



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 12 October 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 12 October 2022**

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

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

## *Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge in the public gallery representatives from the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils forum that was held this morning in the Preston Stanley Room with Minister Roberts and Minister Tuckerman in attendance with other State members representing the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils area, which included me, joined by general managers, mayors and NSROC delegates from councils. I welcome them to the Chamber and thank all those who played a part in that important communication and collaboration forum. Indeed I note that those forums go on all around New South Wales and members participate in those accordingly.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

## *Bills*

### CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COERCIVE CONTROL) BILL 2022

#### First Reading

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

#### Second Reading Speech

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (09:49):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today the Government introduces the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022. We deal with many important matters in this Parliament every day, but none could be more important than personal safety. This bill could literally mean the difference between life and death. Professor Evan Stark, who is widely regarded as the world's leading authority on coercive control, has said that the seriousness of this offence cannot be exaggerated. Coercive control is a systematic attack on liberty. It is insidious domestic abuse involving systematic patterns of behaviour with the cumulative effect of denying victims their independence and autonomy. The abuse could be physical, sexual, psychological or financial. It does not show itself in the same way each time or even in physical symptoms each time. Abusers often take pains to isolate victim survivors from friends, family and support systems, making protection even harder. It is not as easy to detect as bruises or broken bones, but coercive control can be deadly.

This bill is about supporting victim-survivors held hostage in their own homes and in their own lives by domestic terrorism. This bill delivers on the Government's commitment to victim-survivors of domestic violence and New South Wales frontline services by enacting a standalone offence to criminalise coercive control and undertaking extensive community awareness raising, training and education to support its implementation. Some listening to or reading this speech may find some of the content distressing and confronting. These issues are understandably very difficult, but it is important to be clear what this reform is and how it will operate in practice. Our community has grieved with the families of too many domestic violence homicide victims, who include Hannah Clarke and her children, and Dr Preethi Reddy. No words can ever ease the pain of that devastating and unbearable loss to the families, but we know that coercive control is a proven precursor—a red flag indicator—to domestic violence deaths.

Of 112 intimate partner domestic violence homicides that occurred in New South Wales between 2008 and 2016, the Domestic Violence Death Review Team found that there was intimate partner abuse using coercive controlling behaviours towards the victim in every case bar one. With that knowledge comes a deep responsibility for all of us in this Parliament and to the families and to the communities we serve to fight this wicked scourge. Coercive control is difficult to identify, difficult to legislate for and difficult to prosecute. But the fact that it is challenging is no excuse for doing nothing. Until relatively recently "coercive control" was not a well-known phrase or phenomenon. The horrific murders of, sadly, among others, Hannah Clarke and her three children and

Sydney dentist Preethi Reddy are not isolated cases. They make it painfully clear why we cannot lose momentum. Dr Nithya Reddy, who is Preethi Reddy's sister, said yesterday:

My beloved sister, Dr Preethi Reddy, was killed by a former intimate partner who had been non-physically abusive throughout the relationship. She did not recognise the danger of this course of conduct as her killer's first act of physical violence was to take her life. I believe Preethi would be alive today if coercive control was already criminalised ...

Along with a follow through of cross-sectional training, extensive resource provision, wide spread education and especially ongoing consideration of the impacts on the indigenous community, I believe this is the strongest action to prevent intimate partner homicide we have seen in our state.

This bill is based on evidence. It is the product of many years of research, careful consideration and unprecedented—I emphasise "unprecedented"—consultation. In March 2020 I announced that the Government would consult on laws seeking to address coercive and controlling behaviours. We have undertaken at least seven rounds of consultation in the past 2½ years, including a discussion paper, a parliamentary inquiry and an exposure draft bill. This bill delivers on the Government's commitment to develop, publicly consult on and introduce a standalone offence of coercive control in the 2022 spring session. This was a clear component of our response to the findings of this Parliament's joint select committee. This bill is our bond, our commitment to tackling this insidious evil that is coercive and controlling behaviour. We invite everyone in this Parliament to stand with us.

In the sitting days ahead there will be debate on the detail of the bill, as there should be, and I welcome these important discussions. But let us not lose sight of the fact that what is important here is making a huge start. Reasonable minds differ on the best way to legislate, or indeed whether to legislate at all, and on precisely what any offence of coercive control should look like. That is shown by the divergent evidence heard by the joint select committee, whose chair, the Hon. Natalie Ward, MLC, is in the advisers' area today, and again on the Government's consultation on three iterations of the bill throughout 2022. It is also shown by England and Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Ireland, France, Portugal, Sweden and some US states taking very different approaches from each other in drafting their respective coercive control legislation.

These different approaches reinforce the importance of laws that reflect the unique community that they protect and serve. As a government, we are gravely aware that any legislative reform must be approached with great care and caution to ensure it does not unintentionally put in further danger the very people we are seeking to help. We acknowledge and thank everyone who has shared with us their lived experiences, their insights and their expertise, and the wide spectrum of views that has given us invaluable input to drafting the very best bill we can for New South Wales.

We have exercised great caution to make sure that the offence captures only conduct of the very serious standard that deserves criminal sanction and avoids overreach. We have had the benefit of being able to select what our research and consultation suggest are the best aspects of existing models. For example, like Scotland, this bill is targeted specifically to intimate partner settings only. Like England, this bill does not set a mandatory minimum number of incidents of abusive behaviour. But it is also essential to take account of our unique circumstances in New South Wales, including the vulnerability of culturally and linguistically diverse communities and especially—I emphasise "especially"—the unacceptably high rate of Indigenous incarceration.

It is often said that Aboriginal people are the most incarcerated people on earth. We have seen, with the very substantial increase in existing offences of domestic violence related stalking and intimidation, the significant impact this has had on Aboriginal people, who accounted for 28 per cent of court finalisations and 52 per cent of custodial penalties in 2021, according to a recent NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report. That is why we just cannot copy and paste an overseas model to New South Wales without substantial change—doing so would exacerbate the tragic over-representation of Aboriginal people in our criminal justice system. We had to target our policy to address our unique social and legal landscapes in New South Wales. We have made significant changes to the bill to achieve that, in consultation with Aboriginal-led community organisations, like the Aboriginal Legal Service.

Back in 2016, under the stewardship of the then Attorney General, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 was amended to include the words "coerce or control" in the Act. In March 2020 I indicated that the Government would consult on laws to address coercive and controlling behaviour. At least seven stages of consultation followed over the past 2½ years. First, the Government released a discussion paper on coercive control in October 2020, creating the opportunity to raise public awareness. The discussion paper was the Government's first step in facilitating discussion between legal, domestic and family violence and Government stakeholders and the community in relation to how to best address harmful coercive controlling behaviour. The discussion paper included detail and specific questions on drafting choices, such as:

If an offence of coercive control were introduced in NSW, how should the scope of the offence be defined, what behaviours should it include and what other factors should be taken into account?

Second, in October 2020 I moved to establish the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control. In conducting its inquiry, under the leadership of my colleague the Hon. Natalie Ward, the committee considered an answer to the questions posed in the discussion paper. It received more than 150 written submissions in response to its terms of reference, which included the discussion paper. This was, for example, twice as many submissions as Scotland received in its initial consultation process on whether its existing laws were enough and a new specific offence should be created.

Third, over a nine-month inquiry the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control heard from more than 70 stakeholders over six days of hearings and regional meetings. That committee represented a wide spectrum of this Parliament; Liberal, National, Labor, The Greens and One Nation, and it unanimously recommended criminalising coercive control. I thank all the members who served on that committee for their important contributions to advancing this area of reform. Building on the committee's work, in December 2021 the Government committed to criminalise coercive control in intimate partner relationships as a standalone offence and to release a public exposure draft bill for consultation.

The fourth consultation stage occurred in May 2022 when I released a Cabinet-in-confidence exposure draft bill to around 20 restricted legal and government stakeholders to identify any technical legal matters prior to public release. These included the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT). Stakeholders' feedback was taken into account in settling a draft bill for public comment. The fifth stage of consultation occurred in July 2022 when the Government publicly released an exposure draft bill on the Have Your Say website for six weeks between 20 July and 31 August. The Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control had recommended the release of an exposure draft to create a standalone offence "as a priority".

Almost 200 submissions were received in response to the exposure draft bill—more than three times as many submissions as Scotland received on its own consultation draft bill. Of the submissions received, 71 were from sector advocates, legal organisations, academics and government agencies; and 125 were received from members of the general public, 43 cent of whom were victim-survivors. Many of those submissions relayed lived personal experience of coercive control. Of the submissions from the general public, 48 supported the reform, 17 opposed the reform, and the remaining 60 did not provide an express position.

That is why a sixth round of consultation was undertaken, which involved 27 stakeholder roundtables and targeted consultations held in August and September. These explored the exposure draft bill in depth with specialised stakeholders at dedicated sessions, including but not limited to the domestic and family violence sector, people with lived experience of domestic and family violence, victim-survivor advocates, Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal-led organisations, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the disability sector, older persons and LGBTQIA+ community organisations and representatives. A dedicated consultation was held with victim-survivors and those with lived experience of domestic and family violence. Three regional consultations were held in Kempsey and Dubbo with First Nations women, Aboriginal community stakeholders and legal organisations.

As part of the seventh consultation stage, the Hon. Natalie Ward and I subsequently met with Domestic Violence NSW—the peak body for the domestic and family violence sector, and representatives of the NSW Women's Alliance from Women's Legal Service NSW, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre and Full Stop Australia to discuss their submissions and the exposure draft bill. I also met with Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT). We have made several key drafting changes to the bill to reflect feedback received and to ensure appropriate protections against the risk of overreach, especially in Aboriginal communities and the misidentification of victim-survivors as perpetrators. The seventh round of consultation also involved a penultimate Cabinet-in-confidence draft bill reflecting these changes being provided in September to targeted legal and domestic and family violence stakeholders seeking any final comments.

Our proposed offence is unique because our communities are unique. Differences of drafting opinion are no justification for further delay. The extensive consultation process has crystallised the key drafting choices and the views of stakeholders, as divergent as they are, with respect to those choices. Waiting one year, two years or four years will not remove the differences of opinion that exist. In the meantime, we will continue to see all too regularly domestic violence homicide tragedies almost always preceded by coercive control. We know what the differences are; it is our collective responsibility now to make the choices. The best way forward is to start with the huge leap of dealing with core intentional offending, and to actively review and reflect once that offence has been in operation. That is the approach that was taken in England, Wales and Scotland. Now is the time to act.

There is no disputing that this issue is difficult. Legislating the offence and getting the balance right is difficult. But I do not accept that, because it is difficult, it should not be done. That because it is difficult, we should not try or that, because it is difficult, we should wait. There is hopefully no-one in this Parliament who would argue that we should accept this atrocious behaviour. We cannot in good conscience agree that it is deplorable, and then agree to do nothing, or to shift a decision down the road to the next Parliament because lives

depend on this. Now is the time to be brave and not take a backward step. Now is the time to act and translate those learnings into something that will make a difference—first, in ensuring that this conduct is charged, convicted and punished accordingly and, second, in continuing to raise public awareness of what coercive control is and what it looks like. Evan Stark, said to be the world's leading authority on coercive control, says this bill is brave. He said:

I salute the work being undertaken by the NSW Government, and the courage, and wisdom it takes to move forwards. Coercive control is a systemic violation of rights and liberties. This is a wise and brave law to help those held hostage in their own lives by domestic terrorism.

It is brave because, if passed, New South Wales will become the first jurisdiction in Australia to introduce a dedicated criminal offence of coercive control. It is brave because it takes a new approach to existing criminal laws in this State. The bill shifts the lens of the criminal law from individual acts of offending to a course of continuous or repeated behaviour over time. But the bill is also sound. It is sound because it is a bespoke offence that has been painstakingly tailored to our unique circumstances in New South Wales. It is not a carbon copy of another jurisdiction's legislation, because copying laws from overseas without due reflection of the differences between our societies and supporting infrastructure—like police forces, domestic and family violence support services and justice systems—is fraught. The drafting has been carefully calibrated to make sure we are not placing the people we seek to help at risk of further harm or disproportionately impact vulnerable community members. This reflects a deeply considered and appropriate response to a deeply troubling problem.

Our community can take heart in the fact that the Government has heeded the warnings that criminalisation needs to be done with care and consideration to avoid overreach or over-criminalisation. That is why the bill starts by targeting the core intentional forms of this criminal behaviour first, to avoid overreach and to minimise the risk of misidentifying the victim instead of the primary aggressor. That is why the bill locks in a mandatory statutory review after three years of operation, to ensure that the offence is functioning as intended and to investigate the possibilities of further expansion if the data and lived experiences provide a case for further change. Our community can take comfort in the fact that the frontline services that will be involved in delivering this reform are amongst the best in the world—our domestic and family service providers, our legal experts and our courts.

I have faith that those charged with giving effect to this important legislation will come to the task with open minds and the best of intention, as they have consistently done in engaging with this reform over many years. Today, the Government calls on all members of this Parliament to be brave. Following the release of the final report of the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control, Rape and Domestic Services Australia—now known as Full Stop Australia—then chief executive officer Hayley Foster was reported as saying:

This is a real opportunity for the Government to make meaningful, generational change ... They should take this with both hands and run with it. I think at this point we are really at a point in time in our nation's history in that there is multi-party support and the community is right behind this and want to see action. We have to take these moments to make real change, because how often in our nation's history have we had everyone on the same page to address this crisis once and for all?"

This bill is the next chapter in the reform process. It is not the end. For the legislation to be effective, it must be an iterative process. The three-year statutory review underscores the Government's commitment to getting this legislation right. I call on all members of this Parliament to stand with us in condemning coercive control and committing to a criminal offence, in committing to making a real change. We implore Parliament to stand with us. We implore Parliament to be courageous.

I will now address four questions. First, why is a standalone criminal offence of coercive control necessary? Second, what model is the Government proposing? Third, why have particular drafting choices been made? And fourth, and perhaps most importantly, what will the Government do to support the effective implementation of this offence and raise public awareness? I will turn to the first question: Why is a standalone criminal offence of coercive control necessary? We have listened carefully to experts, victim-survivors with lived experience and community members who have told us that the law needs to change to better protect victims, particularly but not exclusively women and children. The findings of the joint select committee inquiry are clear. The committee found at finding 2 that:

... it is incumbent on government, police, frontline services, family law and the criminal justice system to intervene where criminal behaviour exists that ... is known to be a factor in potentially preventable domestic abuse related homicide deaths.

The joint select committee identified that benefits flowing from a standalone offence would include educating the public about coercive control; preventing intimate partner homicides; making it easier for victims to get help and access legal protections; improving the enforcement and prosecution of domestic abuse; and specific penalties for the offence in sentencing. The New South Wales Bar Association has stated that the committee's work made clear that criminalising coercive control will increase the ability of the criminal justice system to respond to patterns of behaviour that are not currently captured adequately by the law, and I quote:

The case for the criminalisation of this conduct as reflected in the ... legislation is backed by extensive evidence heard by the Joint Select Committee including first-hand accounts from victim-survivors, and evidence from community groups and legal experts.

In response to the committee's report, the Government committed to act to criminalise coercive control in intimate partner relationships and to further strengthen our criminal justice system responses to abuse. We supported in full, in part or in principle 17 of the committee's recommendations. We committed to developing and consulting on drafting for a standalone offence to address coercive control in intimate partner settings and possible amendments to other laws. This bill delivers on that commitment. Schedule 1 to the bill would create a standalone criminal offence of coercive control. Schedule 2 to the bill would amend the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to include the new coercive control offence within the definition of "domestic violence offences". It would also introduce a new definition of "domestic abuse" into that Act. Schedules 3 and 4 make consequential amendments.

I turn to the second question: What model of reform is the New South Wales Government proposing? There are two pillars to our reforms. The first is to create a standalone criminal offence of coercive control in intimate partner settings, and the second is the creation of a definition of "domestic abuse". Schedule 1 to the bill will create a standalone criminal offence of coercive control with appropriate safeguards by inserting new section 54D into the Crimes Act 1900. The proposed offence consists of five elements to be proved beyond reasonable doubt.

The first element is that an adult engages in a course of conduct repeatedly or continuously under new section 54D (1) (a). The term "adult" is defined in proposed new section 54C to mean "an individual who is 18 years of age or older". This means the offence will only apply to perpetrators who are at least 18 years old to reflect that the stage of development of young people may not be sufficient to support the persistent, calculated and manipulated behaviours required to satisfy the offence. It is an important safeguard against overreach, and it is supported by stakeholders like Legal Aid NSW. The term "course of conduct" is defined in new section 54G (1) to mean "engaging in behaviour either repeatedly or continuously or both repeatedly and continuously". The terms "repeatedly or continuously" are deliberately not defined further as they are intended to take on their ordinary English meaning. The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines "continuous" as:

1. having the parts in immediate connection, unbroken.
2. uninterrupted in time; without cessation.

It defines "repeated" as "done, made, or said again and again". Use of the word "continuously" in drafting reflects that some behaviours, such as control over finances or communications, may be ongoing. The term "repeatedly" focuses on persistent abusive behaviour. New section 54G (2) clarifies that for behaviour to be engaged in repeatedly or continuously, it does not have to be an unbroken series of incidents or in immediate succession. The two terms are alternatives. Only one needs to be satisfied for this element, although both may be present in some cases. We have deliberately chosen not to specify a minimum number of incidents that must be identified in order to constitute a course of conduct. The course of conduct cannot include behaviours that occurred before the bill commences.

New section 54H contains procedural provisions that are modelled on the offence of persistent sexual abuse of a child in section 66EA of the Crimes Act 1900. In practice, what proposed section 54H will mean is that the prosecution will not need to state the exact dates, times and particulars of any specific instances of abusive behaviour that make up a course of conduct. Under new section 54H (1) (b), the prosecution must provide particulars of the overall time period of the alleged course of conduct and outline the nature and description of the behaviours comprising it. The second element of the offence is that the course of conduct is abusive behaviour that involves violence, threats or intimidation and/or coercion or control of the person against whom the behaviour is directed under new section 54D (1) (a). "Abusive behaviour" is defined in proposed new section 54F (1) to mean:

- ... behaviour that consists of or involves—
- (a) violence or threats against, or intimidation of, a person, or
  - (b) coercion or control of the person against whom the behaviour is directed.

New section 54D (2) (a) states that "the course of conduct may be constituted by any combination of abusive behaviours". This ensures that behaviour may still be considered a pattern of abuse even if, for example, it involves intermittent physical abuse and ongoing isolation and financial control. Second, new section 54D (2) (b) provides that "whether the course of conduct consists of abusive behaviour must be assessed by considering the totality of the behaviours" that make up that course of conduct. When placed in the context of the course of conduct, some seemingly minor incidents reveal themselves to be a part of a damaging and dangerous pattern of abuse.

As recommended by the joint select committee, a non-exhaustive list of behaviour that may constitute abusive behaviour is set out at new section 54F (2). These examples are drawn from existing legislation such as section 4AB of the Family Law Act 1975 of the Commonwealth. They have been the focus of significant stakeholder feedback, which has been closely considered and incorporated to better reflect the lived experience of victim-survivors. Careful consideration has been given to ensuring that the examples also capture the types of abusive behaviours referred to in the findings by the Coroners Court of Queensland in the inquest into the death of Hannah Ashlie Clarke, Aaliyah Anne Baxter, Laianah Grace Baxter and Trey Rowan Charles Baxter, and the findings by the State Coroner's Court of New South Wales in the inquest into the death of Preethi Reddy. We are joined in the Chamber today by her sister.

New section 54F (2) (a) provides an example of engaging in or threatening "behaviour that causes harm to a child if a person fails to comply with demands made of the person". Regrettably, perpetrators of coercive control may use a victim's love and care for their children as a tool to dominate or control. This example is intended to capture several behaviours referred to in the findings of the inquest into the murder of Hannah Clarke and her children. The Coroner referred in her findings to the fact that the perpetrator "often punished the children by refusing to allow them to do things which were planned when he was angry with Hannah. If they did not put their toys away quickly enough, he threw them in the bin" and "frequently used the children to control Hannah". These kinds of behaviour would be captured by the "harm" referred to in proposed new section 54F (2) (a).

New section 54F (2) (b) provides an example of similar behaviour of causing or threatening to cause "harm for the person against whom the behaviour is directed, or another adult, if the person fails to comply with demands made" of them. This could include threats to have the victim or their loved one deported, or threatening to expose a secret that could damage the victim's standing or employment. For instance, the Deputy State Coroner referred in her findings to threats made about Hannah Clarke's mother.

New section 54F (2) (c) refers to "behaviour that is economically or financially abusive" and provides two examples. Stakeholders identified impositions on a person's financial autonomy as core tactics for abusers to limit the liberty of their victims and to entrench their control. New section 54F (2) (d) provides the example of engaging in, or threatening, "behaviour that shames, degrades or humiliates". This includes ongoing verbal abuse that is designed to break a person's confidence and independence, entrenching the control of the abuser. Importantly, this example is not intended to capture a one-off, offhand remark or even criticisms of a person.

New section 54F (2) (e) provides an example of behaviour "that directly or indirectly harasses a person, or monitors or tracks a person's activities, communications or movements, whether by physically following the person, using technology or in another way". This example goes beyond current stalking, intimidation and harassment offences in New South Wales to include monitoring or tracking a person's actions generally. This can be used as a key tactic by perpetrators of coercive control, designed to place demands over a person's autonomy, to isolate victims and to render them unable to reach out for help.

New section 54F (2) (f) provides an example of behaviour that causes or threatens to cause damage to or destruction of property. New section 54F (2) (g) provides examples that refer to the isolation of a person, including preventing a person from "making or keeping connections with the person's family, friends or culture". The removal of support networks may further a victim's dependence on the abuser and limit their options for seeking help. This paragraph also refers to preventing a person from "participating in cultural or spiritual ceremonies or practice" or from "expressing the person's cultural identity".

New section 54F (2) (h) provides an example of causing or threatening "injury or death to an animal", or otherwise making "use of an animal to threaten a person". The Government has recognised previously that victims may have close attachments to their companion animals and that threats to animals are a core part of domestic abuse. New section 54F (2) (i) relates to "behaviour that deprives a person of liberty, restricts a person's liberty or otherwise unreasonably controls or regulates a person's day-to-day activities" and provides three examples:

- Making unreasonable demands about how a person exercises the person's personal, social or sexual autonomy and making threats of negative consequences for failing to comply with the demands.
- Denying a person access to basic necessities including food, clothing or sleep.
- Withholding necessary medical or other care, support, aids, equipment or essential support services from a person or compelling the person to take medication or undertake medical procedures.

It is important to emphasise again that this is a list of examples, and it is an open list. It is not possible, nor even advisable, to attempt to set out every imaginable combination or permutation of behaviours that together might constitute abusive behaviour. The behaviours that make up coercive control are often tailored to the unique and dynamic circumstances of the particular relationship, so it is important that this offence retains flexibility. The third element of the offence is that the accused intends the course of conduct to coerce or control the other person under proposed new section 54D (1) (c).

This mental element requires the prosecution to prove that, in effect, the person intended to force or compel the other person to behave in a particular way or to maintain control over that person. The outcome sought by the person is to coerce or control. What the "intention" attaches to is the "course of conduct" as a whole. It will not be necessary for the prosecution to prove the intention of coercion or control with respect to each of the different constituent abusive behaviours that make up the course of conduct. The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines "coerce" as:

1. to restrain or constrain by force, law, or authority; force or compel, as to do something.
2. to compel by forcible action ...

It defines control as:

1. to exercise restraint or direction over; dominate; command.
2. to hold in check; curb.

The appropriate mental element has been the subject of lengthy discussion and consideration. It is a critical drafting choice to make sure that this offence is appropriately calibrated to capture the heinous behaviour we all condemn, while not overreaching or misidentifying victims as perpetrators. The fourth element of the offence is that a reasonable person would consider that the course of conduct would, in all the circumstances, be likely to cause the other person to fear that violence will be used against them or another person, or a serious adverse impact on their capacity to engage in some or all of the other person's ordinary day-to-day activities. This drafting has been carefully selected to minimise the risk of misidentification of victims. Community standards are used to determine whether the course of conduct would cause harm.

The victim need not have actually suffered the fear or serious impact for the offence to apply. This drafting keeps the focus on the perpetrator's actions and accountability for their behaviour, rather than focusing on the victim having to prove the effects on them. The bill does not require the prosecution to prove that the victim experienced actual harm or effect, in proving either the mental element in new section 54D (1) (c) or that the course of conduct had the character described in new section 54D (1) (d). This means it is not necessary to adduce evidence of the complainant's actual fear of violence or serious adverse impact as described in new sections 54D (1) (d) (i) and 54 (1) (d) (ii) in proving that the course of conduct had the character described in new section 54D (1) (d).

Including the words "in all the circumstances" is an important safeguard against overreach or the criminalisation of behaviour that may be immoral or worthy of condemnation but ought not to be criminal. These words also guard against the risk that a victim-survivor may be misidentified as the perpetrator, as regard must be had to "all the circumstances". This promotes a trauma-informed approach that ensures that the focus of the offence remains on the conduct of the perpetrator. That is not to say that evidence of the actual harm which may have been experienced by a victim-survivor cannot be adduced subject to general provisions and the rules that govern the admissibility of evidence.

In order to make out the actus reus of the offence, the prosecution may in some cases need to adduce evidence that the victim experienced the types of conduct described in new section 54F (2) (a)-(i) for the purpose of proving the actus reus of the offence in new section 54D (1) (a). However, the prosecution does not necessarily have to prove that the abusive behaviour consists of any of the examples of abusive behaviour in new section 54F (2), because they are merely non-exhaustive examples of behaviour that may satisfy new section 54F (1).

The fifth and final element of the offence is that the course of conduct is directed at a current or former partner under new section 54D (1) (b). "Intimate partner" is defined by new section 54C as two people who are or have been: married to one another; de facto spouses of one another, within the meaning of section 21C of the Interpretation Act 1987; or in an intimate personal relationship with one another, whether or not that relationship involves or involved a relationship of a sexual nature.

This limb is intended to capture other romantic relationships. The specific reference to a non-sexual relationship is designed to capture pious relationships such as where two people may be waiting until marriage to commence a sexual relationship. The definition of "intimate partner" mirrors the existing provisions in section 5 (1) (a) to (c) of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, which defines domestic relationship. The scope of this definition should be interpreted in that context, or the context of that section, and the general understanding of the term "intimate partner". The bill proposes under new section 54E (1) that it is a defence that the person's conduct was reasonable in all the circumstances. To make out the defence, evidence adduced must be capable of raising the issue, and then it falls to the prosecution to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the course of conduct was not reasonable.

Under new section 54E (2), the burden of proof for the defence is that the defence adduced is enough to raise the issue of the defence, at which point the prosecution bears the burden of disproving the defence beyond reasonable doubt. The proposed offence carries a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. Clause 2 of the bill provides that the provisions will commence on 1 July 2024 or a date or dates sooner by proclamation but no earlier than 1 February 2024. That is an important change that has been made since the exposure draft bill, which provided that the provisions would commence on proclamation only. The proposed laws will only apply to behaviour that happens once the laws commence under schedule 1 [2] to the bill. Violent or threatening behaviour that occurred before the new laws commence may, nevertheless, be criminal under other existing offences.

Nearly every stakeholder identified the need for a long lead time prior to the offence commencing to enable thorough and detailed training, education and other implementation activities to support the offence. This provides sufficient time to implement this offence and gives agencies, the sector and the wider community certainty as to the window within which the offence will come into force. The drafting also provides clarity and greater certainty as to the time frame for implementation and allows sufficient time for proper implementation. The offence will be an indictable offence, tried summarily in the Local Court unless the prosecutor or the accused elects to have the matter tried on indictment.

As a course of conduct offence that covers patterns of abusive behaviour, some of the conduct that is captured in a charge for coercive control may also be able to be charged as a separate offence. A drafting note in new section 54H makes it clear that the common law in relation to double jeopardy continues to apply to this offence. That means that if a person has been convicted or acquitted of a coercive control offence in relation to a particular course of conduct, they cannot subsequently be convicted of a separate offence in relation to a specific incident that formed part of that alleged course of conduct.

Similarly, if a person has been convicted or acquitted of a standalone offence, any conviction for the coercive control offence cannot rely on that prior incident. But that is not to say that the prosecution has to adopt an all-or-nothing approach to the coercive control offence. There are existing mechanisms for charging multiple offences where conduct may overlap, including alternative accounts or multiple charges in which the conduct that is subject to a standalone charge is not relied on to prove the coercive control charge. This will be a decision for prosecutors on the facts before them in each case. Importantly, the bill makes express provision in new section 54I for a statutory review of the offence three years after commencement. The Minister will be required to review to determine whether the policy objectives of the division remain valid and that the terms of the division remain appropriate for securing those objectives.

New section 54I (2) sets out five matters that the review must consider—of course, this is not an exhaustive description of what the review will undertake. The review must consider whether the mental element should be extended to cover recklessness, whether the scope of relationships captured should be expanded from current and former intimate partner relationships to other relationships, the impacts of this reform on Aboriginal people, whether victims of this offence may be misidentified as perpetrators, and whether the penalty of seven years' imprisonment should be extended. This underscores the Government's commitment to making meaningful policy change now and scrutinising how the bill operates in practice as data and information on the operation of the offence become available. A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of three years. We are deliberately taking an incremental approach that begins with the huge step of intentional core forms of criminal behaviour but earmarks future opportunities to reflect on and revisit drafting.

The bill makes two consequential amendments. Schedule 2 [3] to the bill deems the new section 54D coercive control offence to be a domestic violence offence. That is important because in New South Wales a range of targeted provisions, including protections for victims, apply only to offences deemed to be domestic violence offences. For example, an apprehended domestic violence order can be obtained in relation to a domestic violence offence under section 16 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence Act) 2007. Police are authorised to use special search, entry and seizure powers where a police officer believes on reasonable grounds that a domestic violence offence is being or may have been recently committed or is imminent or likely to be committed. The Commissioner of Police must suspend a firearms licence or a prohibited weapons permit, respectively, when a person is charged with a domestic violence offence.

In court, procedural protections for domestic violence complainants and the right to have a support person only apply in cases involving domestic violence offences. There is a presumption that a person convicted of a domestic violence offence is to be sentenced to full-time detention or a supervised order under the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999. Schedule 3 to the bill makes a consequential amendment to the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to allow a victim impact statement to be made for the coercive control offence.

The second pillar of the New South Wales Government's reforms is to insert a definition of domestic abuse into the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act through schedule 2 [2] to the bill. In New South Wales,

we do not currently have a legal definition of domestic and family violence. Instead, the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act features a definition of "domestic violence offence" in section 11. As I mentioned, that definition does important work because it triggers a range of targeted legislative provisions. Currently, the definition of "domestic violence offence" includes three types of offences. First, it includes specified personal violence offences such as physical or sexual assaults, strangulation, stalking and intimidation. Second, it includes an offence other than a personal violence offence that arises from substantially the same circumstances as those from which a personal violence offence has arisen. Third, there is a catch-all provision that includes an offence other than a personal violence offence, the commission of which is intended to coerce or control the person against whom it is committed or to cause that person to be intimidated or fearful or both.

Importantly, the definition of "domestic violence offence" establishes the grounds on which victims may apply for an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO]. New South Wales follows an offence-based approach to granting ADVOs. The bill will not change that. As breaches of ADVOs are criminal offences, to depart from an offence-based approach to granting ADVOs would increase the risks of over-criminalisation, which was a key concern raised by a number of stakeholders during consultation. To grant an ADVO under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act, the court must be satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the victim has reasonable grounds to fear the commission of a domestic violence offence by the other person or the engagement of the other person in conduct where the victim will be intimidated or stalked. An ADVO may impose prohibitions and restrictions on the perpetrator.

While the bill does not change the offence-based approach to ADVOs, it inserts a definition of domestic abuse within the definition of "domestic violence offence". This will articulate more clearly the types of behaviours that may constitute domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour. In its findings, the joint select committee identified that New South Wales was an outlier among Australian jurisdictions because it did not have a statutory definition of domestic abuse in its civil regime. This creates uncertainty and the risk of confusion as to what constitutes domestic abuse under the law. The committee heard about the benefits of introducing such a definition, including that it would enable a common baseline for health, education, child protection, policing, corrections and legal processes. Schedule 2 [2] to the bill includes a new section 6A, which sets out the new substantive definition of "domestic abuse". New section 6A (1) defines "domestic abuse" to mean:

... any of the following behaviours directed by one person (the *first person*) against another person (the *second person*) with whom the first person has a domestic relationship—

- (a) violent or threatening behaviour,
- (b) behaviour that coerces or controls the second person,
- (c) behaviour that causes the second person to fear for the person's safety or wellbeing or the safety and wellbeing of others.

This definition has drawn on the approach taken in section 4AB of the Family Law Act 1975, which was identified as a useful model by stakeholders during consultation. New section 6A (2) provides an extensive but non-exhaustive list of examples that, without limiting subsection (1), may constitute domestic abuse if threatened or engaged in. The list includes behaviours such as physical or sexual violence, or behaviour which damages property or threatens death or injury to an animal. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of drafting the examples in new section 6A (2) to reflect, as closely as is possible and appropriate, the examples of what might constitute abusive behaviour for the purposes of new section 54F (2). Since the exposure draft bill we have redrafted to align these provisions as closely as possible. Where there are departures in the drafting between new section 54F and new section 6A, these have been deliberate because the legislative examples serve different purposes.

A key distinction between the provisions is that the examples in new section 54F are provided for the purposes of substantiating an action element of a criminal indictable offence punishable by up to seven years' imprisonment. In contrast, the examples in new section 6A (2) are provided to identify offences in the context of a civil framework under which apprehended domestic violence orders are granted. Another key difference is that the section 54F "abusive behaviour" definition feeds into the offence of coercive control that is focused on "a course of conduct ... that consists of abusive behaviour". In contrast, the list of offences that may trigger an apprehended domestic violence order is wideranging and includes many single-instance offences that have lower penalties because these are targeted to what is perceived as less serious conduct.

For example, new section 6A (2) (d) refers to "behaviour that is verbally abusive". This is appropriate in the context of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 because there may be a single incident of verbal abuse that would support a court finding on the balance of probabilities that the victim has reasonable grounds to fear the commission of a "domestic violence offence" by the other person. On the other hand, "behaviour that is verbally abusive" is not included in the non-exhaustive list of examples of behaviour in new

section 54F (2) because it is likely that, without more, verbally abusive behaviour would not rise to the level of criminal conduct that is targeted by the coercive control offence.

Many stakeholders raised a concern that including verbally abusive behaviour without more in new section 54F (2) would set the bar too low for this offence and may exacerbate unintended consequences, such as the risk of victim-survivors being misidentified as perpetrators. Instead, the new section 54F (2) list includes "behaviour that shames, degrades or humiliates". Verbal abuse in a particular case may be of such a nature that it would therefore constitute "abusive behaviour". This specific example is also included at new section 6A (2) (e) of the definition of "domestic abuse". This is an example of deliberate drafting distinctions that have been made between section 54F and section 6A examples to serve the unique statutory purposes of each provision and to reflect the particular behaviours each is seeking to address through different consequences and different legal mechanisms.

The new section 6A definition of "domestic abuse" will seek an important educative function in enhancing community understanding of what domestic abuse is and how differently it can manifest. It is designed to be inclusive and expansive in nature to reflect the different experiences of domestic abuse as it manifests in different types of relationships. The civil regime applies to all domestic relationships and may include conduct not commonly associated with coercive control. Some stakeholders raised the question of whether having different definitions in two statutes will "result in perpetrators not being held accountable as there will be loopholes". This will not be the case, first because both lists are non-exhaustive and inclusive, not exclusive; and second because the definitions serve very different statutory purposes. If any dispute over meaning arises, the courts will apply the ordinary principles of statutory interpretation by focusing on the text of the provision, its context and its purpose in order to resolve that question of interpretation.

The definition of "domestic abuse" is also supported by three clarifying provisions. New section 6A (3) outlines that exposing a child to domestic abuse also constitutes domestic abuse. This provision recognises that when children are living in a household of domestic abuse, evidence shows that they suffer impacts on their health and development. This is in addition to children being the immediate victims of domestic abuse in their own right. I note that the definition includes family relationships which cover abuse directed towards children. New section 6A (4) recognises that domestic abuse can be either a single incident or it can take the form of a course of conduct. New section 6A (5) provides the behaviours covered by domestic abuse may include those criminal offences, while others may not but still constitute domestic abuse. This qualifier again reflects the specific function of the definition as both educative and part of a broader civil protection order framework.

The term "domestic abuse" is proposed for the definition rather than the term "domestic and family violence". As noted by the joint select committee, conventional terms such as "domestic and family violence" may place too great an emphasis on traditional constructions of violence involving a physical aspect. What has to date been known as domestic and family violence can involve both physical and non-physical behaviours, and the term "domestic abuse" appropriately reflects this. The definition of "domestic abuse" provides the foundation for the overall legislative framework to assist in streamlining and reducing complexity, which were core drivers behind the committee's recommendation. Schedule 2 [4] to the bill incorporates the definition of "domestic abuse" into the definition of "domestic violence offence" by replacing the current section 11 (1) (c) of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. Currently this paragraph prescribes a domestic violence offence to be:

- (c) an offence (other than a personal violence offence) the commission of which is intended to coerce or control the person against whom it is committed or to cause that person to be intimidated or fearful (or both).

Under these reforms, section 11 (1) (c) will now state that a domestic violence offence is:

- (c) an offence, other than a personal violence offence, in which the conduct that constitutes the offence is domestic abuse.

The reference to "coerce or control" is not lost as the definition of domestic abuse includes "behaviour that coerces or controls the second person". New section 2 (2) of the bill provides a mechanism for the section 6A definition of "domestic abuse" to commence, on proclamation, on a day separate to the commencement date of the coercive control offence in schedule 1 and schedule 2 [3] to the bill but still no later than 1 July 2024. This provides the option to have staggered start dates if that is considered appropriate. We will look to the advice of the implementation task force for the benefits and risks of such a staged approach.

I will now turn to the third question that I posed: Why have particular drafting choices been made? Reasonable minds can differ in the approach. That is evident from the divergent laws across jurisdictions. It was also reinforced in evidence heard by the joint select committee and feedback we have received across seven rounds of consultation. Even within sectors and some representative bodies, there are differing views of particular aspects of drafting. This bill represents a bespoke offence that the Government considers, after extensive consultation and having regard to all the alternatives, is the best initial model for New South Wales and our unique community.

To help Parliament in considering the bill, and the community in understanding its scope and rationale, it is important to put on the record why particular drafting choices on key decision points have ultimately been made. The first key drafting choice was the scope of relationships covered by the offence. We have taken the decision to limit the offence to current and former intimate partners at this time. The Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control heard evidence both in favour of and opposed to expanding coercive control beyond intimate partner settings and did not reach a concluded position on this drafting question. In its final report, the committee described the conflicting evidence on this point. It said:

Some inquiry participants suggested that a coercive control offence should only apply to current and former intimate personal relationships – similar to the Scottish offence. While acknowledging that abuse also occurs in other relationships, Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre noted that 'the escalation to more serious harm (such as murder-suicide) generally occurs in the context of intimate partners'.

Others argued that the offence should be broader, and apply to all 'domestic relationships' ...

The committee further stated:

The Inquiry heard evidence that, to avoid the risks of over-criminalisation, the offence should be limited to intimate partner relationships. However, other participants expressed opposing views. This issue requires further consideration.

Since we responded in December 2021 to the committee's report, we have been clear from that time about the scope of reforms. We announced last December that as part of our response to those reforms, we would be "building on the committee's work by developing and consulting on drafting a standalone offence to address coercive control in current and former intimate partner settings" only. That is the approach we originally adopted. We remain committed to that approach because, as submitters like Legal Aid NSW and the Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre highlighted, the evidence base around coercive control and particularly its escalation into homicide is strongest in the intimate partner context. That was reflected in the exposure draft bill and has not changed in the bill now before Parliament.

Restricting the scope of the offence to intimate partners is supported by a number of stakeholders as an important safeguard against the risk of misidentification of victims as perpetrators, and that is a risk acknowledged by many stakeholders. It is an approach consistent with that in Scotland. Some stakeholders have raised concern in submissions that the diverse make-up of communities in New South Wales raises further unique considerations for criminalising coercive control due to the complex familial and kinship arrangements that exist in culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal communities. For those reasons we remain committed to enacting the offence in the context of intimate partner relationships. In the meantime, existing criminal offences will continue to be available to address coercive or controlling behaviour in other relationship contexts such as family relationships. Importantly, the Government has adopted the suggestion made to the joint select committee by a number of submitters that while the offence is limited to intimate partner relationships, it should recognise that children and pets may be weaponised to coerce or control victims.

I had the privilege of speaking with Professor Evan Stark about the Government's exposure draft bill. He told us that an offence of coercive control is better limited to intimate partner relationships at this time and should not be treated at law as the same as elder abuse, or sibling on sibling, because the nature of the offending is very different. The dynamics of coercive and controlling behaviour as they manifest in intimate partner settings are innately different from how similar behaviours manifest in other relationships. There is a very strong evidence base of intimate partner domestic violence homicides being almost always linked with coercive control, and that evidence base at the moment does not exist for other relationships. We will actively review the legislation once it comes into force to ensure that it is operating as intended in practice. We are open to considering whether in the future the scope of the offence requires expansion beyond intimate partner settings to other types of relationships, once we have had an opportunity to see how the law works in practice.

The next drafting choice was the mental element. In particular, should it be intention, recklessness, or both? The mental element we propose is an intention to coerce or control the other person. The exposure draft bill, which we departed from, had an intention to cause physical or mental harm—so it was a different outcome that was intended—and also recklessness as to whether the action caused physical or mental harm. Some stakeholders queried with us why that approach was taken in the exposure draft. No community is directly comparable to our unique and culturally diverse circumstances in New South Wales or the challenges this poses for correctly identifying victim-survivors in a variety of cultural settings.

Changing the mental element to the current drafting was recommended by stakeholders including the legal profession and, in particular, is strongly supported by the New South Wales Bar Association, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) and Legal Aid NSW, among others. It is an important protection against the risks that the reforms may disproportionately impact on Aboriginal community members. I also discussed this drafting choice with Professor Stark. He described the harm he talks about in the context of coercive control as a "harm of domination" and an "intent to dominate", rather than a physical harm of imminent risk. The Bar Association said:

An important part of the offence is that the adult intends the course of conduct to coerce or control the other person. Setting the bar at intention rather than a lower mental state will limit the spectre of the offence being used as a weapon against the very people that it is designed to protect. This is an important safeguard to reduce the offence being misapplied to already marginalised communities and persons in intimate relationships who are in need of the protection of the law.

The mental element in this bill strikes an appropriate balance and speaks to the heart of what coercive control is all about. Although the ultimate effect of coercive control is often physical or mental harm, the intention behind the pattern of conduct for coercive control is to dominate and control another person in order to deprive them of their sense of autonomy and freedom. So it is critical that a charge of coercive control be founded on the criminality of the specific intent to control, rather than on a concept of recklessness or even on an intent to cause physical or mental harm.

The joint select committee made it clear that it did not support interference in ordinary consensual relationships. So while we believe that this is an appropriate balance with the mental element, we have included a requirement that the statutory review of the offence consider whether the mental element should be expanded to include recklessness. Again, let us make this huge start now, dealing with core intentional behaviour, see how it goes and, if necessary, use it as a major building block to expand it in years to come, but do not sit around and wait for years for something to happen.

The third key drafting choice was whether there should be a minimum number of incidents that must be identified to constitute a course of conduct. We have deliberately not specified this in the bill. It was a deliberate drafting choice not to set an arbitrary number of incidents. That is the approach that is taken in England and Wales, where the terms are similarly not defined, but they take their ordinary, plain-English meaning. Another key drafting choice was whether a statutory definition of the words "coerce" and "control" should be included. We do not think that a statutory definition is required. The words are not unclear and they have been used in comparable legislation in Australia and other common law countries, typically without express definition. For example, in section 4AB (1) of the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) the expression "coerce" or "control" appears undefined in the definition of "family violence".

In Tasmania the term "coercing" appears undefined in section 8 of the Family Violence Act 2004. The words "coercive" and "controlling" are used without definition in England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland in their provisions that criminalise coercive control. The words "coerce" and "control" already appear in New South Wales law. They have already existed in the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 in section 11 (1) (c) without definition since 2016 and are well understood by stakeholders. Adding a definition now would create unnecessary uncertainty, including for existing offences and processes such as ADVOs and the new offence. When interpreting those words in those contexts, courts have done that consistently with their ordinary meaning. We will include in the bill's statement of public interest, tabled in the other place, the relevant case law references.

A further drafting consideration was how to best reflect the impacts of coercive control on children, not merely as pawns or witnesses to this behaviour, but as victims in their own right. Professor Stark emphasised to us the importance of providing adequate recognition of and support to children. We gave thought as to how this could best be given effect to in the context of New South Wales. At this time we have not included a provision in like terms to Scotland's "aggravation in relation to a child" in the New South Wales coercive control offence itself. That is because existing sentencing laws in New South Wales will work together with the new coercive control offence to achieve a similar impact without the need for reform. Aggravating factors to be taken into account by a New South Wales sentencing court already include, under section 21A (2) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999, that the offence was committed in the presence of a child under 18 years of age and the offence was committed in the home of the victim or any other person.

The definition of "abusive behaviour" in proposed new section 54F in the bill includes at subsection (2) (a) reference to "behaviour that causes harm against a child if a person fails to comply with demands made of the person". That is intended to capture the types of horrific coercive and controlling behaviours identified in the Queensland inquest into the murder of Hannah Clarke and her three children. I expect that protection for children is one aspect the statutory review of the offence will also consider. I now turn to the last, and arguably the most significant, question: What will the New South Wales Government do to support the effective implementation of this offence and raise public awareness? Domestic Violence NSW said publicly in July 2022:

We support criminalisation of coercive control, but the New South Wales Government must ensure they allocate the time and resources required to get it right.

The offence will not commence before February 2024, and it must commence no later than 1 July 2024. That provides adequate time—at least 14½ months, up to 19½ months if the legislation passes the Parliament this year—to implement this offence and provides our agencies and the wider community certainty as to the window in which the offence will come into force. That is a key safeguard to make sure the community is aware of coercive

control, to make sure there is careful consideration given to implementation and that there is appropriate training, education and resourcing in place for police, judicial officers, lawyers and frontline services.

We have committed to ensure careful consideration is given to implementation, including under the stewardship of a multidisciplinary implementation task force. We agree that that task force has an important role to play, as outlined in our responses to the joint select committee report. That is why we have tasked the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice with operationalising this implementation task force, and that work is already underway. In line with the recommendations of the committee, in implementing the offence, the task force will:

... consult with stakeholders including NSW Police, victim survivors, the domestic abuse sector, disability advocacy organisations, and representatives of culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTQ communities.

The bill will be backed by \$5.6 million in initial funding for coercive control training for police, in multiple awareness campaigns and in educational resources. These are landmark reforms that are crucial to ensuring that we recognise in law a pattern of behaviour that is identified as an almost invariable precursor to domestic violence homicide.

I am humbled by the courage of victim-survivors and their families who have shared their experiences with the Government and the committee. I acknowledge the advocacy of Dr Nithya Reddy, who is in the Chamber today, and her family. I thank all stakeholders for their considered submissions, even though, because of the significant differences between them, we cannot accommodate everyone and have inevitably had to make difficult choices between competing submissions. This is not the first bill that the New South Wales Parliament has considered in this area, but we strongly believe that this bill strikes the best balance for initial major reform and gets it right for the people of New South Wales and the diverse communities we serve.

I also acknowledge the advocacy of the member for Shellharbour, who brought forward her own private member's bill to seek to address this behaviour. I acknowledge the spirit of goodwill so far and the widespread support for tackling coercive control that has been evident in debates on those bills. I note that the bill of the member for Shellharbour was voted for by the Opposition, The Greens and members of the crossbench in the absence of the extensive consultation that has taken place since. We have hastened slowly to do the due diligence that is critical. We have listened carefully and respectfully to stakeholders' divergent views over more than seven rounds of consultation in 2½ years, and I sincerely thank all individuals and organisations who have shared their time, their comments and their insights.

These are landmark reforms that are crucial to ensuring that the pattern of behaviour identified as a precursor to domestic violence deaths—and is obnoxious in its own right—is prevented and eliminated in New South Wales. This standalone offence will strengthen our criminal justice system's responses to abuse and provide further protections to victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. Today the Government stands against coercive control and I implore all members to stand with us in this fight.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Business of the House*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended:

- (1) This day to permit, at the conclusion of the routine of business after question time, and prior to the commencement of Government business:
  - (a) consideration of general business notice of motion No. 3920 relating to the Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC, standing in the name of the member for Murray; and
  - (b) to provide for the following speaking time limits:
    - (i) mover—four minutes;
    - (ii) four other members—three minutes each; and
    - (iii) mover in reply—two minutes.
- (2) On Thursday 13 October 2022 to permit between 1.15 p.m. and 1.45 p.m.:
  - (a) the introduction and mover's second reading speech of the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 by the member for Lake Macquarie, after which debate will be adjourned; and
  - (b) the introduction and mover's second reading speech, or, if already commenced, resumption of the interrupted mover's second reading speech, of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2022 by the member for Newtown, after which debate will be adjourned.

**Motion agreed to.***Bills***STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2022****First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Mr Alister Henskens, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading Speech**

**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) (11:08):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) 2022 continues the statute law revision program, which has been in place for more than 35 years. The statute law bills have featured in most sessions of Parliament since 1984. The bill is an effective method for making minor policy changes and maintaining the quality of the New South Wales statute book by removing typographical errors, updating cross-references and repealing redundant provisions. Schedule 1 to the bill contains policy changes of a minor and non-controversial nature that are too inconsequential to warrant the introduction of separate amending bills. The schedule contains amendments to 34 Acts and related amendments to four instruments.

I will outline of some of the amendments that are included in this schedule. Schedule 1 includes amendments designed to ensure New South Wales legislation reflects contemporary practices in the service of documents. These include amendments to the Animal Research Act 1985, the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986, the Food Act 2003, the Hemp Industry Act 2008, the Local Land Services Act 2013, the Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999, the Poppy Industry Act 2016, the Rural Assistance Act 1989, the Stock Medicines Act 1989, and the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 within the portfolio of the Minister for Agriculture. These amendments enable the service of particular documents under those Acts by electronic transmission. Previously, for several of these Acts, service was limited to personal service, postal service or service by email.

The Dams Safety Act 2015 will also be amended to allow service of a document by email to an email address of a person or body corporate specified by the person or body corporate. These amendments ensure New South Wales legislation provides for the evolving types of electronic methods that may be used for the service of documents, whether by email or another electronic method, depending on the type of document being served—which, as the Minister responsible for technology, I obviously endorse. Amendments to the Fisheries Management Act 1994 continue the Government's commitment to deliver user-centred digital services by providing online access to the register of aquaculture permits. Currently, that Act provides that a person may attend the place where the register is kept during ordinary business hours to inspect the register. The amendments will make the electronic part of the register available on the website of the department. That will ensure online access to the register in the same way the commercial fishery share register is currently available under that Act.

Similarly, the exhibition of documents for public consultation under that Act will take place online, replacing physical exhibition at departmental offices. The public will continue to have the opportunity to make submissions on a range of matters, but materials will now be available on the department's website, increasing accessibility. Materials available for public comment on the website will relate to fisheries management plans, the making of fishing determinations by the Total Allowable Fishing Committee and aquaculture industry development plans. Other amendments to the Fisheries Management Act 1994 provide that a person may show a photo of their official receipt for payment of a recreational fishing fee for the purposes of complying with the requirement for a fisher to have the official receipt in their possession when taking fish. The photo may, for example, be shown on a smartphone or other mobile device.

Amendments to the Companion Animals Act 1998 enable the disclosure of the address, as well as the name of the owner of a companion animal, if a person seeks the information for the purpose of bringing legal proceedings against the owner for the animal's behaviour. This addresses an existing issue in which the disclosure of the name of the owner of a companion animal has been insufficient to institute proceedings against the owner. This amendment supports the provisions of the Act that render the owner of a companion animal liable in damages for injury caused by that animal to persons, personal property and other animals. An amendment is made to the Mining Act 1992, which will allow the department and the holder of an authority to clearly define land that the holder of an authority under that Act wishes to retain, if the applicant intends to cancel part of the land to which an authority relates.

Currently, if the holder of an authority under the Act wants to cancel part of an authority, they are required to provide a description of the land that is to be cancelled. The amendment will provide that the holder is required to provide a description of the area to be retained instead, allowing greater clarity between the department and the holder of the authority. The Natural Resources Access Regulator Act 2017 is amended to increase the number of members that can be appointed to the board of the Natural Resources Access Regulator from three members to between three and five members. The board of the Natural Resources Access Regulator is vitally important to the function of the Natural Resources Access Regulator, as any decision relating to the functions of the regulator is to be made by or under the authority of the board. The quorum for the board is also updated from all members of the board to three members to ensure that the board is able to perform its functions if a member is unable to vote for any reason, and to safeguard against conflicts of interest.

