



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday 8 November 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 8 November 2022**

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

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

### *Bills*

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

##### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour of the sitting.

### *Announcements*

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that a staff member from the Deputy Premier's office has today been authorised to take still photographs from the public gallery of question time as well as the member for Clarence's valedictory speech.

### *Business of the House*

#### **ORDER OF BUSINESS: VALEDICTORY SPEECHES**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I move:

That business before the House be interrupted this day immediately following the giving of general business notices of motions to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Clarence.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome guests of the member for Clarence, who are sitting in the gallery today to listen to his valedictory speech. Particularly I welcome Vicki Gulaptis, wife of the member, Graeme and Margaret Dobbin, and Peter and Caroline Brown and their son, James. Welcome to you all.

### *Notices*

#### **PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members that notices of motions are to be framed as notices of motions, not congratulations or personal statements.

### *Members*

#### **VALEDICTORY SPEECHES**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, we will now hear the valedictory speech of the member for Clarence. I will vacate the chair but remain in the Chamber as I want to hear the member's speech. The member's fellow Nationals member, and member for Upper Hunter, Temporary Speaker Dave Layzell, will now take the chair. I join colleagues and all those who are in the Chamber in looking forward to the valedictory speech of the member for Clarence.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (12:18):** Mr Speaker, I appreciate those kind words and the fact you have remained in the Chamber to listen to my valedictory speech. I feel like I am about to give my own eulogy—but no, he's still alive, so it is actually last rites and confession. My staff and friends in the gallery are all looking a bit sad and my colleagues in the Chamber are a bit downcast. My wife is wiping away a few tears, but members should not rush over with the tissues. She does not need consoling; they are tears of joy. She

hates politics and, other than John Howard, she dislikes most politicians. I only make the cut because she likes my cooking. While she has been singing Queen's song *I Want to Break Free* for the past few years, I feel like breaking out into Sinatra's *My Way*. I have not been here a lifetime; it just feels that way. It is certainly a privilege to be elected to this place, but nonetheless it is a tough gig. Now I face the final curtain. But, unlike Frank, I did not do it all my way. What stands out to me more than anything else is that it has been a team effort.

I have been fortunate to be part of a premiership-winning team that has delivered a once-in-a-generation investment into regional New South Wales and, more specifically, my electorate. As much as we like to spruik in this place our achievements as local members, the team should be credited with the success. It was the team that was responsible for the Pacific Highway upgrade, the new Grafton bridge, the multimillion-dollar upgrade to the Casino saleyards and the multitude of other investments in my electorate. It is the team that has delivered health facilities and ambulance stations, and upgrades to roads, schools and sporting facilities. Quite frankly, it has delivered so much that I do not know where to start. What I can say, though, is that it is the team that has put regional New South Wales first for a change and changed the face of regional New South Wales. It is a fabulous team, which I have been privileged to be part of.

Like any premiership team, no single person is better than the team. It has a great coach in Andrew Fraser. I do not know if he is here today. Andrew is the epitome of what a local member should be. He helped, guided and mentored me through some really difficult times. I am truly proud to call him a friend. He was inspirational in my retirement because he has been here so long that I did not want to end up like him: old, cranky and senile. Sorry, Andrew. We do not often make friends in this place, but he is a lifelong friend. Over the past 11 years that I have been in this place, the team has had some terrific captains from Andrew Stoner to Tooley, who is carrying on the wonderful legacy that John Barilaro established for regional New South Wales. Barra put the regions first and fought tooth and nail so that we would get our fair share. He was a real champion of regional New South Wales. Unfortunately, the media and critics have a pseudonym for "fair share". They call it "pork-barrelling". If it was not for the pork-barrel, we in regional New South Wales would get zilch, nada, nothing—not a thing. We did not get anything for decades, but thanks to Barra and Tooley regional New South Wales has a voice.

Whilst I did say that no player is better than the team, every team has star players. We, too, have star players on our frontbench. Surprise, surprise—some of them are even women! Bronnie Taylor, Sarah Mitchell and Steph Cooke have performed incredibly well during some of the most challenging times the State has experienced. They are wonderful examples of the smart, dedicated and hardworking women we have in the regions. I am sure we will see more and more of them representing our party in the future. Like every team, we have a highly trained and capable support group, led by our State director, Joe Lundy. Joe and the support group provided us with the inspiration and administrative tools that we needed to be a premiership-winning team. That support group extends to my electorate staff. The support I have received from them is immeasurable. They carry the load and protect us and encourage us to be the best that we can be for the people who we serve. They are at the coalface every day and are our conduit to our community. They make us look good even when we are ordinary.

Like every premiership-winning team, we have a very loyal bunch of supporters, who work for us, cheer for us and believe in us. A premiership-winning team repays that loyalty by not only winning but playing the game for them and playing our hearts out for the core values that our supporters believe in. For me, winning does not mean winning an election for bragging rights. It means winning so we can deliver those essential services and facilities that every citizen in this State deserves, no matter where they live. For me, being a member of Parliament has never been about me but about being part of a team that can best deliver for the people I represent. All they want is a fair share. In politics, being part of a winning team can be painful. The leadership group can often have a different vision to the individual, whose team loyalty is questioned. But we must always show our loyalty to those who put their faith in us, like when the Government closed the Grafton jail in the first year after I was elected. I was thinking, "What is going on here?" I was supposed to be on the same team as the Government but here it was hanging me out to dry.

