about ways in which we can support Sri Om Care to further improve the lives of the elderly in our community. It was great to meet Devima Swamigal, Chairperson, Sri Om Care. Thank you for the important work that Sri Om Care has done to support the elderly in our Western Sydney community. Thank you to Jay Raman OAM, President, Hindu Council Australia, for organising this meeting. Congratulations on a successful event.

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT MICHAEL MORRIS – FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was great to meet with Chief Superintendent Michael Morris, Area Commander, Metropolitan West, Fire and Rescue NSW, to discuss fire safety strategies for our Western Sydney community on 28th July 2022. Fire safety in our households is so important, especially during Winter when families are using heating appliances the most. Since 1st June, Fire and Rescue NSW has attended almost 400 house fires across NSW. 44 per cent of these homes did not have working smoke alarms, while a further 20 per cent did not have a smoke alarm installed. Sadly, we have also seen nine fire fatalities so far this winter, double the total for winter last year. Fire and Rescue NSW is running its 'Be Safe, Not Sorry' campaign, offering free home fire safety visits, as well as the free installation of smoke alarms if necessary. Fire can engulf a home in a matter of minutes. A smoke alarm alerting you to a fire could be the difference between life and death. Thank you, Chief Superintendent Morris, for a very productive discussion, and for the recent work of the 'Be Safe, Not Sorry' campaign. Our community greatly appreciates it.

INNER SYDNEY HIGH SCHOOL 2022 STUDENT LEADERS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate and acknowledge Inner Sydney High School's elected student leaders for 2022. The 2022 executive leaders in the Student Inspired Leadership Group at Inner Sydney High School are Zara S, Soraya T, Ruby P, Xavier TP, Chelsea C, Carmen L, Lottie W, Ella P, Mai N and Josh D. These students hold the portfolios of community, sport, wellbeing, arts, sustainability and social justice. Becoming a representative for your school is a highly rewarding way of contributing to the strength and connection of our community. These leaders are doing exactly this through their initiatives for the year - including organising wellbeing days, highlighting social issues through days including International Women's Day celebrations, running sports and arts competitions, and developing sustainable initiatives in the school and local community. I thank them for the great work they have done this year, for the work they will continue to do, and for the difference they will make to their school's community and to our electorate of Newtown.

NIBRAS RAHBE – AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—It was wonderful to catch up with Ms Nibras Rahbe, NSW Grow Project Officer with the Australian Red Cross. Nibras is a wonderful advocate of the Australian Red Cross, working with the refugee and migrant community and assisting with settlement in NSW in rural and regional areas. We are very fortunate to have Nibras working with the migrant community and I welcome any developments in this sphere of advocacy.

MTC AUSTRALIA DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently met with Ms Mimi Jalou and Ms Adisa Semic from MTC Australia to talk about MTC's Disability Employment Services. This is an initiative that helps those living with a disability gain a sense of independence through employment. Mimi and Adisa and the team help their clients connect to the services they need to find a job. Gainful employment not only raises self-esteem and leads to a sense of fulfilment in contributing to the wider community. I thank Mimi, Adisa and the team from MTC for all the work they do for the local community.

2022 SOUTHERN DISTRICTS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION NIGHT

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—The 2022 Southern Districts Football Assoc. football season was celebrated at the annual Presentation Night at Cabravale Diggers. It was wonderful to see all SDSFA club's represented. The presentation evening acknowledged Age Division Premiers, Knockout Winners, Grand Final Winners, Long Service and Special Achievement Award Winners. I congratulate all winners and the SDSFA President Mr Andy Favaloro, Board of Directors and the Presentation Night organising committee for hosting the 75th Anniversary in conjunction with the awards presentation.

ECOLOGIST MR PAUL MARTIN

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—On behalf of the Bega electorate, I would like to congratulate Eurobodalla Shire Council's Invasive Species Coordinator, Mr Paul Martin who was recently awarded the biennial, peer-nominated NSW Stephenson Local Government Weed Professional Award in recognition of his work in planning and coordinating their weed management programs. Mr Martin has been working with the Eurobodalla Shire Council for 12 years, during which he has prevented numerous ecological threats from invading our local agricultural lands and native forests. As one of only two invasive species officers covering the entire shire, Mr Martin's holistic approach to land care management and his commitment to keeping our local environment protected deserves to be applauded. His work has helped our agriculturalists to become more profitable, increase biodiversity across the shire and ensure threatened species have an opportunity to thrive. Thank you for your dedication and congratulations on your achievement.

HAYDEN LANE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the inspiring efforts of residents in Hayden Lane Darlinghurst for transforming this space into an inviting green and community space. Over a year and a half, residents have built on the work of Sebastian Vasquez and Mike Heenan to transform what was largely wasted space with dumped household goods and rubbish where people felt unsafe. With donated and rescued plants and equipment, they've created a green oasis and community space. IT has thrived with amateurs keen to learn about gardens and improve their local area. This terrific project was featured on Gardening Australia, which presented the revitalisation project and showed its importance to the local community. The program showed us lush green landscaping, creative artwork including murals, and a local community that socialises with and supports each other. I congratulate the residents behind Hayden Lane's conversion into a place that is both welcoming and beautiful. This is a great example of how inner city residents can improve the amenity and safety of their local area.