Finally, the Public Holidays Act 2010 is being amended to reflect the change in name of the Queen's Birthday holiday to the King's Birthday holiday following the passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III. There will be no change to the day of the holiday and it will still be celebrated on the second Monday in June. Schedule 2 deals with matters of pure statute law revision consisting of minor technical changes to legislation that the Parliamentary Counsel considers are appropriate for inclusion in the bill. Examples of amendments in the schedule are corrections of grammatical errors, typographical errors and updating references to out-of-date Acts or instruments.

Schedule 3 contains amendments to references in a number of Acts and regulations relating to machinery-of-government changes, arising from administrative change orders. These amendments update out-of-date references to the names of departments or reflect machinery-of-government changes. Schedule 4 continues the program of repealing Acts and instruments that are redundant or of no practical utility. In this bill, the Stock Medicines Amendment Act 2004 is repealed, as it contains one remaining amendment that is not intended to be commenced. The bill also repeals the City of Sydney Regulation 2016 as a result of an amendment made in schedule 1. The only provision that was contained in the regulation is moved to the City of Sydney Act 1988 by schedule 1 to the bill, meaning the regulation is no longer required.

Schedule 5 contains general savings, transitional and other provisions, including a provision that deals with the effect of amendments on amending provisions. This schedule also includes a provision allowing for regulations to be made that are of a savings or transitional nature. Each amendment included in the bill is explained in detail in explanatory notes, including at the beginning of the bill. I hope that members will appreciate the uncontroversial nature of the provisions of the bill. If any amendment causes concern or requires clarification, it should be brought to my attention. If necessary, I will arrange for staff to provide additional information on the matters raised. If any particular matter of concern cannot be resolved and is likely to delay the passage of the bill, the Government is prepared to consider withdrawing the matter from the bill. Withdrawn proposals can also be dealt with in a second bill using the procedure for splitting bills in the Legislative Council, which can be dealt with in each of the Houses in the same way as an ordinary bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ELECTORAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Alister Henskens, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**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) (11:18):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The bill amends the Electoral Act 2017 to make important amendments to facilitate the upcoming 2023 State general election and improvements to the administration of the NSW Electoral Commission. These include changes to postal voting, flexibility to extend telephone voting to electors who may be required to self-isolate due to COVID-19, clarifications to authorisation requirements for automated telephone calls, and amendments to facilitate overseas declaration voting. The bill allows the Electoral Commissioner to appoint an acting Electoral Commissioner outside an election period. The bill also amends the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 to make the commissioner the accountable authority for the NSW Electoral Commission. Amendments included in the bill have been recommended by the NSW Electoral Commission largely to support the delivery and integrity of the State general election in March of next year.

Moving to the details of the bill and, first, to the amendments to the Electoral Act. The bill makes a number of amendments regarding postal voting to facilitate the timely production and dispatch of postal voting materials in preparation for potentially higher volumes of postal votes in upcoming elections, specifically the 2023 general election and any by-elections held after March 2023 and before the 2027 general election. At the May 2022 Federal election record numbers of electors in New South Wales voted by post. Based on these figures, high numbers of postal votes are expected for the 2023 State election. The NSW Electoral Commission has advised that no supplier in New South Wales is able to print and dispatch sufficient quantities of postal vote material in the form currently required by the Electoral Act to meet the anticipated demand and the time frames required in response to these issues. The NSW Electoral Commission has proposed an alternate form of postal vote materials consistent with the postal vote pack used in the Federal election.

The bill provides that the Electoral Commissioner may determine to adopt the alternate method of postal voting for the 2023 general election or any by-elections between March 2023 and the 2027 general election. The alternate method consists of the Electoral Commissioner providing to electors voting by post: one, a ballot paper; two, a postal vote certificate; and three, an envelope for return to the Electoral Commissioner. The Electoral Commission proposes to use an envelope that is specifically designed to protect the secrecy of the ballot. The envelope is designed with a rear window protected by a removable flap. When the flap is peeled back, provided the postal vote certificate and the ballot paper have been inserted correctly, the postal vote certificate can be viewed by scrutineers without revealing the ballot paper. This envelope protects the secrecy of each vote by allowing the postal vote certificate and the ballot paper to be scrutinised separately.

The bill will amend clause 15 of schedule 7 to the Act to enable the Electoral Commissioner to switch on the alternate method by determination in writing published on the Electoral Commission's website. The bill introduces a new schedule 8 to the Electoral Act, which modifies the existing postal vote provisions in the Act, if the Electoral Commissioner determines that the alternate postal vote method is to be used. In particular, the bill will amend section 144 and section 145 of the Electoral Act to require that the postal vote certificate, ballot paper and an envelope for the return of the certificate and ballot paper to the Electoral Commissioner are provided to the elector. The bill will also amend section 149 of the Act to remove the requirement that a postal vote certificate must be printed on an envelope.

There are two key savings provisions included to protect the validity of a postal vote. Firstly, the bill provides that a ballot paper is not to be rejected for scrutiny merely because the ballot paper and postal vote certificate were sealed in an envelope other than the envelope provided by the Electoral Commissioner. This will apply if a voter uses a different envelope to the one supplied by the Electoral Commissioner. In this situation, if the Electoral Commissioner cannot read the postal vote certificate without opening the envelope because of the envelope used, the Electoral Commissioner must open the envelope, withdraw the postal vote certificate and if the relevant scrutiny criteria for the postal vote certificate has been satisfied, the Electoral Commissioner must accept the envelope for further scrutiny.

Secondly, new section 149 (1A) included in schedule 8 allows the Electoral Commissioner to open a postal vote envelope if the postal vote certificate is not visible through the rear window but the Electoral Commissioner considers it is likely the postal vote certificate is in the envelope. In that event, the Electoral Commissioner may open the envelope, withdraw the documents and if the postal vote certificate is inside the envelope, replace the documents in the envelope correctly without further inspecting them or allowing anyone else to, and reseal the envelope. If the postal vote certificate is not inside the envelope, the envelope must be rejected from further scrutiny. This will address situations where an elector has placed the postal vote materials incorrectly in the envelope provided by the Electoral Commissioner.

The bill will also amend section 144 of the Electoral Act to change the requirement for the Electoral Commissioner to deliver postal vote packs to registered early voters within one business day after the ballot papers for an election have been prepared and printed, to require them to be delivered or posted as soon as possible after the ballot papers for an election have been prepared and printed. This more closely aligns with the time frame for the dispatch of postal vote packs that currently applies to postal vote applicants, which is as soon as possible once the Electoral Commissioner is satisfied that the applicant is entitled to vote by post.

Moving now to amendments to the Electoral Act that relate to telephone voting, I note that from 14 October 2022 self-isolation due to COVID-19 will no longer be mandatory in New South Wales. However, should circumstances change and self-isolation again becomes necessary or advisable, the bill sets up a two-step process for making telephone voting available to electors self-isolating due to COVID-19. The bill inserts a regulation-making power in the Electoral Act to enable a regulation to be made which would authorise the Electoral Commissioner to then make a determination that telephone voting is permitted for electors who are self-isolating due to COVID-19 in accordance with a public health order or a current guidance document issued by the Chief Health Officer and published on the website of the Ministry of Health.

The NSW Electoral Commission is continuing to explore whether telephone voting could be made available, from a practical perspective, if electors are in self-isolation due to COVID-19. The bill provides flexibility should it be required closer to the 2023 election. The Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which is currently before the Parliament, contains a prohibition on technology assisted voting—except for telephone voting for vision-impaired or blind electors—for the 2023 general election and any by-elections held before that date. Other than including some flexibility for telephone voting to be made available for electors isolating due to COVID-19, the bill otherwise retains this prohibition. The bill also includes a savings provision in the Electoral Act to provide that the results of an election are not invalid merely because telephone voting was not available, even though it was permitted under clause 14 of schedule 7 to the Act.

Another element of the bill is that it clarifies authorisation requirements for automated telephone calls—otherwise known as robocalls. Under section 186 of the Electoral Act, a person is currently required to "legibly show" on electoral material that they are printing, publishing, distributing or publicly displaying during the regulated period the name and address of an individual on whose instructions the material was printed, published or distributed and the name of the printer and address at which it was printed, if applicable. There are limited exceptions to this. However, it is not clear how authorisation details can be legibly shown on robocalls. The bill therefore makes amendments to clarify that for automated telephone calls containing electoral matter, the call must contain, in a clear voice, spoken in English, the name and address of an individual on whose instructions the call was made. A person must not, during the regulated period, cause, permit or authorise an automated telephone call containing electoral matter to be made to another person, without satisfying these requirements.

The bill also makes amendments to better facilitate declaration voting at overseas early voting centres for the 2023 general election. The NSW Electoral Commission has advised that postal votes sent from overseas are not always able to be returned in time to be included in the vote count. To facilitate the Electoral Commissioner making declaration voting available overseas more easily for the 2023 general election, the bill makes a number of amendments to the Electoral Act. The bill gives the Electoral Commissioner the power to appoint a place outside Australia as an early voting centre for all electoral districts if the Electoral Commissioner is satisfied it would enhance the convenience of a large number of electors. The bill provides that only voting under section 135 and section 136 of the Electoral Act is permitted to take place at these appointed overseas early voting centres. This means that only declaration voting by absent electors and absent silent electors is permitted to take place.

The bill also enables the Electoral Commissioner to appoint people whom the Electoral Commissioner considers have the appropriate skills and experience as election officials for the appointed early voting centres. The other eligibility criteria in section 81 (1) and (2) of the Electoral Act does not have to be met for these election officials. This will provide the Electoral Commissioner with increased flexibility to engage election officials to assist with declaration voting at these centres. To improve the administration of the NSW Electoral Commission, the bill enables the Electoral Commissioner to appoint an Acting Electoral Commissioner outside an election period in certain circumstances. Currently, schedule 2 to the Electoral Act allows the Electoral Commissioner to appoint a member of staff of the Electoral Commission to act as Electoral Commissioner only during an election period and only in limited circumstances. For brief, unexpected periods of leave outside the election period, such as sick leave or carer's leave, the Minister may appoint a person to act as Electoral Commissioner.

The bill amends section 5 of schedule 2 to the Electoral Act to enable the Electoral Commissioner to appoint a member of staff of the Electoral Commission as Acting Electoral Commissioner outside an election period while the Electoral Commissioner is ill or absent. Consistent with current requirements, the bill ensures that a person appointed by the Electoral Commissioner as Acting Electoral Commissioner during an illness or absence may only do so until an acting appointment is made by the Minister. Other safeguards include a limit of 30 days for any acting appointment made by the Electoral Commissioner outside an election period and an existing requirement that the Electoral Commissioner must advise the Minister of any acting arrangements.

I turn now to the amendments to the Government Sector Finance Act. The bill amends section 2.7 to provide that the accountable authority for the NSW Electoral Commission is the Electoral Commissioner. The accountable authority is responsible to the relevant Minister for the financial management of the agency. Currently, the accountable authority for the NSW Electoral Commission under the Government Sector Finance Act is the governing body of the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission has recommended that the Act be amended to prescribe the Electoral Commissioner as the accountable authority. This will make the type of accountable authority prescribed for the Electoral Commission more consistent with the type of accountable authority prescribed for other integrity agencies, such as the Ombudsman's Office, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Audit Office. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I acknowledge a number of guests from Lake Macquarie and the Hunter Valley from the Indonesian-Australian community in the Chamber and welcome them. They are going to have a look around the Parliament and observe some of our procedures and a fine example of a Minister introducing a bill on the appointment of the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Mr Assistant Speaker, I note that my grandfather and my mother's family lived in your great electorate for many years. My grandfather was a doctor in Lake Macquarie for 30 or 40 years. My mother grew up there. Other members of my family also live there, and what a beautiful part of New South Wales it is. It is great to have your guests in the Chamber today, who are fortunate enough to live in your beautiful electorate.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** I don't know how he ended up being a Tory, though.

**Mr David Elliott:** He said "doctor".

**Mr Alister Henskens:** And medical researcher. Mr Assistant Speaker would be interested, as would the member for Heffron, to know that after servicing coalmining communities for many years, he then became the first medical researcher at the Joint Coal Board into lung diseases suffered by coalminers.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I note this is not an inaugural speech and therefore I wonder if it has anything to do with a valedictory. The Clerk will call the next item of business.

*Bills***CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (APPOINTMENT OF LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR AND ADMINISTRATOR) BILL 2022****First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Alister Henskens, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**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) (11:34):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government introduces the Constitution Amendment (Appointment of Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator) Bill 2022. The bill proposes an amendment to the Constitution Act 1902 providing that the appointment of persons to the offices of Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator is to be made by the Governor of New South Wales. Before I deal with the issue that the bill addresses, I will now briefly describe the offices of Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator.

As members would be aware, the Governor is the formal head of State in New South Wales and representative of the King. The Governor performs an important constitutional role in the administration of the State, including appointing the Premier and Ministers of the Crown, presiding at meetings of the Executive Council and assenting to bills passed by this Parliament. The Lieutenant-Governor or the Administrator may assume the administration of the State if there is a vacancy in the office of Governor or the Governor is unavailable. The Governor may also appoint the Lieutenant-Governor or Administrator to be the Governor's deputy during a short absence or illness to perform the powers and functions of the Governor.

Since 1891 it has been the practice in New South Wales to appoint the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as Lieutenant-Governor. The Constitution Act includes a deeming provision providing that the Administrator shall be the Chief Justice or, if the Chief Justice is the Lieutenant-Governor or the Chief Justice is unavailable, the next most senior available judge of the Supreme Court, which is usually the president of the Court of Appeal and then if the president is unavailable, it goes down the seniority of the judges of the Supreme Court. This deeming provision applies where an Administrator has not otherwise been appointed and ensures that in the event of a catastrophe, a surviving judge of the Supreme Court may administer the State.

As members would be aware, section 9A of the Constitution Act provides that the Governor shall be appointed by the sovereign. Section 9B (2) of the Constitution Act provides for the appointment of the Lieutenant-Governor by the sovereign. In contrast, section 7 (2) of the Australia Act 1986 of the Commonwealth provides that, with the exception of the appointment and termination of the Governor of a State and when the

sovereign is personally present in a State, all powers and functions of the sovereign in respect of a State are exercisable only by the Governor of the State. The Government has received legal advice from the Solicitor General advising that under the terms of the Australia Act, the Lieutenant-Governor should be appointed by the Governor and not the sovereign, unless the sovereign is in the State at the time of the appointment. I seek leave to table the Solicitor General's advice 2022/14 entitled Question of Appointment of Lieutenant-Governor, dated 2 August 2022.

**Leave granted.**

**Document tabled.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** The Solicitor General has also advised that section 9B (2) of the Constitution Act, providing for the appointment of the Sovereign, may be inoperative due to its inconsistency with the Australia Act under section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution and any commission by the Sovereign appointing a person as Lieutenant-Governor could be invalid. The Solicitor General's advice refers to a joint advice given in 2006 by the solicitor generals of five States, which also expressed the view that any Lieutenant-Governor of a State must be appointed by the Governor and not the Sovereign, unless the Governor is in the State at the time of the appointment. In New South Wales, the Constitution Act was amended in 2009 to insert a new provision providing that any act by the Chief Justice in the capacity of Lieutenant-Governor is taken to have been done, and always to have been done, in the capacity of Administrator if for any reason the Chief Justice was not holding office as Lieutenant-Governor at the relevant time.

The second reading speech for the Constitution Amendment (Lieutenant-Governor) Act 2009, delivered on 11 November 2009 by the Hon. John Hatzistergos—now His Honour—in the Legislative Council, notes the legal uncertainty regarding the application of the Australia Act to the appointment of Lieutenant-Governors, and indicates that for some years New South Wales had been discussing with other States the possibility of approaching the Commonwealth Government with a proposal to amend the Australia Act to remove all uncertainty. Thirteen years later, securing the consent of all States to amend the Australia Act seems unlikely, noting in particular that South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria have already taken steps to resolve inconsistencies with the Australia Act by legislation, and that Queensland has not appointed a Lieutenant-Governor since 1949.

In light of the Solicitor General's advice, the Government has determined that a legislative amendment to the Constitution Act to provide that the appointment of the Lieutenant-Governor is to be made by the Governor is appropriate to ensure that its terms reflect the legal position under the Australia Act. Accordingly, the bill proposes to amend section 9B (2) of the Constitution Act to provide, consistent with the provisions of the Australia Act, for the appointment of a person to the office of Lieutenant-Governor by the Governor. The proposed amendment would bring New South Wales in line with Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, jurisdictions where the Governor now appoints the Lieutenant-Governor. Only Queensland, which has not appointed a Lieutenant-Governor since 1949, and Western Australia, which has unique constitutional arrangements, have not taken steps to update their legislative frameworks to provide for appointments to be made by the relevant State Governor.

Section 9B (4) of the Constitution Act provides for the appointment of a person as administrator by the Sovereign. Although the Solicitor General did not consider the appointment of the administrator in his advice, the issues identified by the Solicitor General may also apply to the appointment of the administrator. The bill therefore proposes to also amend section 9B (4) to provide that the Governor may appoint a person as administrator. Before I conclude, I reflect on the life of Her Late Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She was an admired Queen of Australia and a model of dedication, duty and trust. True to her word, she devoted her whole life to our service. Her loss has been deeply felt across our State and nation. I was grateful to attend the historic proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III as King of Australia.

The bill, consistent with amendments made in other Australian States, will ensure the appropriate appointment of persons to act for the Governor, being the King's personal representative in New South Wales. On behalf of the Government, I thank the former Chief Justice of New South Wales, the Hon. Thomas Bathurst, AC, KC, for his service as Lieutenant-Governor. The bill will align the provisions of the Constitution Act with the terms of the Australia Act and facilitate the appointment of a new Lieutenant-Governor. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **PROPERTY TAX (FIRST HOME BUYER CHOICE) BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Matt Kean, read a first time and printed.**

## Second Reading Speech

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (11:46):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Property Tax (First Home Buyer Choice) Bill 2022 gives first home buyers a choice when buying a first home as to whether to pay an up-front stamp duty or to opt in to a small annual property tax. This legislation is founded upon a cornerstone value of this Government—the freedom to choose. Further, this is a signature piece of legislation for the Premier that I am proud to advocate for. This reform will allow first home buyers to overcome one of the greatest barriers to home ownership and achieve their own Australian dream. Buying a first home is one of the most important milestones in a person's life. Homes are where families are raised, where they share time with friends and make memories to last a lifetime. However, too many young people today see the dream of owning their own place as out of reach. That is why the Premier has undertaken this important reform during his time as Treasurer and is delivering it today.

Overall, rates of home ownership in New South Wales have fallen from 70 per cent in the 1990s to 64 per cent in 2021. For younger people aged 25 to 34, the national rate of home ownership sits much lower, at around 41 per cent in 2019-20. It is taking first home buyers longer than ever before to save the funds they need for a deposit and to pay stamp duty. In the 1990s it would take the median New South Wales household, putting aside 15 per cent of their income, around six years to save for a 20 per cent deposit on the median property in New South Wales and one year to save for stamp duty. It now takes that same household around 10 years to save for a 20 per cent deposit and two years to save for stamp duty.

The New South Wales Government is committed to helping the young people of this State open the door to home ownership that too many feel is shut to them. This initiative will empower first home buyers to fast track their path to home ownership by choosing the option that best suits their own financial circumstances and personal aspirations. I call on all members in this place to lend their support to this initiative that will empower first home buyers across our State to realise their aspirations of home ownership.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Choice is the key feature of the First Home Buyer Choice scheme. We know that everybody's personal financial situation is different, and First Home Buyer Choice allows people to choose the tax arrangements that will work best for them. If a first home buyer expects to live in their first home for several decades or longer, they might prefer to pay stamp duty. But for someone struggling to save the up-front costs of their dream home or for someone who does not plan to hold their first property for decades, property tax will often be preferable. We expect that among the relevant group of first home buyers, around two-thirds will choose to pay property tax. It is important to note that a first home buyer's choice will not affect subsequent owners.

The property tax option is only available to first home buyers. Subsequent purchasers of a property will be required to pay stamp duty, as under current arrangements, unless they are themselves an eligible first home buyer and they choose to pay the property tax. To assist eligible first home buyers in making the choice between property tax and stamp duty, the Government has provided an online property tax calculator. Using this calculator, a prospective first home buyer will be able to discover the owner-occupier property tax that would be payable on a particular property and to compare it with an estimate of the stamp duty payable by a first home buyer at purchase.

Parts 2 and 3 of the bill outline the eligibility criteria for eligible transfers under the scheme. The definition of a first home buyer in clause 5 of the bill is consistent with the existing rules for the First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme. That scheme determines who can receive exemptions or concessional rates of stamp duty. These eligibility criteria are well known in the community and have been in place since 2017. Australian citizens or permanent residents living in New South Wales can opt into the scheme for residential property purchases, provided they or their spouse have not previously owned residential land in Australia.

The bill will allow first home buyers purchasing a dwelling for up to \$1.5 million to choose between stamp duty or the property tax. For people buying vacant land, with the intention of building their first home, the purchase price can be up to \$800,000. Farmland will be excluded from the First Home Buyer Choice. The bill adopts the definition of "land" used for primary production within the meaning of the Land Tax Management Act 1956 to identify farmland that is not eligible for first home buyers to choose property tax. In extensive consultation on property tax proposals over the past two years, farmers in New South Wales have indicated to the Government that they do not consider an annual property tax to be well adapted to the variable incomes faced by farming businesses.

The scheme is focused on first home buyers who seek to become owner-occupiers. The bill includes a residence requirement in clause 15 to ensure that the scheme mostly assists those looking for a first home. Occupation of the property must commence within 12 months of the first home buyer taking possession and must

continue for a continuous period of at least six months. The Chief Commissioner will have the discretion to vary or to waive the residency requirement if there are extenuating circumstances. The rates of property tax have been carefully designed to assist in increasing rates of home ownership and to remain affordable over the long run. The methods of calculating property tax rates are contained in schedule 2 to the bill. The application of those rates is outlined in part 5 of the bill.

For owner-occupiers, the initial property tax rates will be \$400, plus 0.3 per cent of the home's land value—land values in this instance are the official land values determined by the Valuer General and do not include the value of the buildings on the land. For further clarity, this is not the sale price of a property. If a property tax dwelling is rented out, an initial investor rate of \$1,500, plus 1.1 per cent of land value, will apply. The higher rates for investors apply because of the scheme's focus on lifting rates of home ownership and because investors' property tax payments would be deductible expenses for income tax purposes. These tax rates will remain unchanged during the first two financial years of the scheme.

For 2024-25 and subsequent financial years, the tax rates will be indexed each year. The indexation rules for tax rates will ensure that the average indexed property tax payment will grow in line with average annual incomes, ensuring that property tax payments remain affordable over time. The indexation approach will substantially reduce the volatility of individual property tax payments, compared with a system involving a constant tax rate applied to land values. As an added protection, the year-to-year growth of the property tax payments is capped at a maximum of 4 per cent growth. This will provide individual first home buyers with increased certainty regarding their future property tax payments.

Home buyers will want to know that the calculation of property tax will remain consistent for years to come. To safeguard against future governments changing the tax rates by increasing the land value component or the fixed component that make up the property tax indexed amount, provisions have been included in the bill to ensure that any future bill proposing an increase to the property tax indexed amount must be exposed for public comment and face parliamentary scrutiny. Those provisions are outlined in clause 55 of the bill. Additionally, clause 55 requires the Minister proposing the bill to alter rates to notify members of the public and relevant organisations of their intentions. Further, such a bill could only be introduced after being provided to the House at least 30 sitting days prior.

The Government is working closely with the relevant public and private sector systems operators to ensure the scheme is ready to go live in 2023. Eligible first home buyers who choose to pay property tax will not be required to pay stamp duty if their purchase settles on or after 16 January 2023. Relevant private sector and government systems are currently being updated to support applications to choose the property tax from that date. Information about how to apply to pay property tax will be made available on the website of Revenue NSW after this year. Part 2 of schedule 4 to the bill outlines that a period of retrospectivity applies. Property tax applications will be available for dwelling purchases that are contracted in the period between the date of assent of this legislation and 15 January 2023. This means that an eligible first home buyer who buys a property between the assent of this legislation and 15 January would still be required to pay stamp duty to complete their purchase; however, from 16 January they will be able to apply to opt in to property tax and receive a refund for any stamp duty paid.

Part 7 of the bill outlines the deferral scheme. This scheme is intended to support vulnerable home owners who have fallen on financially difficult times and cannot meet their property tax liabilities. Under the deferral scheme, property tax could be deferred until the dwelling is eventually sold, at which time the Government would claim the unpaid taxes as part of the property settlement. No person will be required to sell their principal place of residence in order to meet their property tax obligations. The Chief Commissioner will have the power to assess and approve grounds for deferral of property tax payments when paying property tax would mean the home owner is unable to meet basic living expenses. Grounds for deferral would incorporate consideration of issues such as mental health, cognitive impairment, intellectual disability and other issues in determining if a person is fit to meet their obligations under the property tax. Property tax payments could also be considered by the existing Hardship Review Board, providing an additional avenue for assessment of hardship and potential relief.

Schedule 5 outlines amendments to other existing legislation. Given the bill's interaction with the tax and conveyancing systems, it also makes minor amendments to other legislative instruments. These are required to ensure the first home buyer choice legislation will not conflict with other legislation. Amendments to the Duties Act 1997 are required to ensure land opted in to property tax is not also charged duty. Amendments to the Land Tax Act 1956 set out how property tax and land tax interact. Land tax assessments will be reduced in proportion to the share of any property tax land in the value of total assessable land. Finally, the bill makes a simple amendment to the Taxation Administration Act 1996 to include the resulting legislation from the bill as a taxation law for the purposes of the Taxation Administration Act. This provides the Chief Commissioner the necessary powers for administering the property tax.

The Premier has led the way to deliver an innovative and exciting policy that puts power back in the hands of first home buyers across the State. Above all else, his policy is about choice. It is about giving first home buyers the choice to decide the pathway to home ownership that best suits their own personal circumstances. His policy is also about the great Australian dream—home ownership. The first home buyer choice legislation opens up new avenues for first home buyers to break into the market and to get a foot on the property ladder. It will reduce the time needed to save for a home by giving young people the option to bypass one of the biggest hurdles faced by many people trying to get their first home: stamp duty. This policy will help more young people right across New South Wales buy their very own stake in our great nation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**BUILDING AND OTHER FAIR TRADING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

**First Reading**

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

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (12:01):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Building and Other Fair Trading Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill makes miscellaneous minor but important amendments to various Acts across the Fair Trading portfolio to ensure that these legislative schemes can continue to operate as Parliament intended. The amendments encompass regulatory functions relating to building and construction, explosives and data-sharing arrangements essential to facilitate data-driven regulatory activities. The amendments in the bill clarify the powers for the building regulator to address serious defects in residential apartment buildings; increase penalties for failing to comply with building notification requirements; identify the building regulator actions that can be made publicly available; enhance data- and information-sharing between government agencies, universities and engaged consultants and contractors; recognise decennial liability insurance as a critical consumer protection product; increase maximum penalties for explosives offences; clarify regulation-making powers in the Explosives Act 2003; and postpone the remake of the Explosives Act 2003 to 1 September 2024.

The bill continues to deliver on the New South Wales Government's commitment to implementing transformational reforms to New South Wales building regulation as part of its ongoing work to secure behavioural change in the industry. This comprehensive reform agenda is focused on improving building quality and restoring consumer confidence in the New South Wales construction industry. The Government's reform agenda to date includes the establishment of the Office of the Building Commissioner, the introduction of the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020, known as the RAB Act, and the introduction of the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020. The amendments are informed by nearly two years of operation of the RAB Act and are necessary refinements that have been identified through the on-ground operation of the legislation.

Since September 2020 the building regulator has carried out 168 audits of residential apartment buildings under construction. As a result, over 700 serious defects have been identified and 29 building work rectification orders have been issued to resolve the serious defects. This work has ensured that serious defects are found during construction and rectified by the developer before completion, preventing thousands of apartment owners from incurring unnecessary costs. These amendments will provide further support to the work of the NSW Building Commissioner, David Chandler, whom I am a big fan of—as are many other members in this Chamber, such as the member for Swansea—and NSW Fair Trading, another outstanding agency, by ensuring the building regulator has the right powers and access to information to meet the Government's commitments in this space.

The work of the New South Wales Government in addressing serious defects in residential apartment buildings has been transformative for consumers in New South Wales, giving building owners confidence that the building regulator has the necessary tools it needs to hold those who cause building defects accountable. Our work over the past three years has allowed New South Wales to set new standards for building regulation, making us a leader in implementing the national Shergold Weir Building Confidence report. That report rightly called out that the Australian building industry had for too long taken for granted consumer and practitioner confidence in its business-as-usual approach to delivering noncompliant buildings.

The New South Wales Government's appointment of David Chandler as our first Building Commissioner and the bipartisan support of members on both sides of this House—for which I am grateful—to give him and the fantastic team at the Department of Customer Service the powers they need has seen New South Wales turn a

corner. Consumer confidence is returning, defects are being picked up sooner and building owners are being given stronger support and confidence in the buildings they own and occupy. This has meant that the insurers and financiers, who are critical to supporting the pipeline of development New South Wales needs to meet its housing and property targets, want to work in New South Wales. They are now confident that work will be trustworthy, resilient and fit for purpose.

Our efforts have paid off, and we are now the first Australian jurisdiction where decennial liability insurance is being offered. This product provides a 10-year warranty over a building's critical elements, including structure, waterproofing, fire safety systems, enclosure and building services. Unlike other types of coverage in the market it provides full indemnity up to the original construction value, operates as a strict liability product of first resort and attaches to the building, not the developer. This means that where a defect manifests, there is a remedy available under the decennial liability insurance product to cover the costs of remediation. This is a game changer for building owners throughout the State. It is a signal that the market is backing the projects being designed and built in New South Wales and that homeowners can be confident that buildings will be compliant, safe and resilient going forward.

Much of the success of the building reforms can be attributed to the passion and strong leadership of the NSW Building Commissioner. I assure the people of New South Wales that Mr Chandler has agreed to stay in the role until September 2023, reaffirming this Government's commitment to maintain its work and momentum to transform the building and construction sector and address the problematic behaviours and practices that have compromised confidence in our industry in the past.

I now turn to the substance of the bill. The proposed change to section 98 of the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 requires that the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service, our outstanding Emma Hogan, make available on the department's website copies of all stop-work orders currently in force. Stop-work orders are an important remedial tool to address contraventions of the Act that could result in significant damage to property, or significant harm or loss to the public or occupiers of a building. Given the serious nature of stop-work orders, there is a strong public interest to make these orders publicly available on the department's website. Making these orders publicly available serves both an educative role for the public, by giving the public an understanding of the circumstances that led to the issuing of a stop-work order, and serving as deterrent for industry.

The bill also gives the secretary discretionary power to make publicly available copies or parts of written undertakings accepted by the secretary under the Design and Building Practitioners Act or the Residential Apartment Building (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020. Written undertakings are another remedial tool available to the building regulator, but one where the person contravening the Act voluntarily agrees to carry out certain works or actions, or refrain from certain conduct, as opposed to being compelled by the building regulator. Because written undertakings involve similar circumstances and subject matter to other compellable remedial actions, such as building work rectification orders, it is consistent and reasonable for these to be made publicly available and have the same public availability and prominence as a person who was ordered to rectify a matter.

The secretary is given discretion in making these publicly available as they may contain sensitive or confidential matters that are not suitable to be made publicly available. Where a written undertaking is accepted by the secretary and a person undertakes to carrying out building work to eliminate, minimise or remediate a serious defect, the bill proposes a change to section 28 of the RAB Act for that work to not require development consent or approval under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. This is the same concession that a developer would receive when ordered to carry out the work under a building work rectification order and is an appropriate concession for those developers who volunteer to rectify serious defects. We want to make sure that we are encouraging developers to opt in to remediating defects expeditiously and this amendment supports that cause.

The bill makes other important amendments and clarifications to the Residential Apartment Building (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020. Firstly, the bill increases the maximum penalty in section 7 of the Act for those developers who fail to provide an expected completion notice to the secretary. An expected completion notice sets out the date the developer expects to make an application for an occupation certificate for the building and must be provided at least six months, but not more than 12 months, before that application is made. The expected completion notice is an essential part of the Act as it gives the building regulator a line of sight to when buildings are nearing completion. This information is used to inform the work of the NSW Building Commissioner and the department in carrying out proactive audits of residential apartment buildings nearing completion.

There has been a reduction in serious defects in residential apartment buildings in New South Wales, in large part due to the two years of operation of this proactive audit program by the building regulator. Departmental

audits of expected completion notices have identified unacceptable rates of noncompliance by developers with these obligations. While it is an offence to not provide an expected completion notice, the current penalty amount is not creating sufficient deterrent, particularly compared to the potential cost of an audit that finds serious defects. The proposed change will increase the maximum penalty for developers who fail to provide an expected completion notice to the secretary. For corporations, the maximum penalty will increase from \$110,000 to \$330,000, with the continuing daily offence increased from \$11,000 to \$33,000. For individuals, the maximum penalty will increase from \$22,000 to \$110,000, with the continuing daily offence increased from \$2,200 to \$11,000.

The second changes are important clarifications to the scope and powers available under a building work rectification order. The original and continuing intent of the building work rectification order scheme is to give the building regulator the power to require developers to rectify serious defects and potential serious defects before a building is handed over to the end owner. To remove doubt, changes are proposed to section 33 of the RAB Act to clarify that a building work rectification order can require a developer to take any action, including requiring the carrying out of building work, or the refraining from carrying out building work, that is for the purpose of eliminating, minimising or remediating a serious defect or potential serious defect.

This change addresses the fact that the actions required to resolve a serious defect or potential serious defect may not always be building work. For example, these actions could require temporary structural support works, testing of building elements or other investigative works. These changes ensure that the building regulator is not limited in how they can require a developer to resolve serious defects or potential serious defects in a building. This complements proposed changes to section 34 of the Act for building work rectification orders that would allow the regulator to specify the standard that building work is required to meet, rather than specifying the work or action that is required to be undertaken.

These changes make clear that building work rectification orders can require a developer to submit particulars of the work they intend to carry out to meet the standard in the building work rectification order or engage a suitably qualified person or specialist to prepare a report on how that standard will be met. This is an important amendment as sometimes the nature of building work that is required to be carried out is of a specialist nature. The amendments ensure that the building regulator can utilise the expertise of industry where appropriate, while still having oversight of the work proposed to meet the standards specified in a building work rectification order.

As these amendments are addressing anomalies that have hindered the Act's ability to realise Parliament's intended outcome of the use of these powers, the bill includes a change in schedule 1 to give the changes in sections 28, 33, 34 and 62 retrospective effect. Schedule 1.2 to the bill seeks to amend the Explosives Act 2003 to implement recommendations of the 2019 statutory review of the Act and update regulation-making powers. The review identified the need to increase the maximum penalties under the Act, which have not changed since its introduction in 2003. The proposed changes will see maximum penalties increased by up to 50 per cent, in accordance with the change in the consumer price index. It is important that the offences in the Act continue to strongly deter the unsafe and illegal use of explosives to protect those who work with them and the wider community.

The amendments also implement another recommendation of the 2019 statutory review by confirming the ability of inspectors to serve a notice under section 155 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, as applied by section 27 of the Explosives Act, on a person to provide information or documents, or to give evidence, despite the person being outside the State. Extending the application of section 155A to an inspector's service of notice under the explosives legislative framework is an important and necessary provision that will ensure inspectors can gather information outside New South Wales as part of an investigation or monitor or enforce compliance with the Explosives Act, critical to ensuring safety and compliance.

It is critical that our legislation keeps pace with modern society and enables regulators to function in an effective way in the automated and digital world. The application of section 155B will modernise the serving of notices by SafeWork NSW, allowing for the regulator to serve a notice electronically, at a person's place of residence or at their workplace. The final amendments to the Explosives Act will clarify and update regulation-making powers. Specific regulation-making powers have been introduced in relation to the registration and authorisation of explosives, the storage and transport of explosives, and safety measures when handling explosives. These complement the existing general powers to make regulations under the Explosives Act and will lay the groundwork for the upcoming remake of the Explosives Regulation 2013.

The bill also amends the Subordinate Legislation Act to postpone the remake of the Explosives Regulation 2013, which is due by 1 September 2023, to 1 September 2024. This is to allow time for implementation of further, more complex recommendations of the 2019 statutory review and further consultation on the Act and regulation as a whole. These amendments will ensure that explosives continue to be safely regulated

with appropriate safeguards enacted to prevent misuse. Much of the regulatory work in the Better Regulation portfolio is data driven, which I am very pleased to hear, with compliance and enforcement activities informed by quality data, which is even better. The amendments propose minor changes to ensure that the ability for data to be shared between agencies is not unnecessarily limited.

Section 65 of the RAB Act has been amended to clarify that information stored on the NSW Planning Portal, which is provided under a requirement of the Act and to which the secretary has access, is taken to be information held by the secretary. New section 65A will enable the secretary to share information with Australian universities and consultants or contractors engaged by or on behalf of the secretary. This allows the information to be used to conduct research, such as PhD programs, or the carrying out of analysis of this information and data to assist the secretary in exercising functions under the Act. That proposed amendment includes a necessary protection to not share a person's personal information within the meaning of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

These amendments will enable the secretary to commission research to support capability development, both through the use of micro-credentials and enhancements to tertiary education delivery, as well as inform enhancements to the way audits are carried out by the regulator. It is critical that this information is subject to rigorous oversight and protection but can be used to better protect building owners and the community from noncompliant and unsafe building work.

Schedule 1.5 amends the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 to provide that, instead of giving the secretary a building bond, a developer of a strata scheme may instead obtain decennial insurance approved by the secretary. Decennial insurance is strict liability cover that protects successive building owners against serious defects of the key elements of the common property of a building for 10 years from when the building is completed. This amendment makes this cover an alternative option to the strata building bond, which makes 2 per cent of the contract value available for claims for two years after the building is completed. This amendment recognises the success of the Government's building reforms under the stewardship of the Building Commissioner.

The proactive and robust reform agenda has reduced the risk of building work on residential apartment buildings to the point where insurers are willing to enter the New South Wales market and offer cover against serious defects for these buildings. That is a big win for owners of these buildings who will benefit from this cover for 10 years, without having to establish fault, when taken out by developers. Speaking to the significance of this decennial liability insurance provision in the bill, I do not think anybody should mistake how big this reform is. Nowhere else in the country is an insurance product offered that provides 10 years of cover for major defects in relation to strata buildings. Products like this do occur overseas. I think there is a product in France, from memory, and some other places, but it is not common. It is not common because there is so much uncertainty in the construction space. A lot of uncertainty and not much transparency is a recipe for insurers staying well clear.

Insurers, believe it or not, love certainty because they have to price the risk, and it is very hard for them to price a risk when there are so many variables. When we provide more transparency in the construction sector, as we have done, when we provide the reforms and the powers to the Building Commissioner, as we have done, when we digitise the planning system through planning, as we have done, when we embark on a program of reform around regulations, starting with Fair Trading and moving into SafeWork, as we are doing, and when we lead the nation by digitising the conveyancing sector with eConveyancing from end to end, as we have done, we start to see a level of transparency that brings insurers back into the market. And that is in circumstances where years ago they would in no way have entertained this.

I was the Minister responsible when we brought in the bond under the strata building bond scheme, which makes 2 per cent of the contract value available for claims for two years after the building is completed, and I remember the discussions and negotiations at the time. Developers did not want to put 2 per cent in. Purchasers said 2 per cent was not enough. Developers did not want to put anything in, to be honest, and purchasers said we needed 3 per cent to 5 per cent. We landed on 2 per cent to allow things to progress, but we all knew that this was a bandaid until a better solution came along, which was an insurance product. The insurance product absolutely changes the game. It means developers will pay approximately 1 per cent to 2 per cent of the contract price, but they pay it once and that liability or insurance stays on the property for 10 years. It means that bodies corporate do not have to go in and fight and prove fault before making a claim.

I was formerly a litigation lawyer, and tribunals and courts are clogged with litigation against developers, primarily trying to establish fault and damage. By having an insurance product, one gets past the first hurdle straightaway. One just goes into making a claim and the claim is assessed in the usual course. I can almost guarantee that consumers will universally embrace the single liability product. I have lived in strata all my adult life. I know that if I were to buy into a strata scheme, I would put more weight to and confidence in a scheme that has single liability insurance. There is no way in the world I would feel confident buying into a scheme off the

plan and the developer saying, "No, I haven't got liability insurance, but I've got a 2 per cent bond and you can fight me for it later on." It would not be worth the headache. It would not be worth the time of day.

By a developer doing the right thing, particularly when one marries up the work that the Building Commissioner is doing in relation to iCIRT and the building trust indicator—again, world-beating reforms—it means good quality developers will be able to get single liability insurance and those who do not meet the mark will not. Then they will suffer the consequence in the market by purchasers saying, "I will vote with my wallet and choose to go with a developer that's got single liability insurance." This lifts the quality right across the board. It is not just an insurance product; it is a quality assurance product—and, again, leading the country. I am so proud of the fact that we have got to this point and we have an insurer in the market already with the confidence to offer the product. We will have more to say very soon about that. On that note, I thank the Opposition for its indulgence. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Budget*

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2022-2023**

**Debate resumed from 11 August 2022.**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:32):** I welcome the opportunity to return to the discussion of the 2022-23 budget papers. Previously, I referred to the work done around investment in health. I referred to the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme [IPTAAS] and I acknowledge the great advocacy work done by the Cancer Council of NSW. Earlier this year when I spoke to the Cancer Council we spoke about IPTAAS and the importance of the role it plays in assisting families to be able to travel and access accommodation when they are away from home while seeking health care. It is such an important benefit for rural and regional communities to be able to access that support.

While speaking to investment in health workers, I mentioned IPTAAS when speaking to the Murrumbidgee Local Health District CEO, Jill Ludford. Jill and her team do a fantastic job along with Albury Wodonga Health in providing health care across our region. Jill spoke to me about how this year the Murrumbidgee Local Health District had its largest-ever cohort of graduate nurses, which is fantastic. As the new cohort of nurses come in to work, I wish them all the best. I know that the Murrumbidgee Local Health District will be very supportive as they begin their nursing career. I know that local health districts monitor and adjust starting profiles to appropriately meet operational need at any point in time. Local health districts will continue with ongoing recruitment, as required, to ensure that skilled workers are available to deliver clinical services.

A big part of entering a nursing career is also re-entry. I am advised that NSW Health offers scholarships of up to \$10,000 to support nurses and midwives who re-enter practice. Scholarships are linked to subsequent employment. I certainly encourage anyone who is interested in that to refer to the NSW Health website. I will come back to the topic of health as it pertains to Albury Wodonga Health and discuss the important need for investment in capital infrastructure, but for now I will focus on my electorate and the Premier's words in that regard. He said:

For more than a decade we have delivered on our vision, reinforcing the State's economic foundations, rebuilding the infrastructure, and establishing services strong enough to withstand unprecedented pressures.

With this budget, the NSW Government sets out a transformational roadmap for the decade ahead, delivering not just for our people today, but for generations to come.

In that sense I look to the Albury electorate. Importantly, I see investment, particularly around education. I know that the New South Wales Government has been listening to what people have to say. For me and for my electorate, nothing demonstrates this better—and demonstrates the gulf between the philosophies of government and opposition—than the strong support going to preschools. We all know that in New South Wales there is a boom in job opportunities. Since meeting childcare demand is by the provision of more childcare places, I mention that yesterday I had the privilege of speaking in this place in support of the Treasurer's bill to establish a fund dedicated specifically to child care in New South Wales, which really is supercharging childcare support in this State and leading the nation.

Families in many regional areas are set to benefit from extra preschool places. I have seen that in my area with investment through the Start Strong Capital Works Grants Program. As I said yesterday, I see that from speaking to people in the community—people such as Bev McGrath, Flick Middleton in Tumbarumba through to Steph Girdwood in Jerilderie and Councillor Lee Parker in Holbrook. Right across my electorate the message is loud and clear: We need to be giving our families support with child care. We know the benefit of investing in child care and early education is setting up our young people for life. In that regard, the exciting news has been to see investment in, for example, the Ross Circuit Preschool Centre and the Albury Preschool, which are two of

18 services across New South Wales that will get a share of funding through the latest round of grants to increase the number of preschool places on offer across the State. Those preschools will benefit from \$2.1 million to create an additional 65 places.

Tumbarumba will benefit from \$1.9 million to build a new preschool centre, which will create 40 new places. As I mentioned, in Jerilderie, a preschool and long day care centre has just been opened, which is fantastic testament to the power of work done by the community, backed up with investment by the New South Wales Government. This program addresses demand for community preschools and that will give more New South Wales children the best possible start in life. This funding is so important for our families. We know the importance of accessible early education. These grants aim to increase opportunities for early childhood education. It is a great opportunity for families in our region to be able to access early childhood education. I look forward to the service benefiting from the Start Strong Capital Works Grants Program.

The Minister for Education and Early Learning noted that that round of the Start Strong Capital Works Grants will create up to 600 additional community preschool places across the State for children to attend at least two days per week. The Minister made clear that the Government wants every child in New South Wales to have access to a quality preschool education, no matter their background or location. This funding will support successful services with improvements, including new builds, extensions and renovations, and will also support the maintenance of preschool operations where there is an urgent need for capital works. Since 2018 the New South Wales Government has provided more than \$62 million to deliver additional community preschool places in areas of greatest need and demand. This is in addition to the \$15.9 billion investment in the Early Years Commitment announced by the New South Wales Government as part of the 2022-23 budget to boost access and affordability to early childhood education and care services.

I move from that notion of preschool and early childhood education and child care—which is an important focus—to education. One of the big things in the budget for the Albury electorate was the announcement of a new primary school in Thurgoona. Since coming into Parliament in 2019 a major focus of my work has been supporting the Thurgoona community. Front of mind has been a new primary school. That has not been without its challenges. We have been hampered by the need to get up-to-date data reflecting the growth that Thurgoona is experiencing.

I acknowledge the work that Albury City Council has done and its advocacy. We have been working with Education Infrastructure to make sure that we have contemporary data that recognises that Thurgoona is a growth area, one of the fastest growing regional areas in New South Wales. A big part of that is making sure it gets the services that it deserves. It has been exciting to see the announcement in this year's budget that Thurgoona Primary School is firmly on that work list. It is a fully funded project. It is a public school and the Government is delivering it. Much preliminary work has been underway to get us to this point. In this year's budget \$1.7 million will be funded for planning. We are now in an important stage where substantial planning will commence, including site options, size, facilities and costing. This has been a point of advocacy throughout my term in Parliament.

Last October I spoke in the House about the increasingly urgent need for a new public school in Thurgoona. I have been speaking to and hearing from parents and staff about their concerns. I have been pressing the Government on the case for a new school. Such is the need that as recently as June this year I posted on social media the importance of action for the people of Thurgoona and I have had continued representations with government to that effect. Our school building program will secure a brighter future for Thurgoona families for generations to come. This Government knows nothing is more important than the education of our children, and our community warmly welcomes this investment. I thank the Minister for Education and Early Learning for understanding the needs of the Thurgoona community.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Committees*

### **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the House take note of report 10/57 entitled *Quadrennial Review of the Audit Office of New South Wales 2022*.

**Debate called on and postponed.**

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

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

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (12:44):** As Chair: I address the House regarding the *Legislation Review Digest No. 48/57* tabled on 11 October 2022. The committee examined nine bills, including three cognate bills, introduced in the sitting week beginning 20 September 2023. The committee also examined 32 regulations and commented on three. I draw the Parliament's attention to some of the issues raised in the digest. The Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment (No Body, No Parole) Bill 2022 amends the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999. The bill amends the Act to provide that a parole order must not be made for an offender serving a term of imprisonment for homicide if the victim's body or remains have not been located. This is unless the Parole Authority is satisfied the offender has satisfactorily cooperated in locating the victim's body or remains.

The bill clarifies that the change applies where the offender was convicted or sentenced, or an application for the parole order was made before the commencement of the section. This allows retrospective application of the provision. The committee generally comments on retrospectivity, as it may impact the principle of the rule of law that people are entitled to know what law applies to them at any given time. As retrospective application applies to parole applications prior to the commencement of the bill, the committee referred this matter to the Parliament for its consideration.

Turning to a private member's bill, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Prohibitions for Convicted Persons) Bill 2022 amends animal protection laws to prohibit persons convicted of animal cruelty offences from caring for or working with animals. These include prohibitions on breeding animals or being involved in a business relating to the breeding of animals. A breach of prohibition under these amendments is a strict liability offence and carries a maximum penalty of 400 penalty units for an individual, or one year's imprisonment, or both.

The committee generally comments on strict liability offences as they depart from the common law principle that the mental element is necessary for liability for an offence. Strict liability offences are not uncommon in regulatory contexts and may be included to encourage compliance. However, the committee noted that these strict liability offences prohibit certain activities in relation to employment and business that are ordinarily permitted and attach penalties of imprisonment. Given this, the committee referred this matter to the Parliament for its consideration.

The committee also considered the Charitable Fundraising Amendment Regulation 2022. This regulation prescribed offences under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2021 that may be dealt with by penalty notice. Penalty notices allow a person to pay the amount specified for an offence within a certain amount of time if they do not wish to have the matter determined by the court. This may impact on a person's right to a fair trial and the automatic right to have a matter heard by an impartial decision-maker in public with the opportunity to put forward their case. However, the regulation does not remove the right of an individual to elect to have their matter heard and decided by a court. Accordingly, the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on *Legislation Review Digest No. 48/57*.

I would also like to draw to the attention of the House the recently adopted Sessional Order 188A, passed by the Legislative Assembly yesterday. The order provides that a member with carriage of a bill shall, if reasonably practical, address any matters raised by the committee in its report on the bill during the second reading debate. If it is not reasonably practical to do so within that time frame, the member with carriage is to provide a response by correspondence to the committee. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest and, of course, I thank the hardworking secretariat for their ongoing support. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:49):** I am delighted as usual to contribute to the debate on the forty-eighth digest of this Parliament, dated 11 October. The committee considered nine bills and commented on eight of those, and 32 regulations and commented on three of those. It is pleasing to note that the committee always endeavours to have the digest available with all the bills up for debate and was able to do that yesterday. That is a credit to the staff that support the committee. The committee was also really pleased to note the making of sessional order 188A, which reads that:

- (1) The Member with carriage of a bill shall, if reasonably practicable, address any matters raised by the Legislation Review Committee in its report on the bill during the bill's second reading debate.
- (2) If not reasonably practicable for a response to be made during the debate ... the Member with carriage is to provide a response ... by correspondence to the Committee.

Members of the public and members of the House who follow the committee's deliberations—I know many people do—will recall that back in November 2018 the committee issued a report on an inquiry into the operation of the Legislation Review Act. Recommendation 1 states:

The Committee recommends that the Houses give consideration to amending their respective Standing Orders to require the Member with carriage of a bill to address any matters identified by the Legislation Review Committee during debate on the bill.

It is really pleasing that the recommendation of an inquiry conducted by the committee all the way back then is now being enabled by the House to further progress the scrutiny of legislation. I thank my committee colleagues, particularly the Government members, who supported the constant reminding that the committee did to ensure those standing orders were amended. I again thank the secretariat that supports the committee and I thank my fellow committee members. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

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

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR HEATHCOTE**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Heathcote celebrates his birthday today. I wish him a happy birthday.

*Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome guests to the Chamber. The member for Wyong is welcoming Bendigo Bank representatives: Charlotte Hogerzeil, Dhruv Malik, Elizabeth Petrie, Jack Taylor, Damon Williams, Mark Cooper and Ray Davidson. I understand that there may be some guests of the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Oatley from the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia. I am not sure if they came or if they took a raincheck for another day. I welcome them if they are here. I acknowledge a guest of the member for Gosford, Kyra Sumner, who is a law and politics student at the University of Sydney.

I also welcome my own guests, representing the Jewish Board of Deputies: Darren Bark, who is the chief executive officer, and the newly elected president, David Ossip. I congratulate him on his new appointment. I am sure members are aware that the beautiful mace at the end of our table is a gift from the Jewish Board of Deputies, dating back to 1974. I acknowledge the attendees at the introduction to the Legislative Assembly public sector seminar, who are watching question time from the public galleries. I welcome everyone and thank those members who are participating in those sessions today.

*Announcements*

#### **COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2022**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that the organiser of the 2022 Commonwealth Youth Parliament has confirmed the successful application of our nominee, Mr Ethan Floyd, nominated by the member for Cessnock. Mr Floyd will travel to Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean in late November 2022 to learn from and exchange ideas with potential future young parliamentarians around the world.

*Ministerial Statements*

#### **BALI BOMBING TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:19):** Today marks 20 years since the Bali bombing on 12 October 2002. It was an international tragedy that shocked the world and cruelly took the lives of 202 people from at least 21 different nations. It was an attack calculated to cause harm, especially to Australia and its people. Eighty-eight Australians died and almost half of them were from New South Wales. To this day, that remains the single largest loss of Australian life from any act of terror. It was an attack on our values, our way of life, our freedom and our peace.

This anniversary, this commemoration and this day belongs in a special day to the people directly affected. It belongs to the victims—those who died—and the families and friends who mourn them. It belongs to the survivors, for whom the pain is still raw. It belongs to the first responders and those who helped in the aftermath, whose heroism and bravery saved lives and healed wounds. Although we remember that fateful day, we cannot even begin to imagine what it means to those who experienced the terror, tragedy and violence firsthand. What we can do, today and every day, is offer our support, our friendship, our solidarity and our resolve to stand with those families affected. For some, marking the passage of 20 years will feel like an eternity; for others, it is shocking to think how quickly time has passed. But with that passage of time, we hope the burden of grief is easier to bear. Even though there is no fading of memory, we will never forget.

Today I had the honour of attending the Dolphins Point memorial at Coogee, with the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Coogee and the member for Maroubra. Every year survivors, families and friends of the victims gather at that beautiful, peaceful place to pay tribute to their loved ones who were taken away too soon. It was a real privilege to be a part of that very personal and moving gathering. Dolphins Point was named in honour of the six members of the Coogee Dolphins rugby league club who lost their lives, but the memorial honours all victims. From its plaques to the sculpture and the stunning scenery of our coastline, the memorial invites all of us to keep the memory of the victims alive. That is our duty. We owe it to those who lost their lives. We owe it to the heroic men and women who rushed to help—ordinary people who did extraordinary things, rushing into harm's way to help those in need. We owe it to the people of our nation and future generations to never forget that peace and freedom are fragile and precious.

It was our freedom, our democracy and our egalitarian way of life that terrorists sought to destroy that day by taking the lives of innocent people. Their goal was to instil fear into our hearts and divide us as a people. But they did not understand that our hearts are bigger, and our resolve has only grown stronger. The terrorists did not succeed. In the aftermath of the attack, the world was touched by acts of heroism and generosity. Over 200 Australians were recognised for their bravery. As the then Prime Minister, John Howard, said, "The Australian spirit has not been broken. The spirit remains strong and free and open." We worked alongside our Indonesian friends to care for the injured and the bereaved, and to identify and repatriate the dead. Our response to the terror was not fear but rather an outpouring of kindness, optimism, hope and courage. It was a show of love and unity far greater than the violence.

Today our nation remains a vibrant and welcoming society—a bastion of freedom, democracy and peace. Our relationship with Indonesia is productive and strong. Our future is brighter than ever. None of that was assured 20 years ago, but it is our reality today thanks to the way Australians responded in the aftermath and in the decades since. Today, as we honour the fallen, let us recognise the powerful forces of family, friendship, community, generosity and sacrifice, which have helped us to grow and heal over the past 20 years. Let us resolve to take none of what we have for granted. That is our responsibility to the victims and the families, whose grief remains. We honour them by working today and every day to strengthen and preserve the values that we as a country hold dear, so that Australia may remain peaceful and free for generations to come.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:24):** I join with the Premier in remembering the tragic events that occurred in Bali 20 years ago. On behalf of NSW Labor, I extend my sincerest condolences to all those who lost a loved one that day. For generations, Australians visiting Bali have experienced the energy and artistry of the Barong dance, a dance that brings the ancient mythology of Bali to life, as protective spirits defend their island from forces seeking to do harm. It is a world-famous cultural performance and a universally understood morality tale—a story of good triumphing over evil, the virtuous Barong locked in an epic struggle with the devilish Rangda.

On 12 October 2002, the world saw a new face of evil emerge in Bali. This was a different kind of evil—an insidious enemy not easily identified, never out in the open, never on centre stage. It was an evil that murdered 202 people from 21 different countries, including 38 Indonesians, 28 Britons and, tragically, 88 of our fellow Australians. While the attack in Kuta was not on Australian soil, it was unmistakably an attack on Australia. It targeted our citizens, especially our young people. It was intended as a message of rejection of Australian values and, indeed, the Australian way of life. In many ways, Australia's response demonstrated what is great about our nation and our people.

Amongst the death and the devastation, there were acts of great bravery and, of course, courage of heroes such as Robert Meredith of Engadine, who stayed inside the Sari Club to boost others over the wall to safety as the fire grew in intensity around him. Meredith found himself trapped by a collapsed wall and escaped by running up a burning staircase—in his bare feet. Then there was Lauren John Munro of Forbes, another hero, who remained inside the Sari Club after the bombing to save the lives of others. After scrambling over a wall himself, Munro re-entered the building in order to find more people amongst the debris and then haul them to safety. Our nation has honoured both Meredith and Munro. Both were awarded the Star of Courage for their acts of conspicuous bravery in circumstances of genuine and significant peril to themselves. They are two of the 35 people from New South Wales named in the Special Bali Honours list announced in 2003, one year after the bombings.

I acknowledge the conduct of our public servants, Defence Force, police, nurses, doctors and ambulance officers in the aftermath of this tragedy—in particular, the speed and professionalism of their response. Australian Federal Police officers flew to Bali, including experts in disaster victim identification, forensic investigation, intelligence, bomb blasts—everything. Within 24 hours, 20 government officials, nine defence and 14 police staff were on the ground in Bali. Then at 2.30 a.m. on the Monday, that first Hercules arrived in Darwin, carrying 15 Australian medical evacuees—the first of more than 60 evacuees that would end up being flown to Darwin for treatment.

Today, the Premier and I heard from Paul Yeo, who told us about two things that he had to go through during that period. The first one was the loss of his brother, Gerard, who was a member of the Coogee Dolphins, on the trip. Paul said that he repeatedly tried to tell Gerard not to go on the trip, that he did not think it was right for him and that he wished he would stay home. Then he recounted to the group assembled that he flew to Bali to search for his brother, and he had to make a call that no-one would want to make to his father to tell him that it did not look good and to prepare for the worst.

These are calls that we never want to hear. It is a tragic set of circumstances, but the resilience of the people in Coogee and around New South Wales has been very strong. Twenty years on, after the horror and the grief in Kuta, all of it remains with us. I join with members of this House in remembering the 88 Australians who lost their lives and in offering my heartfelt sympathy to all of their loved ones.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

*Question Time*

### STAMP DUTY

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:30):** My question is directed to the Premier. Was Fady Abi Abdallah, a tax partner at BDO, wrong when he said yesterday, "Any up-front duty savings are likely to be offset by increased purchase prices", or have the Premier and his Government been misleading first home buyers?

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

*[Members interjected.]*

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:31):** No, they are wrong. Every time in the past when we brought in first home buyer concessions, the analysis did not demonstrate an understanding of the suite of measures in New South Wales when it comes to housing affordability. For those in the public gallery to appreciate, a first home buyer purchasing a property up to \$650,000 today does not pay any stamp duty at all, and for properties up to \$800,000 there are concessions in place. We are unlocking supply through the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund, and the Treasurer will introduce shortly the shared equity scheme for first responders. There is also our great new policy to give first home buyers choice of purchasing property.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** What's wrong with choice?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** What is wrong with choice? Out today is "Business backs stamp duty choice reform for first home buyers", which says that the State's peak business organisation, Business NSW, is calling on the New South Wales Parliament—that is you guys opposite—to support critical reforms to provide first home buyers with a choice between up-front stamp duty or an annual amount. It reads, "There is no doubt this measure will help more of our kids get their keys to their first home and that is something worth supporting." The Property Council of Australia said:

The Property Council of Australia has endorsed the NSW Government on reports it will introduce a Stamp Duty overhaul into Parliament this week.

.... Stamp Duty was an inefficient and volatile tax that puts a break on economic growth.

We support modern reform that reflects the world that we live in now. Reforms like this unlock a productivity cycle as we recover from the COVID pandemic. Ultimately, this is about helping our young people get the keys to their very first home. Labor is the party of stamp duty.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor is the party of stamp duty, standing in the way of first home buyers across this State wanting to get into the property market. Labor is all politics, no policy and runs "Mediscare" campaigns. What are we doing on this side of the House? We are giving people choice. We trust people to make a determination of what is in their best interest, unlike those on the other side of the House.

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

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I will come back to that big shot over there, because there are things to say about the member for Rockdale and his naughty inaugural speech. This reform will change lives and provide opportunity for young people across our State.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Oatley will remain silent.

## HOME OWNERSHIP

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:34):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will he update the House on how the Government is boosting home ownership to secure a brighter future for New South Wales?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:34):** What a great question. It could not have been written better if I had tried. That is the difference: The member for Seven Hills is a positive member with a positive vision for the people of his electorate. He wants the young families of Seven Hills to get into the property market while Labor stands in the way and says no. Apparently today the shadow Treasurer was out doing a press conference. I missed it, would you believe? Probably everyone else missed it too. He said the property market had not changed since the 1970s. He needs to get out of the upper House a bit more—fewer Standing Order 52s, more meeting real people with real challenges who want to get ahead in life. As a government, as politicians and as people, we owe it to those people to look at new ways of doing things to provide opportunity and prosperity for generations to come.

We cannot have an Australia that cannot house its children. That is why we seek to provide a great opportunity for the young people of our State to get the keys to their very first home. We know that on average it takes 2½ years for first home buyers to pay for that up-front stamp duty. By the time they have done that the property market has increased and they have gone backwards. Today one of my favourite news publications, *The Guardian*, provided an interesting analysis with case studies of how long it would take people to save to get into the property market. In Fairfield—Guy Zangari would be interested in this—the up-front price for a three-bedroom house is \$975,000. Currently those people would pay \$38,907 in stamp duty. Under our scheme they have the choice of paying nearly \$39,000 in stamp duty or \$2,200 a year. It is their choice

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us go to Sans Souci, in the electorate of Rockdale. A two-bedroom apartment would cost \$925,000. We know the member for Rockdale has a lot of properties, but he is trying to stop everybody else getting into the property market. He is just like Potts Point Park on the other side of the Chamber, Mr Harbourside Mansion himself. He has a house at Thredbo, a house in Potts Point. He is okay. *[Extension of time]*

Do not worry about the member for Keira. He is just blocking every other young person in New South Wales. I say to the students in the public gallery: He is not giving you his Potts Point apartment, is he? No, he has it all for himself.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was, "What is the Government doing?" It was not about members of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I am satisfied that the Premier has been overwhelmingly directly relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** As always. Labor was once a party that stood up for the working class. Its members once stood up for working families across the State but now they only look after themselves.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the first time.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Tell us about Rockdale!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Oh, Rockdale, yes. In his inaugural speech the member for Rockdale stated:

It is an indictment on all of us that prior to every election, both sides rule out even looking at the major planks of our taxation platform. We hear platitudes assuring us that there will be no change to negative gearing, to land tax—

to stamp duty—

to the GST, or to superannuation. We need change, not wilful ignorance.

That was you, mate! You've sold out! You once had integrity. You were a man of principle, a man of strength. You sold out!

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: The Premier should direct his comments through you, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Premier will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You've changed, member for Rockdale. We used to like you. Anyway, just like everybody across our State the people of Rockdale are better off under our changes, at a cost to the budget

of over \$700 million. Our changes put more money in the hands of families across the State so they can achieve the great Australian dream.

#### LAND TAX

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:39):** My question is also directed to the Premier. In response to his previous answer that the experts were wrong, I ask him whether Eliza Owen from CoreLogic was also wrong when she said yesterday that his new land tax "doesn't seem to be addressing much of the affordability issue in New South Wales housing". Is it not true that his new land tax does nothing for housing affordability?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:40):** That is a better question than the one the member for Londonderry asked yesterday, but only marginally.

**Ms Prue Car:** Thanks for the tip.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That is alright; I will help you. We have a suite of policies. If it takes 2½ years for people to save that stamp duty to buy a first home and we take that 2½ years away when the property market appreciates over time, guess what? More people get their keys to their very first home. When we unlock supply and invest record amounts in the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund under the Minister for Planning, we build more homes and provide greater opportunity. When we partner with the Federal Government on shared equity—it stole our idea; I am not insecure about that, but it did—it provides people in our State with access to that scheme. That includes 50 per cent in the bush getting access to that scheme, as well as first responders, nurses, doctors, teachers and women over the age of 50. This provides opportunity for people. It is a suite of measures working together to drive opportunity and prosperity. As I said yesterday, my fifth favourite day of the year is Labor conference day. It is so good. Are you live streaming it?

**Ms Jo Haylen:** I'll send you the link.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Send me the link. I will be at The Everest. We will stream it at Randwick racecourse. I am sure it will be more fun where you are—not! Anyway, the Concord West - Rhodes Labor branch is one of my favourite branches. Is it the left or right faction?

**Ms Jo Haylen:** Is this where the Government spends its resources?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That branch had a motion for Saturday in relation to the stamp duty reform. Mookhey and Minns have said they will come out and stop it, but this great Labor branch stated in its motion, "This puts us at odds with the broad expert consensus on the need for reform." The branch expressed support for our implementation, asking the party to reconsider its opposition to the proposed reform. Guess what happened? This motion has miraculously disappeared from the agenda on Saturday. It just disappeared! How many calls have those opposite been making?

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** You've got the draft agenda.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I get everything.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** They gave you the wrong agenda.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Those opposite silenced the member for Bankstown and now they are silencing their own members.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour is seeking the call to ask a question—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** You've got the wrong program. They've given you the wrong program.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I have got the program. I have every motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I have got them all. I run the SDA. I am there. I have got all my people there on Saturday.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. The member for Coffs Harbour has a question.

#### REGIONAL HOME OWNERSHIP

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:43):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police. Will he update the House on what the Government is doing to help young people buy their first home in regional New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:43):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He is a member who understands the challenges facing regional communities when it comes to housing. He is working alongside his council to address housing shortages not only around Coffs Harbour but also in those areas on the North Coast.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The member for Canterbury is mocking the people of regional New South Wales who are trying to put a roof over their head.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Members on this side of the House believe our regions have a bright future, and that future has been realised.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I want to ensure that young people have an opportunity in regional New South Wales. When I look at my three kids, I want them to be able to get a highly paid job in regional New South Wales. In the past, young regional people had to pack up, leave home and go to the city to get a highly paid job. Those days are no longer. There is a bright future for regional New South Wales because of the investment made by the Liberals and Nationals in Government. I want our young people to have world-class health care, I want them to have world-class educational facilities and I want them to have the ability to put a roof over their head. When I talk about putting a roof over their head, I mean making sure it is not such a burden that they have to save for decades and then go into excessive debt. That is why the stamp duty reforms proposed by the Liberals and Nationals are so important. I also note that agricultural land will be excluded after consultation with NSW Farmers and other stakeholders.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Those reforms are visionary, focused thinking. The Government continues to make policy for the people of New South Wales. We have heard nothing from the Opposition; we have heard no policy. Those opposite have an ideas vacuum on housing. We are making it easier by allowing councils to unlock land, look at the available supply of land and look at opportunities for more properties and development to occur in those communities. People in our communities are going into areas such as policing and nursing. We want to make sure that they too have a house over their head. [*Extension of time*]

It is vital that our programs realise the benefits for our regional communities. We have also announced \$30 million to deliver housing in regional areas, which is essential for workers. We have seen some of those results already, in less than a year. Some 28 new homes are being built in Tamworth and more are being constructed in Quirindi. We are backing up our investment with \$45 million to deliver housing for health workers in the Murrumbidgee, Southern and Far West local health districts. There is also \$174 million to deliver more than 270 additional homes for teachers and police in regional New South Wales. Each one of those homes represents a foundation for a young family who continue to live and serve in their community. It could mean the difference between a town retaining a worker and allowing them to put down roots in that area, or losing them to a city or nearby regional centre.

Our regional communities have been overlooked for too long on housing. Our views were not heard and our voices were silenced—but not anymore. Regional New South Wales has a voice in this Parliament, and the NSW Nationals will continue to stand up for people in our communities. The Labor Party ignored the regions and now it thinks it can pay lip service to our communities, but our communities have not forgotten the past. It does not matter how much Opposition members call out and tell us to be quiet, stop speaking, sit down and say that our time is up; our communities will continue to be represented because of the Liberals and Nationals on this side of the House, who have put policies in place to help people put a roof over their heads. The member for Wollongong is another member who is mocking the people of regional New South Wales. Members on this side of the House will continue to represent our communities, and we will do that each and every day.

#### LAND TAX

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (14:48):** I direct my question to the Premier. Given the Premier said that previously mentioned tax experts and property economists were wrong, does he also think that AMP Chief Economist Shane Oliver was wrong when he said yesterday that the Premier's new land tax will potentially push prices up?

**Mr Ryan Park:** You're too left wing for us, Dom.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:49):** No, that is not true. Now you have thrown me. The reality is that a suite of measures like this provides an opportunity for first home buyers to save faster and get the keys to their very first home quicker. When we brought in concessions and waived stamp duty for properties up to \$650,000, there was always that view. But that is not correct because when a first home buyer competes with an existing home buyer, that existing home buyer has had a property wealth increase from owning their own home while the first home buyer has not had that opportunity. By removing that up-front stamp duty there is more cash in their pocket to compete in the property market all over the State. Under our policies in New South Wales, over the past 12 months 40,000 new first home buyers have been able to access the property market in our State, but we say that is not enough and we want to do more.

Labor wants to lock people out of the great Australian dream. Its own members know this is the right policy, but they are all politics and no principle. They do not have a policy on anything other than the mobile phone connecting thing they were going to put in, the chargers in the trains and the signs outside the toll roads that say, "Hello, there is a toll road here." That is visionary—wow! Are Labor members proud of themselves? They came in here with all of these great ideas, just like the member for Rockdale, who was sold down the river. Over the past 12 months members on this side of the House have reformed child care and health care through our urgent care clinics.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked a specific question in relation to the opinion of the—

**The SPEAKER:** I am satisfied that the Premier has answered the question. He is being less direct at the moment, but he will be more direct shortly.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Try to get back there.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I will try to get back there. Anyway, Facebook loves it. Here are some quotes. This comes from Matt—not Matt from Hornsby. He says, "Good to see some leadership and ideas being brought forward to help young people get a start with a handout. The inevitable fear campaign from Labor will follow, I'm sure." Come in, spinner.

#### HOME OWNERSHIP

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:52):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Government is helping first home buyers choose a brighter future?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:52):** A surprise question.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I thank my friend the member for Port Macquarie—

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** She is one of the best people to have ever represented the people of Port Macquarie. I acknowledge her outstanding work. I also acknowledge that she knows that our First Home Buyer Choice scheme will help first home buyers not only in the cities but also in the regions. It will help them to get into the housing market and realise their dream of home ownership much sooner.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Rockdale that he is on three calls to order. I will not give him another warning.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The member for Port Macquarie is not the only member who supports our First Home Buyer Choice scheme; members of the Labor Party also support our scheme.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Rockdale is close to being removed from the Chamber.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** As the Premier said, members of the Concord West and Rhodes branch of the Labor Party sought to make our policy part of their platform this weekend. That is how much they liked it.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**Mr MATT KEAN:** They said of the Leader of the Opposition—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heffron rises on a point of order. The Treasurer will resume his seat.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The Treasurer was asked a specific question about what the Government was doing for first home buyers.

**The SPEAKER:** In the context of an earlier reference to question time, I am satisfied that the Treasurer is being relevant.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** We are talking about the Concord West branch's views of the First Home Buyer Choice policy. They said of the Leader of the Opposition and his sidekick Misinformation Mookhey's position opposing the Government's First Home Buyer Choice scheme—

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I have just ruled. What is the point of order?

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Standing Order 75, that members will refer to others by their correct title or name.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The member should have been referred to as a member of the other House rather than the way he was referred to. The Treasurer may continue.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It is good to see the member for Charlestown getting up; it takes a brave woman in the Labor Party to stand up to Chris Minns. The Concord West-Rhodes branch of the Labor Party described the Leader of the Opposition's position on the Government's First Home Buyer Choice scheme as harmful to Labor's long-term agenda. Harmful! They are not the words of the Coalition; they are not the words of the member for Port Macquarie. They are the words of members of the Labor Party. What happened to these intelligent, progressive and forward-thinking branch members, Mr Speaker? I think the member for Bankstown knows how this is going to play out: silence, sacked and censured. In this case, it was not because they dared to speak out about corruption in the Labor Party—no, no, no. It was because they dared to put forward a policy. [*Extension of time*]

There is no place for policy in Chris Minns' Labor Party. He said he would have a 100-day plan and we are still waiting for it.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: Standing Order 369, poor scriptwriting and overacting. Mr Speaker, don't look for it, it is not there; I think they only go up to 368.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock, if only to call the member for Maroubra to order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. Does he want to double down?

**Mr Michael Daley:** My point of order relates to Standing Orders 73 and 129, and I adore your previous rulings about him straying from your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will continue. The member for Maroubra is on only one call to order.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Why is the member for Maroubra defending the Leader of the Opposition? The Leader of the Opposition never defended him. The Leader of the Opposition is denying his branch members a choice, just like he has denied first home buyers having a choice in New South Wales.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** If the point of order is relevance, I am satisfied the Treasurer has returned to the leave of the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Was it the hair joke yesterday, Ronnie?

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer has returned to being relevant to the question. Was that the point of order?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** He is not even generally relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** He is being relevant for the moment.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The Leader of the Opposition is denying first home buyers a choice, Mr Speaker. Our policy gives first home buyers a choice between paying a high up-front stamp duty or a small annual fee.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for Port Macquarie seek the call?

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I do, Mr Speaker. I ask that you reset the clock to two minutes.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will continue. It is not a standing order.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Our policy gives first home buyers a choice between paying a high up-front stamp duty or a small annual fee—a choice to enable people to realise their dream of home ownership sooner. I should take on a serious tone because I am informed that the Leader of the Opposition does believe in some choice when

it comes to housing and a brighter future. In the half-million dollar renovation of his home, he is having to choose between mahogany and marble to determine whether that is going to be brighter in his home. [*Time expired.*]

### ENERGY AND COST OF LIVING

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (14:58):** My question is directed to the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. Given the extreme cost-of-living hardship that all New South Wales families are facing, as well as record high electricity bills, why is the Minister not increasing the feed-in tariff rates for families with rooftop solar or subsidising solar batteries or rolling out electric vehicle [EV] charging stations across regional New South Wales?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (14:59):** I thank the member for Ballina for her question. I just want to state that this Government is very concerned about cost-of-living pressures and understands only too well the impact that rising inflation and rising energy bills are having on families in this State, which is why in the budget we announced \$7.2 billion worth of cost-of-living support for families and businesses across New South Wales. That is what happens when you manage the State's finances well. The dividend you deliver is supporting families and businesses when they need it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale will remove himself from the Chamber for two hours under Standing Order 249A.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 15:01*]

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Just like we stood by families during the worst bushfires that we have ever seen, just like we stood by families during the worst drought that we have ever seen, just like we stood by families during the pandemic, the worst health and economic shock that we have ever seen, so too will we stand by families when it comes to cost-of-living pressures.

**Ms Tamara Smith:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I have asked specifically about three things and they were all solar-related.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the Treasurer to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I was just having a preamble, but what I want to say to the member for Ballina is that solar is an important and growing part of the New South Wales energy mix. We are one of the leading jurisdictions in the world for solar take-up. Close to one in every four households now has solar panels. The Government agrees that it is important that households get a fair feed-in tariff. That is why each year the Government asks the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to set a fair and reasonable benchmark range for solar feed-in tariffs. IPART's current feed-in tariff benchmark report notes that customers can expect to receive up to 10.4 cents per kilowatt hour for their solar exports this financial year. That is double the 2020-21 benchmark.

Solar feed-in tariffs are generally lower than the amount charged for electricity by retailers because they exclude the cost of administering household accounts, metering, billing and other charges. IPART's recommended range is set in a way that reflects the expected wholesale price of generation in the National Electricity Market [NEM] during the day. If exported solar energy was more expensive than purchasing energy from the NEM, this would disadvantage customers who cannot install solar panels, such as some renters and low-income households. For the benefit of the member for Ballina, we are looking at ways we can enable low-income households and renters to access the benefits of renewable energy. We are working through that at the moment. The greatest financial benefit from solar panels comes from using as much solar-generated energy and minimising the amount of energy purchased from the grid. The New South Wales Government recently announced a \$128 million Energy Bill Buster package to support energy rebate recipients to install solar panels and that could provide average savings of up to \$600 a year off household bills. [*Extension of time*]

Eligible home owner-occupiers will be able to swap their Low Income Household Rebate for a free fully installed solar system. Later this year, this initiative will also be made available to eligible Land and Housing Corporation tenants. The package will also support eligible households that are unable to install solar, such as renters or those living in apartment buildings, to swap their rebate for a suite of energy efficient appliances. The New South Wales Government announced the creation of the Energy Security Safeguard, which will provide financial incentives for peak demand reduction technologies, such as batteries, smart pool pumps and electric vehicle chargers, and the member for Ballina knows that we have got our plan to roll out fast charging EV infrastructure. That is not just a plan for the cities; it is also a plan for the regions and the bush. We will have options to roll out that infrastructure shortly and I will update the member in the House when the time is appropriate.

In addition to making the most of rooftop solar, switching to the most competitive retail offer can significantly reduce energy bills. Customers should shop around using the free and independent Australian Government service Energy Made Easy to make sure that they are on the best plan to meet their needs. Service

NSW can also assist customers to use the site, if requested. The Government also has in place a range of cost-of-living relief programs specifically tailored to deal with energy challenges. We have the Low Income Household Rebate, the Gas Rebate, the Family Energy Rebate, the Life Support Rebate and the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance scheme. We have also recently launched the Energy Bill Buster program, which will allow low-income households to swap out their rebates for energy efficient appliances and solar systems that will deliver ongoing savings of up to \$600 on their energy bills. I assure the member that this Government has policies in place to ensure that people have access to the cheapest, most reliable and cleanest electricity that they can find. That is not just good policy for now; it will set us up for a more prosperous future forever.

### HOUSING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:04):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's building reforms are helping to lift standards in the housing construction industry and provide greater confidence to home buyers?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:04):** I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question. I particularly congratulate him on his leadership over recent times when we had the R U OK? Day and there was that tragic event—the accident in his community. He really showed leadership by bringing people together. Well done to the member for Wollondilly. Without question, New South Wales is leading the nation and many parts of the world when it comes to reform in the construction sector. Under the New South Wales Liberal and Nationals Government, we have digitised the land titles system. We became the first jurisdiction to reach 100 per cent adoption of eConveyancing.

We have also led the way in digitising our planning system, with all local councils in the State now using the ePlanning portal for development applications, complying development certificates and other planning approval processes. This is not just leading the nation; this is leading the world, and it is really a testament to the reform zeal of our Government. Under the stewardship of the Building Commissioner, David Chandler, and the Office of the Building Commissioner we have introduced reforms that will improve transparency in the market and empower the purchaser. In particular, we are rating the developers. This has not been done before at a national level and, to our knowledge, at an international level. We have introduced the New South Wales Construction Industry Rating Tool, which is known as iCIRT. Basically, developers will be rated based on their history and performance. That level of transparency has never been done before.

iCIRT allows purchasers, banks and insurers to make more informed decisions when investing in apartment buildings. Developers and builders are each rated separately. This has never been seen before, but this is now rolling out. That is the first thing we are doing. The second thing we are doing is not just rating the developer but rating the actual building itself—the quality and content of the building. The Government has partnered with KPMG using blockchain technology to make sure it is verifiable and to source. Those two essential ratings then feed into insurance. In the past, we have never had insurance in relation to apartment buildings. We have had 2 per cent deposits that people would then haggle over if they had to take a developer to court. But now we have seen for the first time ever in the country an insurer coming in to give 10-year insurance for apartment buildings. That demonstrates that we are seeing transparency and confidence in the construction sector that no other State or Territory has. New South Wales is one of the few places in the world that has it. [*Extension of time.*]

I quickly add in relation to the People's Choice calculator that up to now 20,000 people have used the People's Choice calculator, with a 95.8 per cent thumbs up.

### LAND TAX

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:07):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that experts are already warning of increases above 4 per cent to his new annual housing tax and that moments ago chartered accountants put out a press release stating that "with all levels of government needing funds to finance services and debt and local and State governments relying heavily on the taxation of land, there may be pressure to increase future tax rates", is it not true that any first home buyer has to rely on his Government and all future governments not to jack up their land tax rate even more?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:08):** Does Labor have a secret plan to increase the land tax on everybody across the State? Whoa, whoa, whoa—what's going on here? What we know is putting a cap of 4 per cent provides certainty for first home buyers so they can make the decision that is in their best interests. We know that economists and experts right across the country understand and appreciate that stamp duty is a significant barrier for people getting into the property market. Experts love this policy. Labor members can go and cherrypick their way along, but we will have more. I will give them expert after expert after expert. I will

tell them the experts we trust. We trust the people across the State, who can make their own choices about what is in their own interests. I will take an election to have a choice: You have got a choice now to go to an election to have the choice to have a choice. We are not forcing anyone to do anything.

Everyone should go to the great calculator on the Service NSW website—our 70-plus cost-of-living measures. No other State in the country is putting more downward pressure on families' budgets than our Government. We are providing that care and support with over 70 vouchers on Service NSW. On one day 10,000 people logged in to see. Even when the Leader of the Opposition came home last night, his kids ran to the front door and said, "Hey Dad, look at this. Look at the calculator. Look at how much we're going to save." Kids are going to love it. The students who are visiting Parliament today do not have properties in Potts Point or properties across the State, but by giving them opportunity—

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Premier was asked specifically about the chartered accountants warning that future governments of either political persuasion could jack up his land tax rate. Is that not true? Explain it to the House.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is being relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They can jack up the stamp duty rate. At the last election we had a Labor Opposition that ran an election campaign of increasing payroll tax on every single business across the State, and what did we say? We said no. Those opposite wanted to put taxes on farmers in the middle of a drought. We believe in lower taxes. We are legislating at 4 per cent because the Liberals and Nationals believe in lower taxes. What we are seeing in Queensland under Labor is they believe in increasing taxes on our people in New South Wales. Anthony Albanese is wavering on tax cuts. The Leader of the Opposition is silent. For lower taxes, it is the Liberals and The Nationals. [*Time expired.*]

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:11):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting local councils to fast-track approvals to deliver more housing for our growing and diverse population?

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (15:12):** I thank the member for Castle Hill for his question. He is a member who knows all too well how important councils are, as the closest level of government to the community, in ensuring they are delivering infrastructure services to meet the needs of local communities. That is why the Government is backing councils with additional funding and resources to clear a backlog of planning proposals and development applications and deliver more local housing through the \$11.5 million Unblocking Homes Program—thanks to the Minister for Homes, who is doing a great job and made a wonderful announcement this morning.

This is on top of the Government's \$5 billion WestInvest program. Recently I joined the Premier, the Treasurer and the Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney in the Canterbury Bankstown local government area [LGA] to kick off the first round of successful projects, with many more to come. From civic precincts to community hubs to open spaces and local traffic programs, this once-in-a-generation fund has a dedicated \$400 million stream across 15 western Sydney LGAs, with each council eligible for between \$20 million and \$35 million, depending on their LGA's population size. Mr Speaker, let me assure you we really need to appreciate and make sure that the Treasurer has a very special caveat on the Mayor of Canterbury Bankstown, who is Labor's upstanding candidate for the upper House term of eight years, to ensure that he does not use the funds to pay for an entire university degree.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I presume that this extravagant elongation—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wollongong will speak to the point of order.

**Mr Paul Scully:** What about investigating the member for Castle Hill's claims about Hawkesbury council?

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I place the member for Wollongong on three calls to order. The Minister will continue.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** On that, I must commend the actions of the member for Bankstown for trying to alert the House and for calling a spade a spade—the words of the Opposition leader, who is not listening.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Heffron rises on a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock, given we have just had an interruption.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Her words are ringing true. Jobs for the boys!

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The answer really is nowhere near being directly relevant to the question asked about how the Government—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heffron will be heard in silence.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The answer is nowhere close to being directly relevant to the question asked about how the Government is providing support for councils to unlock affordable housing. It is just a straight-out political attack and it is not relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Minister to be mindful of the question. The Minister may continue.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** It is extremely relevant because it is about funding and funding that councils need to make sure they are delivering for their communities, not delivering MBAs for their local mayors to have a career change in the upper House.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will not hear the member for Campbelltown yet. The Minister may continue.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Why has the Leader of the Opposition not—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will not hear another point of order. The Minister may continue.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Why has the Leader of the Opposition not disendorsed the mayor less than 24 hours after recent reports that the council is footing the bill for the mayor's alternative career?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Greg Warren:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 73.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

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

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear from the member for Ku-ring-gai after I acknowledge that the member for Castle Hill was on his feet to request additional information.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 131 (9). We have now had multiple vexatious points of order taken while the Minister for Local Government is trying to speak. I invite the Speaker to use his powers under that standing order. It is unfair that the Minister for Local Government is continuously being interrupted in this way.

**The SPEAKER:** I will clarify. The member for Heffron took a valid point of order. The member for Wollongong took a very bad point of order and was put on a call. I then declined to hear two points of order that would have been disruptive. I will grant an extension of time on the basis that the Minister is mindful of the question.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I am very mindful of the question. I want to know why the Leader of the Opposition has not disendorsed this member for this waste of money. He is more than prepared to sack the member for Bankstown, a senior female member of the shadow frontbench.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: It is clearly not directly relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister may continue. I ask the Minister to come directly to the question.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** This does not pass the pub test. It is self-interest and leads to corruption.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** All members opposite should be seriously thinking about what this means by supporting the Leader of the Opposition—integrity, integrity, integrity. It is time to act, Labor. It is time to stand up.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock, What is the member's point of order?

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** This is not acceptable.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. Has the Minister completed her answer?

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** The answer is complete.

### ENERGY PRICES

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:18):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given energy experts are warning of a 35 per cent increase to electricity bills next year, does the Premier still stand by his commitment that energy prices will be \$130 a year lower for households from next year?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:18):** The member should be asking the Prime Minister that. There is a national energy situation in this country.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** The situation is that's your policy, Dom.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The situation is that with our policies and our renewable energy zones we are ensuring we will have reliable energy into the future and putting downward pressure on prices. Compared to any other jurisdiction in this country, New South Wales leads the way. The member might have missed what has been happening recently with the war in Ukraine and the other challenges. That is the truth, is it not? That is the truth. What we have on the opposite side of the Chamber are scare campaigns.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I specifically asked if the Premier stood by his comments and his commitment that energy prices will be \$130 a year lower for households from next year. That is the premise of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I will listen further to the Premier. There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I would have thought there would be a little bit more respect. We know that our policies in New South Wales are putting downward pressure on electricity prices. We know, due to rebates that we offer, our renewable energy zones secure supply and reliability. We also know that Labor runs scare campaigns when it comes to the energy challenges that our country is facing. I remember the graph that the Leader of the Opposition put up. It talks about electricity prices in New South Wales under the Liberal-Nationals and links it to the increase in the poles and wires, when it is the increase in the wholesale price. He does not even know the difference between wholesale and network prices. He got slammed on his own page. A Tania from Bankstown wrote, "This is so misleading, it's farcical. Do you have any idea what you are doing?" Was that you?

**Mr David Harris:** Was that Matt Daniels?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No. Are you all right?

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Yes, I'm fine.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** On this side of the House it is our transformative policies, our investment in renewable energy and our support for coal, particularly in the Upper Hunter. As we transition to a renewable future, we do so in a way that puts downward pressure on prices and provides reliable energy into the future. In addition to that, we are not just about the here and now; our \$3 billion investment in green hydrogen sets our State up for future success as well. Our policies are not just about the here and now. They are about setting up our children for generations to come.

### WESTERN AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:22):** 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 supporting more people to live and work in western and regional New South Wales?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:22):** I certainly will. I thank the member for his question. He is a young man like me who grew up and lives in regional New South Wales and loves where he lives. All of us who live in regional New South Wales would agree that we love where we live. There is no better place to call home. For me, it is around the Dubbo area, which is a beautiful place, and the capital of central and western New South Wales. For him it is Singleton. Everywhere in regional New South Wales has its place and that is the point. When you know what is there, you can stay there, you can live there and enjoy where you live.

One example is Sunset Strip at Menindee Lakes. The lakes, as I mentioned yesterday, are in their full glory right now, brimming. About another 2,000 gegalitres of water is expected by Christmas. I heard Graeme McCrabb,

a resident there, talking on the ABC this morning about how perfect things were looking. He was on his front porch gazing out over the Menindee Lakes talking about all the birds that were there, including emus and ducks, as well as a few kangaroos, which is lovely. He said that it is a great place to be at the moment because all of the life is coming back. It certainly is. That is what it does. That is why I was a little bit perplexed to hear that another resident, a member of this place, the current member for Barwon, is leaving. He's already left; he's not in the Chamber.

**Ms Tamara Smith:** He's here.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** There he is! Although I know he loves where he lives, he will be running in the next election in 2023 for the last time. He wants to be re-elected but is then looking at leaving us, leaving the beautiful western region. He wants to spend the next four years high-fiving on the way out and doing the victory lap, I guess. A nickname has already been popping up: Harvey Norman—four more years, no interest. I can report though that there is another resident in the western region who is very keen to make sure that the liveability and workability of regional areas, including the western region, are absolutely maintained. We have a fantastic candidate for Barwon who is the former State President of the Country Women's Association and who lives and works in White Cliffs and loves where she lives. She will be an absolute breath of fresh air.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. This is totally irrelevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further; however, I am finding it hard to hear the Minister because of the amount of audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will remain silent.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** For anyone who is looking for an opportunity to be in a great place, anywhere in regional New South Wales, whether coast or west, is a great place to be. Once you are there, you do not want to leave, and we want you to come. We want you to stay. We want you to work, raise your family, be part of an incredible community and join what we know is the best place to be.

#### ELECTRICITY PRIVATISATION

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:25):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney. Given energy experts reported last week that western Sydney families using a privatised energy provider are paying \$200 a year towards excess super profits, whilst those who use the only remaining Government-owned energy company paid almost zero, has privatisation let down the people of western Sydney?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:26):** Dear oh dear, the Labor Party wants to talk to me about electricity privatisation. I will tell you the irony in all of that: In my previous role as the CEO of the Civil Contractors Federation, I was actually handpicked to be on a committee to determine how we would privatise electricity assets in this State. Guess who appointed me: the Labor Party. It was the Labor Party that appointed me in 2009 to assist them in selling the electricity privatisation debate. It was Morris Iemma's greatest appointment. He said, "Dave, I need you to help me privatise electricity." We did great work.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. It was a very explicit and direct question: Has privatisation let down the people of western Sydney?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant and will continue.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** It goes to context because it certainly determines the hypocrisy of New South Wales Labor. If in 2009 those opposite wanted to privatise electricity assets and then changed their mind because they knew they could not get the unions on board and it would cost them even more votes than it did in 2011, what else are they going to lie about this election? The Premier has already picked it up. I think he hinted today that there was a stamp duty increase coming from the Labor Party in this election. But for any member of the New South Wales Labor Party to stand up in this place and ask me about electricity privatisation, they are going to need to go and review the history books—because they wanted to privatise electricity in 2009. They were desperate to do it. I was pretty well known as a Tory. They wanted to do it. They turned their back on the union movement. They wanted to get into bed with big business.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Campbelltown has already taken one point of order under relevance. I have ruled the Minister is being relevant, and he is still being relevant. Does the member for Campbelltown have a different point of order?

**Mr Greg Warren:** It is under Standing Order 129. It was a very direct question.

**The SPEAKER:** I have just ruled on that. The question was directly on privatisation. The Minister is speaking directly on privatisation.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** We should not have been surprised that those opposite wanted to privatise the electricity assets in 2009 and no doubt will have more privatisation plans if they ever get onto the Treasury bench again. Let us go through it: Qantas—who sold that? Labor.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** GIO.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** GIO—who sold that? Labor. Commonwealth Bank—who sold that? Labor. These guys would sell their own mother if they thought that they could get a quid out of it. Why do they do it? Because they know it is the easiest way to give their Labor mates pay rises. That is why they do it. That is the business model of the New South Wales Labor Party. I am very good friends with the member for Campbelltown—it is a matter of public record—but I ask him, please, have a little bit more respect for me than asking me a question about something that Labor already asked me to do 20 years ago.

#### HEALTH FUNDING AND HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:30):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on the Liberals and The Nationals strong record of delivering health infrastructure for growing communities across the State?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health) (15:30):** I thank the member because she has been amazing in advocating for not only her own area but also many other areas—Liverpool Hospital is one of them and, along with the member for Oatley, St George Hospital as well. Over the time that the Liberal-Nationals Government has been in office, we have built or upgraded 180 new hospitals or health facilities across the State, with 130 more currently underway. We have completed or announced close to 100 new or upgraded ambulance stations. We have employed an additional 30,000 full-time equivalent staff. Today, in total, including part-time staff, we have the biggest health force in the nation by a long shot—about 160,000 staff. We have delivered \$3 billion in infrastructure this year and \$11.9 billion over the next four years; it is absolutely unprecedented. Breaking that down in terms of some of the hospitals that have been addressed in terms of massive spending—and often in Labor-held electorates—there was \$790 million for the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct. Was that delivered by Labor or the Coalition?

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Yes. There was \$831 million for stage one of the Westmead Hospital redevelopment—Labor or the Coalition?

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There was \$651.2 million for Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital—Labor or the Coalition?

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** For the member for Campbelltown, who is just such good friends with my colleague apparently, \$632 million for the Campbelltown Hospital. Did he do it? Did Labor do it or the Coalition?

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There was \$619 million for stage two of The Children's Hospital at Westmead—Labor or Coalition?

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There was \$300 million for the Rouse Hill Hospital—Labor or Coalition?

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** And there was \$1.3 billion for Bankstown—Labor or Coalition?

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The bottom line is it has taken a Coalition Government to deliver for New South Wales. But being fair about it, I have received some letters from the Leader of the Opposition. Since 2017, my staff tell me I have had 4½ letters. One was done by his electorate staff and the other four had words shoved here and there on various things. There was not one word about any hospitals, not one word about St George. Every representation I have received has been from the—

**Government members:** Coalition!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The Coalition will continue to deliver. Do not trust Labor to deliver anything for health.

#### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:34):** My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales. While there is an abundance of water in New South Wales at the moment, it is inevitable that we will go back into drought. What is being done to provide a structured approach to responding to drought to give pastoralists, farmers and agriculture-dependent communities the ability to plan and deliver certainty around assistance measures both going into drought and in the recovery phase?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:34):** That is a great question. I thank the member for the question. At the moment, it seems like an odd time to be talking about drought when we are in the middle of a really damp situation across many parts of the western area of the State and across New South Wales. Inevitably, where there has been flood, there will be drought again. The Government is doing plenty as far as setting producers up to do the very best they can in those difficult times, which will come again. That involves having accurate and reliable data to help make those management decisions, the skills to run a resilient farming operation through good and difficult times, and the support to invest in infrastructure to manage the operation for long-term sustainability.

During the last drought, the Government's \$300 million Drought Strategy worked to improve preparedness among farmers, so they are well-positioned to deal with drought and other challenges, as far as they can be. Earlier this year in May I was excited to share that 100 per cent of New South Wales is out of drought for the first time in more than five years. Since then, the Government has been strengthening its tools that it has been asked about and the programs that it has been developing to support and prepare farmers for the next dry spell, which will happen. We have released the Enhanced Drought Information System, which draws on the latest remote sensing, satellite and climate data to provide a more detailed assessment of seasonal conditions.

We are focused on providing more information as early as possible to enable farmers to make better informed farm and stock management decisions. Some \$25 million was invested in three new Doppler radar weather stations in Yeoval, Brewarrina and Hillston. All three stations are live and provide accurate real-time data, determining rain and wind velocity, raindrop and hail size, and the height of bushfire plumes up to 200 kilometres from the radar site. They deliver the fast, reliable and accurate data that is needed, and they can inform decisions around sowing, harvesting or moving stock, boosting productivity and saving money. Making the right decision early is all-important.

A critical part of preparing is ensuring that farmers have good business skills to deal with the data that they are taking in from this new information while making those crucial decisions. The Government has injected over \$12 million through the Farm Business Resilience Program, which will run until June 2024. Farmers have access to free business coaching, workshops, networking events and a series of online resources to provide advice on building stronger farming operations. That is what it is all about. Around 2,000 farmers have already taken up that support to create their own business plans, bank ready budgets and drought strategies through that program. That will continue into the future as well. The other big one is being able to provide the ongoing infrastructure that is needed. The Farm Innovation Fund has been an absolute winner since it was introduced by the Government in 2015. We will continue that. [*Extension of time*]

At the moment, about \$515.8 million has gone out in the past year. That will be taken up again by primary producers and it keeps the money in local areas and with local contractors, boosting entire communities. We will keep working to ensure that we do the best we can.

#### **UNBLOCKING HOMES PROGRAM**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:37):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of the Liberal-Nationals Government's Unblocking Homes Program?

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (15:38):** I thank the member for Heathcote for his question and the opportunity to update the House on the progress of the Unblocking Homes Program. As the member knows, we are backing in councils to help unblock the backlog of development applications to help speed up the delivery of new homes across the State. There is a suite of measures to get this done, including the Regional Housing Flying Squad, call-ins and expert assessment for prioritised housing projects, the Planning Delivery Unit, and the Faster Local Assessment Grant Program, to name a few.

Members on this side of the House know that there is a shortage of qualified planners in some parts of the State. We are overcoming those challenges with the flying squad of experts, who can help councils review development applications faster and move projects into construction. In fact, in Sutherland, we have sped up assessment times for development applications by 41 per cent, taking them from 332 days to 195 days. On the subject, the member for Lake Macquarie's council assessment times have improved by 69 per cent. On the Central Coast, there has been a 65 per cent improvement in development applications. Let us not forget our great Treasurer's council of Hornsby. Its assessment times have reduced from 434 days to 165 days.

The Unblocking Homes Program and the Regional Housing Flying Squad are a pragmatic and sensible approach to easing the workload on our already overworked regional councils, so that they can continue to deliver important housing supply for the people of regional New South Wales. This is our Government building on the historic \$2.8 billion 2022 housing package delivered in this year's budget, with targeted help for councils to drive more local housing delivery. We are the Government for construction, infrastructure and jobs. We are providing the certainty and the policy clarity that business needs to trigger the much-needed investment that drives growth in our State. It is no secret that the State will need 45,000 homes per year over the next 20 years, and we are battle ready for that. We have sharpened the shovels and we are getting the boots on the ground.

Members opposite have forgotten that under their watch housing completions flatlined to 13,000 in 2009, which was the same level of approvals in 1957, leaving a massive deficit legacy of 100,000 homes in New South Wales. It does not please me to inform the House that under Labor new home completions in Sydney averaged a pathetic 14,000 each year for its last five years while Sydney's population skyrocketed by almost 70,000 per year. Our communities deserve better than the nimby attitude of no new supply in New South Wales that The Greens and Labor like to peddle. I will save the rest for next time.

#### *Documents*

### **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with sections 74 and 78 (2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Investigation into dealings involving Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council land*, dated October 2022, received this day and ordered to be printed.

#### *Personal Explanation*

#### **MEMBER FOR BARWON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:42):** By leave: I reflect briefly on the comments of the member for Dubbo in response to a question about my very public and open approach to how long I will spend doing this role if the electorate wants me. It does not reflect my level of work ethic, my level of interest in the electorate or the work I will do for my constituents. I made a commitment to my wife that she could have her husband back in 2027.

#### *Motions*

#### **THE HON. ROBERT BORSAK**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:43):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Considers the statement, "He should have got up and clocked her", is a threat of violence directed by the Hon. Robert Borsak towards the member for Murray.
- (2) Condemns the Hon. Robert Borsak for making the threat, which constitutes dangerous workplace behaviour.
- (3) Notes the importance of the Legislative Council ensuring its members adhere to the standards set in the Council's code of conduct.
- (4) Calls on the Hon. Robert Borsak to apologise publicly to the member for Murray.
- (5) Sends a message to the Legislative Council informing it of the Assembly's resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring the motion before the House. In this Parliament, there are 45 women members between the two Houses. Statistically, around seven of those women will fall victim to some sort of domestic violence at some point of their life. Every week, one woman in this country is murdered by their intimate partner. These are horrifying statistics. This can happen to anyone, regardless of where they grew up or what job they have. It is endemic across our society. What is it going to take to say enough is enough and we need change? How can we still have men walking the halls of Parliament who think nothing of suggesting a woman should have

been clocked to keep her in line? What is the ramification? It is deafening silence. In any other Australian workplace, that behaviour would result in instant dismissal, being marched out the door, "See you later. No excuses. Goodbye." Yet here in Parliament we pretend it does not matter.

It seems to me violence against women has been tolerated for so long that Australia has become numb to it. If we do not speak up and call out this type of behaviour, we remain part of the problem. There is no place for this in our society—not here in Parliament and not in any other workplace either. How does this Parliament even dare to pretend it can set the rules and standards for the rest of the State when we are, in fact, working in a toxic environment ourselves? One in six women has experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner. One in six women has experienced some sort of abuse by the time they are 15—that is 15. Now we are talking about the future of our daughters and our granddaughters. Perhaps one of the blokes on the Government bench could tell us what they might do if their peers decided to clock their daughter because she needed it.

If we do not call this out, if we do not pull up these misogynists before they infect everyone around them, we will remain part of the problem. Premier Perrottet said that the New South Wales Government would offer its full support behind the Broderick review and commit to making the New South Wales Parliament a safe workplace. The Premier said, "As Australia's oldest Parliament, we must lead by example." To be fair, toxic behaviour in Parliament is not only experienced by women, although we are still by far the majority. The Broderick report found 40 per cent of women and 26 per cent of men had experienced bullying and harassment. Those figures are talking about our workplace—that is here. I know things can get heated, and debate can be passionate and fiery, but it must always remain respectful and free of threats and violence. Threatening to clock a female—or anyone—is simply appalling behaviour, and it must be called out. We can all be better, and we all must do better.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:47):** I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Murray as a member of this Chamber representing the electorate of Newtown and also on behalf of my Greens colleagues in this Chamber, the member for Balmain and the member for Ballina. First and foremost, on behalf of those people I speak for in this place, I say to the member for Murray that we are sorry she was subjected to this verbal abuse. It is never okay that anyone is subjected to that kind of threat or inciting of violence. In the video of the exchange from the Legislative Council that I viewed on the reporting of the story in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the shooters party MLC Robert Borsak can be heard saying, "Rath is too soft. He should have got up and clocked her." This statement is clearly inciting violence.

If a member of the Legislative Council feels that it is acceptable to say, "He should have got up and clocked her," in the Chamber when the cameras are rolling and members from other parties are around him, what does he do when the public eye is not on him? What does he think is acceptable then? There is no place in this workplace or in our society—not in people's homes, schools or workplaces, not in their social networks, not in this Parliament and certainly not in either of our Chambers—for this kind of language or threat. In fact, the Legislative Council—unlike this Chamber, which did not adopt the amendment to our code of conduct—has recently made a change to its code of conduct to expect a certain standard of behaviour. The Legislative Council Code of Conduct states:

**10. Treatment of staff and others**

A Member must treat their staff and each other and all those working for Parliament in the course of their parliamentary duties and activities with dignity, courtesy and respect, and free from any behaviour that amounts to bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.

It is critical that members of the Legislative Council hold their member to account when it comes to this clear breach of their own recently amended code of conduct. It is also incumbent on us in this Chamber to make it clear, by supporting this motion, that we stand together against any incitement of violence against women or, indeed, anyone in this workplace. This is not about party political lines. This is about taking a stand about the standard we are accepting and where we are willing to put our voices on the record to say, "We do not support this level of violence."

No political negotiations, no need of or reliance on numbers, would have ever stopped us from calling out the inciting of violence publicly on the record here today. There are only 32 women members in this House and 13 women members in the other House. Less than a third of the members across this Parliament are women, and we have so much to do to address this. We will not address this unless we implement all of the recommendations of the Broderick report and agree to stand strong and speak out publicly and loudly whenever someone offers a threat of verbal abuse or aggression towards a woman in this workplace or in any part of our society.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:50):** I support this important motion, which makes it clear that this Chamber will not tolerate threats of violence against women and members of the Legislative Assembly. Debating this motion shows that the Parliament is taking the shocking findings of the Broderick review seriously, and I pay tribute to the leadership of Mrs Leslie Williams in that regard. This should be a safe workplace. As the member for Murray said, if violence was threatened against co-workers in any other workplace, action would be

taken. That is what we are doing here today. I thank the member for Murray for her bravery in calling this out, which will make it clear to members who engage in this conduct that they will be held accountable.

The comments by the Hon. Robert Borsak, egged on by Mark Latham, were disgraceful. It is important that this Chamber sheds light on his character and his openness to encourage violence against women—something that I know is a growing concern in regional and rural New South Wales. Sadly, of course, this is not an isolated incident. Just yesterday the Hon. Greg Donnelly described the Deputy Leader of the National Party, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, as "howling". Labor should apologise for that and take action to sanction Greg Donnelly. What message does it send to women wanting to enter politics that you can reach one of the highest levels of government but misogyny will haunt you every step of the way? Also recently on social media some random troll commented to the Hon. Mark Banasiak—a colleague of Robert Borsak—in reference to the Hon. Emma Hurst, that he should "step on her and step on her hard", to which Banasiak replied, "Thanks. Will do."