SOUTH SEA ISLANDER RECOGNITION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I acknowledge City of Sydney support for Australian South Sea Islanders, descendants of Pacific peoples that were coerced and forcibly removed or kidnapped from more than 80 islands and brought to Australia, through a slave trade practice known as blackbirding in the 1800s. Those trafficked under the guise of 'Indentured Labour' contracts worked mainly in sugar cane farming, but also in maritime, cotton, fishing, beche-de-mer and the railways. On the motion of Cllr Emelda Davis, the council recognised the discrimination, injustice, disadvantage and prejudice experienced by South Sea Islanders throughout Australia's history and the disadvantage the Australian South Sea Islander community still faces today. The City of Sydney formally acknowledges Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day on 25 August, raised the Australian South Sea Islander flag over Town Hall, and will develop education resources about this community and establish ongoing engagement consistent with Islander cultural practices. Acknowledgement of Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day and raising the Australia South Sea Islander flag reflects the community's inclusion and acceptance of diversity that I'm proud to represent.

MIRANDA SALVATION ARMY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the Miranda Salvation Army and their incredible 'Beanies and Blankets' initiative. Launched in 2012, the Miranda Salvation Army's 'Beanies and Blankets' initiative aims to assist individuals experiencing homelessness stay warm in Winter. The event is held annually

and provides disadvantaged members of our community with hand-made beanies, blankets, and donated jackets to provide comfort throughout Winter. Additionally, the Miranda Salvation Army create a welcoming space for people to attend, receive a hot meal on a Tuesday and create social connections. I commend the community-minded individuals involved in the initiative including David Godkin, Jason Franklin, Mike Salomo, Zoe Lang, Jared Briggs, Sally McDonald, Belle Gannon, Renata Aguiar, Rachael Lewis and Helen Kearney. I thank the team at Miranda Salvation Army for their continued dedication to supporting people across the Sutherland Shire and extend my best wishes for the future.

MIRANDA MUSICAL SOCIETY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the talent of the Miranda Musical Society and the ongoing joy they provide to our community. Founded in 1967, the Miranda Musical Society is a much-loved not-for-profit community organisation who are committed to producing high quality musical productions. The society is comprised of many incredible individuals who get involved in a range of tasks including costuming, set building, ticket sales and making and selling of refreshments. Each member is committed to producing engaging musicals and encourages new members to join the growing society. Recently, the Miranda Musical Society performed their highly anticipated production of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical and have performed over 100 productions including Les Misérables, The Phantom of the Opera, Beauty and the Beast and West Side Story. Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedicated and hard-working committee members. I particularly acknowledge Meredith Simpson, Karen Mosely, Tim Dennis, Gabby Robinson, Emilie Lawson, Peter Sampson, Lauren Dennis, Jordan Harper, Bev Hughes, Rhonda Hewitt, and Geraldine Turner OAM. I commend the members of the Miranda Musical Society for continuing to uplift our local community through their wonderful productions and extend my best wishes for the future.

GEORGES RIVER FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Georges River Football Club on being the recipients of a \$10,000 grant from the NSW Government. Established in 1961, Georges River Football Club is an incredible community with over 1,400 members. The Club has developed a reputation for promoting the values of teamwork, respect, and integrity through fair play. Through this funding, Georges River Football Club were able to deliver an annual program which saw an Under 13's team travel to Queensland to play against a Brisbane based counterpart. Now in its 50th year, this longstanding tradition was a chance for players of all abilities to represent the Club at an inter-state level and to continue to develop football skills and experiences. Of course, none of this is possible without the dedicated and hard-working volunteers who continue to support this great Club. I particularly recognise executive committee members Dale Graham, Matthew Shaw, Debbie Kearns, Laura Croxson and Melissa Gassman. I commend Georges River Football Club for continuing to foster a love of football for members of our community.

STRATHFIELD MEN'S SHED

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)—I have the pleasure of recognising the Strathfield Men's Shed for its important role as a place where men can gather and work together, use their skills and find company and friendship. The Strathfield Men's Shed is an impressive facility filled with the sounds and smells of an active workshop. The different workshop and community spaces provide space for men of all ages to socialise, learn and create. It was heartening to meet a group of men from various social and cultural backgrounds. Like many community organisations, Strathfield Men's Shed was hit hard by Covid. But the resilience and drive of the members has retained the Shed as a lively and important space of community and togetherness. Bob Turner, the President, told me there's an old saying that men talk best shoulder to shoulder. There are strong connections between social, physical, and mental wellbeing and the Strathfield Men's Shed demonstrates how our approaches to these interconnections must be tailored in order to be effective. Congratulations to the Strathfield Men's Shed and all members on creating such a welcoming, dynamic space of community.