The blokes in this place need to do better. Sadly it seems that, as a result of the Broderick report, a shrinking rump of ultra-right-wing men are feeling more emboldened than ever before to behave worse and worse, which has real impacts on the safety and wellbeing of female members and all women in this workplace. I raise another important point: Threats of violence against elected representatives are on the rise. This year alone, two people have been charged with threats against me. If we have now disintegrated to the point where we are making threats of violence against each other on the floor, what hope do we have for our own safety? We must call it out, we must report it, we must take action, and we must pass this important motion to send a critical message that we will always stand up for the women who work in this place and that we will always stand up for the safety of members.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:53):** I begin, firstly, by acknowledging the motion of the member for Murray. I am sorry that she finds herself in a situation in which she needs to bring the matter to this Chamber. I know very well that members across this Chamber are all here because we are so passionate about our local communities. We want them to be better places for our citizens to live. We want improved services and we want new infrastructure. But just like any workplace, I think that each of us rightly expects to do this really important job of representing our communities in this, the oldest Parliament in Australia, in an environment and a workplace that is free from bullying.

Formerly I was a frontline health worker. I was expected to treat my colleagues, my patients and the other professionals I worked alongside respectfully. If I did not, there were consequences. Similarly, when I worked in education as a teacher there were expectations about the way I would treat my colleagues and my students. As you well know, Mr Speaker, in this place we have standing orders so that this Chamber is a workplace that is respectful, safe and free from bullying. Standing Order 72 (2) states:

72. A Member shall not use offensive words against:

...

(2) Either House or its Members.

Further, under Standing Order 250:

250. A Member may be named by the Speaker for:

...

(3) Using offensive words, and refusing to withdraw them.

Those standing orders are there for a reason. From my perspective, in many ways it is a little bit sad that as adults and representatives for our community we have to put in place rules to ensure that we have a safe workplace and a safe Chamber. The Broderick review stated that bullying is a significant issue across this parliamentary workplace. It said that bullying is "systemic and multidirectional" and that those working in parliamentary workplaces have low confidence in structural or cultural protections to prevent bullying or to stop it once it is occurring.

The findings of the Broderick review are sobering, but they provide a strong message to each and every one of us in this Chamber and this workplace that we can and need to do better. We all need to play our part to change the culture of this place, including this Chamber. Mr Speaker, I thank you for appointing me as Chair of the Parliamentary Advisory Group. It is a privilege. I know that each and every person in that group—all members from across the political divide, and those who represent other areas across this parliamentary workplace—is passionate about leading this change. We are absolutely committed to working alongside the leaders of this Parliament to make this a safe workplace for each and every one of us.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:57):** On behalf of the Labor Opposition, I state that it is important that this place is a safe place for women—and everyone—to work. Violence and threats of violence against members in this place are entirely unacceptable. I place on the record that the Hon. Greg Donnelly from

the other place apologised unprompted for his comments yesterday. Today the Labor Opposition supports the motion of the member for Murray.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:58):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Sydney, Newtown, Port Macquarie and Port Stephens for their meaningful and thoughtful contributions to this debate. I really do appreciate them. Today is hopefully the beginning of genuine change and a step forward. No-one should condone an action of violence. For us here in this Parliament, it is time to call out inappropriate behaviour, not to ignore it and hope the perpetrator will mend their ways. It is time to say this is totally wrong—to turn a corner and stop inappropriate behaviour. If I had two bob for every woman who said to me, "I just don't know how you put up with the abuse, the bullying and the bad behaviour", I'd be swamped with money. We are failing to embrace, support and value clever women who have the skills and ability to take on leadership positions. We are missing out. Our State is missing out and we are suffering because of it. New South Wales can and should be enriched with the participation of more women in leadership positions. Let us start right now.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **CONFISCATION OF PROCEEDS OF CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (16:01):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill introduces significant amendments to legislation governing the confiscation of proceeds of crime and unexplained wealth—namely, the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act 1989, the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990, the Crime Commission Act 2012, the Criminal Assets Recovery Regulation 2017, the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 and the Unexplained Wealth (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2018. The bill represents the final important component of our comprehensive and far-reaching reforms to tackle the scourge of organised crime operating in this State. Organised crime poses some of the most serious crime threats to our community and imposes significant economic cost upon the taxpayer. It cannot and will not be tolerated by this Government.

This Government has already introduced three bills targeting money laundering operations, improving law enforcement access to digital devices investigations and eliminating the use of dedicated encrypted criminal communication devices in connection with serious crime. This bill strikes at the heart of serious criminal enterprise by targeting and confiscating the profits of crime and unexplained wealth that fuel organised crime. Those who engage in criminal activity have no legal entitlement to the proceeds of their crimes or wealth. Accordingly, there is a rightful expectation among the community that illegitimate assets will be swiftly confiscated by law enforcement agencies. Whilst the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act 1989 and the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 are valuable tools for law enforcement agencies, both Acts have proven to be complex, resource intensive and inefficient in enabling law enforcement agencies to effectively seize and recover the proceeds of crime and unexplained wealth.

This bill overcomes these law enforcement challenges by introducing strong, efficient and streamlined processes to effectively confiscate the profits of crime and unexplained wealth from serious criminals. This includes automatic forfeiture of restrained or property subject to a confirmed freezing notice following conviction of a serious offence; forfeiture of property from declared drug traffickers unless it is established that property was lawfully acquired, providing that, in certain circumstances, the Crime Commission can confiscate property connected to serious criminal activity which has been seized by or is in the possession of an investigative agency without the need for a court order; and amending the existing grounds for making an unexplained wealth order to provide that the Supreme Court must make an unexplained wealth order if the court finds there is a reasonable suspicion that a person's current or previous wealth is greater than the value of the person's lawfully acquired wealth by \$250,000 in currency—including cash, money held in bank accounts and digital currency—or \$2 million in assets other than money.

To support these provisions, the bill bolsters associated powers of the NSW Police Force, the New South Wales Crime Commission and the courts to identify, seize and restrain suspected proceeds of crime and

unexplained wealth. By introducing pragmatic legislation to enable the effective confiscation of proceeds of crime and unexplained wealth, the bill is critical in the fight against organised crime. Confiscating proceeds of crime and unexplained wealth undermines and disrupts the profit motive of serious criminal enterprise and prevents reinvestment of those assets into further criminal ventures. These reforms target serious criminal activity, particularly senior organised crime figures who profit from crime while not personally or directly being linked to the commission of specific offences. At the same time these reforms ensure procedural fairness for defendants and third parties with lawfully acquired interest. Additionally, the amendments in this bill will implement the recommendations of the Statutory Review of the Crime Commission Act, which was tabled in December 2020.

I now turn to the details of the bill. On the amendments to the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act 1999 in relation to automatic forfeiture, schedule 1 [7] to the bill inserts a new division into the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act to enable the automatic forfeiture of property that is subject of a restraining order or a confirmed freezing notice after the person is convicted of a serious offence. This removes the need for law enforcement authorities to apply to the court for a forfeiture order for restrained or frozen property following conviction of a serious offence. It follows suit with the Commonwealth and many other Australian jurisdictions which already have similar provisions. Under new section 17B the relevant property of the person convicted of a serious offence will be forfeited at the end of the relevant period, which is defined in section 4 of the Act and generally refers to six months after conviction.

If an application is made to exclude property from automatic forfeiture or to vary or set aside the relevant restraining order or the confirmed freezing notice, forfeiture will not occur until the application is finally dismissed, including any associated appeal process. Forfeiture will take effect in the same way as if a court had made a forfeiture order in relation to the relevant property. The automatic forfeiture scheme only applies to persons convicted of a serious offence. This is defined in section 7 of the Act and includes offences which may be prosecuted on indictment. The scheme also applies only to property that was restrained or frozen prior to the conviction, as made clear in the proposed definition of "relevant property". To ensure procedural fairness, new section 17C requires the authority that applied for the restraining order or the confirmation of the freezing notice in relation to the property, known as the "relevant authority", to give notice of the upcoming automatic forfeiture to anyone who is known or reasonably suspected to hold an interest in the property as soon as it is reasonably practical and no later than 28 days before the end of the relevant period.

New section 17D provides that a person can apply to the court for an order excluding property from forfeiture on grounds that the property was not tainted or was lawfully acquired. If the application is dismissed, the person can appeal to the Supreme Court under new section 17E. New section 17G also allows for a person who claims to have an interest in the property to apply to the court for recovery of the forfeited property within six months of the forfeiture occurring. New section 17H allows a dependent to apply to the court for relief from hardship.

On amendments to the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act 1989 in relation to drug trafficker declarations, schedule 1 [9] to the bill inserts a new division into the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act to enable confiscation of a declared drug trafficker's property unless the person can establish the property was lawfully acquired. Under new section 34, the Director of Public Prosecutions or a police prosecutor can apply to an appropriate court for a drug trafficker declaration against a person convicted of a serious drug offence. The court must make the drug trafficker declaration upon an application being made if it is satisfied the person subject to the application has been convicted of at least three serious drug offences in the previous 10 years, or a serious drug offence involving a commercial quantity of a prohibited drug or prohibited plant, or a serious drug offence and the person is or was a member of a criminal group as defined under the Crimes Act 1900.

"Serious drug offence" has the same meaning as in the Drug Supply Prohibition Order Pilot Scheme Act 2020, which generally relates to supplying or manufacturing drugs at indictable or higher quantities. New section 34A provides that within 12 months of the declaration, an appropriate officer may apply for a forfeiture order in relation to property that either belongs to, or is in the effective control of, the person who is subject to the drug trafficker declaration. Unless the court is satisfied the property has been lawfully acquired, the forfeiture order must be made. The burden of proof will lie with the person to prove that the property in question was lawfully acquired. Property is lawfully acquired if it is not unlawfully acquired, which the bill defines as property that is in whole or part the proceeds of unlawful activity, or proceeds of the disposal or dealing in property derived from unlawful activity, or property acquired using property derived from unlawful activity.

These reforms are targeting serious drug trafficking, which is harming our community. These are measures designed to make sure convicted drug traffickers are not reaping the profits of their crimes or, even worse, investing those profits back into further criminal enterprises and ensnaring even more victims. The bill provides for third parties with interest in the property to be notified and participate in the forfeiture proceedings. They can also apply to the court under section 20 of the Act for an order in respect of their interest after a forfeiture order

has been made. New section 43A will allow an appropriate officer or member of the Police Force to apply to the Supreme Court for a restraining order in relation to property reasonably suspected of belonging to or being in the effective control of a person against whom a drug trafficker declaration has been made, or who has been charged with a serious drug offence and could be a declared drug trafficker on conviction. This is consistent with other provisions in our existing legislative framework under both the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act and the Criminal Assets Recovery Act, which prevents property liable to be forfeited from being disposed of ahead of forfeiture proceedings.

Under existing section 45 of the Act, a person may apply to the Supreme Court to have the order varied or set aside. The court has wide discretion to vary or set aside an order and will be able to consider evidence that the restrained property was lawfully acquired. To support enforcement of the new provisions, schedule 1 to the bill also expands existing search and seizure powers under a search warrant in sections 36 and 37 of the Act to include property reasonably suspected of being unlawfully acquired and belonging to, or in the effective control of, a declared drug trafficker, or a person who has been charged with a serious drug offence and could be a declared drug trafficker on conviction.

On amendments to the Crime Commission Act 2012, schedule 2 [8] makes important amendments to section 39 of the Crime Commission Act to enable answers, documents or things produced by a witness at a hearing before the commission to be admissible in confiscation proceedings under the Criminal Assets Recovery Act. This will not apply to proceedings which have already commenced or are imminent. This will improve the ability of the Crime Commission to bring forfeiture proceedings with the best available evidence in order to disrupt and financially disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups. New section 45AA in schedule 2 to the bill provides that the Crime Commission may direct evidence given before the commission by a witness to be disclosed to other agencies. These agencies may apply for a confiscation order under the Criminal Assets Recovery Act or an interstate order as well as relevant courts and defendants in confiscation proceedings. In determining whether to give a direction, the commission must consider the real risk of prejudice to the fair criminal trial of the person subject to the order. Evidence may not be disclosed if proceedings for the relevant confiscation order have already commenced, or are imminent, which is defined in the bill.

Schedule 2 [12] to the bill revises and replaces the existing section 80 of the Crime Commission Act to give effect to a recommendation of the statutory review. Under section 80 (2) of the Crime Commission Act, it is a criminal offence for a person to make a record of information, or to divulge or communicate information to another person if that information was acquired because of, or in connection with, the exercise of functions under the Crime Commission Act. The statutory review found that amendments were required to ensure that this provision remains fit for purpose.

The statutory review concluded that if such an interpretation of "person" was applied to section 80 (2) it would exempt the disclosure of information to a court, which the commission is otherwise entitled not to disclose in response to a subpoena or other compulsory legal process from the scope of the provision. Excluding a court from the meaning of "person" would mean that a person, including current and former officers of the commission, could voluntarily and lawfully reveal operationally sensitive methodology in legal proceedings, compromising the effective performance of the commission's functions or exposing the commission to spurious claims without the commission's consent. Similarly, adopting this interpretation could potentially allow for upload of information to a website, which might be interpreted as not a disclosure to a person.

The bill gives effect to the recommendation of the statutory review by removing the requirement that the prohibited disclosure be to "any person" in the revised offence at section 80 (1). Instead, disclosure of commission information generally is an offence, and the provision explicitly states this disclosure includes disclosure to a court. The draft bill also revises and clarifies the relevant people to which these secrecy requirements apply at section 80 (4). Additionally, the Supreme Court has found that the secrecy provision relates only to information connected with the Crime Commission's special investigative functions, and not with its ordinary corporate functions. The bill amends section 80 to enshrine this distinction for the avoidance of doubt. It explicitly states that only information which relates to the Crime Commission's corporate capacity is not captured by the provision. All other information is therefore required to be kept secret. The bill also extends the time in which proceedings for an offence against the secrecy provision can be brought from six months to three years, as recommended by the statutory review.

Importantly, none of the amendments proposed are designed to circumvent the capacity for people to report misconduct or maladministration within the Crime Commission. Rather, these amendments are targeted at those who may seek to maliciously or mischievously disclose confidential information, and to provide clarity and certainty to all those who work with the Crime Commission. The rights of whistleblowers would remain unaffected and are protected by the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016. The statutory review of the Crime Commission Act also recommended amendments to

improve the operation of the Act. Schedule 2 [11] implements the recommendation of the statutory review that the contempt provisions should be strengthened. Currently, contempt of the commission is dealt with by prosecuting the alleged contemner in the Local Court under section 47 of the Act.

As a case may take months to come before a court, the provision does not have an immediate effect on a witness who displays contempt of the commission. The bill introduces a more comprehensive contempt scheme which allows the commission to refer contempt to the Supreme Court. These provisions are aligned to the contempt provisions in place for bodies such as the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I also note that schedule 2 [14] makes a minor amendment to the Act to remove legislative barriers limiting the Crime Commissioner and Assistant Crime Commissioners from taking leave.

Schedule 3 [7] amends the Criminal Assets Recovery Act to introduce a scheme for the administrative forfeiture of certain property connected to serious criminal activity to the State. Development of such a scheme was a recommendation of the statutory review of the Crime Commission Act. When investigating and taking action in relation to organised crime, the NSW Police Force and the Crime Commission may seize or obtain property suspected of being derived from, or capable of facilitating, serious criminal or illegal activity—for example, cash, luxury vehicles and jewellery. Currently, the only way this seized property can be forfeited to the State is under an order from the Supreme Court under the Criminal Assets Recovery Act. In most cases, proceedings for such orders are uncontested, as persons who identify themselves to the commission as owners of property run the risk of being investigated by the commission for involvement in criminal activity.

These processes are clunky and the need to commence uncontested proceedings for forfeiture wastes the time and resources of the Crime Commission and the Supreme Court. The bill enables property to be confiscated without a court order to streamline these processes. Similar schemes are referred to as administrative forfeiture schemes. Of course, such powers are significant impositions on private property, and the bill includes a number of strict processes, thresholds and safeguards to ensure that administrative forfeiture is only available in appropriately limited circumstances.

I will briefly touch on three key features. Firstly, the administrative forfeiture scheme will apply only to property, other than real property, which has been seized by or is in the possession of an investigative agency, which includes police. This means that administrative forfeiture cannot be initiated on property still in the possession of a private individual, or over land, both of which represent more complex circumstances for forfeiture. The existing court order based scheme in part 3 of the Act will still be available for such property. Secondly, administrative forfeiture can be commenced only by the Crime Commission issuing notices to any person with a known or suspected beneficial interest in the relevant property. A notice must also be published in the *Gazette* and in a daily newspaper circulating throughout New South Wales. Such notices may be issued only if the commission is reasonably satisfied that the property is of a kind for which they would be able to seek a court forfeiture order.

Thirdly, people will have 60 days from the issuing of notices to lodge a dispute claim in writing to seek the recovery of some or all of the property by outlining why they have a legitimate and lawful interest in the property. As I noted before, it is unlikely that many claims will be made as potential claimants run the risk of exposing their connection to criminal activity for which they may be investigated. If no dispute claim is received within 60 days then the property is forfeited to the State as if a court had made a forfeiture order and existing processes for the sale or disposal of that property would apply. If a dispute claim is received, the commission must assess it within 60 days and if it reasonably believes it is more probable than not that the claimant has a legitimate and lawful interest in the property, administrative forfeiture must be discontinued and the property returned to the claimant.

If the commission dismisses the dispute claim, this dismissal can be appealed by the claimant to the Supreme Court. Even if forfeiture has taken place, an individual may apply to the Supreme Court to recover the property if they can provide a reasonable excuse for failure to lodge a claim in the dispute period. The features of the administrative forfeiture scheme provide a significant number of safeguards and avenues for forfeiture to be contested and appealed while also facilitating swift and effective forfeiture outside of costly court processes where that forfeiture is uncontested. Schedule 3 [14] makes consequential amendments relating to the powers and protections of the NSW Trustee and Guardian when exercising powers under the Criminal Assets Recovery Act in relation to administrative forfeiture. They also modernise these provisions to bring the Act in line with current drafting standards and to enhance clarity.

Schedule 3 [31] amends the Criminal Assets Recovery Act to align section 63, which governs stays of proceedings, with section 319 of the Commonwealth Government's Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (Commonwealth). This was another amendment recommended from the statutory review and it seeks to clarify the grounds on which proceedings under the Criminal Assets Recovery Act may be stayed, subject to courts having power to address the risk of prejudice to a defendant in criminal proceedings without having to stay proceedings.

Schedule 3 [8] amends the grounds on which the Supreme Court can make an unexplained wealth order under section 28A of the Criminal Assets Recovery Act. Under section 28A (1) of the current Act, the Crime Commission may apply to the Supreme Court for an unexplained wealth order to pay the amount assessed by the Court as the person's unexplained wealth. The Supreme Court currently can make an unexplained wealth order against a person only if it finds there is a reasonable suspicion the person has engaged in serious crime-related activity or acquired serious crime-derived property.

This threshold for making an unexplained wealth order makes it difficult to initiate forfeiture proceedings to confiscate the unexplained wealth from the heads of criminal networks, who are often removed from the actual commission of the serious criminal offence but who orchestrate the criminal activity and reap the benefits of the ill-gotten gains. For this reason, in addition to the existing grounds for making an unexplained wealth order, schedule 3 [8] to the bill amends section 28A (2) of the Act to provide that the Supreme Court must make an unexplained wealth order if the court finds there is a reasonable suspicion that a person's current or previous wealth exceeds the value of the person's lawfully acquired wealth by \$250,000 in cash or \$2 million in assets other than cash. Under the updated section 28B (2), the court must assess the unexplained wealth of the person as the whole or part of their current or previous wealth, which the court is not satisfied on the balance of probabilities is not illegally acquired property or proceeds of an illegal activity.

Under the current section 28B (3) of the Act, the burden of proof, in proceedings against a person for an unexplained wealth order to prove a person's current or previous wealth is not illegally acquired property or the proceeds of an illegal activity, lies on the person. The high threshold for making an unexplained wealth order under these new grounds ensures that these reforms are targeting serious organised criminals who have accumulated significant amounts of wealth which they cannot explain the origins of. The existing safeguard under section 28A (4) of the Act will apply, which provides that the Supreme Court can refuse to make the order or reduce the amount payable, if it is in the public interest to do so.

Additional safeguards have been included. Schedule 3 item [9] to the bill inserts a new section 28A (6) which provides that amounts payable under an unexplained wealth order will not be taken into account as part of a person's means in determining their entitlement for legal aid. Schedule 3 [12] to the bill also inserts new section 28C (1) (1A) to provide that in assessing the amount payable under an unexplained wealth order, the Supreme Court may deduct the reasonable necessities of life for the person and their dependants. This new ground on which unexplained wealth orders can be made is supported by an amendment to section 10A of the Act in schedule 3 [4] to provide for the Supreme Court to make a restraining order on application from the Crime Commission where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the person's unexplained wealth is at least \$250,000 in money or \$2 million in other assets.

Under the current Act, "money" is defined as money in the form of cash. In schedule 3 [2] the bill amends the definition of money in section 4 (1) to mean money that is held by or is in the effective control of a person, including in the form of cash or digital currency. This will ensure that money held in bank accounts and cryptocurrency are captured by the definition. "Digital currency" has the same meaning as in the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing Act 2006 of the Commonwealth.

The bill contains additional powers under both the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act and the Criminal Assets Recovery Act. This enables the NSW Crime Commission and the NSW Police Force to more effectively investigate persons and premises that are reasonably suspected of harbouring unlawfully acquired wealth and proceeds of crime. Schedule 3 [15] to [18] to the bill amend sections 38 and 39 of the Criminal Assets Recovery Act to extend existing search and seizure powers under warrant to include property reasonably suspected of being unexplained wealth. An authorised officer also will be able to apply for a search warrant if they have reasonable grounds for believing property reasonably suspected of being unexplained wealth is or will be in the possession of a person.

Additionally, schedule 3 [2] to the bill expands the definition of "property tracking documents" to include documents relevant to determining or identifying the current or previous wealth of a person who might reasonably be suspected of having unexplained wealth. Sections 44 and 45 of the Act are amended by schedule 3 [20] and [21] to allow an authorised officer to apply to the Supreme Court for a search warrant to search a person reasonably suspected of being in possession of property tracking documents. This extends the current provisions which allow search warrants in respect of premises where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting there may be property tracking documents present.

Schedule 3 [22] to the bill revises and replaces the existing section 47 of the Act to clarify that the powers of authorised officers exercising property tracking search warrants also extend to making copies of or taking extracts of documents, and to give a direction to a person to assist the officer to access data held in, or accessible from, a computer. The privilege against self-incrimination is not a reasonable excuse for refusing to comply with

such a direction. Schedule 1 [16] to the bill makes similar amendments to the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act in relation to search warrants for property tracking documents.

The bill supports the enforcement of these new search and seizure powers by amending both the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act and the Criminal Assets Recovery Act at schedule 1 [16] and schedule 3 [19] to increase the maximum penalty for obstructing a person executing a search warrant to five years imprisonment or 1,000 penalty units. The higher penalties are proportionate to the grounds upon which the person or premises is being investigated in that the person is likely to hold a significant amount of illegal wealth. The bill prescribes these offences for obstruction of a search warrant in table 2 of schedule 1 to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 as an indictable offence that is to be dealt with summarily unless the prosecutor elects otherwise.

Schedule 3 [25] to the bill inserts a new section 48A in the Criminal Assets Recovery Act under which the Crime Commissioner may issue a "freezing notice" to a financial institution in relation to a person's financial account, requiring the immediate freezing of funds in the account for a period of two business days. This is an important provision to prevent the disposal or transfer of funds from an account before the Supreme Court has the opportunity to make a restraining order over that account. The Crime Commissioner must reasonably suspect the funds will be withdrawn, transferred, or otherwise disposed of before the commission has applied for a restraining order in relation to those funds, or before the restraining order application has been determined by the Supreme Court. The Crime Commissioner may issue a freezing notice only if the commissioner is satisfied the person has engaged in serious crime-related activity, or acquired serious crime derived property or has unexplained wealth exceeding a value of \$250,000 in money or \$2 million in other assets. Contravention of a freezing notice will be punishable by 1,000 penalty units, which is the same as the penalty under the Act for contravening a monitoring order.

Schedule 1 [17] and schedule 3 [28] to the bill insert new provisions in both the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act and the Criminal Assets Recovery Act to enable the Police Commissioner and the Crime Commissioner, under the Criminal Assets Recovery Act, to give notice to a financial institution requiring the financial institution to provide information about the transactions or assets of a person, if it is reasonably required to determine whether to take action under the Act, or in relation to proceedings under the Act. Financial institutions will have 14 days to comply with the notice, or three business days if it is an emergency. Financial institutions can also seek an extension of time to comply, if required. Unlike existing provisions which allow authorised officers to request information from financial institutions, the bill would compel compliance through the creation of a new offence punishable by a maximum penalty of 1,000 penalty units. However, it will be a defence if the financial institution took all reasonable steps to provide the information within the required period and provided it to the agency as soon as practicable after the end of the period.

Schedule 1 [17] and schedule 3 [28] to the bill provide further protections for financial institutions, including that an action or suit does not lie against the financial institution or their employees for providing the information in compliance with a notice. Financial institutions are also protected from suit under schedule 3 [28] to the bill for compliance with the new freezing notice. Schedule 1 [1] and schedule 3 [2] to the bill amend the definition of "account" in both the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act and the Criminal Assets Recovery Act to enable these notice powers to be used against registerable digital currency exchange services within the meaning of the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006 of the Commonwealth in light of the evolving crime threat where organised criminals use cryptocurrency to avoid law enforcement scrutiny. The amendments proposed in schedule 1 and schedule 3 to the bill will be subject to a statutory review after two years of its commencement, after which a report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in Parliament within 12 months of the end of that period.

I turn to the amendments relating to the maximum allowable costs for legal expenses. Schedule 4 to the bill amends the Criminal Assets Recovery Regulation 2017 to specify that the maximum allowable costs for legal expenses that may be paid from restrained property are to be the rates for legal representation set by the Attorney General. Under section 10B (3) (b) of the Criminal Assets Recovery Act, Australian property may be released for the payment of reasonable legal expenses incurred in defending forfeiture proceedings or criminal charges.

Such a release is subject to the conditions specified in section 16A of the Act. Further, section 16B provides a regulatory power to cap the allowable costs for legal expenses; however, to date no prescribed rates have been set. The bill sets the rates for maximum allowable costs for legal expenses to provide certainty and reduce the need for all contested proceedings in relation to reasonable rates. Schedule 4 also contains consequential amendments including to the Unexplained Wealth (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2018 as a result of the updated definition of serious criminal offence within the meaning of the Criminal Assets Recovery Act.

These reforms make significant amendments to existing legislation to ensure that our law enforcement agencies, including the NSW Police Force and the New South Wales Crime Commission, have the cutting edge

of legislative tools necessary to confiscate the profits of criminal enterprise in this State. These reforms target the core of criminal networks by striking at their profit base. They send a strong message that this Government does not tolerate serious and organised criminals operating in this State. They are a crucial step in our plan to disrupt and dismantle organised crime in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **TREASURY AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Matt Kean, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy) (16:38):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Treasury and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 amends a diverse range of legislation administered by the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. The legislation covered by this bill includes the Government Sector Finance Act 2018, the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Act 2000, the Superannuation Administration Act 1996, the Electricity Supply Act 1995, the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987 and the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989. While they deal with quite different subject matters, taken together the amendments provide for a series of miscellaneous reforms that will strengthen accountability, transparency, performance and innovation in the New South Wales Government. Schedules 1 to 3 deal with Treasury-related matters, while schedule 4 addresses energy matters. I will address each schedule to the bill individually.

I turn first to the amendments to the Government Sector Finance [GSF] Act 2018 in schedule 1 to the bill. These amendments seek to clarify the authority for GSF agencies that spend and receive payments from transactions with other agencies within the sector. While there are strong mechanisms in place to manage agencies' administrative expenditure limits detailed in the budget papers, there is no mechanism to ensure expenditure by agencies from the Consolidated Fund does not cause a technical breach of a Minister's appropriation authority. This is because the legal framework is out of step with modern cash and accrual accounting concepts. The proposed amendments simplify and clarify the authorisation framework. This will enable Ministers to have clearer visibility over their appropriation limits, and an improved ability to manage those appropriations they are accountable for. It does this by aligning the legal framework with existing administrative budget and cash controls already operating in the sector. In her report on *State Finances 2021* the Auditor-General recommended that NSW Treasury:

... ensure a framework exists to monitor and provide assurance to Ministers that expenditure incurred across a financial year by agencies under the relevant Minister's coordination does not exceed the appropriation authority conferred by the annual Appropriation Act and the GSF Act.

This bill seeks to progress a major component of NSW Treasury's response to the Auditor-General's recommendation. The Audit Office of New South Wales has been consulted and is supportive of the proposed changes to the Act. These legislative amendments would result in a permanent, sustainable solution to the current issues. Specifically, schedule 1 to the bill proposes amendments that will: deem transactions between two government entities as a new category of deemed appropriations; simplify how Ministers receive deemed appropriations, as well as simplify the framework for Ministers to delegate and monitor spending against their appropriation limits by ensuring deemed appropriations are being deemed to be made to the lead Minister rather than the responsible Ministers of the GSF agency receiving or recovering the money; validate payments between two GSF agencies made in previous years to ensure they are taken to have been made under authorised appropriations; enable the Treasurer to transfer existing deemed appropriations when the related service, function or program is transferred from one cluster to the new cluster; and empower the Treasurer to transfer existing appropriations—whether made under an appropriations Act or deemed appropriations—where new clusters and new cluster lead Ministers are established within a financial year.

Without the proposed amendments it is not clear what the available appropriation is at any one time or which Ministers are responsible for that appropriation. This is because the legal framework is unclear and overly complex and the information and reporting systems, which align with cash and accrual frameworks, do not currently capture the necessary information to monitor expenditure against the legal authorisation framework. The amendments in this bill will bring the legal framework into better alignment with these other control frameworks. For example, it is common for one cluster to pay another cluster for services using its appropriations, or transfer activities under a machinery of government change. However, there is no formal legal authority to spend the moneys in the new cluster. There is also no formal legal adjustment of either cluster's appropriation limit. The proposed amendments will legally "deem" such transactions as appropriations so there is formal legal authority

to spend the moneys. The amendments will also legally enable the transfer of deemed appropriations where a machinery of government change occurs.

The amendments also seek to address the ambiguity in situations where the cluster lead Minister receives appropriations for a program but the responsible Minister is a different person by simplifying the legal framework on how Ministers receive and delegate the authority to spend. NSW Treasury will provide guidance to agencies on how this legislative framework will work in practice. In particular, there will be guidance on the new references in the bill such as "financially administered" and how this applies to agencies, as well as the development of a GSF amendment regulation that will clarify which types of payments fall within the definition of cross-appropriation payments under the GSF Act. Cluster grants are not a form of cross-appropriation payment. If no legislative change is implemented in relation to a new category of deemed appropriations within the Act, a significant administrative burden will fall on the agencies and the lack of clarity for Ministers in terms of unauthorised cross-appropriation payments will continue. The proposed legislative amendments are recommended to be passed by 31 December 2022 to meet NSW Treasury's commitment to address the Auditor-General's recommendation.

I turn now to the amendments to the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Act 2000 in schedule 2 to the bill. These amendments will provide the statutory framework that enables the operation of a shared equity scheme in New South Wales. As part of a package of home ownership measures announced in the 2022-23 budget, the Government announced it would deliver a two-year trial of a shared equity scheme. The shared equity scheme will allow the Government to share the cost of purchasing a home with an eligible home buyer in exchange for taking an equivalent equity share in the property. This will help address both the deposit barrier and the mortgage serviceability difficulties faced by home owners, bring forward purchases and provide access to home ownership for those who might not be able to get into the housing market without government support.

The scheme's legislation will be enacted by way of amendments to the First Home Owner Grant (New Homes) Act 2000. Once the legislation is passed, this Act will be called the First Home Owner Grant and Shared Equity Act 2000. This Act is an appropriate legislative location for the scheme as it similarly supports a home buyer to purchase a home and contains relevant provisions that would be applicable to the scheme. The bill will give the Treasurer power to establish a shared equity scheme, by order published in the Gazette, and issue policy guidelines. These policy guidelines will outline aspects of the scheme not incorporated in primary legislation, including eligibility, obligations, conditions and processes. The chief commissioner must administer the scheme in accordance with the policy guidelines.

The bill will provide the chief commissioner with both the authority to administer the shared equity scheme and the necessary powers to protect the State's interest. The functions of the chief commissioner will include establishing application processes, assessing applications, entering into contracts for the scheme and monitoring compliance with the scheme requirements. Consistent with other parts of the first home owner grant Act, the chief commissioner will have investigative powers to support compliance activities. This includes the power to require information, documents or attendance, enter the property premises and conduct a search warrant. The legislation also enables the chief commissioner to use and disclose information obtained under other Acts—for example, in relation to tax and grants administration—for the purpose of administering the scheme.

To support the chief commissioner's functions, the bill will extend certain offences and penalties that apply to first home owner grants and apply to the scheme the record keeping and general offences in part 8 of the Taxation Administration Act 1996. The chief commissioner will also be able to impose administrative penalties of no more than \$3,300 to deal with minor instances of noncompliance. Participants will be able to object and seek a review of certain decisions of the chief commissioner, including approval to participate, repayment obligations and imposition of penalties.

Once an assessment is made that a repayment of the equity share is warranted under the policy guidelines, the chief commissioner will notify the participant and support the participant to make repayments. For example, this could be made through a negotiated instalment plan. Where repayments are not made, the bill provides that these outstanding debts are referable debts under the State Debt Recovery Act 2018. Revenue NSW may commence debt recovery action as it currently undertakes in relation to a range of debts payable to public authorities. The chief commissioner when determining the course of action around repayment will consider the nature of the eligibility breach and the ability of the participant to repay the Government.

The bill also establishes the NSW Shared Equity Scheme Fund to manage and report on the significant amount of funds that are to be administered for shared equity scheme purposes. The fund is needed to contribute to the purchase of homes in exchange for a shared equity interest and, at a later point in time, receive the repayment of that equity share in the fund. Given that this is a two-year trial, the bill also provides a mechanism by which the fund may be closed with the agreement of the Treasurer and the relevant Ministers for the fund.

I now turn to schedule 3 to the bill that deals with superannuation fund mergers. The bill amends the Superannuation Administration Act 1996 to allow for the transfer of former government superannuation schemes to successor funds via a new regulation-making power. The need for the bill arises from the proposed merger between the Energy Industries Superannuation Scheme [EISS] set up by the New South Wales Government and the Construction and Building Union Superannuation Fund [Cbus]. Under the current licence condition imposed on EISS by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority [APRA], EISS must merge with a larger, better-performing fund.

EISS, assisted by an external consultant and overseen by its board, undertook a comprehensive process to find an appropriate merger partner. Potential funds were assessed on the basis of pricing, general capability, member services, employer services, investment and insurance. The analysis, endorsed by the EISS board, identified Cbus as the preferred merger partner and successor fund. Cbus is one of the largest superannuation funds in Australia, with over \$68 billion in funds under management and 785,000 members. The merger will provide EISS and Cbus members with access to greater economies of scale and investment opportunities that will ensure members' interests continue to be protected in the long term.

The Superannuation Administration Act, as currently drafted, does not provide for a situation where an additional State public sector superannuation scheme set up by the Government under section 127 of the Act could merge with another fund through a successor fund transfer. Mergers between funds are commonplace in the superannuation industry, which is currently going through a market consolidation phase to ensure members can take advantage of the greater scale of larger funds. A successor fund transfer is a method of merger under Commonwealth superannuation law between two superannuation funds, involving bulk transfer of members and their benefits from one fund to another. The outgoing and incoming trustees must agree that the receiving fund will provide members with equivalent rights after the transfer. It is a method of merger that minimises the ongoing administrative costs and would therefore be to the benefit of the members.

I now turn to the details of the bill. The bill amends the Superannuation Administration Act 1996 to provide that regulation can be made to transfer the members and their benefits from a government superannuation scheme to a successor fund. The bill preserves the mobility rights currently provided for in the Act following a successor fund transfer. The bill also makes consequential amendments to other Acts where they refer to EISS or sections of the Act that are being amended by the bill to ensure that no unintended consequences arise from the successor fund transfer.

The bill is introduced with the intention of making the Superannuation Administration (Cbus Transitional Provisions) Regulation 2022, which may be made under the new regulation-making powers in the bill. The proposed regulation enables a successor fund transfer of the EISS to the Cbus fund. The proposed regulation will transfer the members of EISS to the Cbus fund; make Cbus liable for the payment of their benefits; and provide that employers under EISS are now employers contributing to the Cbus fund. Without this bill and the proposed regulation, EISS and Cbus would have to merge through other mechanisms, which creates additional ongoing administrative costs to the detriment of members. Also without the bill, EISS may not be able to merge with Cbus, which could breach the conditions set by APRA requiring EISS to merge with a larger, better-performing fund.

Schedule 4 to the bill deals with the schemes under the Energy Security Safeguard. It makes changes to three Acts. The bill amends the Electricity Supply Act 1995 to improve the operation of the Energy Security Safeguard, which consists of three schemes: the Energy Savings Scheme, the Peak Demand Reduction Scheme and the Renewable Fuel Scheme. These amendments complete the reforms to align with the policy and design features that the Government committed to in the Energy Security Safeguard position paper. Given the similarities and need for consistency between the safeguard schemes to minimise red tape, the amendments also apply to the Renewable Fuel Scheme, which was legislated after the position paper was published.

The amendments to the cost of audit provisions will improve audit integrity. The amendments enable regulations to be made to allow the scheme regulator and administrator to determine which audit functions it undertakes and which are undertaken by other parties such as auditors; how fees in connection with audit functions should be paid; and the maximum amounts for such fees. The amendments in schedule 4 to the bill will improve the administration of the safeguard schemes in three ways. First, it clarifies when energy savings certificates may be created and allows regulations to be made to extend the period in the Act. Second, it ensures that the Peak Demand Reduction Scheme and Renewable Fuel Scheme certificates can be surrendered in respect of a compliance period, even if the certificate has expired but only if the certificates were active during the compliance period for which they are being surrendered. Third, it allows the scheme administrator to waive or reduce any application fees. This will reduce unnecessary costs for participating businesses.

Schedule 4 to the bill also includes amendments to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989 that will provide greater confidence to long-term energy service agreement operators and network operators that are engaged under the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. These amendments will reduce the risk of a change in law mid-contractual

term, affecting long-term energy service agreements and network infrastructure project revenue determinations made under the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 and the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Regulation 2021. Excluding the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Regulation 2021 from the staged repeal process is consistent with the inclusion of several excluded instruments currently identified in schedule 4 of the Subordinate Legislation Act, such as in respect of the ports assets, electricity network and generator assets transactions. The amendments in this bill are similarly designed to secure critical regulatory certainty for the term of such authorised transactions.

Finally, schedule 4 seeks to amend the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987. Section 35 of the Act reflects the energy administration framework on the enactment of the Act in 1987, which established the department of energy for the sole administrative purpose of managing the affairs of the corporation. The department of energy was abolished on 8 April 1999 by the Public Sector Management (General) Order 1999. Due to the Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Miscellaneous) Order (No 2) 2022, from 1 April 2022 the references to "the department" in section 35 of the Energy and Utilities Administration Act were to be read as references to Treasury, with the effect that all money received by Treasury must be paid into the energy administration account special deposit account.

Further, all amounts required to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with the functions of Treasury under the Act, or any other Act, must be paid out of the energy administration account special deposit account. This amendment to section 35 of the Energy and Utilities Administration Act removes outdated references to "the department" and remedies the current technical breach of the Energy and Utilities Administration Act by Treasury. In summary, the bill makes a range of necessary and important changes to Treasury and energy legislation. The most significant of these reforms is the shared equity scheme. The scheme is just another part of this Government's commitment to secure a brighter future for New South Wales families and key workers by increasing housing affordability and accessibility. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Public Interest Debate*

#### ASSET PRIVATISATION

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:58):** I move:

That this House opposes the further privatisation of New South Wales Government assets.

It gives me great pleasure to move this motion. Here we are today, knocking on the door of \$100 billion of State Government assets that belong to the people of New South Wales being privatised. The number just keeps going up, despite the promise that was made to the people of this State four years ago. The Premier said then, "Will we do any more sell-offs? No. No more sell-offs. If we are going to sell more public assets, we would tell you." Does that sound familiar? If you ask this Government, it is not privatisation.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** What is it?

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** It is asset recycling. In the Government's own words, the *Budget Statement 2014-15* states:

The strategy aims to effectively manage the State's balance sheet by unlocking equity, de-risking the balance sheet, and recycling proceeds into new economic and social infrastructure investment.

It states it will "effectively manage the State's balance sheet"? The most recent budget has an \$11.3 billion deficit. That is triple what this Government forecasted. That is great maths there.

**Ms Anna Watson:** They are not good economic managers.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** They are disgraceful economic managers. They said it will "effectively manage the State's balance sheet". Well, that is going really well for them, is it not? Put that one on record. But they will fix it. What they could do is set up a sham entity.

**Ms Anna Watson:** That's a good idea.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** It is a great idea. Shift some of the expenses across so they can cook the books to make the budget look even better. They cannot call it the Transport Asset Holding Entity because that is already taken. Bugger! What a shame. How about the "Hospital Asset Holding Entity"? Or maybe just the "cover-up entity"? We all know what this Government has done with its sales.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Dodgy, dodgy, dodgy. Dodgy Liberals.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** Absolutely dodgy. They sold the Port of Newcastle for a long-term lease of \$1.75 billion and shackled it with a cap on containers. It was a handbrake on the economy of this State, particularly northern New South Wales. The member for Oxley across the Chamber might even be able to attest that it was a terrible handbrake given that it went through at the National Party conference as a policy statement in support of getting rid of that terrible cap and the penalty. I am sure the National Party will have a lot more to say on that as time goes on. We have seen the catastrophic privatisation of bus services. We all knew what was going to happen there. We did not need an inquiry to tell us what it was going to be like, but we had the inquiry and of course it labelled it a disaster. Anyone in the region who has been subject to the bus privatisation nightmare could have told us that. We only have to look at the schoolchildren left standing by the side of the road because bus stops are closed, not to mention the blowouts in journey times. Elderly people were left isolated and abandoned, and the list goes on.

The Government sold off the buses and a whole list of things, including poles and wires. Labor warned at the time that it would mean electricity prices would cost a lot more, and what did we find out just last week? Companies have been obtaining super profits at the expense of the people. There is the great example of the old Northern Beaches Hospital. We keep bringing that one back. What a pleasure that one is! That privatisation was so disastrous that the committee recommended that the Government never privatise one of its hospitals ever again. But maybe it has been outdone by the Vales Point Power Station. That is the great record of the Liberal-Nationals. It is one of their finest examples. It was sold in November 2015 for the princely sum—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** How much?

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** It was sold for \$1 million and resold in September for \$200 million. What a great financial manager this Government is. We only have to look at the toll roads, NorthConnex, the M7, the Cross City Tunnel, the M2, Lane Cove Tunnel, the M5 or the Eastern Distributor.

**Mr Nathaniel Smith:** How is that light rail?

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** We would not mind being a shareholder in Transurban. The list goes on. Social housing—\$3.1 billion worth of housing has been sold, but we are told that it is to create new stock. They are selling off houses with multiple bedrooms in suburbs where the land value is higher, closer to the shops, public transport and services, only to build little one- and two- bedroom boxes further out from town centres. That is not just selling the asset. That is selling off their social conscience.

**Ms Anna Watson:** They don't have one.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** That is the problem. Tens of billions of dollars are flowing into the Government's coffers and it still cannot resource our hospitals properly. It cannot fully staff a school. It cannot properly maintain the social housing properties that are left. Now this Government will allege that those big infrastructure projects would not happen without the money from its sell-offs. If this is how the Government is funding the projected budget, how will it fund the blowouts? An extra \$6 billion for Metro City and Southwest, Parramatta Light Rail—the list goes on and on. The Government is embarrassing itself now, but it can actually stop it happening. It should take a leaf out of our book. Stop the sell-offs! [*Time expired.*]

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:05):** We know it is Labor conference time when the member for Newcastle sticks his head above the parapet because he is worried about who is coming for his electorate—we know that Nuatali Nelmes would love to be in this place, Crackers. That is the only time we ever hear from him. He comes in here flailing his arms and screaming about hypocrisy and privatisation. He comes in here complaining and thinking about whether or not he actually has any chance of continuing to run as the member for Newcastle. I know it is very challenging for the current member for Newcastle, but I want him to have a little think about the actual facts behind what he said.

In the member for Newcastle's contribution I heard a long shopping list of things and I thought he was talking about Labor—I am not sure what other members thought. He talked about the oppressive number of toll roads and tolls applied to the people of New South Wales. He talked about the Cross City Tunnel—Labor's tolls. He talked about the Lane Cove Tunnel—Labor's tolls. I am sorry, but when Labor has the longest tolling concessions in the history of Australia, those opposite should not tell us that we are the problem. The member for Newcastle talked about potential cost blowouts on infrastructure projects—at least we build infrastructure. Let us look at the Epping to Chatswood rail link, originally the Parramatta rail line—half a rail line, twice the cost. Let us look at the CBD to Rosehill metro. They should not talk about billions being lost; Labor lost half a billion dollars for nothing. The CBD to Rosehill metro bore nothing. Then they complain to us about hospitals—for instance, the Northern Beaches Hospital. I am sorry, but it was John Hatzistergos and Morris Iemma who promised the people of New South Wales a northern beaches hospital. They scrapped that promise. They said within four years in 2006, and they never did it.

**Ms Anna Watson:** What has this got to do with privatisation?

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** The member for Shellharbour should have listened when her colleague was speaking. She does not want me to respond to what was said. So, yes, this Government delivers time and time again. On this side of the House, we deliver the hospitals. We deliver the roads. We deliver public transport. We deliver cycleways, rail, metros, buses, extra bus drivers and electronic buses. We deliver everything that Labor said that it would, but it failed to deliver time and again. We succeed because we know how to manage the books.

When it comes to the question of privatisation, I feel like we have just heard the first policy announcement from the member for Newcastle. His entire first minute was a list of the ways in which he would try to cook the books to make things happen and go about privatising new assets. I am sorry, but this Government does not take advice about economic management from the member for Newcastle. We make our own policies and our own plans. We went to the people of New South Wales with the transaction around the poles and wires. They said yes, and the dividend has been profound in the city, in the bush and in areas that those opposite would never invest in. That is what happens with the Liberals and The Nationals in government: We deliver the outcomes to the people of New South Wales.

Those opposite do not understand. They love spruiking our projects in their communities and in their newsletters. They love going to the new schools and to the new hospitals that we have built. They just cannot accept the fact that we are so much better than them, so they try to spin the truth. But our asset recycling program created a pipeline of more than \$100 billion of that vital infrastructure. How much infrastructure did Labor deliver? It promised 12 rail lines and delivered half of one. We on this side of the House make the tough decisions and manage our finances in order to deliver outcomes. Let us talk about Labor's record. Those opposite claim that they oppose the concept of privatisation, but that is just policy amnesia. When Labor was last in government, it sought to privatise New South Wales electricity generators—the gentrader transactions. The Assistant Speaker would recall that.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for South Coast will come to order.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** The Assistant Speaker would recall Labor proroguing Parliament early in the dead of night to push it through without any transparency to the people of New South Wales.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for South Coast will come to order.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** The member for Shellharbour.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I mean the member for Shellharbour. I am sorry.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** It is thanks to Labor that the people of New South Wales lost \$1.8 billion because of that botched transaction. The Leader of the Opposition wants to pretend he is a warrior against privatisation—and he is often opining on Twitter about these things—but Chris Minns was chief of staff to John Robertson when he privatised Parklea prison. That is right, Chris Minns himself signed off on the privatisation of Parklea prison. Those opposite need to stop with their hypocrisy and leave the job to us. [*Time expired.*]

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I incorrectly called the member for South Coast to order. The member for South Coast was not in the Chamber. I was referring to the member for Shellharbour.

[*Interruption*]

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:11):** To help members on that side of Parliament understand what we are talking about today, I will break it down for them. I will provide budgetary evidence for what I am about to say in just a moment. They all know that I read it and I have a few excerpts here. Those opposite clearly cannot understand the budget so I will put it into simple terms that they might be able to follow. Let us imagine a family that is lucky enough to have an investment property which provides a return, and they make a decision to buy a new sports car. They sell off the next 99 years of income from that investment property to someone and say, "Hey, listen, I need a short-term sugar hit. I've got to get the new sports car. You can take all the money that that makes for the next 99 years, even though it's going to be 100 times what I'm going to charge you today, but if you give me a little bit of money today, I'm going to go out and buy a sports car." Someone says, "That's a great deal. I'll take that. I'll sign the 99-year lease for that."

So that family has a nice new sports car. The moment they buy the new sports car, it starts costing them money—registration, insurance, tyres, depreciation costs, running costs, repairs, the whole lot. But it is in their shed. Good on them. That is fantastic. However, their household income no longer has the revenue from the rental and their family grows. They have more babies—they are like the Perrottets, for example. As their family grows, the cost of fruit, vegetables, bread and milk keep going up. The cost of new jeans and sneakers for the kids keep going up, but they do not have that old reliable income anymore. So what does that family do?

They have to start making cuts to some of the basics in their household. Then the bank manager comes along and says, "I'm a little bit concerned about your finances because, firstly, you haven't got the income you originally had and, secondly, you keep on using your credit card to buy the sneakers, joggers, replacement refrigerator and things like that. I am concerned about your credit rating. Can you explain to me how you are going to maintain this lifestyle without the income you used to have?" They say, "We're going to sell the sports car and buy a motorbike." But the motorbike comes with the same problems. It depreciates and has expenses from the moment they buy it. The value of the thing is going south and costing them more money than ever before. The bank manager comes along again and says, "Listen, I'm unconvinced. Your credit rating is going to disappear." That is exactly what is happening in New South Wales.

Don't worry about the rental property; think of it as our poles and wires, our ports, our Land Titles Office or the retail income from Darling Harbour and Circular Quay. That is what we've sold off: regular, reliable income. What we purchased—whether it is a stadium, a road, a tunnel, trains, trams or whatever—costs money and depreciates, but we do not have the reliable income. We have what some people would call a fiscal gap. It is not just me saying there is a fiscal gap. I refer to pages E-1 to E-3 of the Government's *Budget Paper No. 1*. The Treasury—and your own Treasurer, who signed off on it—is concerned about the fiscal gap as well. The Treasurer can see that the money coming in is not keeping up with the increase in expenses and costs. Standard & Poor's has taken away one of the As from our triple-A credit rating. The other two financial agencies are equally concerned about our triple-A credit rating.

When those opposite arrived in government the borrowings of this State were \$20 billion. Today that amount is \$180 billion. That is a 900 per cent increase. Who is going to pay it off? Will any Government members be around for the next 99 years to pay off that debt? No. They have shifted the debt onto their kids and their grandkids. Meanwhile they are saying to our key workers—our teachers, our nurses—"We no longer have the reliable, regular income so we can't afford to do that." That is what privatisation is. I encourage those opposite to read the budget papers because the story is all there.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:16):** I agree with member for Cessnock that the story is all in the budget—when we add the asset side of the balance sheet. The member for Cessnock would do his constituents more of a service if he was not as patronising about them selling an asset for a sports car. I think the constituents of Cessnock are far too sensible to do anything so stupid as to sell infrastructure or an investment property for a simple sports car. I add that in 2010 it was his lot that gave a 40-year licence for NSW Lotteries to Tatts Group for almost \$1 billion.

Members must be honest in conversations with their communities about why we are doing this. The Government has recycled assets not to buy a sports car but to build schools and hospitals, or put in a dual carriageway of the Pacific Highway that is saving 53 lives every year. We have now turned to the Princes Highway and the Great Western Highway to do similar work. We are recycling our assets and, at the same time, creating economic growth, jobs and opportunities. Some would say we are doing too good a job of that because infrastructure costs have increased and because of the challenges sourcing engineers and so on. But we are working through those positive challenges as we build the infrastructure for New South Wales.

Our sale of Snowy Hydro to the Federal Government delivered \$4.2 billion to New South Wales and our regional communities. Those funds have allowed us to build schools in the Snowy, to build infrastructure, to fix public toilets in our communities and to put female changing stations in our sporting grounds. If the member thinks that is a bad idea, I suggest he goes to the people of Cessnock to criticise it. No, he is just creating a conversation around the idea that people are stupid enough to sell an investment property to buy a sports car. People are not that silly.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for Cessnock will come to order.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Our Government is being very responsible in recycling assets and creating a record spend in infrastructure across New South Wales. It has built WestConnex, a project that members opposite did not support. I do not know whether they supported the Lane Cove Tunnel. I do not know whether they supported the Cross City Tunnel; not many people did because the traffic projections on that project were just appalling. But thanks to the WestConnex we now have a super fund for projects throughout western Sydney. I cannot see Labor councils criticising any of those projects. Those actions have been positive. In June 2011 New South Wales net assets were \$163 billion, or \$22,000 per capita. In June 2022, only 11 years on, we have grown those assets to \$250 billion, or \$30,000 per capita, which is working towards making the lives of the citizens of this State better.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** That's your lesson, Clayton.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** If you don't understand what it actually means, don't bother.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We do understand, Clayton.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** You don't. Those assets are both on the books and off the books.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for Cessnock will come to order.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We do understand that recycling assets ensures that we have built infrastructure that has created better, safer and more modern hospitals; better schools; better roads; and better public transport across New South Wales. These are the things that we can do. It is not as if those opposite did not do it when they were in government; they just did not do it well enough.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Not as much.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The member for Swansea says that because she talks with two tongues, two mouths, and is not honest. Members opposite did it. Labor did it federally with Qantas and Telstra. Labor did it in New South Wales with Lotto, the Cross City Tunnel and the Lane Cove Tunnel.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Gentraders?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for that point. Gentraders—what a joy that was! It was not a joy for the taxpayers but it was for a certain amount of Labor Party Cabinet Ministers. In the dark of the night they did the gentrader transition and we lost \$1.85 billion. That is how those opposite do privatisation. That is how they recycle assets: They lose \$1.85 billion. Well done, Labor. Let us keep going, Liberals and Nationals. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:21):** I support the motion of the member for Newcastle. We have seen our assets sold off, resulting in increased pressure on the cost of living. Cost of living is the one thing that this Government wants to get down, yet it is the one thing it has perpetuated while robbing the people of New South Wales of valuable public assets. I start with the privatisation of the Newcastle transport network and the disgraceful repercussions that has had for communities across the Hunter. What we got from that privatisation was poorer services, longer travel times and people left without any transport whatsoever. It is an abject failure and one that this Government should be ashamed of.

I note other instances of privatisation throughout the State. In his contribution the member for Newcastle mentioned the sale of Vales Point Power Station. In 2015 it was sold for \$1 million. What a sweet deal that was, let me tell you! Of course, members know from media reports that recently it was sold for more than \$200 million. Anybody who says that is a good deal needs their head read, quite frankly. The sale of that site caused much anxiety throughout the community. It puts both jobs and the community at risk, not to mention that we could be looking down the barrel of further price hikes when it comes to the delivery of power.

That brings me to the poles and wires this Government sold off. Data released by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis confirms that power prices have gone up since privatisation. That is confirmed. Do not try to get out of it. We were told that we would receive a \$130 reduction in bills, but that simply has not occurred and it will not occur. Between 2014 and 2021 energy networks collected 67 per cent in profits from those privatised electricity networks. That means every single household in New South Wales is paying \$100 more for their electricity. The Government got a bit shaky on a couple, and we all remember those. What about when it tried to sell off our 11 sport and rec camps? That was a great idea. But the five public hospitals was my favourite. That included Wyong.

**Ms Anna Watson:** And Shellharbour.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** And Shellharbour, of course. It was only through committed community campaigns that we could save those very valuable assets in our local communities. I applaud every member who came into this Parliament. It is not just about the community. We should also reflect on the comments about privatisation that were made by the then chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Rod Sims. For those who do not recall, Mr Sims delivered a keynote speech to the Melbourne Economic Forum in which he said that price gouging by inadequately regulated monopolies before or after privatisation aimed at buffering the sale price for cash-strapped governments—like this one—is the common thread that has led to his losing patience with governments' privatisation agendas. He is a pretty respectable man, and one whom I certainly respect.

He went on to say that price gouging, in which private organisations increase the prices of services, is turning him against privatisation after a professional lifetime of being a strong advocate for the efficiency-boosting powers of private ownership. Mr Sims went on to talk about the excellent example—which the member for Newcastle pointed out—and that is the Government's sale of the 99-year lease at the Port of Newcastle. The Government not only sold it for \$1.75 billion to Hastings Funds Management and China Merchants Group but

also put a deed in place to keep the port uncompetitive. I have a long list of all the privatisations that have been implemented by the Government since 2011. They include Eraring Power Station, Shoalhaven Hydro, Delta Electricity, Mount Piper, Wallerawang, an Ausgrid building in Sydney, Green State Power and Macquarie Generation. The Government has flogged off many properties at Millers Point. It sold off 13.5— [*Time expired.*]

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:27):** I did not know it was comedy night in the bearpit with the powerful Hunter-Newcastle Labor faction, which is on the outer with the leadership team. They have been given a go today—isn't that wonderful? But what a pathetic go it has been. We want to talk about asset recycling, which is fundamental to the strength of the New South Wales economy. It delivers projects that are essential to make a brighter future for the people of New South Wales. Only the Coalition Government's leadership can deliver the responsible fiscal management necessary for asset recycling in the State. Critical infrastructure projects deliver benefits across the State, whether it is roads, bridges or hospitals. Look at the hospitals we have built. Campbelltown Hospital was worth \$632 million and the Bowral and District Hospital was worth \$128 million, and there are many more.

Those projects require a significant economic commitment and only the Coalition has the economic management and skill to ensure they are managed in a fiscally responsible way. The Government's rigorous and sophisticated assessments allow the Government to unlock capital that would otherwise be tied up in assets or businesses. That capital contributes to the strength of our economy. Through the NSW Generations Fund, capital from assets is invested to ensure a competitive return for taxpayers, a sustainable debt position over the medium term and to guarantee long-term investment in world-class infrastructure. The Government's strong record on economic management has brought forward the delivery of vital community infrastructure that the people of New South Wales have never seen before. They did not see any under the 16 years of neglect from those opposite.

Let us look at the WestConnex transaction, which is a great demonstration of successful asset recycling. Only the Liberals and Nationals could have achieved that. The sale of WestConnex generated \$20.4 billion for the people of New South Wales, of which 51 per cent has been invested in the M4-M5 motorway link and other infrastructure to better the lives of people in New South Wales. The remaining 49 per cent, or \$10.3 billion, has been invested in the NSW Generations Fund, ensuring debt retirement now and into the future. Thanks to the successful WestConnex transaction, the Liberals and Nationals have been able to deliver \$5 billion into the WestInvest program.

Labor mayors, especially the Mayor of Bankstown—who has been a very popular figure in this House over the past few weeks—have been parading about, saying how wonderful WestConnex is. The Mayor of Blacktown has received other investments to improve Blacktown and surrounding areas. We are investing in western Sydney, which the Opposition did not do when it was in government. The \$5 billion WestInvest program will fund infrastructure projects to support livability and community amenity in western Sydney in the following areas: quality green and open spaces, community infrastructure, school modernisation, arts and cultural facilities, high street activation and local traffic programs. The WestInvest program was opposed by Labor, but its mayors do not—they love it. The Liberals and Nationals have invested in the people of western Sydney, while Labor did sweet bugger-all.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for Blacktown will come to order.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** Let us look at Labor's record. It has run a concerted effort to deceive and mislead the voters of New South Wales. Spooky Mookhey and Miserable Minns are running a scare campaign about privatisation and they have lied about their own record. They lied to the people of New South Wales about the impact of the sale of poles and wires. They claim it led to wholesale price increases, but they do not understand that poles and wires are about network costs. In fact, the former Leader of the Opposition was the architect behind overturning the Labor Party's ban on privatisation. The Leader of the Opposition formulates his economic policy in 140 characters or less by claiming that "privatisation doesn't work". What he means to say is, "I don't know how privatisation works."

When the Leader of the Opposition was a chief of staff, Labor signed off on the disastrous Parklea prison privatisation. I remind members opposite that the former Labor Government botched the gentrader privatisation. Asset recycling has delivered roads. In my own area Labor sold the Southern Highlands line for \$1. It put freight before passengers. Labor members did not care about the people of the Southern Highlands. Bob Carr engaged in class warfare when he said, "I don't want to get a train from Bowral to come to Sydney." Labor did not care. Asset recycling has delivered roads, rail, schools and hospitals years ahead of time thanks to outstanding economic management by the Liberals and Nationals. We are making New South Wales great again.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (17:32):** In reply: I thank the member for North Shore, the member for Cessnock, the member for Oxley, the member for Swansea and the member for Wollondilly for their contributions. The member for North Shore got very mixed up with the topic. She was very concerned about the

teals taking her seat in this place. Instead of focusing on the topic, she tried to coach not only Labor but also the Assistant Speaker. She was very confused. She forgot that her Government has been in power for 12 very long years when she tried to hark back to the years before. The member for Cessnock gave us a very sound sports car-motorbike analogy to make it very simple for those across the Chamber, who have real trouble grasping basic budget issues. Government members have trouble taking responsibility for their mass privatisation agenda. He exposed their \$180 billion debt, and boy did they get uncomfortable.

Unfortunately the member for Oxley did not quite understand the sports car analogy but, despite that, she became caught up in using the sports car—the spoils of all that privatisation. She got into Federal Government grants and ignored the Northern Beaches Hospital debacle. The member for Swansea highlighted the rising cost of living, the Newcastle bus service disaster and the absolute debacle at Vales Point Power Station, including the rising cost of power prices which has come as a result. She made some very good points when she quoted the former chairman of the ACCC, who has turned against privatisation, on price gouging. I welcome the comments from the former chairman of the ACCC, who was absolutely horrified by the privatisation of the Port of Newcastle and has taken NSW Ports to court over it.

It is unbelievable that this Government—a Liberal Government—would set up such an anti-competitive deed of agreement. The member for Wollondilly rightly recognised that Team Hunter is the true force in this Parliament. He got very stuck looking back over the years. He did not seem to acknowledge the huge debts that his Government has created through selling off the cash cows for the quick, quick, sugar hits. That is all he likes—the quick sugar hits to try to give this Government a little bit of something. He lowered himself by calling us names—a true sign of someone struggling to win an argument. This is the worst record we will ever see. Not since the criminal government of Bob Askin have the people of New South Wales seen such systemic and widespread abuse of public office. Shame on you all!

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....40  
Noes .....42  
Majority.....2

**AYES**

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

**NOES**

Ayres, S	Hancock, S	Provest, G
Clancy, J	Hazzard, B	Roberts, A
Conolly, K	Henskens, A	Saunders, D
Cooke, S	James, T	Sidgreaves, P
Coure, M	Kean, M	Singh, G (teller)
Crouch, A	Layzell, D	Smith, N (teller)
Davies, T	Lindsay, W	Speakman, M
Dominello, V	Marshall, A	Stokes, R
Elliott, D	McGirr, J	Taylor, M
Evans, L	O'Dea, J	Toole, P
Gibbons, M	Overall, N	Tuckerman, W
Greenwich, A	Pavey, M	Williams, L

	NOES	
Griffin, J	Petinos, E	Williams, R
Gulaptis, C	Preston, R	Wilson, F

	PAIRS	
Atalla, E		Lee, G
Dib, J		Anderson, K
Holland, M		Bromhead, S

**Motion negatived.**

*Bills*

**ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING ENFORCEMENT BILL 2022**

**First Reading**

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

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (17:46):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Electronic Conveyancing Enforcement Bill 2022, which I will refer to as the ECNL bill. The bill provides important powers that will allow the New South Wales Registrar General to properly regulate the flourishing electronic conveyancing ecosystem. The bill will implement New South Wales specific enforcement powers that will operate alongside the national eConveyancing regime so that land transactions completed in New South Wales are as secure and seamless as the people of New South Wales expect them to be. eConveyancing has been a national success story. Since 2010 all Australian States and Territories have worked together to develop a national system that allows land transactions to be settled and lodged for registration in a secure, digital environment.

The efficiency of the system brings cost and time savings for users. The national consistency of the reform provides additional benefits for the wider Australian economy, reducing red tape for those businesses that operate across borders. New South Wales has been a consistent champion of the national reform and is the host State for the Electronic Conveyancing National Law [ECNL]. In May—as members will remember—the Government brought legislation before this House to amend the national law. That bill heralded a new phase in the electronic conveyancing marketplace, allowing interoperability between the ELNOs, which are the Electronic Lodgment Network operators.

As electronic conveyancing and the regulation around it have progressed and matured, it has become obvious that there is one key component missing—a fit-for-purpose enforcement regime. At a national level, the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council, known as ARNECC, is developing a comprehensive enforcement package that will apply to ELNOs and the subscribers who use that system. However, implementing a national regime is difficult, with each jurisdiction having different requirements around things like judicial process and the manner of imposing or collecting fines. Resolving these differences nationally takes time—but the longer it takes, the longer New South Wales is left without appropriate enforcement powers. New South Wales cannot sit idly by in the interim. We must give the New South Wales Registrar General real enforcement powers to protect the people of our great State right now.

The existing enforcement powers are totally inadequate to regulate the sophisticated electronic conveyancing system that we have in New South Wales. Currently, the only power that the Registrar General has to prosecute any bad behaviour of an ELNO is to revoke or suspend the ELNO's approval to operate. This is a last-resort power with limited application. In the New South Wales context, where all land dealings must be lodged electronically, a range of more nuanced powers is needed. With the total value of property recorded in the New South Wales Torrens Title Register being more than \$1.8 trillion, compliance with and enforcement of eConveyancing obligations are critical to the New South Wales economy. This bill is about responsible and proactive regulation. To promote compliance with the legislative framework, the Registrar General needs appropriate enforcement powers and tools. New South Wales cannot wait for breaches to occur before introducing a stronger enforcement regime.

For these reasons, New South Wales proposes to introduce a standalone enforcement regime for the protection of New South Wales conveyancing transactions until an agreed national enforcement regime is in place. The passage of the bill will not lessen the Government's commitment to national consistency or slow the progress of further amendments to the Electronic Conveyancing National Law. In fact, the New South Wales eConveyancing enforcement regime will run parallel to the developing national regime and has been designed to minimise impact on national consistency in the following ways. First, the New South Wales regime is intended to operate on an interim basis until a suitable national regime comes into effect. This will minimise any inconsistency or overlap between the New South Wales and national regimes. Secondly, the New South Wales regime is a targeted, pared-back version of the national enforcement proposal, designed to ensure regulatory consistency and minimal disruption when New South Wales transitions to the national regime.

New South Wales continues to be an active contributor to the national regime through ARNECC. Some stakeholders have asked why subscribers, such as law firms, conveyancing practices and financial institutions, are not addressed in this bill. It is not only ELNOs that are subject to the requirements of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law. Subscribers also have obligations, and appropriate enforcement tools to manage subscriber compliance are also important. However, the New South Wales Registrar General is utilising an existing effective compliance process for subscribers. This process will continue until it can be enhanced by the enforcement reforms at a national level.

The enforcement options currently used by the New South Wales Registrar General for subscribers include: first, a well-developed subscriber compliance program that is consistent with the national approach developed through ARNECC; secondly, informal mechanisms, including subscriber guidelines and education, to support and encourage subscriber compliance; and, thirdly, for sufficiently serious noncompliance, a subscriber's access to electronic conveyancing services can be suspended or terminated, which is an appropriate and necessary response that helps to ensure the security and integrity of the conveyancing process. A subscriber's access to an electronic lodgement network can be suspended or terminated and, if appropriate, reinstated without significant disruption to the electronic conveyancing system. While subscriber enforcement will be enhanced through the national regime, it is currently achieving satisfactory regulatory outcomes.

This is not the same story for ELNOs. With only one incumbent ELNO enjoying a monopoly market share while a second ELNO emerges, the regulator cannot suspend or terminate an ELNO's approval to operate for noncompliance. This would have significant and widespread consequences for all property transactions across New South Wales. The proposed New South Wales regime will allow the Registrar General to ensure compliance with the legislative framework without the significant disruption that would be caused by suspending or terminating an ELNO's approval to operate. There have been calls for stronger enforcement powers for some time. In December 2019 Dench McClean Carlson undertook a review of the Intergovernmental Agreement for an Electronic Conveyancing National Law and recommended that an enforcement regime be developed that included penalties rather than only the existing suspension or termination in the case of a breach.

It acknowledged that the current sanctions of suspension and termination were clearly not useful where electronic conveyancing is mandated, being highly disruptive to both the Government and to the wider industry. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] has consistently expressed support for a stronger eConveyancing enforcement regime, recommending a robust compliance and enforcement framework for a monopolised market. As we move to more competition in the electronic conveyancing market, the ACCC has emphasised that an effective enforcement regime will be critical—I repeat "critical"—to stakeholders' overall confidence in the regime and their willingness to participate in an interoperable eConveyancing market. In response to these calls, in April 2021 ARNECC published a position paper that proposed additional enforcement powers for registrars, including enforceable undertakings, binding directions, financial penalties and stronger investigative powers.

Key stakeholders all expressed in-principle support for the proposal. The revamped enforcement provisions were to have been included with other amendments that were also being proposed for the national law. But last year, with the support of most stakeholders, the enforcement proposals were decoupled from the Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Amendment Bill 2022. This was done to allow for further development of the national enforcement framework but without delaying the earlier bill, which was vital to ensuring delivery of a major market reform that has mandated a requirement for all ELNOs to interoperate. The decoupling of the reforms was supported by stakeholders as a pragmatic way of achieving the needed major reforms to the electronic conveyancing environment, with the understanding that further amendments would be made to provide the enforcement powers that are also so critical.

As I mentioned earlier, ARNECC is continuing to finalise details of the anticipated national response. In July 2022 the New South Wales Office of the Registrar General notified stakeholders of the proposal to put in place interim enforcement powers for New South Wales, pending implementation of the anticipated national

enforcement reform. An outline of the proposal was provided to the ELNOs—Property Exchange Australia Ltd and Sympli Australia Pty Ltd—the ACCC, the Law Council of Australia, the Law Society of New South Wales, the Australian Institute of Conveyancers and the Australian Banking Association.

Submissions on the proposal were received and considered. I thank all stakeholders for their valuable feedback, which has assisted the development of this important regime, and for their support of New South Wales' approach. Stakeholder feedback incorporated into the bill includes: more detail in the issuing of remedial directions to ensure procedural fairness, for example, a requirement that before issuing a direction the Registrar General must give a written notice to an ELNO within 14 days and consider any submissions from the ELNO within that time; and that appropriate decisions of the Registrar General be subject to the Supreme Court appeal process under section 28 of the ECNL.

I now turn to the detail of the bill, the intent behind its provisions and the reason for the chosen legislative framework. The New South Wales enforcement power will be implemented through a standalone Act of Parliament, separate from the Electronic Conveyancing National Law. There will be no change to the law of other States and Territories and no impact on the national eConveyancing system or the future national eConveyancing enforcement regime. The bill introduces three tailored enforcement mechanisms: enforceable undertakings that can be offered by an ELNO to the registrar; remedial directions that can be given by the registrar to an ELNO; and civil penalties for a contravention of an enforcement provision. Those enforcement measures are widely used by regulators of national industries such as telecommunications, or for competition and consumer protection, areas that bear similarities with the emerging ELNO market.

In relation to enforceable undertakings, sections 5 to 9 allow the Registrar General to accept a written undertaking given by an ELNO to forestall other enforcement action in relation to a contravention of the ECNL, the operating requirements determined under the ECNL or a condition of approval of the ELNO under the ECNL. Enforceable undertakings are intended to provide a flexible, adaptive remedy that focuses on practical steps to resolve the root cause of any noncompliance while also allowing the ELNO in breach to continue to operate. Undertakings will enable ELNOs to propose remedial actions that are practical and commercially feasible. While the acceptance of an undertaking is at the discretion of the registrar, the terms of the undertaking are negotiated, with the ELNO being able to vary or withdraw the undertaking at any time with the registrar's written agreement and the registrar being able to withdraw their acceptance at any time with the ELNO's written agreement. That allows the parties to reach a commercially agreed position, but ELNOs are also kept accountable.

If an ELNO contravenes an enforceable undertaking, the registrar may apply to the Supreme Court for an appropriate order to comply with the undertaking, discharge or vary the undertaking, and any costs orders. The registrar cannot issue a remedial direction or commence proceedings to recover a civil penalty in relation to a contravention that is addressed by an enforceable undertaking, either in force or which has been fully discharged by the ELNO. Furthermore, if the registrar accepts an enforceable undertaking, the registrar must take reasonable steps to discontinue any civil penalty proceedings in relation to a contravention addressed by the undertaking. These provisions provide a level of assurance to ELNOs that, when they enter into an enforceable undertaking and comply with its terms, they will not be subject to separate enforcement action for the same contravention.

In relation to remedial directions, clauses 10 to 15 authorise the Registrar General to issue a remedial direction to an ELNO if the registrar reasonably believes that the ELNO has contravened or is contravening a requirement imposed by the ECNL. For procedural fairness, the Registrar General must give the ELNO 14 days' written notice of the registrar's intention to issue the direction, and must give the ELNO the opportunity to make submissions within that period. In emergency circumstances, the Registrar General may issue an interim remedial direction that is not subject to the 14-day notice period. This is to address urgent matters where the security or integrity of the eConveyancing system is at risk. Given the potential impact on ELNOs, interim remedial directions are subject to the additional safeguard that they can only operate for a period of 21 days before they must be superseded by an ongoing remedial direction, or otherwise lapse.

Another key safeguard is that a decision of the registrar to give a remedial direction can be appealed to the Supreme Court in accordance with the appeal process at part 3 division 4 of the ECNL. A requirement of a remedial direction is an enforcement provision. Therefore, if an ELNO fails to comply with a direction, the Registrar General may institute proceedings to recover a civil penalty. In relation to civil penalties, clauses 16 to 18 allow the Registrar General to apply to the Supreme Court for an enforcement order requiring an ELNO to pay to the State an amount not exceeding a specified maximum if the ELNO contravenes the following enforcement provisions: the requirement of section 18A of the ECNL to establish and maintain interoperability between electronic lodgement networks, the maximum penalty being \$1.65 million plus \$44,000 for each day the contravention continues; the requirement of section 34 of the ECNL to cooperate with a compliance examination, the maximum penalty being \$110,000; and the requirement to comply with a remedial direction, the maximum penalty being \$1.65 million.

In setting penalty amounts the penalty must be sufficient to operate as an effective deterrent for noncompliance. The penalty must be high enough to outweigh any commercial benefit that the ELNO might obtain from engaging in noncompliant conduct. ELNOs are sophisticated and well-resourced commercial entities. In relation to interoperability, the penalty must be high enough to overcome the potential commercial benefit that PEXA—Property Exchange Australia—could obtain from maintaining a de facto monopoly of the electronic conveyancing market. A failure by an ELNO to establish interoperability could have significant consequences for the industry and New South Wales citizens, including a lack of competition and related benefits such as competitive pricing and choice of services for consumers.

The maximum amounts in the bill are relatively modest in comparison to civil penalty amounts applicable to obligations imposed by other regulated industries, such as the competition, telecommunications and energy industries. The risk that a regulated entity may treat a civil penalty as a "cost of doing business" was identified by the ACCC in 2018 when penalty amounts were substantially increased for breaches of the Australian Consumer Law. In January 2021 the Australian Energy Regulator increased penalty amounts for breaches of the national energy laws to provide a greater incentive for businesses to comply with laws to protect consumers. I also note recent proposal of the Federal Labor Government to increase maximum penalties for breaches of both competition and consumer laws fivefold for corporations—the greater of \$50 million, 30 per cent of adjusted Australian turnover, or three times the value of the benefits gained from the breach. I fully support the Federal Labor Government in this direction.

The Registrar General must commence enforcement proceedings within two years of becoming aware of a contravention. This promotes efficient exercise of enforcement powers and provides a level of certainty to ELNOs about time frames for enforcement proceedings. As I mentioned earlier, it is the Supreme Court, not the Registrar General, that determines the penalty amount required to be paid under an enforcement order up to the maximum provided by the bill. The bill also sets out criteria that the court must consider in determining the amount to be paid under an enforcement order, including the nature and extent of the contravention, as well as any resulting loss or damage suffered, including by third parties; the circumstances in which the contravention took place; and the amount necessary to deter the ELNO from engaging in the contravening conduct in the future.

Those factors are centred on the key purpose of the bill: upholding the security and integrity of the New South Wales land titles system and deterring contraventions of the Electronic Conveyancing National Law to provide for seamless electronic conveyancing transactions. The introduction of the bill represents responsible regulation by this State. It is vital that, as the eConveyancing system and market evolves, the regulatory tools remain current and fit for purpose. The bill keeps ELNOs, on which the eConveyancing system relies, accountable and provides confidence to the industry and wider New South Wales public in this significant part of our economy. While New South Wales supports the introduction of a national enforcement regime for eConveyancing, New South Wales recognises the immediate need for a robust regulatory framework to deliver a secure and efficient electronic conveyancing market for the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

### **Debate adjourned.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **TRIBUTE TO MARCO BRANDLI**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:04):** The Coffs Coast is mourning a much-loved and respected member of our community, Marco Brandli, who passed away peacefully at his home in Coffs Harbour on 1 October 2022. He was 92 years old. Marco was the devoted husband of Johanna; father of Hanna, Marco, Isabella and Roland; loving grandfather of Alice, Rohan, Emma and Ben; and proud great-grandfather of Natalie, Maddison, Grace, Miro, Opal and Billy. Marco was a life member of the Coffs Harbour Cycle Club and a well-known local thespian and choir member, not to mention a long-established litter collector. He was a friend to many and will always be remembered for his warmth, kindness and generosity, for being a true gentleman, and for his passion for cycling. I first met Marco over a decade ago through the Coffs Harbour Cycle Club, and I remember his warmth and friendliness to me at that time. To quote from his death notice, Marco is "now riding in the Tour de Universe". Rest in peace.

#### **ILLAWARRA CONVOY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:05):** On behalf of all residents of the Shellharbour electorate, I thank the Illawarra Community Foundation for working tirelessly to organise the Illawarra 2022 Convoy. Back in 2005, Convoy creator Mr Marty Haynes had a goal of raising \$20,000 for kids and their families who were living with cancer. Just 17 years later, Convoy is now the Illawarra's most amazing charitable event and has raised more than \$20 million for charity. The next Illawarra Convoy will be held on Sunday 20 November 2022. I encourage everyone from the Illawarra and surrounds to get out there and show their support. I thank all of the

participants, volunteers and supporters for their hard work in raising money for various charities that support people in need across the Illawarra.

#### **MARIA KOVACIC AND JACQUI MUNRO**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:06):** I congratulate two of our great women Liberal leaders: Maria Kovacic, who was recently elected as President of the NSW Liberal Party, and Jacqui Munro, who was elected as President of the Liberal Women's Council. Maria is an accomplished managing director and business owner, with over 20 years of experience across the commercial, public and not-for-profit sectors. She founded and ran her own financial services business in western Sydney for over 16 years and has served on several boards and committees across the western Sydney community. A founder of Western Sydney Women, she was also elected president of both the State and Federal Liberal conference. She brings a wealth of experience to the role, and I wish her every success.

I also congratulate Jacqui Munro, who was elected as the NSW Liberal Women's Council president. Jacqui is following in my footsteps, as I was president of the women's council years ago. She has a background in media relations and public policy and research. She has been a candidate for our party for the Federal seat of Sydney. She worked on a national level as part of the media team for the Australian Marriage Equality campaign. I wish Jacqui and her entire team of the women's council executive all the best in the new roles. I know she will bring a vibrant attitude and passion to working with the women's council for the betterment of women in the Liberal Party.

#### **TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY PANKHURST**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:07):** Shirley Pankhurst passed away on 19 September 2022 at 91 years old. Known for her intelligent, inquisitive, persistent and loving nature, she will be missed by her family and the Wee Waa community. She was dedicated to her family, including a loving marriage to Dudley and raising their three children. Shirley's contribution to hockey as an A-grade player, A-grade coach, A-grade national umpire, State selector, and life member and high office holder in Newcastle and New South Wales women's hockey showed her love and dedication to the sport.

Shirley moved to Wee Waa in 1985 and was an active volunteer, holding positions with the Historical Museum Society and Community Care Committee among others. Up until recently she was still volunteering one or two days a week. Shirley received the 2010-11 Lions Senior Citizen of the Year Award, the 2016 Narrabri Citizen of the Year Award and the 2020 Narrabri District Hidden Treasure Award. Shirley also received the Ann Williams Clark Medallion from Garden Clubs Australia for her outstanding service and commitment to the Wee Waa and District Garden Club over many years. I thank Shirley Pankhurst for her dedication and commitment to her community.

#### **HENRY LAWSON INTERMENT 100TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:08):** I thank the Friends of Waverley Cemetery for organising a beautiful event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Henry Lawson's interment. It was an incredible event to celebrate and reflect on the life of one of Australia's greatest writers. The beloved bush poet who mastered the art of the short story was laid to rest in Waverley Cemetery after becoming the first Australian writer to be granted a State funeral. I am so lucky to have such incredible heritage and history in my backyard, and the Friends of Waverley Cemetery do an amazing job preserving this heritage and educating the community about this amazing history. I commend them for the amazing work they have done. I urge all my colleagues and everyone in the community, if you have not already done so, to book a tour of this amazing cemetery with the Friends of Waverley Cemetery to discover this history and heritage for yourself.

#### **DAME MARIE BASHIR PEACE AWARD WINNER**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:09):** Ameira, a year 12 student from Elderslie High School, has won the esteemed Highly Commended Certificate in the Dame Marie Bashir Peace Awards. That is a remarkable achievement. To be considered for the certificate in the Dame Marie Bashir Peace Awards, high school principals nominate a single female student from years 10 to 12. The criterion for the nomination is for students who have displayed leadership in fostering harmonious relationships and peace. They are the kind of values and principles that must be championed and encouraged. I am proud to congratulate Ameira on such a wonderful achievement. I wish her the best in completing her future studies and hope she continues to champion those fundamental values and principles.

#### **ELM ST EARLY LEARNING**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:10):** I congratulate Elm St Early Learning on 40 years of providing exceptional early childhood care and education in the Burwood local government area. Elm St is one of only two not-for-profit early childhood centres in Burwood and is managed by a cooperative of parents. The fortieth

anniversary celebrations were a wonderful display of community. I had the honour of formally opening Elm St's bush tucker garden, which promises to provide enrichment for generations of young people. I met parents who attended Elm St as children and who are now sending their kids. That highlights the deep and continuing relationships of the Elm St community. Centre director Mildred Rasool and management board member Rebecca Ritchie, as well as all parents managing Elm St, should be proud of running an institution that has become a pillar of the local community. I congratulate Elm St on its first 40 years.

#### **COOLAMON LIONS CLUB**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (18:10):** I extend a huge congratulations to three members of the Coolamon Lions Club who were awarded service chevrons for their continued and dedicated service to their local club. Coolamon Lions Club recently had the privilege of hosting the first vice-district governor Geoff Freudenstein and zone chairman John Welsh, who presented the three local members with their awards. Lion Graham Dennis was awarded his medal for 40 years of service to the club. Lion Geoff Glass was awarded a service chevron for his 25 years of service, and Lion David McCann was awarded an award for 20 years of service. I congratulate Geoff, Graham and David on their ongoing commitment to the Coolamon Lions Club. Their support and volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated, and I am sure their local club and community are so incredibly grateful for the countless hours and involvement they contribute.

#### **HUNTER VOLUNTEER AWARDS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:11):** Volunteers power our communities. They keep our communities strong, healthy and connected, and they are everywhere. Recently I have worked with volunteers in aged care, the arts and our hospital; on our beaches and in the bush; helping those facing homelessness; and in our schools, sports clubs, service clubs and emergency services. At the recent Hunter region NSW Volunteer Awards I was delighted to recognise some of our local volunteers, including Paul Coggan from Tomaree Sports Council; Julie Hallam from Medowie Girl Guides; Davina Pye from Disaster Relief Australia; Brenda Simmonds with Australian Dysphonia Network; Alysha Springett, who volunteers with Port Stephens SES; Evie Baas from Medowie Girl Guides; Abby Keeley from Medowie Girl Guides; and Mary O'Brien, who is also with Girl Guides.

I congratulate everyone nominated and those who took out the Hunter's top gongs, including Hayley Johns, who was Hunter Young Volunteer of the Year; and Nick Newton, who was Hunter Senior Volunteer of the Year. The Hunter Volunteer Team of the Year was Survivors R Us Incorporated, and Salwa Salwa was the Hunter Adult and Overall Volunteer of the Year. I thank The Centre for Volunteering for supporting and recognising the important work of volunteers right across New South Wales.

#### **FOOTBALL PLAYER DALE GRAHAM**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:12):** I acknowledge the incredible Dale Graham of Sutherland who won Sutherland Shire Football Association's Merit Award for his involvement with the Georges River Football Club. Dale joined the Georges River Football Club in 1980 with their under-7s team and celebrated 43 years as a player in 2022, having played on many premiership winning teams as well as a State Cup winning team in 1990. Throughout his time at the club, he has served on the Executive including as president since 2016, and as a coach and a manager. Throughout his time with the Georges River Football Club, Dale has introduced a number of initiatives including the Tiger Cub nursery academy, in-house senior presentation nights, under-6 Mini Roo Sundays, club upgrades, and free members events, and has hosted a number of charity nights for members who have found themselves battling life threatening illnesses. Dale truly embodies what it is to wear the black and gold. I congratulate Dale Graham on receiving this recognition and wish him every success for the future.

#### **FAIRER ROAD RULE CAMPAIGNER BEAU JACKSON**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:13):** I offer a huge congratulations to local legend Beau Jackson from the Central Coast. For the past two years Beau has been a single Coastie on the back of a motorbike with an A3 sheet of paper warning drivers about upcoming hidden speed cameras ripping off hardworking commuters. Beau has grown his small operation into an army of dedicated volunteers who joined his Facebook group and volunteered to notify other motorists by putting up their own signs on the back of their vehicles. He appeared on Channel 7, Channel 9 and in newspapers, spruiking his cause for fairer road rules. I congratulate Beau on his fantastic campaign, a fantastic example of civic action and activism. This week the Perrottet Government finally gave up its plans after fining \$45 million from motorists in New South Wales and announced it would put the signs back. The group only recently invested in recreating the previous signs the Government dumped two years ago. Perhaps the Perrottet Government could buy those signs to put up near its speed cameras from 1 January.

### STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (18:14):** I recognise the fantastic work of the NSW SES and its dedicated volunteers as we face our third La Niña weather event in a row. NSW SES volunteers from across the Monaro have been deployed to assist in flood-affected parts of the State. As the member for Monaro, I could not be prouder of the contribution that they have made to the wider New South Wales community, now and in the recent past and into the future. Our NSW SES volunteers drop everything to answer the call of the community. They put their lives in danger to rescue those trapped by rising floodwaters and they do it without need for reward. Their efforts must be recognised. I personally thank my local units of Queanbeyan, Sutton, Captains Flat, Bungendore, Braidwood, Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River and Bombala. On behalf of our entire electorate, I thank them for everything they do and continue to do.

### OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL ANNUAL FESTIVAL

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:15):** The Our Lady of Mount Carmel Festival Committee hosted the sixty-second annual festival with a celebration of the holy mass, statue procession and parish luncheon on Sunday 9 October 2022. The western Sydney deanery congregational leader, Father Dominic Dinh, concelebrated the commemorative mass with Father Anthony Fregolent and Father Francis. Despite the inclement weather over the weekend, the festival proceeded with success. The Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church was filled with parishioners and respective representatives from the Italian, Spanish and Vietnamese communities. I acknowledge the liturgical organisers of the mass for coordinating the quadruple-language service. The mass was spoken in English, Italian, Spanish and Vietnamese throughout various stages of the liturgy. One highlight of the service was the presentation of the new gold crown for Our Lady and Jesus Child. I congratulate Mr Michael Daniele from Daniele Jewellers on designing and crafting the gold crown. I congratulate Our Lady of Mount Carmel Festival Committee on hosting the celebration and promoting social cohesion in the multicultural community.

### HAWKESBURY FLOOD RELIEF CONCERT

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:16):** I commend PulseFM 89.9 community radio on hosting a successful night to raise money for flood victims in Hawkesbury. Talent was on display that night and included popular Australian guitarist Kevin Borich and local talent Jed Zarb, Mady Disbray, Matt Charnley and the James Brothers. The Hawkesbury Flood Relief Concert raised an incredible \$3,489 for flood-affected families. I extend my thanks to PulseFM and all those who attended for giving the time and money that the Hawkesbury community appreciated. They have been battered by floods for the past two years and this was a welcome relief. PulseFM also drew attention to the importance of clear and regular communication for locals during flood events, especially for communities in Pitt Town, Macdonald Valley and Colo Valley.

### EDUCATOR MARGARET CROUCHER

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (18:17):** I commend the work of our local resident Margaret Croucher, who has worked in the Catholic education system for the past 34 years. More importantly, Margaret is currently the chairperson of the State Association of Science Education Technicians [ASET] and vice-president of the national association of lab technicians, a position she has held for three years, having held positions of treasurer and president since its incorporation in 2014. As chairperson and committee member of ASET, Margaret has effectively organised annual two-day metropolitan conferences and country regional professional development days to support and train lab technicians in their roles as significant members of their school science departments. This provided lab technicians with the opportunity to meet colleagues from all over New South Wales, share ideas, implement new initiatives and liaise face to face with industry suppliers. Margaret's community service has also included being a brownie guide leader with the first South Granville brownies for six years. I thank her for her continued service to our community.

### GUYRA CENTRAL SCHOOL

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (18:18):** I recognise Guyra Central School's success with its annual agricultural program. A successful school requires contribution from the community, and Guyra Central School's participation in the statewide Merino Wether Challenge in Dubbo recently was a clear example of that. Sheep donated locally gave students the means to give an outstanding performance in sheep handling and presentation. Students met with Mr and Mrs Roger Fletcher, formerly of the Northern Tablelands, who offered insights into the opportunities in the industry. Assistant judge Deb Snaith of Inverell's Macintyre High School observed that year 10 student Brooke Grills demonstrated superior fleece handling skills in her junior judging competition. Her parents, Mara and Anthony Grills, organised donated motel accommodation, with Mara Grills and Jo Dullaway providing food for the trip. The bus was driven by Mrs Linley Ryan. I congratulate all the students who represented Guyra Central School in the best manner possible, gaining outstanding recognition for

their exemplary performance. I commend the agricultural teacher, Mrs Rebecca Smith, for her enthusiasm and guidance in making this experience possible.

#### WYONG DRAMA GROUP

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:19):** I congratulate Wyong Drama Group on celebrating its seventieth anniversary and staging up to 300 productions in its time. The group is celebrating by scheduling performances throughout the year and each will open with a special gala night, including a free drink and canapes. Since 1952 the group has been entertaining the Central Coast, operating longer than any professional theatre group in Sydney. The group was first called Wyong Dramatic Group and performed in the Astra Theatre. Over the years the group has performed at Memorial Hall, Wyong District Youth and Community Centre, Wyong Grove Public School and The Art House. It is currently performing at the beautiful Red Tree Theatre. It has hosted the Central Coast theatre festival, a festival for one-act plays; is home to the WOSCARS; and has been the force behind other special events, such as drama workshops, bush bashes, music halls, birthday celebrations and fashion spectaculars. I have watched many plays over the years, including *Clue*, *'Allo 'Allo*, *Fawltly Towers*, *A Good Old-Fashioned Big Family Christmas* and many more. I congratulate the Wyong Drama Group.

#### CARMODY NEWSAGENCY

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (18:20):** I recognise Margaret Carmody and Carmody Newsagency in Boorowa. Carmody Newsagency has traded as such for the past 70 years, with three generations of the Carmody family having proudly served the Boorowa community through this business. Owner Margaret Carmody played a vital role in the Australia Post licence being allocated to the newsagency in 2019, which saw the post office amalgamated with the retail business. The newsagent and Australia Post services are essential and have an abundance of support from the community. That was certainly an important milestone not only for the Carmody family but also for the community as a whole. I sincerely thank Margaret Carmody and congratulate her on her foresight and openness to embrace the additional postal services. Carmody Newsagency will change hands on 24 October 2022. I am grateful and appreciative of all the tireless work and community centredness fulfilled by the Carmody family for generations. I wish them the very best in the future.

#### CANTERBURY OLYMPIC ICE RINK

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:21):** I acknowledge the more than 1,000 people who attended the Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink rally on Saturday, ranging from recreational skaters, students and parents, from Penrith, the Central Coast, Newcastle and locally, to voice their support for the community venue that their children and grandchildren grew up with. The event emcee was the friends of Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink's Joanna Bitar, with the speakers including the Ice Skating Club NSW Co-Operative director and former Winter Olympian, Danielle O'Brien, and many others. I also acknowledge my colleague and neighbour the member for Strathfield, Jason Yat-Sen Li, and the Hon. Shayne Mallard, the Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney. There were a range of other speakers, including support from various councils. I acknowledge all who attended.

#### COMMUNITY WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER KIRSTY PARKES

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:23):** I recognise Kirsty Parkes, chief executive officer of Community Cafe Outreach Service, for becoming a finalist in the Western Sydney Women Awards in the category of Community Woman of the Year. The Community Cafe is a local service providing support and relief to vulnerable people in the community. Starting from humble beginnings in the garage, it has now grown to a major community service, providing food hampers, home-cooked meals, clothing and household goods to those who need it. The service is completely volunteer run, with an open invitation for the whole community to come for a free home-cooked meal in Miller, Hoxton Park and Fairfield. I am happy to say that it now has a real cafe space that will offer training to kickstart careers. Kirsty works tirelessly and it has been wonderful watching the Community Cafe grow and continue to support those in need. I congratulate her on this deserved recognition and thank her for all the hard work that she puts into this incredible service.

#### NORTH CURL CURL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (18:24):** I acknowledge the wonderful North Curl Curl Surf Life Saving Club, which will celebrate its centenary this year. The club had humble beginnings in a small shed containing a lifeline and belt, notifying council that the club had formed in October 1922. In 1924 a timber clubhouse was built. It has been my privilege to meet many club members over the past five years and to support their outstanding efforts. The members of North Curl Curl surf club are some of the best people on the beaches. They are a true family club and always welcoming. I congratulate them on their centenary and wish them all the best. I thank the North Curl Curl surf club.

### TRIBUTE TO ANGUS MACNEIL, AM

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:24):** I am deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Mr Angus Macneil, a farmer from Rand, a strong contributor to the community of Rand and a dedicated member of the Liberal Party. Angus was born in Corowa and lived his whole life in Rand on a farming property, which his father had purchased. He was a member of the Murray Catchment Management Authority, and a lover of football and other sport. From 1965 to 1989, Angus served as a councillor for the Urana shire. From running a very successful farm to steering council through difficult decisions and attending local working bees, he was always to be found in the thick of it when community or the Liberal Party—which he loved—called and things just had to get done. His energy and appetite for a challenge will be missed not just in Rand but right across our region. In 2019 Angus was awarded the Order of Australia for his services to primary industry. Vale, Angus Macneil. My thoughts are with his family—wife, Gail, and daughters Georgie and Kate.

### MULGOA ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (18:25):** Today is the beginning of the HSC for year 12 students across New South Wales, and I pay particular attention to all the year 12 students sitting the HSC in my electorate of Mulgoa. Being from western Sydney, they already bring that tough and unique character to all the challenges they have to face. For many, COVID-19 was an enormous additional challenge to their education. It was a challenge that no generation before has had to face. Despite that, they tackled the situation with passion, determination and spirit. For that alone, they should be immensely proud of themselves and everything they will achieve.

I thank all the teachers in my electorate for their hard work. There are simply not enough words to do justice to acknowledging their performance throughout the past few years to finally deliver this year's year 12 students to their final exams. I also publicly acknowledge all parents, carers and friends who have provided strength, reassurance and encouragement to their child during those senior school years. I offer my congratulations to all students, parents and teachers today. Everyone should remember that, no matter what HSC score they get, the score does not define who they are and they get the chance to define themselves.

### PORT MACQUARIE RSPCA VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:26):** I recognise two volunteers from the Port Macquarie RSPCA who recently announced their retirement, after serving a combined 28 years with the organisation. It is often said that our volunteers are the backbone of the community, who go above and beyond in service to others, making a lasting difference through their selfless generosity and kindness. Today I congratulate two stalwarts from the RSPCA Port Macquarie branch, Jeanette Setterfield and Jenny Bucton, who have decided to call it quits after dedicating literally hundreds, if not thousands, of hours and years of service in the local op shop located on Short Street in Port Macquarie.

Described as a committed and devoted member of the team, Jeannette Setterfield has donated 21 years of service to the RSPCA, serving as a president and long-term branch member. Her passion is helping animals in their care and seeing them rehomed to a loving family. Jenny Bucton is another loved volunteer within the local branch. Her main role over the past seven years has been coordinating the operations of the op shop, preparing rosters, setting up displays and managing the volunteers to ensure that the premises runs like clockwork. It is a legacy that will be difficult to match. I thank Jeanette and Jenny for their valuable service to the RSPCA.

### COAST SHELTER

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:28):** I congratulate Coast Shelter on delivering quality support and care for 30 years across the Central Coast to people who are vulnerable and in need of a helping hand. Coast Shelter celebrated its thirtieth anniversary at The Entertainment Grounds in Gosford with local businesses and community members, along with sponsors Gosford RSL and The Agency. It was a brilliant afternoon to share this special milestone with the community. I offer my congratulations to the people who were acknowledged for their positive impact on our community.

Talented cabaret singer and comedian Marney McQueen entertained throughout the afternoon. Throughout the event there were live auctions and raffles that raised an amazing amount of \$26,000 to go towards addressing homelessness, and domestic and family violence on the Central Coast. It was a special day for Coast Shelter CEO Michael Starr, bringing the community together to celebrate years of achievement and raising funds to help expand the services. Coast Shelter is a wonderful organisation that continues to grow and support many children, young people and adults on the Central Coast.

### ELOUERA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:29):** I acknowledge the wonderful members from Elouera Surf Life Saving Club, who have been a familiar presence on our beaches for over 50 years. Beginning in a humble

tent on the beach in 1966, Elouera has a proud history of providing a welcoming and supportive space for all members of the community. The club is particularly proud of its Yellow Fins Nippers. Importantly, throughout the 2021-22 season there were no lives lost on the beach and the club's members completed over 9,000 hours of active duty, 26 rescues and over 900 preventative actions. Of course, none of this is possible without the hard work and tireless commitment of each individual who contributes. I recognise the 2022-23 Board of Management including Cameron Simpson, Daniel Campisi, Lorraine Jago, Andrew Watson, Ron Hegarty, Dean Morris, Stephen Urquhart, Andrew McKellar, Sophie Burns, Fran Hannan, Alyson Scott, Joshua Nicholson and Nathan Neale and extend my best wishes for the season ahead. I thank all Elouera Surf Life Saving Club members for their continued dedication to protecting local beachgoers.

#### **OVERSEAS KOREAN TRADERS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:30):** I congratulate the OKTA, the Overseas Korean Traders Association, on its organisation of the 2022 Korean Brand Expo last weekend in Strathfield, which I was delighted to attend. It was terrific to see the Consul-General of Korea there, Mr Sangwoo Hong, as well as the President of OKTA, Mr Isaac Lim, and my friend Sue Ho, who was one of the exhibitors. It was terrific to see so many great Korean brands that the exporters have brought to Australia for the local community to experience as well as exporters from Australia to Korea. Those innovative entrepreneurs take great Australian brands and make their products available to consumers in the Korean market. Those local entrepreneurs form the backbone of our economy's future prosperity and enhance trade relationships between the economies of Australia and Korea.

#### **HOLSWORTHY COMMUNITY GROUP**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:31):** I recognise the Holsworthy Community Group, which is a tri-service community group located at the Holsworthy Barracks. The service's primary aim is to support serving members and their families living in the area through providing programs that facilitate interaction and help to create connections for adults and children who may have just been relocated to our area. Locals who are not military families are also welcome to join. The group holds weekly events such as "Coffee and Chat" at a local cafe. It is always child friendly and a great opportunity for locals to come together and meet people from the area and get some support. The group also holds a playgroup for non-school-age children at the Holsworthy Barracks Chapel Multipurpose Room. It also holds monthly social events. This month it has organised a youth disco, pizza and games Halloween night for children aged five to 12 years, and a paint, sip and graze night for adults. I thank all involved in the Holsworthy Community Group for encouraging our local families to get involved and connect with and support each other.

#### **COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT PARTICIPANT ETHAN FLOYD**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:32):** I congratulate Cessnock resident Ethan Floyd, who has been chosen as the New South Wales Commonwealth Parliamentary Association representative to the Commonwealth Youth Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago, to be held from 20 to 24 November. I wish I was going with him. Ethan is an outstanding young individual who comes from my community. He is a First Nations person and intensely talented and clever, with a soul and emotional capacity the size of the universe. He will be a great representative of this State and of the communities of Cessnock but, more importantly, of us as the nation of Australia. Ethan will take his message of "yaama"—which means "hello" in his Indigenous language—to the world. Go get 'em, Ethan. You are going to knock them out, buddy.

#### **WORLD TEACHERS' DAY**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:33):** Last week was World Teachers' Day. On behalf of the people of Canterbury, I express thanks to every teacher in our public, independent and Catholic school systems in my electorate. I thank them for their invaluable service, their professionalism, their dedication and their effort in educating our students and enabling them to be the leaders of tomorrow. We hear their stories loud and clear, and I try to understand the constraints and challenges because for them it is about teaching, but they are caught up with endless other tasks rather than teaching. I admire the incredible work that goes into teaching and seeing students flourish. I was brought up to respect teachers the way we respect our parents. I am the wife of a teacher, and my best friends are teachers. On behalf of my constituents, I thank our teachers. We will work very hard in the lead-up to the next election to ensure that they have better conditions.

#### **HOPEFIELD SERVICES INCORPORATED**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:34):** I acknowledge the incredible Hopefield Services Incorporated. Hopefield is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation enabling individuals to resolve challenges by inspiring hope and transforming lives. Hopefield employs quality staff to deliver a diverse range of professional, evidence-based clinical services, including psychology, counselling, speech pathology, case management and group services to individuals, families and organisations. In June, Hopefield was involved in

The Eve Project's Thriving Futures Program, which supports and empowers female survivors of abuse and trauma whilst aiming to prevent the intergenerational transference of abuse. With an increasing amount of women who are the victims of domestic violence, it is great to see that Hopefield is committed to supporting local victims. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated team behind Hopefield for their hard work and tireless efforts. I acknowledge Vicki Sherry, Ross Langford, Janet Hayes, Sam Headen, Jason Ezzy, Marc Rader, Melisa Giles, Kerrin Ryan and Neil Evans. I commend the team at Hopefield Services Incorporated for their work and extend my best wishes for the future.

### **RADIO STATION 2SSR 99.7FM**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:35):** I congratulate Sutherland shire community radio station 2SSR 99.7FM on celebrating its thirtieth year of being live on air. I know my shire colleagues also join me in wishing it a happy thirtieth birthday. 2SSR has evolved over the past three decades into the modern radio station it is today, continuing to provide the Sutherland shire community with local information, interviews and news, sports and cultural programs. The station also prides itself on training radio presenters—with the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia using its training program as a model for other community radio stations—as well as training politicians. I know that many members probably had their first interviews on 2SSR. The training program has seen current and past presenters finding their careers in the commercial media industry. As 2SSR is a not-for-profit organisation, the station would not be operational if not for the many volunteers, members, management, presenters, staff and sponsors who continue to provide quality programs for local listeners. I again congratulate it on this milestone.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY HEROES**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I wish the member for Heathcote a very happy birthday.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (18:36):** Yes, it is another one. Prominent Heathcote volunteers were recognised recently at the 2022 Minister's Community Heroes awards night with the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC, at the Engadine Bowling Club. The Minister's Community Heroes program provides recognition for and celebrates the immeasurable contributions of community volunteers in New South Wales. The program shone a bright light on many of the individuals who significantly contribute their time to helping our community organisations, local clubs, sporting clubs and businesses in Heathcote. It was an honour to recognise volunteers with their friends and family in attendance. I thank each and every one of them, who have dedicated significant service to the community. I am incredibly proud of our Heathcote volunteers. They offer an irreplaceable service that benefits the community whilst supporting the economy. Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

I congratulate the 2022 Heathcote Community Heroes: Denise Jago from 1st Heathcote Scout Group, Anthony Ritter from Scarborough Wombarra Surf Life Saving Club, Nicole Burrill from Helensburgh Anglican Church, Greg Mokeeff from Rotary Club of Engadine, Cheryl Scott from Engadine Girl Guides, George Braine from Activus Transport and Engadine Caring Centre, Kirsten Benhiam from St John Bosco Youth Centre Cricket Club, Sutherland Shire Junior Cricket Association, Mark Coppock from 1st Heathcote Scout Group, Garry Keir from Engadine Community Services, Rodney Hampson from Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Life Saving Club, Stanwell Park Sea Eels Winter Swimming Club, Benjamin Gibson from Sutherland Communications Rural Fire Brigade, Sue Saffery from Hope Church 2508 Community Pantry, Trent Chatterton from Heathcote Engadine Hawks Junior AFL Club, Ben Allen from Maianbar Rural Fire Brigade, Beverley Allen from Maianbar Rural Fire Brigade, Colin Bowmaker from St John Bosco Baseball Club, Cronulla Sutherland Junior Baseball Association, and Steve Greening from Bundeena RSL Sub-Branch.