RPA STRIKE

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On 1 September nurses, midwives and hospital workers across the state and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital went on strike to demand an increase in pay, mandated staff to patient ratios, better conditions, and more resources. Those at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital were from RPA, Community Health and Sydney Local Health District. On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I want to thank representatives from the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association who organised the strike action, including delegate Sabrina Sharp, and NSW Nurses and Midwives Association President O'Bray Smith, Phillip Sheard, Cherie Desreux, Josh Callaghan and Tyrone Dallas who all spoke. The Greens stand firm in our support of your demands. We reject the unfair wage freeze. We support mandated staff to patient ratios. We recognise the need to fix chronic staff shortages, for urgent intervention to alleviate unreasonable workloads, and for genuine investment to address long-standing safety and wellbeing issues. I acknowledge the vital work of all RPA nurses, midwives, staff - and

all those in our Sydney Local Health District - and thank them for taking industrial action to demand the government fixes the industrial conditions needed to ensure nurses and midwives can do their job safely and securely.

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES SOCIETY [CASS]

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS] and congratulate them on their new joint report with the UNSW Social Policy Research Centre [SPRC], "Sustaining Old Age Volunteerism Among CALD Population - The CASS Community Volunteer Model". For forty years, CASS has trained thousands of volunteers to deliver programs ranging from English lessons to fitness classes and neighbourhood cleanups. The average CASS volunteer is 70 years old and has volunteered with the organisation for 12 hours per week for 12 years. As many still face pandemic-related isolation and our communities age, CASS' volunteer model is an inspiring blueprint for connecting people across demographics and breaking down barriers that keep us apart. I would like to thank CASS for their leadership in volunteering and recognise the report research team: Henry Pan, Bosco Chang, Wendy Liang, Ivan Wong, Peony Chik and Molly Li. I would also like to acknowledge the authors from UNSW SPRC: Yiran Li, Yixuan Huang, Ilan Katz, and Bingqin Li and thank Chairperson Dr. Bo Zhou and Deputy Chairperson Anthony Pang for hosting the launch.

MAX DOUGLAS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)—I would like to congratulate Manly local and Manly Marlins player Max Douglas on winning the Ken Catchpole medal as Shute Shield player of the year. Max a 22 year old lock ended the season with six tries, 17 tackle busts, five clean breaks and a near perfect tackle rate of 95.7 per cent. This is just another award in the resume of this impressive young player of who just 12 months ago was awarded Waratahs rookie of the year. Congratulations again to Max on this great honour and good luck for the rest of the season.

SEAFORTH RAIDERS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)—I would like to extend a huge congratulations to the Seaforth Raiders Rugby Club. Recently they achieved some fantastic results, with their Under 10 whites finishing as runners up in their competition. In even better news the Under 11 blacks and Under 12s side finished their season as champions This is fantastic news and a true testament to the hard work and skill of the players. I would further like to extend my congratulations and gratitude to fantastic coaches and parents. I wish them all the best for next season hopefully a repeat is in the works.

SEAFORTH FC WOMENS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)—Today I congratulate the Seaforth FC Women's Premier League team, who have continued their dominance, winning their Grand Final 2-1. This completes the treble as they are now Challenge Cup Champions, MWFA League Champions and Grand Final Winners. These fantastic results are true testament to the hard work, dedication and skill of the Women's Premier League team. All of Manly is incredibly proud of the team and this fantastic result. I wish them the best of the luck for next season hopefully their dominance continues.

2MBS RADIO

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—2MBS Radio is a treasured local institution and I had the great pleasure of visiting their studios in late August. Based in my electorate in St Leonards, 2MBS radio seeks to share the love of fine music through broadcasting. Offering a very broad musical genre, 2MBS broadcasts classical, jazz, opera, blues, contemporary and sacred music for the enjoyment and encouragement of its listening audience. Committed to nurturing local talent, 2MBS is eager to promote Australian musicians and composers, with particular focus on the young. In addition to a board of directors and a small team of staff, the music station is run by a dedicated team of volunteer presenters who bring a wealth of insight and knowledge about their music. I am grateful to both the Chair, Michael Morton-Evans OAM, and the Deputy Chair, Peter Poole, for their leadership of the station as well as that of Operations Director Mona Omar. 2MBS radio makes a fantastic contribution to our cultural life in Willoughby and beyond, and I wish it every continued success.

CHATSWOOD JUNIOR RUGBY CLUB

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I am proud to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of the Chatswood Junior Rugby Club in my electorate. The club hosted its successful Chatswood Club Challenge on 3 September featuring over 20 clubs from across our city. Despite wet and muddy conditions, the club's great people pressed on at Chatswood's Beauchamp Oval, a local ground I know well from my childhood. I witnessed the Wahroonga Tigers win the under 9s in a hard-fought game. Thank you to Acting President Nick White, the

organisers and volunteers for staging this terrific event, including the canteen workers who sizzled 600 sausages! I was also delighted last week to draw the club raffle for the coming tour to New Zealand and I thank the many people who supported this fundraiser. The club is a family-friendly community club with over 350 players, catering for boys and girls from ages 4 to 17. Well done this season to everyone involved in Chatswood Junior Rugby and I'm looking forward to next season.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 23:26 until
Wednesday 21 September 2022 at 09:30.**