I also congratulate Rachel Moore from Woronora River Public School P&C Association, Scott Olsen from Southern Cross Cycle Club, Jillian Critchley from Girl Guides NSW, Scout Association of Australia, Sutherland Shire Choral Society, Engadine West P&C Association, CMT Australia and CMT Aussie Kids, John Greig from Bundeena RSL Sub-Branch, Gregory Ray from Heathcote Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade, James Thomas-Walker from Heathcote Waratah Football Club, Sutherland Shire Football Association, the SES and RFS, Jessica Hay from Garie Surf Life Saving Club, Royal Flying Doctor Service at Bankstown, William Allan from The Youth Partnership, George Antognelli from Hope Community Kitchen, Sue Bunt from The Youth Partnership, Ross Bingle from The Youth Partnership, Ngaire Greenacre from Loftus Public School P&C Association, Brad Taylor from Garie Surf Life Saving Club, Surf Life Saving Sydney, Marney Wane from Loftus Public School P&C Association, Anthony Graham from Garie Surf Life Saving Club, Kevin Thomas from Hope Church 2508, Helensburgh Men's Shed, Kirsty Mason from Dandelion Support Network, Jason Smith from Hope Community Kitchen, and Michelle Smith from Hope Community Kitchen.

Thirty-six volunteers were recognised at the community heroes awards night. I am grateful to everyone in our community who took the time to nominate them as they are extremely deserving of recognition for their wonderful work and invaluable contributions. I am thrilled we were able to show our appreciation and celebrate those volunteers through the community heroes initiative. I take this opportunity to again commend the volunteers for their efforts and for selflessly contributing their time to our community. I am incredibly grateful for their outstanding service.

### TRIBUTE TO COLIN NEAL

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (18:40):** I pay tribute to my dear friend Mr Col Neal, a fearless fighter for working people, a fond friend to many and a much-loved man to his family. Sadly, Col passed away recently after a short illness. Col was rock solid Labor. His membership started in 1984 and he just fell short of the 40-year requirement for life membership. For decades Col was the returning officer at my local Ingleburn-Macquarie Fields branch—a position he fulfilled with distinction. Interestingly, Col never sought public office, but had he done so he would have excelled because of his honesty and hard work. At branch meetings Col was forthright in his debating and questioning. He never left us in any doubt as to what he believed. He would call things and issues as he saw them. As a public representative, I was always grateful for his insights.

Col was rock solid union. He spent his life in the transport industry and was a proud life member of the Transport Workers' Union [TWU]. Col joined the TWU in about 1982 when he was a brick carter, but he first encountered the union movement much earlier when he landed his first job as a 15-year-old at the railway workshops in Chullora. Col was passionate about helping the underdog and was always working to retrieve underpayments for his tip truck owner-drivers. It angered him to no end when tip truck drivers were ripped off in some subcontractor arrangement gone wrong or through phoenix companies, which took the money but never paid the workers what they were owed. Col fundamentally believed in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Col was rock solid family. He recently celebrated his diamond wedding anniversary with his wife, Ros. He was 23 and she was 21 when they got married in 1960 at St. Brendan's in Bankstown. Their relationship was one of love and dedication to each other. Col doted on his wife; his children, Liz and Michael; his grandchildren; and his great-grandchildren. The walls of Col's home are filled of photos of happy family times and of a proud and beaming Col. There is no greater achievement for any man than creating a happy family home for the people he loves the most. On this measure alone, Col was an absolute champion.

Col was a rock solid friend. Regardless of where you sit in this Chamber, friendships—and I mean real friendships—can be quite rare, difficult to find and even more difficult to maintain. Col was old school. His word and his handshake were his contract. When he told you that he supported you, it was a done deal. Col was not one for moving or changing his mind. Col Neal's support meant a lot to me as a younger man seeking public office. Every time I knocked on his front door, he would recognise my voice. Through the security door, I would respond to his question, "Who is it?" He would tell me in good humour that politicians were not welcome and then proceed to welcome me into his home. Over a cup of tea, we would talk about a range of topics—some political, some not. I will always treasure those cups of tea, the thoughtful conversations and his enjoyable company.

Col passed away just short of his eighty-sixth birthday. The average life expectancy for an Australian male is about 83, and I can hear Col saying to me now in response to that statistic, "See, mate? I told you I was always above the average." Indeed, Col was above the average in all aspects of his life—as a proud member of the Australian Labor Party, as a proud unionist, as a dearly loved family man and, not least, as a fond friend. I will miss my friend. Times like these make me realise how lucky I am to have found my life filled with people like Col and Ros Neal. May my dear friend Col Neal rest in peace. May his family and especially his dear wife, Ros, be comforted that he was greatly respected and will be sorely missed.

### MR 358

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:45):** Tonight I share a particular problem in the upper Hunter that I have discussed before in the House as part of my appeal to the Federal Government to put common sense over politics and support those in regional areas. It is a road that we call MR 358, otherwise known as Coulsons Creek Road and Merriwa Willow Tree Road—it is all one and the same. It is a link between the Golden Highway, heading out west, and the New England Highway and is a very important link between the communities of Merriwa, Willow Tree and Tamworth. For people who need to go to hospital in Tamworth or need to travel between those areas, that road is all important. It is an important path for industry going through there and an important part of this country's heavy vehicle routes.

That is why in 2016 the Australian Government invested in upgrading that road through the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program. Stage two involved cutting through the Liverpool Range. It is about a 200-metre change in height across about a three-kilometre section of road, so it is very steep. The roadworks were undertaken

by Upper Hunter Shire Council, but I am afraid things went wrong as they sometimes do in construction. As they were finishing the road, cracks were identified. By the time I was elected to this place and went up to inspect the road, those cracks were a metre wide. The road had to be shut down completely, so it went from a single lane each way that was getting upgraded to no road at all. Those communities are completely isolated from each other and need to take the huge journey through Scone to get around.

Mistakes were made and people have lost their jobs over those mistakes, and rightfully so—we believe in accountability. But the Upper Hunter Shire Council cannot afford to fix the problem. The project was worth \$5.5 million; the fix is now worth \$50 million. It is a serious problem and is much too expensive for the local ratepayers to pay for, which is why we made a deal with the Federal Government—\$10 million from the State and \$40 million from the Federal Government. It was a long process to get there, but the big departments agreed to it.

Being in Barnaby Joyce's turf, of course, it was announced by Barnaby Joyce, and that may be the start of our next set of problems. I have recently written to the Federal Minister asking for confirmation of that \$40 million commitment from the Federal Government, and I am afraid she has written back to me to say that they are assessing it. They do not see it as a must-have and a need, or as an election promise, which really is a problem for my community. Listening to Federal politics and the media around it, I understand the Treasurer is laying down a road map of dire financial circumstances coming up. They have to fix the budget, and I understand the politics of that. But this is a really important project, and those communities need that support.

We need the project to be fixed, and we need that Federal Government money to do it. The State Government money is still there, so I am asking the Federal Government not to put politics above common sense. This important Federal project has gone wrong, and the Federal Government should not walk away from its responsibility just because it is in the former Deputy Prime Minister's electorate. Do not let the politics of the situation get out of hand. I have a letter ready to go to Catherine King, and I really look forward to seeing the budget on 25 October. For the people of the Hunter and regional New South Wales, I hope she does not rip out that money that we need.

#### HUNGRY POINT, CRONULLA

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (18:50):** I update the House on Hungry Point, Cronulla, and in particular the consultation on future proposals for that site. It is a spectacularly beautiful site, rich in Aboriginal cultural significance. For over 100 years until 2012, it was the site of Cronulla Fisheries and its predecessors. It is listed on the State Heritage Register, which means that any alterations to the buildings require the approval of the independent Heritage Council of NSW.

Marine Rescue NSW has had its State headquarters on the site since around 2012, and it has lodged an application with the Heritage Council for permission to proceed with a proposal that was announced in 2020 for a training academy on the site. The Hungry Point Reserve Land Manager is made up of a cross-section of community representatives. It had conducted an extensive expression-of-interest process for the future use of the site, and I understand that a training academy was the best proposal received to retain and maintain important heritage buildings on the site. That public-purpose use would allow greatly improved training of Marine Rescue volunteers, currently over 3,000 of them, improving recruitment and water safety and ultimately saving lives.

My support in principle for such an academy is conditional on some overriding considerations. They include that any future use is sympathetic to the site's heritage and beauty and, as I have previously fought for, that it ensures public access to at least the open parkland and a walkway around the entire clifftop and waterway, not just part of it. The Government announced in 2019 that it would fund that walkway proposal around the entire clifftop and waterway, and I assure the House and my constituents that I will be holding the Minister who made the commitment to that promise.

There have been community concerns because of the unfortunate way that the heritage application emerged. People, including me, stumbled across it almost accidentally and were given only 21 days to respond to the exhibited proposal, so I will outline the procedure going forward. Although it is a heritage site, the decision-making process will ultimately go through Crown Lands. On its website, it has foreshadowed a consultation on the proposal. The 42-day public exhibition period will include a series of drop-in information sessions where members of the public can ask questions and view the proposal by Marine Rescue.

Crown Lands is doing that in accordance with the Crown Lands community engagement strategy and will be seeking feedback on how the community feel their use and enjoyment of Crown land will be affected by the Marine Rescue proposal. My anticipation is that there will be online, social media and drop-in information sessions. I will want to see that all relevant documents are made available for the community to make an informed decision. There were some documents missing from the Heritage NSW exhibition. I wrote to the Minister seeking

that Heritage NSW extend what I thought was an inadequate exhibition period. Heritage will now recommence its exhibition after Crown Lands has sought feedback on the lease proposal. My anticipation is that Heritage NSW will make a submission to Crown Lands during that exhibition process, so we will get a sense of where Heritage NSW is heading.

I expect Heritage NSW will be pretty vigorous in its analysis of the Marine Rescue proposal, if its past performance is any guide. I understand that Heritage NSW has concerns about the Marine Rescue proposal. Separate to that, Heritage NSW will be assessing and exhibiting the land manager's proposal for a walkway. I encourage constituents to go by the drop-in information session at the Kingsway end of the Cronulla mall on Saturday 15 October, between 9.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m., where the board will have a pop-up display of the cliff-top walk project. There are three streams of consultation underway, and I can assure constituents that I am determined to see that Hungry Point remains the beautiful and iconic site that it is.

### COST OF LIVING

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:55):** I raise an issue of great importance to the community in the electorate of Prospect: the rising cost of living. In New South Wales, the cost of living continues to rise. The economy is struggling to cope with the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and energy shortages driven by the war in Ukraine. Working families in New South Wales are struggling as a result of these factors, and the western Sydney community in Prospect is no exception. State Labor governments across Australia have worked with the Federal Government to ease cost-of-living pressures for their communities by lowering the cost of electricity and investing in public services. It outrages me that the number of State governments that have acted to reduce these pressures does not include the Liberal-Nationals Government of New South Wales.

After 12 years in office, this Government is tired and failing to deliver the essential services that families in Prospect rely on. Over 12 years in office, the Government has failed to train enough healthcare workers or teachers who work or live in the electorate. Now, on the eve of the March 2023 election, it is only offering bandaid fixes to help Liberal candidates get through the campaign. The Government's only plan for the future includes more privatisation of State assets and an annual land tax that risks affecting four out of five homes in the electorate of Prospect. As this 12-year-old government lurches from scandal to scandal, and Ministers are fighting amongst themselves, it is clear that they are too busy focusing on themselves and not on the challenges facing families in Prospect. Not only are Ministers in this Government focusing on themselves, rather than families who are struggling with the cost of living, but they refuse to answer questions about their solutions to these issues.

For example, yesterday during question time I asked Treasurer Matt Kean a question of great significance on behalf of families in Prospect struggling with the cost of living. I said that energy bills already have risen in New South Wales by 18 per cent in the last 12 months, that industry is forecasting additional price rises of up to 35 per cent next year, and that the Treasurer was warned in secret negotiations that prices would rise by another 33 per cent when the Eraring Power Station comes offline. I asked him what he would do. The Treasurer completely avoided my question, choosing instead to launch an attack on the Leader of NSW Labor, Chris Minns. He gave no answer on whether he still stands by his promise to families doing it tough during the cost-of-living crisis. I am outraged that the Treasurer dodged the question. Families in Prospect deserve a Treasurer who will take the cost-of-living crisis seriously, rather than weaponise the topic for partisan attacks on NSW Labor.

While the behaviour of the Treasurer yesterday concerns me, more important to the people of Prospect are the policies that the Government introduced in the lead-up to the cost-of-living crisis. The Government's most recent flagship policy, the new annual land tax, will be a tax on Prospect family homes forever. No-one likes paying stamp duty, but the Government wants to replace it with a land tax that will affect the majority of homes in the electorate. It will cost the average property owner some \$2,400 every year, set to increase annually. This is an out-of-touch policy proposal that does not take into account the cost-of-living pressures facing families in Prospect.

While new proposals such as the land tax are a grave concern, the ideological values of the Government, which indicate what it will do next if given another term in office, are even more concerning. Will the Liberal-Nationals Government privatise the electricity network, like it did in 2015, when power bills went straight up? Power prices continue to rise by 20 per cent. Further, over the past 12 years the Government has privatised over \$90 billion in public assets, including electricity, power stations and motorways. This has caused higher prices and worse services for families in Prospect.

New South Wales has lost those essential assets forever, as well as the billions of dollars of dividends they returned for the community—dividends that were invested in schools, hospitals, emergency services and transport services. Instead, the Government is trying to blame essential workers such as nurses, teachers and rail workers for its failures over the past 12 years. To conclude, I request that the Government put aside partisanship and work with NSW Labor to find solutions to ease cost-of-living pressures for struggling families. Now is not the time for

petty partisanship. Families in western Sydney are not interested in political games. We need to deliver positive change to improve the lives of families in the electorate of Prospect.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:00):** I bring to the attention of the good member for Prospect the savings that are found on the Service NSW website, which may be of interest to his constituents. They include the Low Income Household Rebate, which helps households cover the cost of energy bills; gas rebates, which allow eligible residents to save up to \$110 on their gas bills; and toll relief, which may provide free or half-price vehicle registration for frequent toll users. There are also some vouchers, including the \$100 First Lap voucher to go towards the cost of swimming lessons for children aged three to six. There have been Active Kids rebates, National Park passes for pensioners, and it goes on. Perhaps they will assist the member for Prospect.

#### NATIVE VEGETATION MAPPING

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:01):** I bring to the attention of the House the concerns of many people across my electorate at the very quiet—dare I say surreptitious—release of what was seen to be innocuous mapping by the Department of Planning and Environment last Wednesday afternoon at 4.00 p.m. Usually when land mapping, or in this case draft native vegetation regulatory mapping, is released, we expect it to be accompanied by some sort of media release or fanfare. No, this was quietly released at 4.00 p.m. Despite the appearance of being benign, the impact of these draft regulatory maps, and the suggestion from the department via its website that this is simply a staged process to release these maps across all New South Wales, actually belies the benignity that the department would have us all believe.

The maps have been released in accordance with part 5A of the Local Land Services Act 2013, as per the amendments passed by this Parliament in 2016, to enact the balance that was struck in creating the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, which replaced the old, discredited and criminal Native Vegetation Act. Under that Act, landholders, having had their land sterilised and quarantined, were virtually doing a favour on behalf of the people of New South Wales on land that they owned and were paying rates on. The balance that was struck by the Government and by this Parliament was a smart one. It meant that there was a compact between government and landholders—typically farmers.

The agreement was that farmers would be entitled to remove certain types of vegetation on their land in exchange for setting aside other key pieces of biodiversity on their land and actively managing that land in perpetuity, and they would have access to the Biodiversity Conservation Trust for doing so. It allowed farmers to continue to make productivity gains and grow more of the food and fibre that we rely on. But it also recognised that the days of carte blanche clearing in the fifties, sixties and seventies were over and that we have a responsibility to actually be good environmentalists. In fact, every good farmer we meet is keen to be a good environmentalist because there is a direct correlation between the health of their land and soil, and increased productivity.

**Mr Roy Butler:** Hear, hear!

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Barwon, who knows this all too well in representing the vast electorate that he does. One of the aspects of that reform was the issue of mapping. As the Minister for Primary Industries said when introducing this bill in 2016, the intention was that there would be mapping. However, in his second reading speech he said:

The map is currently under development. It will not come into effect until Ministers are satisfied that stakeholders have sufficient confidence in its accuracy. To this end, further engagement with landholders will be undertaken in early 2017, to explore a range of issues, such as mapping of grasslands and woody regrowth.

The problem is that despite the best efforts of the Department of Planning and Environment, the technology does not exist to actually distinguish via satellite mapping the difference between different types of woodland and, by the department's own acknowledgement, the different types of grassland. The technology is great at detecting ground disturbance, but it cannot distinguish between different types of vegetation. If it could, then those much-maligned koala habitat maps would not have shown Bankwest Stadium, the roundabout in Grafton and the goalposts on the home ground of the Mungindi Grasshoppers as core koala habitat mapped in pink. I love koalas, but I have never seen them lick the paint off goalposts and claim it to be a food source. Goalposts are not feed trees.

It is the same technology that drafted those maps that have been released in 11 local government areas in the south of the State. It should not be the responsibility of landholders to correct the inaccuracy of maps put forward by a government agency. If the government agency wants to release those maps, then in accordance with the second reading speech of Minister Blair it should satisfy everyone as to the accuracy of those maps, not be lazy and rely on landholders to do the work of a government department.

## REGIONAL AND RURAL COUNCILS

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:06):** All things have not been created equal when it comes to local councils in New South Wales, particularly when you look at the differences between councils operating in city and country areas. City councils can rely on a huge base of revenue from a dense population of ratepayers. They can also collect money from a range of different sources, including parking meters, hiring out council venues, or charging fees for development applications and whatever other services they offer. Most country towns have much smaller populations, fewer ratepayers and far fewer development applications and venues for hire. Many do not have parking restrictions, and those that do are not usually raking in revenue from booking hundreds of cars in a day; they might be lucky if they snare one or two.

While country councils have fewer people to get revenue from, they have much more territory to cover with what small amount they do get. Their revenue must go toward things like the maintenance of thousands of kilometres of roads. Given the damage done by the recent rain and floods, a significant portion of their revenue is going to have to go to repair. One of the councils in my electorate has three airports. Some have multiple public pools and multiple large public parks with the accompanying facilities.

There is also the problem of depreciation of assets, some of which they were unable to pay for in the first place and some of which they do not even control. Without a large enough rate base for large infrastructure projects like water pipelines, sewage treatment plants, bridges and new roads, most of these projects are only made possible through State and Federal government grants. Once they have been built the council needs to spend money on their upkeep. With other items that have been gifted to them, like equipment for the RFS or SES, they must bear the depreciation but have no say in what happens to that asset.

The funding model for all of this is based largely on how city councils operate. Most city councils get by on their rates, fees and the services they offer but fill small gaps with occasional grants. Recurrent funding from government is not something most of them need to rely on. Many city councils have the problem of infrastructure backlog—the lag between the cost needed to maintain an asset or bring it up to an acceptable standard and the ability of the council to cover the cost—but the problem is far worse in the country. Metropolitan councils have an average of \$28.7 million in infrastructure backlog, but the figure is \$52 million in the country. Rural councils are struggling under the burden of depreciation.

The current funding model for councils is at risk of collapse where rate bases are failing the task. The New South Wales Government needs to reconsider its obligation to fund essential services in the more remote council areas. This reconsideration should not include models that decrease representation of locally elected representatives. It is time to look at a new funding model for regional and rural councils, one not designed for large urban centres. What works in the city does not always work as well in the country. That is often lost on many people who live in big cities, especially those who make regulations and laws relating to councils. I urge any members who are not from a regional or rural electorate to go to the bush and talk to some councillors to better understand some of the problems that rural councils face. It would help better inform policy.

Several things could be done to help these struggling councils. One major step would be to take depreciation off their books. It is sending many of them broke. If a council acquires an asset through a government grant, there should be recurrent funding factored in for the upkeep. The "Red Fleet"—the emergency services equipment that is such a burden on councils—should be paid for under a statewide funding regime that also takes account of the depreciation. Why should a council bear the cost of something that is not ostensibly theirs?

Councils unable to raise enough revenue through their ratepayers should be given recurrent funding to fill the gap between their revenue and the amount needed to meet the financial demands of the council area, rather than having to beg for grants to plug those gaps. Whatever the solution, it is clear the approach to country councils needs a rethink. The model was created for population-dense city councils and does not work in more thinly populated areas beyond the city. In fact, it is threatening to send many of them broke and leave people who live in regional New South Wales without adequate services or amenities.

## GREGORY PLACE PLANNING PROPOSAL

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:11):** The Maronite Catholic community in my electorate is vibrant. It is made up of thousands of people who cherish their faith and have made a great contribution to the local community. Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral in Harris Park, which is their local church, is the largest Catholic parish in Australia. It has about 15,000 parishioners, mostly from the Parramatta and Granville electorates. It is a very active community, with seven church services every week.

A number of the parishioners have contacted me to express their grave concerns about the Gregory Place build-to-rent proposal. Some 483 units built in three towers are proposed to be constructed right next to the church. The proposed development also adjoins Hambleton Cottage and is in the close vicinity of Experiment Farm and

Elizabeth Farm, which is the oldest European building in Australia. Experiment Farm and Hambleton Cottage are only a few decades younger. Experiment Farm was built by James Ruse and Hambleton Cottage was built by the Macarthurs for their children's governess.

The proposal has generated over 50 submissions. Included in those submissions is a strongly supported petition from the parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon. I believe that if this proposal was to go ahead the built form would be incredibly detrimental to not only some of the most significant heritage buildings in Australia but also the current operations of the church and the cathedral. Being such a busy church and having such a large congregation, with seven services every week, when they have large funerals or Easter or Christmas services their parishioners spill into the car park and surrounding streets. I have joined them many times on Good Friday for the Way of the Cross, which goes right past where those units are to be built and the gathering would be very irritating for anyone living in those units.

I have been to two funerals at the cathedral when between 3,000 and 5,000 people were present. One was the service for the Abdallah children and the other was for Gabby Wehbe, another local young person who died from cancer. She was a school captain and a very well-loved young woman. That would also have detrimental impacts on the adjoining neighbourhood. One would never, ever want to tell someone to turn down their funeral or restrict the number of people in attendance. Midnight mass and Easter services create a parking strain on the local area, but it is managed because Elizabeth Farm, Hambleton Cottage and Experiment Farm are museums in parkland settings with space for parking. But it would not work if we were to stick 483 homes in the middle of that. The proposed eight-storey blocks would overshadow the church and exceed the six-storey industrial building that will be demolished to make way for those three towers and should never have been built there.

It is impossible to maintain the integrity of Elizabeth Farm, Experiment Farm and Hambleton Cottage, nor have any sense of their previous rural settings, if they look out onto giant blocks of units. Those units will enormously overshadow the church's childcare centre and other facilities. Over the years some people have argued that Our Lady of Lebanon, which is a very modern design, is incompatible with those heritage buildings. Though it is a modern design, it takes a very traditional built form in that it is in a low-rise setting with a high spire on a ridge line in the centre of the suburb. The taller ancillary buildings are all on the far side of the church, away from the heritage buildings, and they work well together. That would be undermined if those enormous towers dwarfed everything around them. I do not support the project, which I have discussed with the member for Parramatta. Despite our political differences, he has asked me to place on record his concerns as well.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF NARELLAN CHARITY BALL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:16):** I had the pleasure of attending the Rotary Club of Narellan charity ball, "A night to remember". It was an amazing night because of the effort that was expended to make it truly magical and the fundraising results that followed. The ball was not held merely for the enjoyment of those who attended but to raise the necessary funds for and awareness about various local organisations and institutions that have a profoundly positive impact on the community. They represent the very best that community can do and are part of the reason why the residents of Camden and Macarthur proudly call this community home. The community holds the various charities that received donations from the ball near and dear. The Rotary Club of Narellan hosted the event, which was a practical example of the power of community.

I am thrilled to say that the night was astronomically successful. A total of \$1.085 million was raised for cancer research, robotics and health technologies, obstetrics and women's health, and mental health, which are truly noble and worthy causes. I recognise the wonderful organisations, charities and institutions for the incredible work they do throughout the year with the support of the Rotary club. I recognise CareFlight, the Ingham Institute, Mater Dei, Lifeline Macarthur, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Eggtober Foundation, Western Sydney University, Karitane, the Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation, Youth Solutions, Ladies Lipstick Luncheon, the Miracle Babies Foundation, Camp Quality, Rotary, Christmas in Narellan, the Breast Cancer Foundation and Kiss Goodbye to MS.

Further, I acknowledge the efforts of those responsible for the successful night. I congratulate president Steve Maloney, community service director Andrew Moyle, secretary Phil Dowd, foundation director Tony Perich, treasurer Peter Mihajlovic, vocation service director Paul Hutchinson and youth service director Steve Grabowski. I thank the master of ceremonies for the night, the charismatic Tim Knapp. The support of those individuals to the community does not go unnoticed. They all act as a force for good in the community. They do not do it for the recognition but from their selfless desire to do what is right. I thank them for that.

I acknowledge the businesses that operate and practice in the community. I thank them for contributing to the charity night and for choosing to run their businesses in Camden and Macarthur. They play an integral role in the wellbeing and welfare of the community. They have persisted through tough and turbulent times and have been unrelenting in their will to do good. I thank them on behalf of the community. I say well done to event

partners Tony and Ron Perich, Liverpool Catholic Club and Lady Fairfax Charitable Trust. I thank the event's platinum supporters, which include the Rotary Club of Narellan, Greenfields Development Company, TRN Group, the A2 Milk Company and Richard Crookes Constructions.

I thank the event's gold supporters, which include Camden Hire, Bombora Pools, Hutchinson Builders, Australian Petrochemical Storage Ingleburn, BHL Group, Gunlake Concrete, Fowler Homes, Multiquip Australia, Vitocco Charity Trust, Bradcorp, Calibre Consulting, Eden Brae Homes, Masterson Homes, Brolen Homes, Perfection Landscape Services, Cameron Brae Group, Landcom, Mainbrace Constructions, Avid Property Group, Wisdom Homes, Regal Innovations, Henley, Allen Jack + Cottier Architects, Everyday Homes, Narellan Town Centre, the Australian Building Construction Company, Diamond World Narellan, Sydney Trucks and Machinery, Knapp Property Group, First Style Homes and Ingham Property.

I thank the event's silver supporters, which include Kelly Partners, Design+Planning, Marsdens Law Group, UrbanGrowth NSW, 4K Automotive, Glenfield Waste Services, Macarthur Automotive, Vital and Tulich Family Communications. I thank the Rotary Club of Narellan for its service-above-self support for the community. I commend the club for the great work it does in our local community.

### UCI ROAD CYCLING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (19:21):** In September the Illawarra and part of my beautiful electorate of Keira, which I am so fortunate, honoured and humbled to represent, hosted the world's best cyclists at the 2022 Union Cycliste Internationale [UCI] Road World Championships. They were competing for gold over eight days in the largest annual road cycling championships conducted by the UCI, which include road races, time trials, team time trials, cultural events and other community activities. More than 935 cyclists from 70 nations provided the community and enthusiastic supporters from afar with a spectacular display of elite athleticism, determination, sportspersonship and cycling professionalism. For the first time some 1,060 hours of international broadcast, delivered to close to 300 million people in 70 countries around the world, showcased our spectacular Illawarra region.

As with many first times, the community that I represent was apprehensive about the event. Locals grappled with street closures, bus reroutes, schoolkids studying from home and a peloton of riders who were about to embark on rides in and around their community. However, the apprehension was soon overturned and the community embraced the mammoth event, flocking to the best vantage points and saving their best spirit for the last day of competition, the men's elite road race, which was held on Sunday 25 September. That race was preceded by the women's road race, which was held on Saturday 24 September. Spectators convened at Helensburgh, Bald Hill, Stanwell Park and the Wollongong CBD to watch the athletes challenge themselves on the incredible 266.9 kilometre route.

I was fortunate enough to join with thousands of others at Ramah Avenue, Mount Ousley. I am told that on Sunday visitation expectations were exceeded with some 100,000 spectators in attendance. It was great to ring the cowbells with my family. We watched the very best riders, many of whom we only see once a year in the Tour de France, out on our streets in the electorates of Keira, Wollongong and beyond. I thank a number of people whose work made the event possible, along with many others. I thank the UCI personnel, including its board members and the chairman of the Wollongong 2022 UCI Road World Championships, Dean Dalla Valle. I thank the UCI Wollongong 2022 team, led by Stu Taggart, and the entire organising committee and its staff. I thank Wollongong City Council, including general manager Greg Doyle, council staff, directors and work teams, which did an incredible amount of work and a great job.

The New South Wales Government played a role in this through Destination Wollongong, and General Manager Mark Sleigh and Jeremy Wilshire. The entire team at Destination Wollongong did a great job. More than 1,300 people volunteered their time, including my father and my father-in-law, enthusiastically ensuring that spectators and competitors were looked after. They volunteered in the wind, the rain and the spectacular sun, all with a smile and an unmatched enthusiasm. I thank them incredibly. My father is nearly 80 years of age and he was in charge of a crew, marshalling as the riders came through.

Finally, and most importantly, as we should always do in this place, we recognise the people that we represent: our community. It was a challenging event because we have never seen an event of this scale come to the Illawarra. It was the fifth largest sporting event on the globe. There were always going to be some challenges and disruptions, but I sincerely thank the community. They embraced the event and gave it their full spirit. They did not know what to expect and, when it arrived, they grabbed on to it and gave our international athletes an experience they will remember. Here's to many more events coming to our truly great city. I thank staff, volunteers, emergency service personnel and all those people who contributed to what was a terrific week of international road cycling.

### WESTERN SYDNEY MODEL AVIATORS CLUB

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (19:26):** Recently I had the opportunity to visit the site of the Western Sydney Model Aviators club, which is based on a rural property near Eastern Creek at Richards, in my electorate of Riverstone, and is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year. Established in 1972 as the Freemans Reach Radio Controlled Society, the organisation started life as a small but passionate group of model aircraft enthusiasts in north-western Sydney committed to sharing the excitement and technical skill involved in flying and racing model aircraft in their local community.

The initial 20 members of the club in 1972 grew steadily throughout the years. In 1987 they moved to larger premises on land owned by the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, now a campus of Western Sydney University at Richmond, where they were able to substantially expand their operations in a major boon for both the members and the broader community. Due to the hard work and dedication of the current president, Mr Bob Carpenter, and his wife, Jackie Carpenter, the club hosted the 1988 National Model Aircraft Championships, which was when the club gained the recognition of the broader model aviation community across Australia. The club moved forward again in the 1990s when it changed its name to Hawkesbury Model Air Sports and significantly increased its membership and expanded its range of activities to meet the demands of a rapidly growing and changing population.

In 2012 the club moved its base to a rural property on Bandon Road, which was then in the locality of Vineyard but is now part of the newly named suburb of Richards, and has continued to grow its operations and membership to the point where there are just under 160 members. It is the third largest model aviation club in New South Wales and attracts members and competitors from across Sydney and surrounds who enjoy the camaraderie of the people there and the high-quality venue that the club provides. Development of facilities on the site has largely been undertaken by club members volunteering their time and expertise. Its airfield, though scaled down for model aircraft, is laid out and operated exactly as an operating airport would be, boasting a 300-metre main runway and shorter crosswind runway. Operations are controlled by the strict safety rules we would expect at an airport.

Now known as the Western Sydney Model Aviators club, until the onset of COVID the club was providing its membership with access to its facilities seven days a week, and running regular competitions and training for both members and guests as well as displays for members of the broader community. Due to the devastating impacts of both COVID-19 and the major flooding issues that have impacted Sydney's north-west in recent times, the club has been confronted with major challenges to being able to carry out its regular longstanding activities. In spite of these challenges, the club continues to offer opportunities for enthusiasts to learn and grow their love of model air sports, and is planning for a bigger and brighter future once circumstances permit. One of the immediate challenges will be to relocate the clubhouse to higher ground on the site to reduce further exposure to flood damage.

Bob and Jackie Carpenter have devoted years of their lives to the sport of model aviation as one of their broader interests and expertise in science, technology and general aviation, which they make available to interested schools. The club has hosted demonstrations of modern drone technology for school and social groups. I take this opportunity to recognise their work in this space and their dedication over decades to both the sport and the broader community. Apart from serving as president of the Western Sydney Model Aviators club for a number of years, Bob has served for 24 years as president of New South Wales Model Aviation and has been instrumental in advocating for and effecting change in model aircraft regulations over decades. Ably supported by his wife, Jackie, they have been at the forefront of embracing new model aircraft technologies, including in recent times drones and jet-turbine aircraft technology. The club has become a second home for many members who find in it real connections with other members of the community undertaking an activity they enjoy. I commend Western Sydney Model Aviators for playing this significant role within the Riverstone electorate.

### CAMP BREAKAWAY

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:30):** It gives me great pleasure this evening to talk about Camp Breakaway, which is a fantastic organisation that is on the edge of my electorate. It is actually over the border slightly in the electorate of Swansea, but it is an organisation I have had an association with for a very long time. Camp Breakaway is an organisation that gives people with a disability or severe illness and their families an opportunity for respite care. It is a really important resource, not just to the Central Coast but to the whole State.

Last Friday Camp Breakaway celebrated its fortieth birthday with a special ceremony and ball at Mingara Recreation Club, which was attended by a large number of people. On that night, through ticket sales, raffles and auctions, the organisation was able to raise \$30,000, which is an incredible amount. That money is important because Camp Breakaway has been through a really difficult time. First of all, it had to change its business model because of the NDIS. Previously it could get grants for camps, and popular camps could cross-subsidise other

camps. But when the NDIS started it had to charge people directly through their NDIS funding and that money was tied, so it could not then cross-subsidise other programs. Whilst it was able to continue running some camps, it could not run sibling camps because those siblings were not directly affected by the illness or disability.

Camp Breakaway used to accommodate young people with a disability and their families. The parents would partake in education and siblings would be given respite. Sometimes in the environment of 24/7 care, they do not always get the attention they might otherwise have. Unfortunately, the organisation had to change that model a bit. Then it was hit by COVID and was not able to operate at all. It has a small number of paid staff, but most staff are volunteers. Its board members are volunteers and the community has really come on board. The history of Camp Breakaway is that the Central Coast Rotary clubs banded together and built the whole facility. That was done through community fundraising. The land was gifted by Delta Electricity at the time and the community literally built the huts, the meeting hall and all of those sorts of things, so it has real community ownership.

But the organisation is really struggling at the moment. It is trying to come up with new ways of fundraising so it can go back to holding the camps it had before, but it has had to put off some staff and stop holding camps for a while until it builds up some funds to run its operations. It is not clear what the solution is. Our community is very generous. Also, through its fundraising officer, Sarah Evans, it has a partnership with Warnervale Airport and people are raising \$2,500 or \$5,000 for an organisation to do trick flights. That is a great initiative that has already raised \$15,000, but the organisation is trying to raise more.

These organisations do such an important job. This in-the-cracks organisation is filling a need that is not currently covered by the system. I hope we can come up with a proposal for them to be able to go back to full operation and again be engaged across the State with families who are in desperate need of respite care. I also hope that in the longer term they will go back to providing a service that is so vital to our community. We are working on that and having discussions. I hope that we can come up with a long-term solution. The organisation cannot be expected to continually run raffles and to hold stalls and markets to try to fund such an important service not just for the Central Coast but for the State of New South Wales.

#### THE PINK ELEPHANTS SUPPORT NETWORK

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (19:35):** The month of October is International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. Today I had the pleasure of attending The Pink Elephants Support Network breakfast with the Premier, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet; the Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell; and Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor. The Pink Elephants Support Network is an organisation that exists to support women and their partners who experience a common and devastating outcome of pregnancy: miscarriage. The Pink Elephants Support Network, which I shall refer to as Pink Elephants, provides the latest resources, information and peer support for anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss.

Using evidence, empathy and connection, the organisation strives to use a unique digital-first approach that offers a single source of specialist support, wherever and whenever it is needed, for anyone who has directly experienced early pregnancy loss—even for their family and friends or health care professionals who are seeking proven ways to help. It is estimated that one in four pregnancies ends in loss. That means many women walking among us have faced the trauma, grief, pain, confusion, questions, and even guilt, arising from their loss. Each year, more than 100,000 Australians experience this profound physical and emotional health issue. However, whilst the prevalence of miscarriage is widespread, there still exists barriers of silence, shame, guilt, lack of resources and awareness that prevent many women and their partners from seeking help.

We cannot ignore the pain and suffering that women, their partners and their families experience after early pregnancy loss. For too long this issue has been sidelined because it is difficult, painful and uncomfortable for many of us to talk about. But talking about one's experience helps to break down that shame. It helps to break down that silence and encourages others to speak up and ask for help if they need it. We need to ensure that the end result is not what it is at the moment: an increase in poor mental health outcomes for people who are not seeking the support that they need. Women are being left to navigate their grief, confusion and their disappointment alone. The mission of the Pink Elephants is to make lasting positive differences. They organise to help those experiencing early pregnancy loss feel cared for, protected and understood. When challenges seem insurmountable, the Pink Elephants strive to offer strength, validation and sanctuary.

I am proud to be a member of this New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government that has taken action to support families who have lived this experience by being the first government in Australia to enact five days of bereavement leave for those who experience early pregnancy loss. This landmark policy supports women who experience miscarriage or stillbirth and the leadership of our Government has also spurred on the private sector

to follow suit. However, there will always be room to improve. There will always be more opportunities for this Government, other employers, the wider community, family and friends to offer more support.

I note that the Investing in Women Funding Program has provided support to the Pink Elephants and I congratulate the Pink Elephants on being successful in that process. I thank the Liberal-Nationals Government for its leadership in this area. It is also incumbent on all of us to learn how to talk with someone who has experienced miscarriage—and, perhaps more importantly, to know what not to say to them—and to allow the individual woman to choose her journey towards healing. I thank the Pink Elephants for their enormously helpful work and for the meaningful difference they make to many lives in our communities. I especially thank them for the work they do to support the lives of women and families. Organisations such as The Pink Elephants Support Network have an enormous impact on those women and their partners who feel they may be alone in their struggle. I congratulate Sam Payne, who began Pink Elephants following her own struggle with miscarriage.

I also pay my deepest respects and appreciation to the Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, and to the Premier, the Hon. Dom Perrottet, for sharing their personal family journeys in mourning. I have spoken of my journey in this area at a number of public events, but it took me many, many years to have the ability and the emotional strength to go back to that time. I will never forget going to the obstetrician and looking up at that ultrasound image, expecting to see this fast-beating heart of the baby growing inside, only to see that there was no movement whatsoever. That devastation, that shock, takes a long time to heal from and it is something that pretty much no-one knows about because you are in too much pain to share. That is why it is so important to use days and months like this to raise the awareness and encourage women and their partners to seek help when and if they need it. I again congratulate The Pink Elephants Support Network.

### CANTERBURY HOSPITAL

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (19:40):** Once again I speak about Canterbury Hospital. Recently I sent out a community survey to my electorate, the results of which showed that Canterbury Hospital was one of the top two most important issues to them: one, cost of living; two, Canterbury Hospital. My community has told me about the extended hours they are spending in the emergency department [ED] waiting room. They told me about the lack of privacy in the antenatal clinic. They told me about having to travel for hours to other hospitals for access to angiograms, MRIs and dialysis.

Let me be clear: My community and I are eternally grateful to the incredible health staff at Canterbury Hospital. I have a very good relationship with the delegates from the Medical Staff Council, the Health Services Union and the Nurses and Midwives' Association. I commend them for their work. In particular, about a month ago the Nurses and Midwives' Association members held a rally. I stood there and took it all in. Members of this House well know that our health staff, and all people who work in services, do not hold back in telling us exactly what they think. That is exactly what they did with me. They made sure that I listened to every single word, every single issue and all the concerns they raised.

Hospital staff have endured so much in the past two years and they are still undergoing many hardships. Staff told me that working conditions at Canterbury Hospital are cramped and there is a lot of underfunding going on. There are a lot of vacancies and staff are under-resourced. The hospital needs more staff and more space. Despite all that the staff endure, they do an incredible job. The Bureau of Health statistics for the latest quarter show just how under-resourced our hospital is. Compared to the same time last year, we have seen an almost 10 per cent increase in emergency attendances but decreased rates in the number of patients starting treatment within 30 minutes and, of course, patients leaving emergency in under four hours is non-existent.

Tonight I will share some of the stories from my community survey. The response rate was 7 per cent, which was pretty good. Ebrahim of Campsie took his son to the ED where they waited for over four hours before seeing a doctor. Noeline of Earlwood said that her father-in-law waited hours before paramedics arrived at his home, and that the ED was so severely understaffed that his family was not properly consulted on his treatment. Unfortunately, her father-in-law has since passed away. Some members of the community said that patients with low mobility—because they are suffering from osteoarthritis—who attend the hospital's osteoporosis centre do not have designated disability parking for pick-up and drop-off. Others told me about their experiences in the antenatal clinic where women are forced into one room, all together—it is a very small space; I have seen it—where there is limited privacy and no space for both patients and staff.

I have raised this issue in this place previously and I will continue to raise it. The Minister came to Canterbury Hospital in November. He did not make any commitments, but I was expecting in the budget that he would at least take into consideration dialysis and particularly the space issues that we talked about. We have been waiting for far too long for the allocation of funding. I am trying to be very reasonable. We will be lodging a petition. I understand that resources are limited but our community was one of the 12 LGAs that was in lockdown and we have a very large multicultural community. Is this because we are a very large multicultural community

and we have language difficulties and barriers? People are working, they are dealing with their families. Is it because we are where we are? These are the questions that I am asking. I will continue to raise these issues until our hospital is funded for redevelopment.

### TULIP TIME FESTIVAL

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (19:45):** Spring has truly sprung this year, with the arrival of my electorate's favourite time of year: Tulip Time. Each year the floral festival attracts tens of thousands of locals and visitors to Corbett Gardens in Bowral to delight in the picturesque display of over 75,000 tulip bulbs and 15,000 annuals. This year was no different, with the festival attracting the largest number of attendees to date. Almost 61,000 people attended the festival to marvel at the sea of brightly coloured tulips. The tulip flower has always been a subject of fascination. The tulip has a rich history, beginning in the mountains of Kazakhstan in the sixteenth century, when the flower was first discovered. The flowers were taken and planted in the exquisite palace gardens of the Ottoman sultans, who were impressed with the beauty of the tulips.

The tulips became a symbol of power and wealth, with sultans wearing the flower on their turban. It is said that this is where the name "tulip" originated from, as the Persian word for turban is "tulipan". In the seventeenth century the obsession with tulips peaked, giving rise to "tulip mania". This refers to the period in the Dutch Golden Age, between 1634 and 1637, when the price of tulips reached extraordinary highs. The demand for tulips in the Dutch Republic was based on the flower being new to the market and its incredible beauty, which culminated in the price of a single tulip bulb being equivalent to the price of an Amsterdam canal house. In today's modern age, whilst we do not hold the tulip to the same monetary value, there is no doubt that the magic of the tulip is still appreciated today as it once was during tulip mania.

This is evident in our Tulip Time festival, which showed off the magnificence of tulips through the theme "Explore". Each year Tulip Time's head horticulturist, Rod McTernan, creates the festival's theme reflected in the garden bed designs. The 2022 theme of "Explore" was a powerful theme generated to reflect the festival's and the community's return to exploration after the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme was symbolised in a range of installations, including a rocket ship placed in the centre of the gardens. Visitors could also spot the festival's beach-themed installations, including beach umbrellas and grass cleverly dyed blue to represent the ocean.

This year's Tulip Time guest of honour, Liz Mitchell, was celebrated at the festival's launch. Liz is one of Tulip Time's biggest supporters, having attended the festival for the past 50 years, ever since she was a child. Tulip Time is close to the hearts of many people like Liz, with many beautiful memories of friends and family coming together to revel in the magic of the tulips. Tulip Time once again boasted an incredible live music scene, with many local bands and artists performing, including school bands from Oxley College and St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Moss Vale. My eight-year-old, Chloe, performed in the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church choir. She did very well at the opening—the Smith family continuing to serve the community across all generations.

For the first time ever, Tulips After Dark was held every Friday and Saturday night throughout the duration of the festival. The gardens were lit up for visitors to stroll in the park and admire the tulips under the moonlight. It certainly was an after-dark event, with pop-up wine bars from Joadja Estate and Artemis Wines for the adults to enjoy. Each year Tulip Time chooses a charity to support. This year Tulip Time supported the Southern Highlands organisation Harbison. Harbison provides aged-care services across the Southern Highlands, including specialised dementia and respite care. Activity days were held in the senior hall in Corbett Gardens during the festival, allowing Harbison residents to participate in the festivities. I thank the organising team for bringing Tulip Time to life in the incredible displays. My thanks extend to all the magnificent volunteers who displayed that beautiful country spirit and that warm Wollondilly charm in greeting visitors and locals during the three-week Tulip Time festival.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (19:50):** You would be forgiven if, when you were visiting a friend at 81-86 Courallie Avenue, Homebush West—the Centenary Park complex—you turned up to realise that 81-86 Courallie Avenue refers to about 30 different sites. This is not some strange dystopian fantasy but the daily reality of over 2,000 people who call 81-86 Courallie Avenue home. Friends and family, post and food deliveries, couriers and tradies all deal with the confusion of trying to locate a particular building on the block, which is designated by a letter—for example, building A. The issue is that the detailed building addresses have not been properly integrated or input into the address or geolocation databases queried by platforms and websites.

At a residents' meeting at Centenary Park on 17 September, residents told me about how they could not enter their address on retail websites when ordering online deliveries. More significantly, they could not readily

access services on Service NSW or Services Australia platforms because their addresses did not exist and had to be entered manually. A truly Kafkaesque situation would arise when the platform did not allow them to manually enter an address. It is like they do not exist. It is unacceptable that access to critical services such as Medicare, banking, utilities and the National Broadband Network are hampered by the inability to find one's address. Indeed, in emergency situations where clear, easy access can make a life-saving difference, it is simply dangerous.

Unfortunately the address problem is not the only one that Courallie Avenue residents need to deal with. In spite of being home to thousands of residents, the Centenary Park complex and its surrounds have limited bus services. The walk to the nearest train station, Flemington, is about one kilometre and the route includes having to cross two major roads, Marlborough Road and Centenary Drive. For elderly and disabled residents, or for those with young children, this is often a bridge too far. These specific challenges faced by Courallie Avenue residents point to overdevelopment in the absence of proper planning for amenity; overdevelopment without consideration given to infrastructure, services and livability for new and existing residents. It is what happens when you build big but think small, when the towers are tall but the vision is short-sighted. Public transport planning and access is a widespread problem for different pockets of the Strathfield electorate.

High density housing and planned major developments continue apace. Significant density increases will be delivered along the Parramatta Road corridor. Local residents are justified in their fears that these developments will not be accompanied by the infrastructure required to service rapid population increases. Livability and amenity are likely to plummet. The Strathfield electorate population has increased by 8.8 per cent between 2016 and 2021. There were nearly 7,000 new private dwellings built in the same period. Planned development will continue to substantially increase both these numbers. Housing supply is one of the most complex but urgent challenges facing our State. There are intractable issues and trade-offs required of policymakers and leaders. How do we improve housing affordability in an economic context of high inflation, soaring construction costs and workforce shortages?

How do we accommodate significant increases in population whilst preserving and protecting the character and heritage of our local areas? How do we ensure the urgency to provide additional housing supply is also partnered with sustainable development controls and criteria, strong consumer protections, and the provision of good infrastructure, green space, amenity and services so that local communities become more livable, vibrant and connected? How do we increase the supply and accessibility of social and affordable housing while managing the cost to government, as well as removing the stigma attached to such housing? Appropriate transport, school, hospital and other services must meet growing populations. Growth must be sensible and sustainable.

The New South Wales Government's housing targets must include attention to appropriate infrastructure. If they do not, inequities will get worse. If they do not, residents will bear the worsening impacts of development. They will be left without appropriate transport and they will be worried about their kids' access to schools, their families' access to local hospitals and the safety of their families on over-trafficked and dangerous roads. The New South Wales Government must not allow the need and urgency to increase housing supply and diversity to override crucial considerations about infrastructure, services and amenity. It must not be a piecemeal, inadequate, sluggish response to wholly predictable problems, such as those faced by residents in Courallie Avenue.

#### **FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNER NEDD BROCKMANN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:55):** We often hear from fellow members about the extraordinary people from our respective communities who do amazing things and who achieve lofty goals, breaking records, making personal sacrifices, putting others before themselves and dedicating themselves to an admirable cause. There are some truly amazing people. As many stories we hear about such extraordinary feats, another story always comes along that leaves us in awe. This story is about one such extraordinary individual who is undertaking a huge quest for the most worthy and noble of causes. I speak of Mr Nedd Brockmann, who hails from Bedgerabong in my electorate of Orange. Nedd moved to Sydney, the big smoke, as an apprentice electrician. As a boy from the bush, Nedd had not faced the realities of homelessness until he witnessed the many people living tough and sleeping rough on the streets of Sydney.

Nedd felt that everyone deserved to at least have a roof over their head and food to eat, and from that moment he was motivated to help the homeless. Motivated is too mild a description; he was compelled to help the homeless. Two years ago Nedd commenced a fundraising campaign in partnership with the Australian Red Cross and undertook to raise \$50,000 by running 50 42-kilometre marathons in 50 consecutive days, which is no mean feat, even for the healthy and fit 21-year-old man that he was back then. Commencing on 31 August 2020, Nedd ran a marathon every day thereafter until he successfully completed his 50 consecutive marathons in 50 consecutive days, and far exceeded his fundraising goal of \$50,000, raising closer to \$100,000 for the charity. Amazingly, Nedd undertook his daily marathon runs across Sydney while maintaining full-time work, five days a week, in addition to his TAFE training.

Nedd's charitable fundraising and physical endeavour was truly inspiring, but it pales in comparison to his next fundraising endeavour, which would take the homelessness awareness and fundraising campaign to an entirely new level. It is fair to say that, following his first fundraising endeavour, Nedd became committed to the homelessness cause and philanthropy became an increasing preoccupation for him. Fast-forward two years and Nedd launched his next homelessness awareness and fundraising campaign with extraordinary goals. Nedd conceived another fundraising initiative, which he named "Nedd's Record Run". He partnered with the charity We Are Mobilise to combine an extraordinary physical challenge to raise awareness and money for the homelessness cause.

On 1 September 2022 Nedd commenced a run of over 4,000 kilometres from Australia's west coast to its east coast in just 40 days. Nedd set off from Cottesloe Beach in Western Australia and planned to run 100 kilometres per day until he arrived at Bondi Beach less than six weeks later. He sought to fundraise \$1 million for charity in the process. Many sponsors have joined the cause, and the list is growing as the campaign progresses towards its completion. Nedd may once again exceed his fundraising goal, and I truly hope that is the case because his personal sacrifice is certainly worth that and more. Donations to date are at \$720,000. Anyone watching or listening can still donate to Nedd's Record Run. It is a herculean quest by a herculean human. I admire Nedd's extraordinary efforts to help Aussies in need and make such a huge personal sacrifice to accomplish his lofty goals.

While Nedd has on many days of his campaign exceeded his goal of at least 100 kilometres per day, he is human after all and injuries he has sustained along the way have taken their toll and prevented him from achieving the minimum and excruciatingly painful 100-kilometre run per day that would have set a new world record and further promoted his campaign. Twenty-three-year-old Nedd is tougher than an ox and more stubborn than a mule. In spite of suffering hip dysplasia, not having menisci in his knees, and stress injuries to his feet and ankles, he is soldiering on with a rare level of mental fortitude that pushes him to fight through the pain to complete his quest.

Nedd may have been slowed a tad, but he has not stopped. He has endured all kinds of weather, headwinds and terrain. He has chewed up every metre of the mighty Nullabor and kept running east. He is already well into New South Wales, and this afternoon he took a call from me as he was running. He said he was only 10 kilometres out of Wagga Wagga. Nedd is now on track to hit the finish line at Bondi Beach at 6.00 p.m. on Monday. Many thousands of Aussies have supported the boy from Bedgerabong, constantly giving him encouragement and toots of their horn as his trademark blonde mullet trails past in the breeze of his determined and unstoppable cadence. Nedd should be proud of his enormous philanthropic and physical accomplishments. He is a true champion of the Aussie battlers who are doing it tough, and he epitomises the tenacity, spirit and heart of our great nation. Nedd is a bloody legend.

### TEACHER SHORTAGES

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:00):** Recently I made a submission on behalf of the Blue Mountains to the New South Wales Parliament inquiry into teacher shortages. I began that submission reminiscing about how in 1991 when I emerged from university I was so incredibly excited to be entering such a noble profession as teaching. However, it was in the final decade of my near 30-year teaching career that things in the education sector started to shift. I was aware of my own diminishing faith in a system that seemed to be increasingly about outcomes that had very little to do with the wellbeing of either staff or students and all about what looked good on paper—ticking boxes and reporting constantly, which is an administrative overload.

Those same teachers that had shared my eagerness for the job were feeling it too, as collectively we struggled with changes to our profession that saw an unsurmountable increase in the demands placed on our roles. Greater accountability, greater responsibility, pushing workloads, the casualisation of the workforce and an escalation in administrative requirements all amounted to a decline in the reason we got into the job in the first place, which was to focus on our students and to teach. Sadly, under years of a neglectful government that preferred to over-fund private schools rather than invest in accessible-to-all public education, that trend has not only sustained but also magnified exponentially.

The feedback I receive consistently is that teachers are exhausted. They are fed up. They feel devalued and undermined. Good teachers are being lost and there is a failure to attract new ones to the profession. One high school in my electorate reported to me that over a 2½-term period, 359 of its senior classes were on minimum supervision. That means 359 senior classes were without a teacher. Think about that for a minute. That is one of the many dire repercussions of the teacher shortage crisis. I will read an excerpt from a heart-wrenching letter I received from a teacher in August this year. It states:

Public schools are on the verge of genuine crisis. It is not just a Sydney Morning Herald headline ... Morale is the worst I have seen it.

There are daily disruptions to teaching and learning programs as a direct result of teacher shortages.

Our schools are falling apart, the backlog of maintenance is enormous.

I am drowning under compliance paperwork.

The expectation on schools is ever increasing. The number of special needs students have increased significantly in recent years without the equivalent increase in funding and staffing levels to support these students. Staff expertise to support these students is critical yet supply of staff with those skill sets are limited and declining.

Are our public school kids worth less than endless infrastructure and pork barrel projects? Are they worth less than tunnels, toll roads, stadiums, museum relocations and carparks. They will not save our country from increasing class division and decreasing socio-economic mobility.

I need to remain anonymous as the Department of Education code of conduct is a weapon to silence well-founded criticism from within. Trish, I am considering resigning within the next 12 months after a 30 year career of services to the kids of the west. I have found years of joy working in public schools ... but can no longer tolerate the frustrations of a failing organisation.

They are strong words straight from the heart and straight from the front line. I have heard over and again that student behaviour, attitude and overall resilience is lessening, whilst vandalism, violence and social issues are on the rise. Make no mistake, this State is in the midst of an education crisis and the choice now is recovery or continued decline. As a former teacher, I still care deeply about what is happening in the education sector. I will continue to advocate for my local schools and the teaching profession more broadly for increased pay and improved working conditions; for upgrades to essential infrastructure; and for the critical need for an adequate, ongoing supply of teachers. There is no quick fix for a sector that has essentially been left to rot, but it is my hope that the voices of our teachers, our students and our parents will ultimately be heard.

I yearn to see a restoration of respect for our remarkable educators and to see them valued and given a seat at the table whenever there is a discussion or decision being made about the profession that they understand so expertly and intimately. But that will not just occur; it requires first an acknowledgment of the failings of the current system and then a real commitment now from this current Government to make public education a priority. Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty, for supporting a child's development and wellbeing and for closing the gap in social inequality. We need our teachers, and we need to take care of them. I extend my deep gratitude to all teachers who have spoken to me about their despair, the Independent Education Union, the Teachers Federation and TAFE Teachers Association.

### **HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE PROJECTS**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:05):** I acknowledge the critical projects being undertaken in Hawkesbury which, once completed, will go a long way to protecting lives, homes, farms and businesses in the region. The Government is committed to major projects, allocating funding that will prove to be an investment in Hawkesbury. First is the declaration of raising the Warragamba Dam wall as critical State-significant infrastructure. That declaration means that the project will be fast-tracked and will avoid getting caught up in red tape and legal challenges, which all too often inhibit the delivery of much-anticipated and much-needed infrastructure.

It is also important to note that even though this critical proposal will be fast-tracked, it will not avoid the stringent assessment and stakeholder scrutiny that is required. I am pleased to say that the Government's declaration is putting people first, instead of plants. It is an investment in residents of the Hawkesbury-Nepaan Valley. The urgency with which this project is being undertaken is a recognition of the many years of anxiety suffered by people living in the valley. That anxiety is brought on every time it rains. With another La Niña weather event forecast over coming months, Hawkesbury residents are bracing themselves for another nervous summer. Raising the wall is an investment in the future of Hawkesbury and making sure it is a place where people can settle and prosper for decades. I extend my thanks to the Premier for prioritising this project.

A second major investment in Hawkesbury was highlighted recently when I joined Steph Cooke, the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery, as we turned the sod on the new \$8 million Hawkesbury Fire Control and Emergency Operations Centre in Wilberforce. It was a great day, and we were joined by RFS volunteers and Hawkesbury City Council councillors for the sod turning. This facility is set to be completed in 2024. Once finished, it will support the 23 Hawkesbury brigades as well as provide RFS volunteers with a state-of-the-art site and the first-class equipment needed to respond effectively to major events.

In December 2019 after the Black Summer bushfires, then Premier Gladys Berejiklian visited the existing Hawkesbury RFS Fire Control Centre and saw the dire condition of the building. That visit got the desired attention of the Government and kickstarted the process of providing a new centre. Whether it is floods or fires, the new centre will provide a hub for staff and volunteers to respond safely and effectively. Those projects will do a lot to take the pressure off Hawkesbury families ahead of natural disasters, such as bushfires and floods. After several years of tragedies, including the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires and five floods in 18 months, it is time for change in how we as a government respond to these major events. While we cannot prevent natural disasters from occurring, making sure we are prepared is one way to try to minimise the destruction inflicted by

them. Investing in critical infrastructure, like raising the wall of Warragamba Dam and building a new fire control and emergency operations centre, is acknowledging the pain and disaster of the past and then building on that experience to prepare and prevent future tragedies.

I acknowledge the impact that an additional 14 metres on the Warragamba Dam wall will make to the lives and livelihoods of people living and trading in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. In a flood event mirroring the worst on record in the valley, the extra 14 metres will mean that the number of people required to evacuate will be dramatically reduced from 90,000 to 14,000 and the number of homes impacted will drop from 15,500 to 5,000. The financial impact of repeated flooding is not to be ignored. Raising the wall by 14 metres will assist in alleviating the cost of damages, tipped to be reduced by up to \$8 billion. You cannot put a price tag on safety, but these investments by the Government in supporting the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley against fires and floods is a welcome step towards making it a safer place to live and prosper.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:10):** I commend the member for Hawkesbury for her outstanding private member's statement. It is a classic example of her deep connection with her local community. She has been a long-term supporter of the RFS in her area and she has also personally experienced the disastrous effects of floods in her local area and across the valley. I strongly support her calls for raising the dam wall and I am very pleased with the Government's work towards it.

### PORT STEPHENS SCHOOLTEACHERS

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:10):** I acknowledge the many hardworking local teachers in Port Stephens and shine a light on the disgraceful way they are being treated by this 12-year-old Liberal-Nationals Government. As I have shared in this House many times before, I am the proud daughter of two teachers. I know the skill, dedication and care that it takes to be a teacher because I grew up with it. My father was a school principal and my mum taught at TAFE. Teaching has always been a challenging but rewarding profession and it has always attracted hardworking, community-minded people who are committed to making a difference to the lives of young people.

As a local member of Parliament, I love spending time in our local schools and speaking with teachers. I see firsthand the incredibly important impact that teachers have in our local community and the power that they have to put young people on positive paths for their lives. It has been so difficult for me to hear from local teachers who are thinking of walking away from the profession. After 12 long years, this Government has pushed our teachers beyond breaking point, in public schools and in independent schools. Teachers are working more than 60 hours per week and yet they are spending less time in the classroom.

The workload of a modern teacher involves more and more paperwork, administration and bureaucracy, while trying to do what they love—teaching. Despite the increasing demands on teachers while dealing with increased complexities in the classroom and more paperwork outside of the classroom, this 12-year-old Government has pushed teacher salaries down. It is an undeniable fact that in New South Wales over the past decade teacher salaries have fallen further and further behind other similarly qualified professions.

Unsustainable workloads and lower salaries have been the catalysts for teachers leaving their jobs. The NSW Teachers Federation has highlighted the shocking teacher retention rates in our schools, with one in eight teachers leaving the profession entirely within six years of starting. An increasing number of teaching graduates are choosing to not even start and to use their skills outside the classroom where they can earn more money and deal with less stress. Right now in New South Wales more than 1,600 full-time teaching positions are vacant. Just think about that for a second. That is 1,600 vacant positions. Imagine how many students are missing out on learning because of those vacancies. We do not need to imagine; we simply have to visit any of our local schools to see the devastating impact.

Every day in Port Stephens dozens of classes are being cancelled and dozens of classes are being collapsed, with some teachers supervising more than 60 students at a time and not teaching them. They cannot possibly teach 60-plus kids, often standing outside in a covered outdoor learning area. At one of the high schools, 38 classes were collapsed into 19 and 11 classes were supervised by non-teaching staff on one day alone. At another school, 28 classes were cancelled or collapsed, 32 classes were merged or split and 11 classes were supervised by non-teaching staff over a one-week period. At a primary school, classes were collapsed 10 times over one week because there simply were not enough teachers. It is little wonder that student academic results in New South Wales are plummeting and, as always, the most disadvantaged students are being impacted the most.

But I am not going to mention school names because it is not the fault of the principals and it is not the fault of the teachers. It is the fault of the New South Wales Liberal Government, which has undermined our local schools and the entire education system for 12 long years. Local parents in Port Stephens know it. They see it every day and they are fed up. In Port Stephens, we cannot even get our school buses to turn up—and I am not

joking. Since 26 July, nearly 300 government-funded school buses have been cancelled by Hunter Valley Buses, leaving students stranded on the side of the road, so our students cannot even get to school. But when they get to school, the teacher shortage means that their classes are collapsed and, day after day, students are being supervised by non-teaching staff. It is not right, and it is not sustainable.

Instead of admitting there is a problem and trying to fix it, the Government is trying to pretend the problem does not exist and that everything is fine. It blames COVID, teachers, the Teachers Federation or the Independent Education Union. It even blames Labor. But the problem was brewing well before COVID. Even after 12 long years in government, the Liberals and The Nationals do not have the decency to take responsibility—ever. There is no hope that they will fix the problem because they will not even acknowledge the problem. The only way our schools and our teachers will get the respect and the resources they deserve is for a change in government next March. That is what I will be fighting for on behalf of our teachers, our parents and, most importantly, our kids.

### WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:15):** I speak on local bus services in the Willoughby electorate and outline areas where it can be enhanced so it is fully working for our local community. The area has historically been well serviced by transport options and a reliable, well-serviced public transport network has become essential to the daily lives of all of us in the Willoughby community. Recently bus services have come under strain from the flow-on impacts of the pandemic, an unprecedented shortage of bus drivers due to a highly competitive labour market, as well as ongoing staff absences due to COVID-19 and seasonal illness. The problem is not exclusive to Willoughby or to the bus sector. Industries across the country have faced similar issues and shortages. But we do need to ensure that all that can be done is being done to alleviate those pressures.

Recently I met with local bus operator Busways and visited the Willoughby bus depot—indeed, on two occasions—to see firsthand the issues and challenges. Every day the depot faces being short almost one-fifth of its full workforce. I have met with the leadership of Transport for NSW, the Minister and Busways, and have also reached out to Keolis Downer and the Neutral Bay bus depot to confirm that effective actions are underway to ensure that service reliability is being restored. Measures undertaken include recruitment drives, open days, enhanced retention measures such as bonus pay, and improvements to shift design and rostering. Together, those measures are working to improve the service and cancellations have fallen to half of their peak. But more can be done and I will ensure that all options are being pursued.

I am also pursuing initiatives such as the permanent reinstatement of free employee Opal cards for all bus drivers and strengthened access to traffic information and insights, including access to the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] traffic cameras for all bus operators. There is more to do, but the service is improving and reliability will be restored. I encourage commuters to continue providing feedback via the Opal app or the Transport website. I record the gratitude of the Willoughby community to all bus depot staff and drivers for their service to the Willoughby area every day in such challenging times. I also thank the commuting public for their patience and understanding. I appreciate it has not been easy.

There should be clarity on the root cause of the driver shortages. Some people have tried to suggest it is due to privatisation. It is not. For many years, when I grew up on Penshurst Street, I was a daily user of Forest Coach Lines buses to Chatswood station. It was a very good service and still is today. It was a franchised service, and that approach has been around for many years among many sectors and by governments of all kinds. Again, it is not privatisation. The State Government continues to own the buses and depots, set fares and control the routes and services that franchise operators are contracted to provide. The Government must use that control to ensure that the service, including routes and frequencies, is meeting the travel demands of the community. Service design relies on the accuracy of data and modelling. COVID has undoubtedly changed our travel habits and, as we now return to a new normal, updated modelling is needed. We need assurance that Opal data is accurate. I appeal to all people, including schoolkids, to ensure that they tap on and off.

I have been a strong advocate for the Willoughby community's need for enhanced routes. One of those routes was a direct service to Royal North Shore Hospital from the hospital's west. In a major win, next month that service will commence from Chatswood to the hospital as route 113. I welcome this vital service, particularly for our sick and elderly members of the community, and I thank the Government for responding. Willoughby residents are also united on the need for an east-west service from Chatswood to Balmoral via Willoughby. I will continue to be a strong advocate for the restoration of what was route 257. I am also working to ensure that adequate capacity exists through the spine of Willoughby on Penshurst Street and Willoughby Road on routes to the CBD, particularly during the peak.

There is also a need to ensure that the location of bus stops is right. Too often responsibilities are blurred between councils, the State Government and bus operators. A well-designed network will consider the optimum location of stops, and I will bring stakeholders together to address this issue. The safety of users of our buses,

particularly at night, is also in need of improvement. Bus stops must be adequately lit to ensure that all commuters, particularly women, feel safe and able to utilise services at all hours. No-one should feel some buses are off limits. The Government has made encouraging moves to improve lighting to enhance women's safety and I want to see those initiatives expanded more widely.

A particular local long-term project is the improvement of Chatswood bus interchange. As the convergence point of many bus routes and other transport modes, Chatswood has become a very busy area and is congested with buses. It is clear that the existing interchange will become unable to cope with the demands on Chatswood as a commuter hub. I am advocating for a study to be commissioned into a new or upgraded bus interchange at Chatswood. The time to plan that is now. I will always be a passionate advocate for the enhancement of Willoughby's local bus service, and I am determined to see it will be the best it possibly can be.

### **SPORT AND EXERCISE**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:21):** COVID hit my electorate in western Sydney pretty hard. It had a significant impact, indeed, on exercise and sports in the community, alongside all the other impacts. For many people in my region, there was often little space within the five-kilometre zone that could be accessed. Indeed, the Rookwood cemetery became an important open space to do exercise because it was the only place within five kilometres of many people within the Lidcombe and Berala region.

Although COVID has had an effect on the way we exercise, not all of it has been negative. According to the July 2022 sports participation update in the latest AusPlay participation figures, compared with 2019, the number of activities per person for those aged 15 and over has increased, and people are adding unstructured activities to their daily routine. We also have a new entrant in the top 20 activities, with "exergaming" becoming a top 20 activity for ages 15-plus, going from less than 10,000 participants in 2019 to 935,000 in 2021. Unsurprisingly, online exercise sessions have also increased. The biggest increases in exergaming were in the States with lockdowns, particularly Victoria and New South Wales.

But the pandemic has had quite a different effect on children's participation in sport. The year-on-year proportion of children participating in sport three or more times a week has fallen significantly. The year-on-year decline in one-plus participation per week has been felt across all sports and physical activities for children. Of particular concern is the significant drop in swimming lessons and the full impacts may not be felt for many years to come.

In western Sydney, those figures are more complicated by the hard lockdown and the low numbers of children involved in organisations before the lockdown. They were far more complicated before the lockdown. In 2018, just 53 per cent of children eligible for the Active Kids rebate in the Western Sydney Local Health District registered for the vouchers. According to one of the few studies in the health promotion journals, there was a significant difference between the least and most disadvantaged local government areas [LGAs]. The study showed that in the most disadvantaged LGAs only 31 per cent of children were registered. We can see those figures across the Active Kids dashboard, which shows a significant disparity. In Fairfield, only 35 per cent of children were registered for Active Kids vouchers and, in Auburn, only 39 per cent of children were registered.

Compare that with Ku-ring-gai, where 77 per cent of children have registered; Epping, 82 per cent; Cammeray, 79 per cent; and Birchgrove, 65 per cent. Meanwhile in my electorate, Granville and Berala still sit at around 43 per cent and 44 per cent respectively. In areas like Fairfield that means over 10,000 children are eligible for Active Kids rebates but 6,559 are missing out. The suburb of Fairfield is getting \$1.9 million in Active Kids rebates but there is \$6.3 million sitting there that should be going towards getting these kids on the field. Epping has 1,239 missing from its figures when 5,646 kids are actually registered. There is a huge disparity. Over the term of Active Kids rebates, members will see that Auburn has only had 16,000 and Epping has had 28,000. That is where we get the disparities of six million and five million between suburbs. It is time we looked at how kids in those areas are exercising and where this money is going. It is time to make sure that we are getting the most bang for our buck and getting kids out on the sporting field.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

### **BUSINESS OF THE YEAR – GREGORY HILLS HOTEL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I would like to acknowledge the prominent achievement of Gregory Hills Hotel in winning the Business of the Year Award in the Camden Local Business Awards. It is with profound joy that I say the Camden and Macarthur community has a great many businesses who serve the community to the highest calibre of care and quality. Therefore, to win this award is a testament to the special level with which Gregory Hills Hotel operate. Congratulations to John Payne, and the team that work to make it all possible. To win this award is not an easy feat. Your efforts and passion have not gone unnoticed, sincerely well done.

**LOUISE SPARKES**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I would like to applaud and offer my congratulations to Louise Sparkes for being named Camden Business Person of the Year in the Camden Local Business Awards. Louise operates Pineapple Marketing & Promotions, an award-winning business that helps local small and medium businesses stand out. Whilst this is a special award for Louise, I would like to acknowledge that both herself and her business have accumulated many accolades and awards in recent years due to your hard work. It is always great to see someone who helps others with their work and passion, succeeding and prospering. Once again, great work Louise and congratulations on your achievement, you have really earned it.

**SOPHIE BLACKMORE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I would like to commend and applaud Sophie from Extract Espresso, Gregory hills. Sophie has won the reputable Youth Award in the Camden Local Business Awards. The Youth Award is open to young people up to the age of 25. Such awards are an important mechanism in recognising the commitment and contribution that young people have both on our local community and economy. The awards serve to inspire and call forth the very best skills and talents that all young people are capable of mastering. Once again, well done to Sophie from Extract Espresso and to her managers and mentors. I am sure that this will be the first of many awards and accolades Sophie will earn.

**BANKSTOWN SPORTS STARS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I take this opportunity to recognise one of our treasured local Football Clubs, Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club, on an outstanding football season this year. I commend all players, officials and supporters involved with Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club, and congratulate all the teams that competed in the Grade 14 Division 1, Grade 15 Division 2, All Ages Men's Division 8 and Grade 15 Ladies Division 1 on winning their respective competitions this season as part of the BDAFA Competition. This is a well-deserved result, and one the Club should be very proud of. I acknowledge Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club, President Frank Fruci, Treasurer Louie Taouk, Secretary Houda Hamze, as well as the coaches, players and volunteers, and congratulate the club on a successful season. I also further commend Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club, on their continued efforts in promoting football within our local community. I am proud to offer my support for Bankstown Sports Stars, and thank the club for their dedication towards supporting high participation rates in football across our region and in supporting local families.

**BANKSTOWN SPORTS STRIKERS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I take this opportunity to recognise one of our treasured local Football Clubs, Bankstown Sports Strikers Football Club, on an outstanding football season this year. I commend all players, officials and supporters involved with Bankstown Sports Strikers Football Club, and congratulate all the teams that competed in the All Age Men's Division 6 and 17/18 Ladies on winning their respective competitions this season as part of the BDAFA Competition. This is a well-deserved result, and one the Club should be very proud of. I acknowledge Bankstown Sports Strikers Football Club President John Dacciaro, Treasurer Andrew Skaltsounis, Secretary Mark Merlino, as well as the coaches, players and volunteers, and congratulate the club on a successful season. I also further commend Bankstown Sports Strikers, on their continued efforts in promoting football within our local community. I am proud to offer my support for Bankstown Sports Strikers, and thank the club for their dedication towards supporting high participation rates in football across our region and in supporting local families.

**BIRRONG SPORTS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I take this opportunity to recognise one of our treasured local Football Clubs Birrong Sports Football Club, on an outstanding football season this year. I commend all players, officials and supporters involved with Birrong Sports Football Club and congratulate the Under 12 Boys Division 3 on winning their respective competition this season as part of the BDAFA Competition. This is a well-deserved result, and one the Club should be very proud of. I acknowledge Birrong Sports Football Club President Tyrone Wait Vice President Phillip Maratheftis, Treasurer Ann Wait, Secretary Michelle Davis, as well as the coaches, players and volunteers, and congratulate the club on a successful season. I also further commend Birrong Sports, on their continued efforts in promoting football within our local community. I am proud to offer my support for Birrong Sports Football Club, and thank the club for their dedication towards supporting high participation rates in football across our region and in supporting local families.

**CARINGBAH ROTARY CLUB**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I commend Caringbah Rotary Club for their ongoing 'Rotary Care Pack' initiative in the Sutherland Shire. The care packs are funded by community donations

and include a range of small goods for people in need. In the past 18 months alone, over 700 care packs have been delivered to people in the Sutherland Shire. Care packs are distributed through local organisations including Sutherland Shire Food Services, Project Youth, Kurranulla Aboriginal Women's Organisation, Dandelion Support Network, Activus Transport, Sutherland Hospital, and Kingsway Care. I thank the affiliated organisations, volunteers, and the following Caringbah Rotarians for their dedication and service to the local community: President Jeff Eager, Barbara and Dave Harris, and Pam Brown.

#### **SARAH WASER – WOOLLOOWARE HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate Sarah Waser of Woollooware High School on receiving the 2022 NSW Minister's Award for Excellence. Sarah was one of 40 Year 12 students who received the Minister's Award for their efforts in academic, sporting, cultural and leadership fields, commitment to school community, and personal values. Sarah's citation for the award reads: "Sarah Waser is an outstanding student who works diligently to achieve excellent academic results, while studying a highly rigorous pattern of study for her HSC. Sarah is School Captain of Woollooware High School. She is an outstanding manager of her leadership team, always leading by example, and is determined to make a difference. Sarah actively participates at an elite level in representative Football as Captain of her team, both in Sydney East teams competing at NSWCHS tournaments, and in a local representative team, playing first grade. It has been an honour to witness Sarah Waser's leadership of her school." I commend Sarah for her efforts and wish her the best of luck for her future endeavours.

#### **NORTH CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB - 2022 LIFESAVING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate Sari McKee and Warwick Cavanagh of North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club for their success at the 2022 Lifesaving World Championships. The Championships, held this year in Riccione, Italy, are a biennial event that see thousands of international competitors compete in surf lifesaving. Sari won gold in the W15-19 2km run and bronze in the W15-19 Sprints. Warwick competed in the masters' titles, winning gold in the 75+ Male Board Race, 75+ Male Beach Flags, and the 75+ Male Beach Sprint. I commend Sari and Warwick for their outstanding efforts.

#### **THE SIMPLE GIFT OF A BAG INITIATIVE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—The Simple Gift of a Bag initiative started eight years ago when Lauri Fettel and her family rallied together to form the group after Lauri received a hand-made carrying pouch for her drainage bag during her breast cancer journey. The volunteer group are marking October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month by holding their third sewing, cutting and making day of drainage bags for breast cancer surgery patients in post-operative care. Sandra is inviting everyone to come along and help this year with plenty to do, even if you don't sew. The event will be held at Kiama Downs Surf Club, and all bags made will be donated to hospitals across Australia. There is folding and cutting out the bags before they are sewn, and ironing before they are packed. They also add a small card to each bag for the patients, so there is ribbon cutting and attaching to the cards. The group has now donated over 19,600 bags. The event is this Saturday 15th October 2022 at Kiama Downs Surf Life Saving Club, from 9:30 am to 4 pm.

#### **KIAMA LIONS CELEBRATING TWO SPECIAL MILESTONES**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Australia's largest service club organisation, Lions Australia, has reached its 75th milestone. Starting from one Lions Club in Lismore, there are now over 30,000 members in more than 1,300 clubs across Australia. The Kiama Lions Club was formed in 1969 and has a proud history of helping the community through many projects. One of their initiatives, the Cancer Care Trust Fund, is also celebrating a milestone - supporting local cancer sufferers and their carers for 25 years. The Fund does practical things like pay for palliative care medicines, financially help families who need to travel to and from Sydney hospitals for treatment and support people with their mental health. Russell Fredericks and Gerry McInerney have responsibility for the Cancer Care Trust Fund. On Friday 30th September, to celebrate 75 years of Lions Australia and Kiama Lions longest running program, members attended Albion Park Bunnings for a celebratory sausage sizzle and cake. The work Kiama Lions does for the community began with their first project which helped raise money for the Meals on Wheels van and also established the Lions Carers Cottage.

#### **GERRINGONG RFS MANGOES FUNDRAISER**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—The perfect chance to pick up fresh mangoes straight from the farm gate whilst helping out a terrific cause is back with the return of the Gerringong Rural Fire Service Mango Fundraiser. After two years missed due to COVID, locals can now order a tray of mangoes with all profits going straight to the Gerringong RFS. The summer fundraiser started five years ago, and Commander Andrew Downes says in the past there has been many happy customers with the RFS raising over \$800 last time it was on. The money allows Gerringong RFS to buy additional items which are needed to help them do their jobs for the brigade.

The Bowen Special Mangoes will come directly to the RFS from the North Queensland farm, after they are picked up late November. Mangoes are always popular – a lot of people on the South Coast region always enjoy fresh mangoes produce – especially as we head into the warmer summer months. The 7kg trays are \$25 each, orders close Wednesday 19th October 2022. Please contact Julia on 0411 685 607 or via email to [julia@calmandconnection.com.au](mailto:julia@calmandconnection.com.au)

#### **CLAIRE ASHPOLE**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)**—Today I recognise Claire Ashpole, Life Member and President of Thornleigh Netball Club. For 50 years, Claire has been an active member, starting in the 11/4s and right through her junior years. She began coaching in 1991 and joined the club's committee in 1995. Claire also served as President of Thornleigh Sports Club, until 2018. Claire has dedicated much of her life to netball, continuously playing both day and night competitions. Even when she was heavily pregnant with Hanna, she was still involved as a coach. A career highlight for Claire was being able to play night comp with Hannah and her two nieces. Together they won their Grand Final in 2012. Claire refers to the Thornleigh netball club as "the family netball club" because it has always been home to generations players and possesses a strong family culture. As her husband, Roy, certainly knows. Claire's commitment to the club, passion for netball, out-of-the-box ideas, positive attitude and genuine love for every player, is unequalled. I thank Claire Ashpole for all she has done for our netball community, and it was my pleasure to recently award her a Community Service Award.

#### **WPHC GIRLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)**—Today I recognise West Pennant Hills Cherrybrook Cricket Club and the work they are doing growing female participation in cricket. The club has grown their female cricketers to 80 players through a number of special programs. Recently the club launched playing outfit for the girls with a spectacular Aboriginal design. This design has been endorsed by the local Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation. The inaugural Festival of Girls Cricket is planned with Girls Teams from Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai and other North Shore regions playing over a full day at major local grounds. The Club has created pathway options for female cricketers who want to pursue involvement with cricket into Club Leadership, coaching and other volunteer activities. To this end, Danielle Chivers has joined the Club Executive as its youngest ever Executive member and is responsible for running the Junior Blasters program. Five other girls are involved as accredited and paid Club Coaches. In May the club was awarded Cricket Australia's prestigious "Women and Girls Initiative of the Year" for their work with a Girls Leadership program. I congratulate this proactive sports club for their unique and important developments to further support female participation and development in cricket.

#### **VOLUNTEER BRENDAN LIMBREY, HORNSBY/BEROWRA JUNIOR AFL CLUB**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Treasurer, and Minister for Energy)**—As a senior AFL player Brendan Limbrey was very keen to introduce his three daughters to the sport. He enthusiastically got involved in the first year of his eldest daughter playing Auskick with Hornsby Berowra Junior AFL Club and took on the coordinator's role. Since 2019 Brendan has grown the club's Auskick program in terms of girls and boys participation, as well as parent engagement. He recruits volunteers for the club with his persuasive approach, by saying, "I have a job I need you to take care of." Of course, no one ever refuses. Weekly Brendan is first on ground and has created opportunities for Auskickers to have amazing experiences both on and off the field. As his daughters grow older Brendan graduated to the role of coach of the club's Under 10s Girls team, creating a clear and important pathway for girls footy locally. Brendan displays everything required to be a successful community sport volunteer. The club loves him, respects him and is energised by him and his significant efforts. It is my pleasure to recognize Brendan Limbrey's contribution to the club and girls AFL football.

#### **AIDAN REALLY AND VERONICA BALSAMELLO**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to Aidan Really and his mother Veronica Balsamello who have turned their own family tragedy into an opportunity to raise funds to help others. After losing their father and husband to cancer last year they have turned their hands to fundraising for Kids with Cancer, Grafton's oncology patients and providing food for animals affected by the floods. Aidan has been baking cupcakes which he sells locally to raise funds for Kids with Cancer, they sell bandanas etc to raise additional funds and then when the floods came they held a number of BBQs and raffles to raise much needed money to assist with food for animals affected by the floods and they raised over \$17,000 which is an outstanding effort. I think we could all learn a great deal by watching this selfless attitude that Aidan and Veronica have displayed and I wish them continued success into the future.

### UMINA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I offer a huge congratulations to Umina Surf Life Saving Club for their fabulous results at this years NSW State Pool Rescue Championships held at Peninsula Leisure Centre in July. Special mention to the 23-strong Youth team, who fielded a competitor in almost every race, achieving several podium finishes to sit second overall. With eight golds, nine silvers and six bronzes, there are too many fantastic results to individually list. Not to be outdone, the Masters and Opens teams also had a great weekend, finishing fourth and sixth, respectively – along with their own share of medals. Umina finished the championships with a huge haul of 15 gold, 15 silver and eight bronze medals. I also congratulate the coaching team for their excellent performance, and thank all the volunteers, timekeepers, announcers, pool setters for their tireless work. Thanks to their dedication, enthusiasm and comradery, Umina Surf Life Saving Club continues to be one of the best on the Coast. Congratulations again and thank you for all you do!

### CENTRAL COAST OUTRIGGER CANOE CLUB 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to congratulate the Central Coast Outrigger Canoe Club who celebrated their 25th anniversary in September. The Club offers the fantastic opportunity for Central Coast locals to enjoy the beautiful natural coastline and waterways. They provide canoeing opportunities for people of all age groups and skill levels, as well as opportunities for training, coaching, and competitive and social paddling. The Outriggers community engagement extends to a number of initiatives including their participation in cleaning the flood debris and pollution along the Hawkesbury River with Clean4Shore. The Club shares its long-standing dedication to the community in promoting the well-being, fitness and skills of its members, as well as their competitive success through the participation in championship regattas. In commemoration of their milestone achievement of 25 years, the Club celebrated with their past, current and founding members by paddling down the Coast's channels, along with an anniversary dinner and awards ceremony. I'd like to sincerely thank the Central Coast Outrigger Canoe Club for their ongoing contribution to our community, and to, once again, congratulate the Club on 25 fantastic years.

### DON TEE

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Congratulations to Don Tee, who has been serving our community with passion and enthusiasm for many years and is celebrating 40 years of continuous service to the Rotary Club of Woy Woy. Don is also celebrating over 50 years with Rotaract and Rotary, his journey beginning in the 1970s when a knock on the door initiated a lifelong commitment to his local community. Since joining Woy Woy Rotary in 1982, Don has been an integral part of the Club, serving as President, Vice-President, International Director as well as Community Service Director. For over 35 years Don has been a constant presence on the Club's Board. Don's dedication to local organisations and projects, such as Mary Macs and PCYC Umina Beach, selling Christmas Trees, providing tea, coffee and candles for Anzac Day Services, as well as his willingness to step into the President's role when left vacant, truly exemplifies service above self. Don will receive a third Sapphire Pin to go with his Paul Harris Fellow for exceptional service to the community and Woy Woy Rotary. Thank you and congratulations Don for your wonderful contributions to our local community!

### WARILLA HIGH SCHOOL YEAR 12 COHORT

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations and admiration to the graduating year 12 class of Warilla High School, who spent their final day of school before their HSC exams raising much-needed funds for cancer research. Two of this year-groups schoolmates had previously undergone chemotherapy treatment, which pushed the cohort to decide they wanted to raise money for those who might be going through a similar challenging experience. The organisers of the sausage sizzle which was held on the year 12 muck-up day, expressed that they wanted to give a gift of gratitude as a part of their final day of their high-school journey. The group sold over 500 sausages and raised over \$1000 to donate to the Cancer Council Australia as a result of their efforts. The year-group should be incredibly proud of themselves for using their final day of their schooling journey to give back to the community and contributing to a much-needed cause. Congratulations again to Warilla High School's year 12 cohort and best of luck for your upcoming exams.

### MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I thank the Macedonian Orthodox Church Management Committee for their incredible efforts in organising the Gala Ball to celebrate the 50th year of the Macedonian Orthodox Community Church, Saint Dimitrija Solunski, in Wollongong. The first stone of the Church was laid on 4 April 1971 and it was completed, blessed, and opened in 1972. The Gala Ball will be held on 29 October 2022 at the Sun Lounge Reception Centre in Wollongong, and I am looking forward to being a guest of the hard-working President of the Management Committee, Lou Stefanovski, when we celebrate a half century of this wonderful Community Church.

### **HURSTVILLE ADVENTIST CHURCH PARTNERS WITH SYDNEY CITY MISSION AND LIFESTYLE CENTRE ON A FREE POP-UP FOOD PANTRY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Thank you to the Hurstville Adventist Church for launching a weekly stall filled with grocery items for disadvantaged people in the community. This is the first time this charity has partnered with a St George church and already the turnout has been quite a success after a letterbox drop. More people than expected registered to come along in what are challenging times for many, clearly demonstrating that a need exists in the area. Entirely volunteer-run by church members, the pop-up pantry hands out items including bread, canned vegetables, milk, rice, pasta, muesli bars, noodles, and fresh fruit and vegetables. People can save anywhere from \$30 to \$60 which is a big saving in a weekly budget on a grocery bill if people are struggling with rent, electricity bills or fuel. Congratulations to all involved in setting this up and running the much-needed pantry. Their selfless contribution is helping so many. Thank you for your generosity of time and effort.

### **GABBIES SEWING ANGELS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—A very big thank you to the wonderful volunteers of Gabbies Sewing Angels, which was founded by Patricia Will just over 20 years ago, and who is now 86! These dedicated volunteers have been making all types of children's and adults' clothing from donated fabric and once sewn into garments are distributed to charities both in Australia and overseas, including Syria, Timor Leste, Fiji and the Philippines. They have also made garments for bushfire victims and Aboriginal settlements in the Northern Territory. Christmas is a particularly busy time – they make approximately 8,000 garments. This past week the volunteers completed an especially important task, sending 10 bags of clothing, hand-knitted tops, wraps, blankets and bed linen to flood affected families in the Lismore district. And this is after sending 12 bags a month ago. Gabbies has about 40 members, both men and women, aged from 42 to 90 and welcomes people from all ages and religions. They meet at the St Gabriel's church hall at Bexley on Thursdays and have a fully equipped workshop with sewing machines, overlockers and cutting tables, all of which have been donated. Thank you to these committed volunteers for their excellent work.

### **OLD KOGARAH INN PRESERVATION**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I acknowledge the work of Georges River Council in preserving the building known as the Old Kogarah Inn, located on the Princes Highway at Carlton. Council has acted to preserve the building for its heritage significance, following its compulsory acquisition. The Council has also resolved to continue to make the building available for appropriate community use into the future. The Old Kogarah Inn was built by James English in 1879 and opened for business in 1882 as a staging post and hotel. It has had many different uses over the years, including as a restaurant, a boarding house and at one time was subdivided into flats. It is currently used as a branch of the Nan Tien Buddhist Temple, which is based at Wollongong.

### **SABIAN MANDAEAN COMMUNITY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I wish to recognise the 2022 Mandaean Appreciation Awards Ceremony held on Wednesday 28 September at the Mandi Ganzibra Dakhila and Mandaean Community Centre at 9 Pirie St, Liverpool. The purpose of the Ceremony was to acknowledge and present awards to people who had contributed to assisting the community during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This included medical professionals and workers at NGOs, and also included many volunteers who helped with food distribution and other activities. Awards were also issued to those who sponsored these efforts. Many groups and communities responded to the challenges, which was particularly acute in western and south western Sydney, created by the Pandemic. A characteristic of many of these responses was resistance and communal solidarity. These are things to be acknowledged and celebrated. I should acknowledge the role of Salah Chohili and Yassmen Yahya.

### **WOLLONDILLY ANGLICAN COLLEGE COUNTRY FAIR**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I was pleased to attend the first Wollondilly Anglican College Country Fair that has been held since COVID. The fair was held at the school in Tahmoor on the 10th of September, and the turnout once again was great. The event is one of the largest in the region, attracting, on average, 5000 people each year. The Wollondilly Anglican College truly outdid themselves, with the fair having everything you could wish for. There were amusement rides, slides, food trucks, local markets and craft stalls, medieval combat displays, pony, and camel rides... the list goes on! There was something for everyone, especially the children who I am sure had the times of their lives running around the grounds, enjoying all that was to offer. Thank you to Wollondilly Anglican College and everyone involved in bringing the fair to life. Such a unique, large-scale event would have required immense effort and work. It was certainly worth it as the fair was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone, including myself.

### MARIA AND BRUNO LOPREIATO

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Maria and Bruno Lopreiato are worthy of recognition for their invaluable contributions to the Silverdale and Warragamba communities. Maria and Bruno moved to Silverdale from Italy in 1986 and have ever since have been active in the community, through both business and charitable endeavours. Maria has served the Silverdale Post Office for 28 years, after she took over as licensee in 1994. Consequently, Maria has been a fixture in the local community through her long service, in addition to her duties as a Justice of the Peace. Mario and Bruno give back to their community donating and sponsoring local sporting events and teams, including the Warradale Soccer, netball, swimming, and cricket clubs. But the list does not end there! The Lopreiato's immense charitable contributions also include sponsoring the ANZAC Day Memorial in Warragamba, the Jack Donoghue Festival, and the Warragamba Dam Fest. I express my gratitude and admiration to the Lopreiato's. Maria and Bruno, truly... what would Silverdale do without you?!

### BOWRAL BLACK'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I congratulate the Bowral Blacks Rugby Club on their 50th anniversary. I was pleased to attend the anniversary event held at the Mittagong RSL to celebrate this milestone. In addition to providing opportunities for many members of my electorate to play rugby, the club has also fostered a passion for the sport. Founded in 1972 by Robin Croker, the club brought together ruby enthusiasts from the area to play in the Canberra Cup. By 1973, the Bowral Blacks had already won a First Grade Premiership. The club grew from a small club into what it is today, a successful club serving thousands of ruby players. A number of great ruby players have also played for the Bowral Blacks, including Jimmy Hindmarsh, who later played for the Wallabies. Bowral Blacks have served the community for 50 years, including current club president Mark Freund.

### ROTARY CLUB OF NEPEAN

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith)**—Following their recent changeover, I would like to acknowledge the incoming Office Bearers of the Rotary Club of Nepean for 2022/23. Kerry Havigland – President, Lisa Salas – Secretary and Nick Marathakis – Treasurer. I note that during another COVID-19 challenged year the club were still able to provide over \$30,000 to both local and overseas communities. That is a fantastic achievement and I thank all the Rotary members for the valuable work they do within our community.

### RENEWED ERINA ICE ARENA OFFICIALLY OPENS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Central Coast residents are celebrating the official opening of the renewed Erina Ice Arena following a \$624,000 upgrade, with \$592,000 funded by the NSW Government through its Regional Sport Facility Fund. The project includes improved accessibility to the entrance foyer; two upgraded universally designed disability bathrooms; two re-designed all gender change rooms; operationally efficient LED lighting; ice hockey netting; glass grandstand balustrade and overhauled refrigeration plant. Erina Ice Arena owned by Adele and husband Murray, is a premier venue for ice sports and recreation on the Central Coast. Kicking off with a bang, Erina Ice Area hosted the 2022 Sydney Synchronized Festival. Run by the NSW Ice Skating Association, the event showcased the best Synchronized Skating teams from across Australia, including teams who represented Australia at the 2022 World Synchronized Skating Championships. I had the honour of officially opening the event at the festivals' Opening Ceremony on Saturday 27th of August. The event held 350 skaters, 20 coaches, 40 officials and a significant number of volunteers. Not to mention the spectators! Congratulations to Adele and Murray on not only a premium sporting facility but a fantastic event.

### QUIET HOUR INTRODUCED AT ERINA SERVICE NSW

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to thank the team at my local Service NSW Centre, who are part of the pilot introduction of Quiet Hour. Customers are now able to utilise Quiet Hour at eight Service NSW Service Centres, including Erina, for a quieter, less stimulating experience. The team at Service NSW aim to make all customers feel welcome and supported when visiting a Service Centre. Major retailers across the country, including Coles and Woolworths, have successfully introduced Quiet Hour and customers have called on Service NSW to offer a similar experience. Quiet Hour offers a lower-sensory environment by making changes within the Service Centre to reduce noise and lighting where possible, for example lowering the volume of music and customer ticket announcements and requesting customers to turn their phones to silent. Service NSW is committed to fostering a community which is inclusive and supportive of all, where staff will complete disability awareness training to provide additional support to customers. I would like to thank Vanessa, Debbie, Robyn, and the rest of the team at Service NSW Erina for helping deliver this fantastic support to our community."

### POETRY IN THE PARK MURWILLUMBAH

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—It was fantastic to see year 3 and 4 students from Murwillumbah Public School and Murwillumbah East Public School participate in their Poetry in the Park event in September this year. The event was held in Knox Park and was a wonderful gathering celebrating the creativity of the students and a love of writing, imagination and performance. A big thank you to Murwillumbah Public Assistant Principal Louise Watkins for her organisation and everyone who supported the poetry in the park event and importantly our future poets. These budding young poets have been working hard writing their poems for the last 5 weeks. Over this time they have been learning different styles of poetry including free verse, magnetic poetry, roll away poetry and tanka poetry. The students then got to select their favourite poem they wrote to perform to the group. It is a great confidence boost for the students to have an audience for their work and to practice their public speaking. Well done to all the teachers and future poets.

### NIMBIN MARDI GRASS 30 YEARS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Last weekend was the celebration of 30 years of protest, advocacy and community organising at the Nimbin Mardi Grass. Mardi Grass is like no other event and has been a staple of the Nimbin calendar. The Mardi Grass has a long history of advocating for the legalisation of cannabis and celebrates all Nimbin has to offer. It is major tourist event in our region. The Electorate of Lismore that I have the absolute privilege to represent is diverse culturally, socially and politically. Our community often leads on social, political and environmental change. I would particularly like to acknowledge Nimbin HEMP Embassy President Michael Balderstone for his decades dedication not only to Mardi Grass but to the Nimbin community. I thank Mayor Steve Krieg for doing the honours of opening when I couldn't attend and it turned out he was their first choice of opener anyway! The Nimbin community is truly spectacular and unique. In the Northern Rivers we love them and I look forward to attending in the future.

### MIND YOUR MATES PROGRAM – LIFELINE TENTERFIELD

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate Lifeline Tenterfield on a successful Mind Your Mates event held at the Tenterfield Golf Club in September. Mind Your Mates is a program that enables participants to recognise the signs of depression, anxiety and thoughts of suicide in your friends, family and community members. I thank organiser Lisa Dalton for all her hard work and facilitation. Lisa does fantastic work as the Tenterfield Community Advocate working for Lifeline's Bushfire Recovery Resilience Program. I also thank participants Bruce Jackson, Gary Smith, Jenny Shearman, Roxanne Bancroft-Stuart and Kim Rhodes. I thank them for their participation but also for their care and concern for the mental health of communities across the Tenterfield Shire. This is critical to the recovery of communities still reeling from the 2019 Black Summer Bushfires and other disasters. Caring for the mental health of communities is a central part of disaster preparedness and recovery and I thank these wonderful community members for being so proactive and committed.

### MICHELLE MAYS

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—There are so many organisations throughout Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur region that do a phenomenal job supporting our community. But there is no doubt that some are more vital than others. WILMA Women's Health Centre is one of those critical organisations. And the person who has been at the helm of WILMA for many, many years has been Michelle Mays. Unfortunately Michelle will part ways with WILMA this week in what will be an enormous loss for our community. Michelle's passion and dedication to those who have walked through WILMA's doors has been nothing short of inspirational. It was only last year that I spoke in this place about Michelle after she was awarded the 2021 Campbelltown Local Woman of the Year. However, given her contribution to the entire Macarthur region over many years, I believe it is fitting that Michelle is again recognised. Of course, it takes the entire team at WILMA to ensure the organisation runs effectively and efficiently. But it is clear that Michelle's guidance and leadership has played an integral role. Thank you again Michelle for all that you have done for our community and best of luck with your future endeavours.

### CAMPBELLTOWN MEN'S SHED

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Men's sheds do an incredible in many areas supporting their communities. Whether it's fixing up and donating equipment like mowers or supporting local organisations and schools, men's shed members are always willing and eager to lend a helping hand. The Campbelltown Men's Shed team had been on the lookout for a base for quite some time. They had the members, they had the skills – they just needed a home. Finally they have found one off Badgally Road in Claymore. I recently met with some of the Campbelltown Men's Shed members to have a look at the site and discuss their plans for the future. Despite being relatively new, the club also boasts more than 20 members – with the committee confident that more and more will sign up. Member Kevin Harder explained the benefits of being a part of a men's shed in the South West Voice

recently. "For men going to a men's shed means they're not getting bored to death at home." We are certainly lucky in Campbelltown to have such passionate members of our community who are eager to start a men's shed and assist the community.

#### **FQ KITCHENS – MANUFACTURING FACILITY TOUR**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Located within the Electorate of Prospect, Food Queens [FQ] Kitchen is a family business success story, producing delicious, Italian style food for distributors such as Woolworths and Harris Farm Markets. It was pleasure to be provided with a tour of the FQ Kitchen manufacturing site at Wetherill Park by the company Director, Tina Blain and her business associate, Sam Tropeano on Thursday 18th August 2022. Tina and her family have made an important contribution to our Western Sydney community, creating many local jobs for residents within our community. It was wonderful to hear about the passion that Tina has in caring for her staff and producing quality Italian food based on recipes passed down to her by her family. Thank you to Tina, Sam and the staff at FQ Kitchens for the tour of your impressive facilities. The FQ Kitchens as a growing small business within our Electorate is truly inspiring. Our community can't wait to see what more FQ Kitchens will achieve. I look forward to returning in the future, as well as continuing to support your commercial endeavours.

#### **ANNIE WANG – RECOGNITION OF SERVICE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I acknowledge and thank Annie Wang, a greatly valued staff member who worked for me for over 7 years. Annie was my longest serving Electorate Officer, having commenced work in my Electorate Office when she was a student from Prairiewood High School in 2015, in the first year of my tenure as the Member for Prospect. Throughout her time in my office, Annie developed into a very hard working, competent, and compassionate young woman. Over the course of these almost 8 years, Annie has gone above and beyond, serving hundreds of constituents in our community, achieving many positive outcomes for them. In the last year of her time at my Electorate Office, Annie served as my Senior Electorate Officer. She was extremely effective in this role as someone I could trust as my close confidant, and as a mentor to the other staff. I am very pleased that Annie will continue contributing to our community as a mentor, completing her studies to become a High School teacher. Thankyou Annie for all your years of hard work. I am very proud of what you have achieved, and I wish you all the best.

#### **SOLEMN PONTIFICAL REQUIEM MASS – ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I was honoured to attend the Solemn Pontifical Requiem Mass honouring Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, held by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney at St Mary's Cathedral on Saturday 24th September, with my NSW Labor Parliamentary colleagues Guy Zangari MP and Stephen Bali MP. This was a very moving service and it was a great opportunity for the Catholic community within the Archdiocese to pay tribute to Her Late Majesty's service to Australia and the Commonwealth of nations. The Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC share her experiences meeting the Queen. The Most Reverend Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP, who presided over the service, made a tribute as well. This was accompanied by wonderful musical performance of the St Mary's Cathedral choir. Bishop Terry Brady and Bishop Richard Umbers were also in attendance, as well as the NSW Speaker of the House, Jonathan O'Dea MP. Thank you to the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney for inviting me to this Mass. Catholics within the Archdiocese will never forget Her Late Majesty's 70 years of service, her charitable works, and significant interfaith dialogue with the Catholic Church.

#### **MAKERS FRONTYARD TRAIL 2022**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I would like to recognise the efforts of all the Inner West creatives who participated in the Makers Front Yard Trail on Saturday 8 October. Makers Frontyard is an annual event that takes place during Sydney Craft Week and gives our Inner West makers the opportunity to sell their handmade wares from their own front yards. This year, those who followed the Trail were led to eight different front yards around the Inner West, including our own suburbs of Dulwich Hill, Summer Hill, Ashfield, and Ashbury. Locals were able to do their Christmas shopping early and purchase thoughtful and unique gifts directly from the makers themselves. Thank you to all the makers who participated and offered their front yards as shopfronts on the Trail, as well as the organisers at Makers Frontyard for making the day happen. I also extend appreciation to our Inner West locals who are always so quick to support the local arts. It was a truly wonderful celebration of handmade and locally made craft. I look forward to it again next year!

#### **MARRICKVILLE WELCOMES ALL-VEGAN BAKERY MISS SINA**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I am pleased to welcome Miss Sina as the latest delicious addition to Marrickville's bakery community! Opening its doors in early September, the start-up has already served up plenty wonderful creations for café and bakery goers in the area. Miss Sina was established by Sina Klug and Jacques

Dumont for those in the community who enjoy their sweet treats plant-based or dairy-free. The bakery offers a mix of German and French pastries, as well as Aussie favourites that prove difficult to find in their vegan versions. The duo and all their friendly staff have quickly built a lovely spot to pop in for a coffee and sugary snack in the morning. Their warm cinnamon scrolls have attracted out-the-door lines on Illawarra Road every weekend since the bakery's doors opened. Certainly, Miss Sina has made our vegan-friendly community even friendlier and is already a fantastic contribution to the rich café and foodie culture enjoyed within the Inner West. I hope to see the bakery continue to thrive and thank Sina Klug, Jacques Dumont and all their wonderful staff.

#### **ROUND SHE GOES ONE LAST TIME**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—On Saturday 8 October, the Round She Goes Preloved Fashion Market hosted its final Sydney event of the year. Marrickville has always been the home of the markets, with locals rejoicing in fabulous retro fashion trends since the markets were established in Sydney. Before an end-of-year hiatus into 2023, Round She Goes hosted its last 2022 market at PCYC Marrickville – a larger venue than their usual markets to allow for social distancing and comfortable shopping for all attendees. The market featured over 70 handpicked stallholders that sold women's pre-loved designer fashion, quality vintage and retro fashion, and handmade jewellery and accessories. Marketgoers perused a huge range of looks that celebrated the styles of the 1940s and onwards. The day was highly anticipated for our fashion-forward locals as well as retro-enthusiasts across all of Sydney. As always, the market attracted hundreds. Thank you to the organisers at Round She Goes and all the stallholders who participated in the final 2022 market.

#### **VALE PETER KINGSTON**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge Peter Kingston, an acclaimed poet-painter of Sydney Harbour who recently passed away. Peter was a long-standing resident of Lavender Bay for nearly half a century and a neighbour to the Whiteley's in my electorate of North Shore. He was a lifelong environmental activist and campaigned to save Sydney's working harbour, Luna Park, and the Walsh Bay heritage wharves. The foreshore boardwalk at Lavender Bay bears his name and is lined with his bronze sculptures of characters created by artists May Gibbs, Dorothy Wall, and Norman Lindsay. In the early to mid-1970s, Peter worked on the restoration of the well-known entrance to Luna park. Kingston is best known for painting the moods of Sydney Harbour, its workhorse Lady class ferries, and the Opera House. In December, a forthcoming exhibition of his drawings and paintings will be held at the Australian Galleries. I offer my sincere condolences to Peter's family, loved ones, the local community and friends in the arts who knew him for their loss. Vale Peter and your passion for Sydney will continue to bring joy to the local and broader community through your art.

#### **MOSMAN PUBLIC SCHOOL BOOK WEEK PARADE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I congratulate Mosman Public School on the Book Fair held earlier this year in Book Week. I had the privilege of attending the School's Book Week Parade and seeing all the fabulous outfits both students and teachers put together. It was a fantastic event, and I know the kids all had a blast. Book Week is a great time to encourage creativity and foster and highlight the importance of reading for kids. I donated a copy of *Somebody's Land* by Ellie Liang and Adam Goodes to Class 3P. I hope that they love this book just as much as I do. I want to thank Mosman Public Principal Steve Connelly and Nadia Tobia for welcoming me on the day and supporting the event. I extend my thanks to all the amazing teachers and staff who put so much effort into the day for the kids to enjoy and to the parents who joined us.

#### **LUNA PARK TURNS 87**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the recent 87th birthday of Luna Park on the 4th of October. Luna Park is an icon of Sydney Harbour's foreshore and is a very special part of the local North Shore community. Thousands flock every year to travel through the iconic face at the park's entry and be transported back in time to play carnival games, enjoy rides, and visit the famous Coney Island. While the Park has seen multiple upgrades and refurbishments, its heritage is still rich and very much alive. The park has provided so much joy to so many people over the past 87 years, both locally and beyond, and I am sure it will continue to do the same for many generations to come. I want to congratulate new Chief Executive John Hughes, and former park managers Peter Hearne and Warwick Doughty for all of their hard work in keeping our much-loved Luna Park running. I extend my congratulations to all the staff of the park for their dedication and hard work in keeping Luna Park the funnest place in Sydney!

#### **ULLADULLA HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Ulladulla High School, at the recent NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence ceremony were the school won an impressive five awards. Two awards went to two students, Poppy Gillespie and Mim Macdonell who won Excellence in Student Achievement and two awards went to two teachers, Anita Barry and Suzy Taplin for

Secretary's Excellent Service. Ulladulla High School is phenomenal having also taking out the award for its sanctuary program, a place of hope and entrepreneurship, focussed on Wellbeing and Renewal for the entire student population and their families. what an outstanding achievement from both students and teachers the hard work and dedication makes these students and teachers both very deserving of these awards. So again, congratulations to Ulladulla High School and to the students and teachers for being passionate and for being advocate leaders at Ulladulla High, your excellence doesn't go unnoticed.

#### F1 FAMILY

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Pancreatic cancer is the 3rd leading cause of cancer deaths in Australia with a very low survival rate of only 11.5 per cent. The disease receives less funding than other high-profile cancers, but one nurse at John Hunter Hospital—Nicole Burke of New Lambton Heights—has joined the campaign Put Your Foot Down to help those affected by pancreatic cancer. The campaign is organised by PanKind: The Australian Pancreatic Cancer Foundation, which is exclusively dedicated to pancreatic cancer and represents, supports and advocates for all Australians impacted by the disease. Nicole walked to raise funds for pancreatic cancer because it is a cause close to her heart. Her friend and fellow nurse Dellie Schulz has recently been diagnosed with the disease. After caring for thousands of people over the course of her career, Nicole and her friends stepped up and to help her. Nicole and fellow nurses Ashley, Kate, Lindsay, Julie, Laura, April, Emily, Anna, David, Mikaela, Victoria and Courtney, under the banner of "Team F1 Family" raised nearly \$6000 to raise awareness of pancreatic cancer and help promote research. Great work Nicole and team. I wish the wonderful Dellie all the best.

#### HMRI MEDIBUS

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Wallsend electorate is a hub of the science and medical research which is driving our economy's growth into the twenty-first century—and helping people live longer, healthier, happier lives. This is in large part thanks to the Hunter Medical Research Institute, which has helped countless people with its research. Now, a record \$12.4 million investment in Hunter Diabetes care and research will help fund a medibus—a "clinic on wheels"—to take specialist care out into the community to those who need it most. Diabetes is a very manageable disease—if someone living with diabetes has access to all the appropriate support. Unfortunately, many people in rural and regional areas don't. The medibus will remove some of the barriers preventing this people from accessing this needed care. Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin, HMRI director, has pointed out that as many of half those in the Hunter New England area with diabetes might not even have been diagnosed. This new investment will help change that. My congratulations to Professor Kay-Lambkin; the program's driving force, Associate Professor Shamasunder Acharya; the HMRI board and leadership team; and to the Colonial Foundation, for this funding.

#### BJL WELDING & FABRICATION

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Hunter Business Awards celebrate excellence in Hunter business. Beresfield-based BJL Welding & Fabrication won the Outstanding Building Services award at the 2022 Hunter Local Business Awards gala presentation night—making it two in a row for BJL director Brad Lloyd and his Team. Brad has put everything into BJL over the past seventeen years, building the business from the ground up. Over the past nine years the business has experienced enormous growth, from a four-man workshop to a workforce of sixteen. This award goes to show how driven and dedicated Brad and his team are. I would like to acknowledge the BJL leadership group, including Peta Lindsay, Matt Lane, Mat Warby, Dan Walmsley, Cam Smith and Mitch Keena, as well as their tradesmen, apprentices and labourers. The team has so much to be proud of, with a range of services on offer, including detail drafting, site measure, fabrication, painting, galvanising and installation of structural steel and metal work for a range of clients, including building companies and the domestic market. Congratulations to Brad and the entire BJL team on this well-deserved victory—an inspiration to entrepreneurs and businesspeople across the Wallsend electorate.

#### CORE COMMUNITY SERVICES PRESCHOOL

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I commend CORE Community Services for their focus on diversity and inclusivity in the early learning centre. CORE Community Services has serviced the Fairfield community for many years and has always placed on emphasis on making the community they serve feel welcomed and included. A welcoming attitude for the many diverse cultures that exist within the Fairfield Local Government area has meant that parents feel comfortable to share their culture with the preschool. A cultural wall is a feature of the preschool and a testament to the welcoming of diversity by CORE Community Services. The preschool recently had a number of cultural items to add to the cultural wall including a bamboo xylophone from Vietnam. I commend CORE Community Services preschool for making cultural diversity a routine part of their early education program.

**PONTIFICAL REQUEIM MASS FOR HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH THE SECOND**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Saturday 24 September 2022, the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney held a Solemn Pontifical Requiem Mass at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney to honour Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. The Mass was presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP and co-celebrated by Auxillary Bishops, Reverend Bishop Terry Brady and Reverend Bishop Richard Umbers along with clergy from the Archdiocese of Sydney. It was an honour to hear from the Governor of NSW Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beasley AC KC about her memories from prior meetings with Queen Elizabeth. It was also a pleasure to be in the presence of the Speaker of the House Johnathan O'Dea, Stephen Bali MP State Member for Blacktown and Hugh McDermott MP: State Member for Prospect. The Requiem Mass was an opportunity for the local Catholic community to pay respects to Her late Majesty's life of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the territories and realms of the Commonwealth.

**VALE SAAD MAQDASI HANNA**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—It is with much sadness that the Fairfield community recently learned of the tragic death of Mr Saad Maqdasi Hanna. Saad was a very well-known local, a beautiful man, softly spoken and a gentle soul. I came to know Saad in his position as a sales assistant at the Metro Service Station, Fairfield. Saad's passing has left his family devastated and the community in shocked grief. I pass on sincere condolences to the Hanna family and to Saad's many friends and relatives. Rest In Peace Saad Maqdasi Hanna.

**JUMBUCK MEATS GOURMET BUTCHERY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I would like to congratulate Ray Wood and all the team at Jumbuck Meats Gourmet Butchery in Oatley, who recently won the best butchery award at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards. Also nominated as finalists in the Business of the Decade category, Jumbuck Meats Gourmet Butchery has been a cornerstone of local business in the area for over 10 years now. In over 10 years of operation, they have also won Best Butchery nine times as part of the St George Small Business Awards. I would also like to personally congratulate owner Ray Wood, who was also nominated as a finalist for Entrepreneur of the Year as a part of the Australian Small Business Champion Awards. The work Ray does for the community is truly second to none, which has contributed to Jumbuck's success. I'd again like to thank all the team for the effort and hard work they have put in over 10 years to ensure Jumbuck Meats Gourmet Butchery remains a local institution. I wish them all the best in the next 10 years to come.

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL OATLEY FLAG PRESENTATION**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I recently attended St Joseph's Catholic Primary School at Oatley to present the school with new flags, as well as 2022 Student Leadership certificates. St Josephs is charming local school, which provides students with the opportunity to learn and grow within the framework of Catholicism. They are very much involved in the local community throughout Oatley and surrounds, providing a safe and caring environment for students to thrive. I was able to present St Josephs with an Aboriginal Flag, Australian Flag and Torres Strait Islands Flag, which will fly high over the school for years to come. It was also a great privilege to present the Student Leadership team with certificates that recognised their hard work and dedication to their school community. It was great to have a chat to all the student leaders and find out what their hopes were for the future, as well as what it takes to be a good student leader. I look forward to continuing to work closely alongside St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

**LESLIE GOVER**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I would like to congratulate a constituent within my local community, Mr Leslie Gover, for his fundraising efforts over the last few years. Leslie is currently participating in the 'Big Walk for Little Kids,' organised by the Camp Quality organisation, who provide outstanding support for children living with cancer, as well as their families. His inspiration is Grace, who was diagnosed with Leukaemia when she was five years old. Leslie connected with Grace and her family during the 'big walk' event last year and has been supporting them since. He plans to walk all the streets of Peakhurst, which is well over 400 kilometres, to raise money for Camp Quality and Grace. He will also be dying his hair red and his beard blue, in honour of Grace's favourite NRL team, the Newcastle Knights. So far, Leslie has raised over \$5000 by walking more than 90 kilometres. This is a fantastic achievement, and I am incredibly proud that the community has gotten behind Leslie's journey. I look forward to hearing more about Leslie's journey around Peakhurst and wish him all the best!

### LOCHINVAR PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Earlier this year I had the honour of attending Lochinvar Public School to present Leadership Certificates to their elected student leaders. Congratulations to School Captains, Boydon Smith and McKenna Bruderlin and Student Leaders, Kaide Simon, Ciera Granger, Blake Fogg, Mill Malineack. These students were chosen to be student leaders because they earned the respect of their fellow students and teachers and displayed leadership qualities. It is important to have effective student leaders that can promote the school's values and be a positive role model for the school community. I look forward to hearing news of them as they keep learning, keep trying new things, keep asking for help and support, and continue to feel proud of their achievements. I wish them all the best for a bright future as a leader and continued success along whatever pathways they choose. Congratulations on your achievements during 2022 and thank you for helping make our Maitland community an even better place.

### OFFICIAL OPENING OF ST BEDE'S DOMINIC BUILDING

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Guests and members of the St Bede's school community gathered on Tuesday 23 August 2022 to officially open and bless the school's new Dominic Building. The Dominic Building's opening marks the completion of stage two of St Bede's four-stage expansion and provides state-of-the-art facilities, current technology and flexible learning environments for students and staff. Congratulations to everyone involved who turned a vision from many years ago into a reality. Special thanks to Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Chief Executive Officer Sean Scanlon, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Director of Schools Gerard Mowbray, Diocesan Administrator Father Greg Barker and parish priest Fr George Anthicadu. We also remember and acknowledge the work of the recently deceased Bishop Bill Wright and Father Paul O'Neil who played a key role in planning and early history of St Bede's. They both would have been very proud that their vision and dream has come to fruition. I am grateful for the honour and privilege to share such a milestone event with school community and Catholic Diocese of Maitland and Newcastle.

### MILLERS FOREST PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I recently had the honour of attending Millers Forest Public School to present Leadership Certificates to their elected student leaders. Congratulations to School Captains, Lachlan Antcliff and Myles McGrath and Prefects, Shikiyia Barber, Georgia Courtney, Mason Franks, Dean Loveridge, William Mayes, Cohen McKenzie, Max Neville and Brock Robinson. These students were chosen to be student leaders because they earned the respect of their fellow students and teachers and displayed leadership qualities. It is important to have effective student leaders that can promote the school's values and be a positive role model for the school community. I look forward to hearing news of them as they keep learning, keep trying new things, keep asking for help and support, and continue to feel proud of their achievements. I wish them all the best for a bright future as a leader and continued success along whatever pathways they choose. Congratulations on your achievements during 2022 and thank you for helping make our Maitland community an even better place.

### WAGGA WAGGA AWARD WINNERS

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to the 2022 NSW Education Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence recipients from the Wagga Wagga electorate. As well as presenting the student speech as part of proceedings, Wagga Wagga High School's Kipchumba Langat and Leila Wadley were both awarded a Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement. Kipchumba has been recognised as a determined, well-rounded student who strives for excellence in all areas of school life, while Leila has been recognised for demonstrating an extraordinary commitment to her responsibilities and representing her schools and peers with integrity and dignity, in the classroom, on the sporting field and the wider community. Wagga Wagga High School parent Cathy Prescott, who has been a respected and valued member of the Wagga Wagga High School P&C since 2015, was awarded a Public School Parent of the Year award. North Wagga Public School's Reading Project, which provides a focus on improving teacher practice and student outcomes, received a Secretary's School Achievement Award. These awards acknowledge the outstanding achievements and contributions made to public education by students, teachers and parents across the state. Congratulations to all recipients on your awards and immense contribution to your schools and the community.

### WAGGA WAGGA'S VOLUNTEERS

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I had the pleasure of attending the recent Riverina region's 2022 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Congratulations to Young Volunteer of the Year, Clare Lawlor, who, at the age of 18, founded the Wagga Wagga Rotaract Club which encourages young adults to contribute to programs that support the local community. Clare is now one of the leading supporters of the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and the Miss Wagga Wagga Quest. She is a board member of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music and

volunteers at a number of Wagga Wagga events. Congratulations also to the Volunteer Team of the Year, South Wagga Rotary's Rocky Hill Regeneration Volunteers, who provide more than 1,500 volunteer hours each year to look after Wagga Wagga's Rocky Hill environment for the community. A big congratulations to the other Wagga Wagga electorate nominees: Anna Ryan, Alexander Young and Nicholas Young in the young volunteer category; Suzy-Ann Fortington, Ashlee Jones, Ben Lesslie, Leia Thiele and Myriam Walker in the adult volunteer category; and David Dunn, Milena Dunn and Phil Hoey in the senior category. Congratulations to the Wagga Wagga Combined Division of the St John Ambulance on their nominations in the team category.

#### **JOSHUA SHAW AND CHELSEA BURGESS HANNON**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—For two decades, students have been "taking over" Parliament House as part of the year-long youth leadership and engagement program offered through the Y NSW Youth Parliament. This year, Wagga Wagga's Josh Shaw and Chelsea Burgess Hannon were among the 60 students who took over the Legislative Council for a four-day sitting week. Students passed nine committee reports across a range of portfolios including Aboriginal Affairs, Education, Women's Affairs and Inclusion and Diversity. The group made nearly 100 recommendations, among them an 11.5 per cent wage rise for teachers, greater rights for gig workers, lowering the minimum full-time work age to 16 and reducing the cost of car registration for young tradespeople by 60 per cent. Josh, a first-time youth parliamentarian and Mater Dei Catholic College student, landed the role of Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. He was also presented with the Taskie Award for Star Player of the week. Chelsea, who has recently been appointed to the NSW Regional Youth Taskforce, served as Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House and enjoyed being able to participate face-to-face in the 2022 event, after sitting virtually last year.

#### **GUNDAGAI TIGERS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I would like to congratulate the Gundagai Tigers for their impressive season in Group 9 this year. Not only did the Gundagai Tigers achieve the accolade of Minor Premiers but they remain unbeaten this season, the first team in 18 years to achieve this impressive feat since the 2004 Temora Dragons. The Gundagai Tigers commenced their finals run on Sunday 4 September against the Young Cherry Pickers in an absolute thriller, winning by the narrowest of margins with a final score of 28-26. The Gundagai Tigers after having shown their grit and determination against the Cherry Pickers earned the week off and secured their place in the Grand Final on 18 September. The Cherry Pickers later locked in a rematch against the Gundagai Tigers after their gutsy win over the Tumut Blues. The Grand Final was a fierce clash, both teams were physical and up for the challenge early in the match. In the end Gundagai proved to be too strong, remaining unbeaten with a 34-4 win over the Cherry Pickers. Winning the Group 9 Rugby League first grade premiership is the ultimate achievement, but to remain unbeaten is rarely heard of, congratulations again Gundagai Tigers.

#### **JUNEE ROUNDHOUSE MUSEUM TURNS 75**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I would like to thank and congratulate the Regional Heritage Transport Association of Junee for their event to celebrate 75 years since the official opening of the iconic Junee Roundhouse Museum. A festival was held over the October long weekend which incorporated vintage, classic and muscle car displays along with market stalls, educational tours and even a ball in the name of the birthday of this historic milestone. There are many volunteers and helpers at the museum, which was awarded the 2021 Riverina Volunteer team of the year, but I would like to particularly note the efforts of Gail Commons, who is not only an incredible advocate for the Roundhouse museum but is known in Junee for the large volume of volunteer work she undertakes for the benefit of the wider community. The team at the Junee Roundhouse Museum dedicate a lot of time and energy into every project they undertake, and the 75th anniversary celebration is no exception. To everyone involved, thank you for all your efforts. You should be proud of the success of this celebratory event.

#### **PEARSALL & POTTS FAMILIES FUNDRAISER FOR CITY2SURF**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I would like to commend the Pearsall and Potts families of Murrumburrah for their recent participation in City2Surf, raising funds for the Bears of Hope charity. Bears of Hope is an Australian not-for-profit focused on pregnancy and infant loss support, education, and awareness. They aim to help improve the healing process of the devastating loss by connecting families to support networks.

Paige and Corey Pearsall accompanied by Clancy Potts and Will Peterson participated in City2Surf and managed to raise \$5,000 for Bears of Hope. Corey said fundraising was a way they could give back to Bears of Hope, sadly having lost 2 babies in the last 12 months and having been supported by the charity through an

incredibly difficult time. This is a simply heart-warming story and I would like to again commend all those involved with this fundraiser for their outstanding efforts, in support of Bears of Hope."

#### **BELLA MERLINO, SANTA SABINA COLLEGE**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate Bella Merlino from Santa Sabina College, Strathfield who was awarded a Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award 2022. Bella is an outstanding student, filmmaker, and young social justice advocate. Initiated by the National Council of Women NSW, the Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award is awarded to students who have shown great leadership in fostering social justice and harmony in their schools and communities. These are admirable and important goals and it is wonderful to see young women such as Bella demonstrate such commitment and leadership in their communities. In addition to her excellence in and out of school, Bella is also a committed young advocate for young women's empowerment, online safety, and dementia awareness. She has fundraised for Dementia Australia and been active in raising awareness of the impacts of dementia on thousands of Australians and their families. Bella is also a finalist for Western Sydney Young Woman of the Year and continues to demonstrate excellence in all her endeavours. Congratulations to Bella for all her many accomplishments.

#### **THE HILLS GARDEN COMPETITION**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend the always-impressive Hills Garden Competition Awards Night held at the Harvey Lowe Pavilion, within my Electorate of Castle Hill. Operating since 1959, the competition is now a highly anticipated part of the local Orange Blossom Festival, and is proudly run by the Rotary Club of The Hills-Kellyville, and supported by The Hills Shire Council. It was my pleasure to be joined on the night by my colleague David Elliott, and I would like to thank judges Lucia Fowler and Peter Whitehead, who had the tough job of deciding between the many colourful and expert entrants. This year, many schools, community organisations, retirement homes, and private citizens all entered their well-cared for gardens, and were judged across a wide range of categories. The big winners included Kellyville Public School, who, under the stewardship of Principal Jenny Walker always perform well in this competition. Further, Jim Anderson won the George Mobbs Award for Excellence in Gardening and Dale and Chris Brown were named "Champion of Champions". My thanks goes out to all involved in this wonderful competition, and I look forward to next year's edition.

#### **MUSLIM WOMEN AUSTRALIA**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—Muslim Women Australia, a community-based organisation represents the best of our community – support and charity. MWA represents Muslim women of all backgrounds. Today it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge their valuable work. With every visit, I see the important work that they do, specifically in providing help to women and children in the community. Recently I had the opportunity to take Jodie Harrison MP, Shadow Minister for Women and Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on a tour of MWA. I welcome any opportunity to show Members of Parliament how organisations like MWA look out for the community. Through Mrs Maha Abdo OAM, CEO, and members of her team, we learned about this organisation's commitment and dedication to serving the community. It remains nothing short of inspiring. MWA provides access to many important initiatives such as affordable childcare, early childhood education, boosting numeracy and literacy for younger women; and strategies to improve the lives of older women. MWA gives so much of their time, resources, and heart to our community. We thank them for all that they are doing.

#### **ROBERTS PARK SKATE PARK UPGRADE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—On Monday 19 September, I joined Canterbury-Bankstown Mayor Khal Asfour, Deputy-Mayor Bilal El-Hayek, and Councillor George Zakhia to open the new and improved Roberts Park Skate Park. Over time, Roberts Park has had a major new lawn, fencing, stands and change rooms installed with a splash park and refurbished community centre on the way. With the upgrade to the Skate Park, Roberts Park is on the way to being a fantastic all-ability addition to our local community, and it is the first in Greenacre. I also met passionate skateboarder and aspiring Olympian, Amar, who is the only Muslim woman professional skateboarder in Australia. She is now mentoring a group of young women from Australia to compete in the biggest Women's Skateboarding competition in America. Our community could not be any prouder of her. Mayor Khal Asfour and I showed students from Greenacre Public School how it's done. It was fantastic to see so many smiling faces, kids big and small, enjoying the new skate park, sporting fields and entertainment. I encourage everyone across the community to go to Roberts Park and enjoy the new facilities with their family.

#### **NEPALESE MONUMENT**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—Last week the Hindu community celebrated Dashain. Dashain is a major Hindu religious festival in Nepal and symbolises the victory of good over evil. It is an opportunity to celebrate

the diversity of our community. I want to congratulate my good friend and Wiley Park local, Councillor Bhadra Waiba, on the unveiling of the Nepalese Monument at Gough Whitlam Park. In collaboration with Canterbury Bankstown Council, Bhadra was able to ensure that the valuable contribution of the Nepalese community to Australia was captured. This monument will be a place for reflection and gathering for the Nepalese community across Sydney. It is a fitting monument made possible by the generous contributions of the community - a dream now a reality. Being Australia's first Nepalese Councillor, Bhadra, has paved the way and shone a light on the contributions of the Nepalese community in Australia. Six words are inscribed on the new monument, and they read: generosity, ethics, patience, diligence, renunciation, and wisdom. These words symbolise the work ethic and compassion of the Nepalese community. I look forward to celebrating many Nepalese festivities at Gough Whitlam Park with the community.

#### **BIRRANY MALUNGAN WALANMARRA**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—I want to commend Taronga Conservation Society Australia's community and culture team in Dubbo for the incredible work they're doing to empower our Indigenous youth. In Wiradjuri, the word Birrany means young man, while Malungan means young woman. Jarred Clark delivers the Birrany Business Youth Program, while Terrissa Dundas-McEwan runs the Malungan Business Youth Program. The two programs start working with Aboriginal students in year 8 and 9 at Dubbo College's South and Delroy campuses, taking them out of the classroom for one day a week to share cultural knowledge, and teach them about conservation. Lee Anne Sutcliffe and Jaidyn Chapman are program officers for the Walanmarra Youth Program, which aims to strengthen Aboriginal children in their skills, learning and attachment to land and culture. These programs are proudly supported by the NSW Government – plus our Transport Access Regional Partnership program subsidises the costs of getting the students to and from the zoo, to make sure no one misses out. Australia's First Nations people are original conservationists, and I can think of no better partnership than our Indigenous youth and Taronga. Well done to all involved.

#### **QUEANBEYAN SOUTH PUBLIC ON A NORTHERN TRAJECTORY**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—Early education is the foundation on which life is built and those dedicated to shaping our children's futures are fundamental to their development and who they will be as adults. I thank the Queanbeyan South P&C which is made up of mums, dads and supportive family members, and Principal Adam Zanco, for their outstanding work in the early education sector and their admirable dedication to their local community. Queanbeyan South is an incredibly diverse and inclusive school and as the Member for Monaro I could not be more proud of the environment that has been cultivated there. Through their rich appreciation of Indigenous culture, welcoming those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and providing incredible support to those students that need a little extra help, Queanbeyan South has cemented itself as one of this electorate's best schools. I congratulate and offer the heartfelt thanks of our wider community to all who give their time and effort to assist this school and our kids be the best that they can be.

#### **VALE JAMES 'JIM' MARTIN**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—A legend on and off the field, beloved local Queanbeyan High School teacher and sporting icon James 'Jim' Martin passed away recently following a valiant battle with cancer. Jim was known as a guiding light to many local sporting champions as the coach of the Queanbeyan High Rugby Team which he invested so much time. He was an inspiration to those who went on to play professionally, including Canberra Raiders prop Trevor Thurling and Manly Sea Eagles second-rower Brent Kite. Jim's passion for sport was well known across the Monaro and his natural ability to put people at ease and his caring personality was something that those who knew him will miss dearly. He loved cricket and was an avid player himself where he was the leading wicket-taker for Queanbeyan with 654 grade wickets. Jim saw the best in people and enabled them to shine in every way, in the classroom, on the field or at the crease. Jim will be remembered fondly by the community he has left behind and his legacy will live on in those who knew and loved him.

#### **UNSUNG HEALTH HEROES**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—Hospitals are not only made up of incredible frontline staff caring for our sick and injured, or the dozens of support staff who bring the meals, look after the grounds and facilities or those who change the linen. They also have an army of volunteers who are dedicated to supporting our local hospital. The Queanbeyan Hospital Auxiliary has been serving the local community for over 95 years. These dedicated volunteers raise funds that support the Queanbeyan Hospital through wide ranging fundraising activities including the hospital kiosk, barbecues, 'the ward trolley' and markets throughout the year. Despite the setbacks of covid, which left the kiosk closed for several months, the Queanbeyan Hospital Auxiliary has raised close to \$100,000 for the hospital to fund various projects right across the facility. I had the pleasure of attending the Queanbeyan Hospital Auxiliary Annual General Meeting recently and met the long serving members,

including Margie Hirst who has served for over 20 years and Kay Williams for 15 years. I want to congratulate the Queanbeyan Hospital Auxiliary team on the incredible work they do and look forward to seeing their efforts of their hard work continue to come to fruition.

#### **WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL LEADERS MORNING TEA**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Here at NSW Parliament on 12 September, I had the pleasure of hosting school captains and vice-captains from secondary schools across the Willoughby electorate. These impressive school leaders joined me from Cammeraygal High School, Chatswood High School, Mercy Catholic College Chatswood, St Pius X College Chatswood, Gleneaon Rudolf Steiner School and Willoughby Girls High School. After enjoying a morning tea together and insightful discussion, they were able to tour the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. For their contribution as student leaders of their school communities, I was proud to present each captain and vice-captain with a 2022 Certificate of Leadership. The strength of leadership and clear talent on display left me in no doubt that our future is in very safe hands. These leaders are a credit to their school communities across Willoughby and I wish each of them the best of success in their HSC studies and future endeavours. Thank you again to the students, school teachers and leaders who made it possible.

#### **NORTHERN SUBURBS NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I am proud to recognise the biggest sporting body in my electorate, the Northern Suburbs Netball Association (NSNA). Known simply as 'Norths Netball', this active thriving club boasts almost 7,000 players. Norths Netball was formed in 1969 and prides itself on being at the forefront of sports development and participation across the lower North Shore. The Club welcomes all players and is committed to mentoring and educating in all areas of netball including playing, coaching, umpiring and administration. Guided by its core values of respect, responsibility, growth, loyalty, courage and commitment, Norths Netball fosters a healthy sporting culture for all netballers to excel. In September, I had the great pleasure to attend the Grand Final Presentation Day, where I met many players, coaches, volunteers and supporters. It was a delight to present a number of trophies in two year groups. I congratulate the many winners, including teams from local schools such as Willoughby Girls High and Mercy Catholic College Chatswood. I give thanks to the NSNA executive and the many coaches, support staff and volunteers who contribute to the success of this great association and wish it well for next season!

#### **COMBINED PROBUS CLUB OF NORTHBRIDGE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I commend the contribution of the Combined Probus Club of Northbridge to our community life. The Club is part of the worldwide Probus movement originating from Britain in the 1960s, where Rotary Clubs saw the need to provide fellowship opportunities for members reaching retirement. The Northbridge Probus Club itself evolved from the Rotary Club of Northbridge in 1998 to form a new society for men and women. Northbridge Probus has since maintained an active presence with a capped membership of 140 under its Constitution. To facilitate fellowship, the Club hosts a variety of social events and members receive a monthly newsletter. This is in conjunction with the Club's regular monthly meetings at Northbridge Golf Club featuring a guest speaker and the serving of morning tea. On Monday 19 September, I had the pleasure of attending the monthly meeting of Northbridge Probus where about eighty people attended. I was impressed by the spirit of fellowship and goodwill amongst its members who continue to be enthusiastic and energetic to contribute to the life of our community. I thank President Malcolm Lye, club leaders and all members for their welcome and their considerable contribution.

#### **JENNY'S PLACE 45TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Since 1977, Jenny's Place Domestic Violence & Homelessness Support has been helping women and children in the Newcastle area to find safety. In the forty-five years since their founding, Jenny's Place has been an incredible resource for so many vulnerable women and their children as they flee domestic and family violence and get back on their feet. They do such extraordinary work in our community. On Wednesday 28 September, I went along to the 45th anniversary celebratory breakfast. MCed by NBN newsreader Natasha Beyersdorf, we heard from Jenny's Place pioneers Cathy Tate and Wendy Couper. These incredible women and their fellow pioneers have built such a legacy, and it was great to have the opportunity to celebrate what the organisation has achieved so far—and to look forward to what is yet to come. My thanks to Jenny's Place executive manager Marcia Chapman for organising the event, and I wish to acknowledge the many people who—over the last forty-five years—have contributed to Jenny's Place.

#### **YOUR BODY, YOUR HEALTH LAUNCH**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—For three decades, Newcastle-based lawyer Catherine Henry has litigated cases for women who have experienced poor or avoidable health outcomes. She has channelled this experience into a zeal for reform, and along with her team at Catherine Henry Lawyers, she has written a free

women's health legal guide e-book, *Your Body Your Health*. Inequities between men and women in approaches to healthcare lead to disastrous outcomes for so many. The practice at Catherine Henry Lawyers has encountered a range of issues. The goal was to put together a resource which can assist women from all walks of life from before the cradle to the grave. The book covers abortion, contraception, pregnancy, childbirth, surgery, ageing, pain, sexual and other violence, mental health and aged care. I went along to the launch at Fort Scratchley on 8 September, where a panel including our colleague Sonia Hornery MP, Maroba Aged Care CEO Viv Allanson, Victims of Crime Assistance League Newcastle CEO Kerrie Thompson, GP Specialist in Reproductive and Sexual Health Dr Phoebe Walsh and Oasis Solutions principal, former nurse and academic Dr Shirley Shulz-Robinson, discussed women's health issues. My thanks to Catherine for putting this vital resource together.

#### **WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Every day, nine lives are lost to suicide in Australia. For World Suicide Prevention Day on Friday 9 September, I joined in a walk from Dixon Park to Merewether Baths and back. More than five hundred people were there, many of whom had had their lives impacted by suicide. These people braved the elements and walked to raise awareness and support for the cause and support the vital work of Lifeline, and I was pleased to be there alongside my local colleagues Kate Washington MP, Yasmin Catley MP and Tim Crakanthorp MP. Stigma around has stopped people reaching out for help when they need it, and the message of the march was simple: it's okay to not be okay. My thanks to the organisers, including Lifeline Hunter CEO Rob Sams, for putting this important event together. I would also like to thank Aunty Cheryl Smith for welcoming us to Awabakal and Worrimi Country on the day. If you need help, reach out. Lifeline is there to listen. Please call if you need their support.

#### **MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—Mid-Autumn Festival this year was on 10 September 2022. It is also known as the Moon Festival because on this day, the moon is clear, bright and full. In traditional Chinese culture, the moon's roundness represents the reunion of family and friends. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many community and cultural events were either cancelled or postponed. It was marvellous that this year the University of Sydney held a Mid-Autumn Festival event on 15 September at the Chau Chak Wing Museum. This was an opportunity for alumni to enjoy this cultural event with a spirit of happiness, togetherness and thanksgiving. It was good to see Dr Paul Donnelly, CCWM Museum Director and Professor Mark Scott AO, Vice-Chancellor and President, as well as many other colleagues and friends at the University of Sydney. I hope the brightness of the moon continues to uplift and inspire all of us. Happy Mid-Autumn Festival.

#### **BANGARRA DANCERS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—I want to congratulate three Dubbo College students who have been chosen to learn from the internationally-acclaimed Bangarra Dance Company in the lead up to this year's Schools Spectacular. South Campus student Jobie Castledine (year 7) and Delroy campus students Kynan Roworth (year 9) and Sarah Charlton (year 10) were selected to perform as part of the NSW Public Schools Aboriginal Dance Company after submitting video auditions. The trio are now rehearsing for the Schools Spectacular, at Qudos Bank Arena on November 24 and 26 – but they're also looking to the future. They hope meeting teachers and performers from Bangarra could open doors for a career in the arts, and they wouldn't be the first; Dubbo Ballet Studio alumni Ella Havelka danced with Bangarra for three years before becoming the first Indigenous dancer with the Australian Ballet, and award-winning Bangarra dancer and Wiradjuri man Beau Dean Riley Smith was also born in Dubbo. Congratulations Jobie, Kynan and Sarah! Best of luck for Schools Spectacular and I can't wait to see what you do in the future!

#### **ALF CANTRELL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge Mr Alf Cantrell, of Yeoval. With his wife, Sharon, Alf is the co-owner and curator of the Banjo Paterson – more than a poet exhibition and museum at Yeoval, and proprietor of Clancy's Café which is attached to the museum. Alf has dedicated years to memorialising the life and accomplishments of A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson, and has amassed a large and unique collection of Banjo's personal possessions and memorabilia, as well as Australiana collections from the past. The museum and café have grown as a tourist and traveller attraction, and has done much to attract visitation to the township and contribute to the economy of the quaint rural township. For the past 60 years Alf has been actively volunteering at the Yeoval Progress Association, Red Cross, the Historical Society and the Yeoval Show Society. Alf's six decades of volunteering was recently recognised and he was awarded the Central West NSW Volunteer of the Year and Senior Volunteer of the Year at the 2022 Central West Volunteer of the Year Awards. I wish to thank Alf for a lifetime of volunteer service, and congratulate him on being recognised and awarded for his service to community. Well done.

### NSW STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the dedicated volunteer members and professional staff of the NSW State Emergency Service. The volunteers of the State Emergency Service should be commended for their vital service when responding to flood and storm, keeping communities safe throughout New South Wales. During this unprecedented wet season, our SES volunteers and their units have tirelessly kept a vigil and promptly deployed during the repetitive floods which many of our communities have experienced during the past year. I wish to commend the SES volunteers for their service to community and ongoing personal sacrifice to keep our communities safe during storm and flood. The SES volunteers exhibit courage in adverse and potentially dangerous conditions, to protect life and property. There are many areas across NSW, including the Orange electorate, which are presently braced for potential major flooding. The SES volunteers have placed their professional and personal lives on hold while helping communities prepare for potential flooding and remaining ready to respond should flooding eventuate. On behalf of an appreciate community I thank all SES members for their service and wish them safe return home from their deployments. Thank you and keep up the great work.

### MURRAY HARTIN – MOREE CELEBRITY

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Mr Murray Hartin, a well-known identity in the Northern Tablelands and beyond, for his inspirational and entertaining stories and poetry. Murray is a local Moree resident who some may refer to as an Australian larrikin, and Murray is Australian through and through. His humour and take on life has lifted the spirits of many. As creator of Magic on the Mehi, Murray teamed up with Mitch Johnstone and Mitch Cosh to offer a fantastic weekend of entertainment at his property for many years until COVID interfered. Murray has authored or co-authored many books from campsite recipes to local stories and poetry. He has contributed to community functions including of late a combined schools' poetry workshop at the Mungindi Town Hall helping children from kinder to grade 6 develop their literacy skills and create a poem. I congratulate Murray on the success of his many publications and endeavours. I commend Murray for his commitment to Moree and for keeping alive our rich heritage much of which would be lost if not for our wonderful story tellers.

### CLAUDE MAGARRY – A MOREE CHAMPION

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Mr Claude MaGarry, one of Moree's unsung heroes whose life has left a mark on forming Moree as a progressive community ever striving for integrity, relevance, fairness, and opportunity. Mr MaGarry was born during the tough years of World War II and raised by a remarkable man at the Moree Wool Appraisement. Claude learned about hard work and treating others as he would want to be treated and has maintained that rule. He worked for Council for 45 years, represented council workers as the union representative, and ultimately served as a Councillor. Claude can be seen at the supermarket selling raffle tickets for numerous charities, serves as a board member for Gwydir Industries, and is a familiar sight at the Moree Race Club where he helps with the barriers. It's always been about helping others for Mr MaGarry. I congratulate Mr MaGarry on his many accomplishments over the years. I commend Claude on his community leadership and unknowingly being a mentor to us all.

### MS MILLIE BOYLE

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—On behalf of the Bega Electorate, I would like to recognise Ms Millie Boyle who recently co-captained the Newcastle Knights to their maiden premiership in the NRLW. Originally hailing from Cobargo, Ms Boyle and the Knights had a convincing 32-12 win over the Parramatta Eels in the 2022 season decider at Accor Stadium in Sydney on Sunday, October 2. Millie is yet another extraordinary example of home-grown sporting talent as a dual-code international, having played for both the Australian Jillaroos and Australian Wallaroos. In late September, Ms Boyle was named in the Dream Team for a second consecutive year, announced by the Rugby League Players Association which name the best 13 players in their positions, as voted by the players. Ms Boyle was again selected for the Jillaroos squad for the upcoming World Cup in England, however, has opted to remain in Australia to continue her work with Trainer Group. Ms Boyle is one of the foundation members of Trainer Group which focuses on improving mental and physical health, increased community participation, education and confidence building with programs for people with disabilities. Congratulations Millie!

### PATHWAYS TO POLITICS

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On Friday September 23 UNSW's Pathways to Politics for Women held its final event for 2022, with this year's graduates giving their final speeches at NSW Parliament. Pathways to Politics is a powerful and empowering program that aims to change the face of politics by equipping women with the skills, knowledge, confidence and networks they need to run for elected office and thrive as political

leaders. On behalf of the Newtown electorate I want to acknowledge and congratulate this year's graduates: Jade Tyrell, Skye Tito, Kate Sinclair, Mira Ibrahim, Ahalya Rentala, Sandra Triulzi, Amanda Fotheringham, Maryam Zahid, Sarina Kilham, Angela Maguire, Grisha Chawla, Kiri Dicker, Kashmir Miller, Taylor Vandijk, Michelle Cook, Monique Dam, Elizabeth Hristoforidis, Jananie Janarthana, Fiona Thatcher, Isabella Kristo, Anjali Nadaradjane, Charlotte Mortlock and Ellie Stamatelatos. I also want to thank and acknowledge Pathways to Politics' Program co-directors Dr Lynsey Blayden and Professor Rosalind Dixon for their hard work in ensuring the program is immensely valuable and rewarding for all participants, and the University of NSW and Trawalla Foundation for supporting the program to succeed.

#### **UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing work of the University of Sydney Women's Collective [WoCo]. For over 50 years WoCo has been at the forefront of campus activism for reproductive justice and the movement against sexual violence on and off campus. They are champions of intersectional feminism that is inclusive of First Nations women, women of colour, trans women, and gender non-binary people. Community building is central to their activism, and they host events ranging from educational panels and reading groups to open discussions and rallies. This year, amidst advocating for survivors of sexual violence and organising a thought-provoking Radical Pride & Consent Week, WoCo has supported public sector workers taking industrial action and helped people understand why the strikes are a feminist issue. I thank WoCo for their commitment to radical intersectional feminism, practical solidarity, and grassroots organising. In particular I recognise the leadership of Dashie Prasad and Monica Lee, the 2022 Women's Officers, and the contributions of SRC President Lauren Lancaster and former Women's Officer Jazzlyn Breen to the Radical Pride & Consent Week panel I also participated in.

#### **JEMIMA MOWBRAY**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to acknowledge the work of Jemima Mowbray, Policy and Advocacy Manager at the Tenants Union NSW. Jemima has worked with the Tenants Union since 2014 and in policy development and advocacy since 2016 with a strong emphasis on housing and rental justice. Her detailed work supporting the rights of renters is invaluable and has informed the work we do in the Newtown electorate which has one of the highest percentages of renters in NSW. I wish to particularly acknowledge and thank Jemima for her work during the past 2 years advocating for the rights of tenants in the Covid-19 pandemic when renters were, and continue to be, severely impacted. We know that so many people across NSW rely on the expertise and support of Jemima and the whole Tenants Union team in their work and express our appreciation for their efforts.

#### **MULGOA VETERINARY CLINIC**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Today I acknowledge the end of an era for the local Mulgoa community as it farewells the Mulgoa Veterinary Clinic. The clinic began at the back of the Mulgoa Shopping Village in 1994 and 11 years later it found a new owner in Dr Bernice Blom. Dr Blom made the heartbreaking decision to close the clinic doors after suffering from the impacts of COVID-19, a fractured wrist and a crisis of vet and nurse availability. It's always a tough decision to close the doors of a business you have worked so hard to build and despite all the challenges Dr Blom faced, she never gave up trying. It is that spirit to keep on trying that illuminates the real passion an individual has for what they love to do most and I that is clear with Dr Blom. I wish Dr Blom all the best in her future endeavours.

#### **REGENTVILLE RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—The terrible and tragic 2019/20 Black Summer Bushfire Season that the State and all our emergency services had to endure for the safety of every one of us is well and truly seared in our minds – we will never forget. Since that time, the Regentville Rural Fire Service have welcomed 22 new members. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for volunteering their efforts to serve and protect others in times of emergency. Our RFS Volunteers right across our state are some of the most bravest individuals amongst us. They are committed to protecting our families from the dangers that our natural environment can sometimes unleash. Thank you to all the new recruits at Regentville RFS. You have my utmost respect and admiration for all the work that you do and for all the challenges you will face.

#### **CAROLINE CHISHOLM COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—A huge congratulations to the newly elected student leaders at Caroline Chisholm College. It is a significant honour to be recognised by your peers and your teachers that you are worthy of being a leader in your school community. Leadership is a tremendous challenge and opportunity. School Captains and Vice Captains play an important role as leaders, they set the example for others and take the initiative on matters that affect students on a day to day basis. Importantly their presence, influence and actions

on behalf of the broader student body can and does inspire others. This inspiration can see others dream and work to reach even greater goals in life. Congratulations once again to the new student leaders at Caroline Chisholm and I wish you the very best in your leadership roles.

#### **NORMA DISHER HAWKINS**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the incredible contributions of Glebe resident Norma Disher Hawkins, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday on 19th October. Norma has been an active member of the theatre and film-making community since 1949 when she joined New Theatre, holding roles from costumer to director. Norma brought a strong sense of social justice to her work, establishing links between the theatre and the Sydney Committee for Human Rights in Guatemala and working in the Waterside Workers' Federation Film Unit. Together with her comrades Jock Levy and Keith Gow, Norma made important contributions to capturing the struggle and history of the union movement, with one of the films she worked on, *The Hungry Miles*, winning a gold medal at the Warsaw Film Festival. In recognition of her services to the arts and social justice, Norma was awarded an Honorary Fellowship at the University of New South Wales in 2021. Norma has also been recognised by the Glebe Society for her involvement in preserving John Street Reserve, with a tree planted in her honour. It is a privilege to recognise Norma's achievements in Parliament and I wish her a happy birthday.

#### **BALMAIN EAST MIXED PROBUS CLUB**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the valuable work of the Balmain East Mixed Probus Club whose September General Meeting I had the pleasure of speaking at. The Probus Club is a group of active retired business and professional people who have an ongoing interest and engagement in local affairs. The Club is a place for retirees to make new friends, share stories and participate in activities. Their recent return to in person meetings at the Cat and Fiddle Hotel marks an exciting new era for the Club and I look forward to their continued participation in Balmain community life. I would like to extend thanks to all those who have made contributions to the Club, including Beverley Bruen, Rosemary Newman, Gary McFarlane, John Prowse, Charo Devery, Robyn Longhurst, Ann Burleigh, Mary Ancich and Bron Logan.

#### **NATIONAL HEADSPACE DAY PORT MACQUARIE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise Headspace Port Macquarie and the activities organised to acknowledge National Headspace Day on 5th October 2022 calling on young people, their families and friends to slow down and prioritise their mental health. National Headspace Day is a day of awareness focussing on the mental health and wellbeing of young people and recognising their struggles and the importance of community connections and the support of their family and friends. Headspace Port Macquarie organised a free community event featuring a smoking ceremony and welcome to country by Birpai Elder Uncle Bill O'Brien followed by a picnic, music, mindful movement session and mindfulness art classes with artist Vivianne Hazenveld. Headspace Port Macquarie is a free service where young people can connect with mental health coaches and health clinicians, social workers, psychologists, a doctor or psychiatrist provided through dozens of passionate and dedicated staff. Thank you to the Headspace Port Macquarie team of staff and volunteers with a particular mention of Community Engagement Coordinator Julie Jamison with the support of Kate McKinnon, Andrea Burns, Jessica Thomas, Ben Rahsdan, Ella Lloyd, Dimity Chippendale Melinda Griffiths, Kate Stalder, Kirraleigh Ryan and John Gardner.

#### **TOM JENKINS – AUSCYCLING NATIONAL ALL SCHOOLS CYCLING CHALLENGE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I applaud Tom Jenkins who is a gifted young man of the MTB and BMX circuit. Tom recently completed the Auscycling Shimano National All Schools Cycling Challenge held at the Gold Coast on the 2nd – 4th September 2022. A Year 10 student from St Joseph's Regional College, Tom is now ranked among Australia's elite Mountain Bike Riders after completing his first Auscycling National title to record a 1st in the MTB Enduro, 3rd in the MTB XC, 4th in the Road Sprint and 7th in the Road Criterium. At the age of just 16, Tom continues to reach new milestones in mountain bike competitions since discovering a passion for riding when he was 10 years old. Recognising a star in the making it wasn't long before Fox Factory Australia jumped on board to sponsor Tom in his cycling endeavours. Approximately 240 students registered and competed for championship honours in the Auscycling National All Schools Cycling Challenge with our very own Tom Jenkins claiming the highly coveted Overall trophy. I congratulate Tom on this outstanding achievement and wish him well at the international championships in 2023.

#### **NATIONAL STEM AWARDS – ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL LAURIETON**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise our incredibly talented students from St Joseph's Primary School Laurieton and acknowledge their recent win in the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics [STEM] Make a Difference [MAD] design at the National Catholic Education Conference held

in September. St Joseph's were also successful in the Best Engineer Product and were finalists for the Application of Maths in Context section at the showcase. It is simply amazing what our young geniuses have developed in STEM and a credit to the teachers at St Joseph's who have created so many opportunities for students to learn and grow in this space. At the conference, year six students Jack Wilson, Adam Tunhavasana and Roman Reithmuller impressed the judges with an ingenious flood warning system designed for their school aimed at improving resilience and awareness. The team were inspired to create a warning system following the impact caused to the school from the one-in-one-hundred year flood event in March 2021. Renowned biomedical engineer Dr Jordan Nguyen inspected the design which combined technical, coding, electrical and science knowledge to construct the impressive flood warning system. I congratulate the students on their success at the Conference.

#### **MENAI HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Menai High School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I urge them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the new student leadership team for 2023, namely School Captains Noah Mariani and Kaia Dennis and Vice Captains Tom Straker, Ethan Butcher, Amber Soo and Savannah Archer. I have every confidence that these dedicated young adults will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Menai High School's motto of 'care and commitment'.

#### **NORTH CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the wonderful members from North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club ("North Cronulla") who have been a familiar presence on our beaches for nearly 100 years. Since 1925, North Cronulla's members have been patrolling our beaches and safeguarding the lives of swimmers. North Cronulla is not only an inclusive and family orientated Club, but one which delivers a range of educational programs and services to our community. Importantly, throughout the 2021/2022 season there were "no lives lost" on the beach and the Club's members completed over 10,000 patrolling hours, 100 rescues and over 2,500 preventative actions. Of course, none of this is possible without hard work and tireless commitment of each individual who contributes. I recognise the newly appointed 2022/2023 Board of Directors including Warren Rennie, Geoff Budd, Craig McKinnery, Dave Waugh, Donna Hargreaves, Ben Smollett, Colin Bulloch, Shane Whittaker, Lee Howell, Anita Pryke, Jeff Loy, Barbara Maythers, Geoff Streater, Kevin Macnamara, Jamie Primmer and Barry Schuettrumpf and extend my best wishes for the season ahead. I thank the North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club members for their continued dedication to protecting local beachgoers.

#### **MRS SUSAN GRUBER AND MRS KERRY ENGLAND**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise Mrs Susan Gruber and Mrs Kerry England, known as the St Clements Hymn Group. Mrs Susan Gruber's excellent vocal talent together with Mrs Kerry England's superb piano skills have been sanctifying the congregation at the historic St Clement's Anglican Church in Yass. Mrs Gruber and Mrs England have led the band of jubilant voices of other parishioners each Sunday morning for the past twenty years. The joy of their talents has also seen the celebrations of many other events such as the Christmas Eve midnight services and the Lighting of the New Fire at Easter. Earlier this year Mrs Gruber and Mrs England performed at the Yass ANZAC Day Ceremony which saw a larger audience than they are used to. The special connection through music with each other and their spirituality is one to be respected and appreciated as it also provides others with the opportunity to join in and celebrate their faith. I convey my sincere praises to the duo for their longevity of service and commitment to the congregation at St Clement's.

#### **ALIVE IN THE PARK**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise 'Alive in the Park'. 'Alive in the Park' is a free event, held at Riverbank Park in Yass, drawing in members of the community to enjoy the live music and arts festival. The festival is a collaborative effort between YASSarts and the Yass Valley Council, attracting youth participation in aspects of planning and performance. It is truly an enticing and innovative way for young people to become involved in a way that captures their interests, skills, and passion. The vision of the community and Council have been brought together and for this 'Alive in the Park' was recognised by receiving the 'Most Innovative Youth Week Program 2022' at the Local Government Week Awards in August. I am truly heartened to see this collaboration and the Council's Social Plan being activated, recognising that COVID has had such impact on many young people and the wider community. It is inspiring that our local

regional communities can maximise their strengths, talents, and skills to shine and inspire others. I sincerely congratulate all involved and praise the recognition that they have received through their award.

#### **FROSTIVAL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise 'Frostival', Goulburn. 'Frostival' was a three-day event, held in late August, for the very first time at Belmore Park and Montague Street in Goulburn. Goulburn is well known for its winter chill and frosty mornings, which provided the backdrop theme for this exciting new event. Donned with beanies, gloves, coats and scarves, members of the community were embraced by a warmth of community spirit and access to participate in a range of winter-themed activities, which even included an ice-skating rink. Frostival also delighted those less inclined to participate in physical activities to indulge in an array of refreshments, mulled wine at the Frostival Bar and hot chocolate. Live entertainment and illuminations in the park provided other sensory delights. The idea for the event was initiated by the Goulburn Mulwaree Council's Marketing and Events Team. The perfect 'Frostival' which celebrated the end of Goulburn's cold winter, enriched the hearts and spirits of those attending, highlighted the talents of local musicians and provided an array of culinary delights, was truly a wonderful concept that was enjoyed by all. I sincerely thank and congratulate the Marketing and Events team for all their hard work.

#### **WARIALDA HIGH SCHOOL – 50 YEARS CELEBRATION**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Warialda High School's recent 50-year Reunion Celebration which brought together the young and not so young sharing the stories from 50 years of education. Photos of every Year 12 group and staff since 1972 created a Hall of History including sports photos collated by the Late Nancy Frazer. Bill McIntosh, James Pinkerton, and Dwayne Nolan with the help of Scott Villagonzalo ensured the grounds were in impeccable order and students Maddison Findlater, Ella-Louise Turner, Imogen Hall, Lucy Lockyer and Zeva Way gave tours with morning tea provided by Senior Hospitality students and staff. The 1997 time capsule, buried by Mrs Hausler's Year 8 class, was unveiled and a new capsule was buried. Evening dinner entertainment included the school song sung by Vice Captain Jack Digby and memorable speeches by David Galvin, Len Fleming and Yvonne Ledingham described what it meant to be a part of Warialda High School, concluding the event described as a magical day for a trip down memory lane. I congratulate Principal Shelly Way and staff, Stacey Bell, Franca Williams, Christine Wilkins, Donna Smith, Wendy Phillips, Margaret Smith, Debbie Turner for providing a memorable 50-Year Celebration.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:28 until  
Thursday 13 October 2022 at 9:30.**