It was tough on the picket line outside the Grafton jail, standing alongside members of the Prison Officers Union and just ordinary people worried about their future, but it was not as tough as losing one's job, taking one's family away and seeing despondency creep into one's community. That is the reality of governments making tough decisions. Apart from learning a few slogans on the picket line, I learned very quickly the drastic impact that decisions in Macquarie Street can have on a community 600 kilometres away. I learned very quickly which side I was on, and that was, is and always will be with the people who put their faith in me to represent them. My faith in the Government was restored not long after that when it collaborated with the private sector to build Australia's largest jail in the Clarence Valley, creating 700 jobs.

Country life is very different to city life. It is simple and honest, and that is what I love about it. City people love country life as well, but their love is like a country and western song, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. That certainly seemed to be the message when the Government decided to ban greyhound racing in New South

Wales. Never mind that it is not the sport of kings but the sport of the working class. Never mind that country people love their dogs, they love to socialise and they love to have a punt. Never mind that it went against the very fabric of country life. I found myself questioning whether I was on the right team again. I did not get it. What were they thinking? It was painfully obvious to me this was just out of whack with what ordinary country people believed.

I met with many greyhound owners. I saw how much they loved their dogs and the sport that brought them together, and I could not let them down. I had no choice. If I was to be true to them, I had to cross the floor. Crossing the floor did not sit easy with me; it was like falling out with one's family. But I knew deep down it was the right thing to do. It proved to be the right decision because the Government gave the greyhound industry a reprieve and, as a consequence, the industry is stronger than ever with the highest animal welfare standards in the world. The lesson that never seems to be learned is pretty much what I said before: Life in the country is different to city life. Do not presume to know what is good for us. Do not try to force change on us. Do not try to make us into you.

We saw exactly that with the koala State environmental planning policy, a flawed policy based on a false premise—the false premise being that all rural landholders have complete disregard for koalas—and a policy with defective maps showing core koala habitat over the main roundabout in the centre of Grafton and in the pits at Mount Panorama. How could we support such—I will use the French word for it—crap? This sort of top-down policymaking infuriates country people because it is so fundamentally wrong. Most people on the land love nature and our native wildlife. That is why we find koalas in the country. I am so proud that our whole team objected to this—I will use the French word again—crappy policy.

As difficult as it was for Barra and our Ministers, it was the right decision. It was a clear demonstration of our support for our core constituency—the people who put their faith in us; the people who provide the food, the fibre, the construction materials and most of the other resources that city people need to survive because they have gobbled them all up with growth. Now they are telling us that we are doing it all wrong. I am puzzled. Who is doing it wrong? Over the past 11 years, no matter how often I walk through Hyde Park, the Domain and the botanic gardens, and no matter how hard I look, I have never seen a koala. I am flat out trying to find a eucalypt for that matter.

There we have it. Yes, there are significant differences between the city and the country. That is why the role of The Nationals is so important to the State Coalition Government. We are the voice of the regions. The regions rely on us to make sure they get their fair share and we have done that because we have a seat at the table. Our communities on the North Coast have been devastated by floods. It is incumbent on government to do everything possible to help people and communities recover. That has to be a priority of government and I will do everything possible to help them. We do not always see eye to eye with our Liberal colleagues—we do today because they are all here and I thank them for coming.

Our Coalition has strengthened over time. My admiration for the Premier has strengthened every time I have seen him visiting flooded communities on the North Coast. Dom has been visibly moved by individual stories and has shown compassion and commitment to assisting flood victims to rebuild their lives, and that is the mark of a true leader. As the 25 March election draws near, I feel that the Liberal-Nationals Coalition is in a very strong position to win a fourth term—sorry to the Labor Opposition. I know that is exactly the result that country people want. I will certainly be supporting the Clarence candidate, Richie Williamson, who is in the gallery today. I thank him for coming down. Richie is a terrific candidate and a great friend, and I am very confident in saying he will be the next member for Clarence.

The problem for Chris Minns and the Opposition is that their perspective of politics is taken from Marx—not Karl, but Groucho. For them, politics is the art of looking for problems, finding them everywhere, diagnosing them incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies. That is why they remind me of the Marx Brothers. I see Janelle, who reminds me of the Marx brother I like the most: Harpo. Anyone who has seen *The Big Store* knows what I am talking about. It is organised chaos, but they have certainly given me a laugh, and I will be looking for a few more laughs next year. That is unlike The Greens, who have scared the crap out of me. They always come into this place with frightening stories of what is going to happen to Earth. They remind me of those disaster movies where an apocalyptic meteor is heading for Earth and they are all shepherding us on foot to Area 51, that safe haven in the Nevada desert. When we get there, the lights are on. The lights are kept on by a nuclear reactor, but don't tell them that. God bless them for saving the world.

I love the Independents because they remind me of *Happy Days*. Greg Piper is the cool one, Fonzie. Alex is Richie Cunningham, the eager beaver, happy, always trying to help someone. And Joe is the sensible Al, in charge of the drive-in. They solve some incredible problems, such as whether Chachi should take Joanie to the junior prom. I am just kidding. I love those guys. They made my time here very special. I will never forget the shooters, who are not here, except for Roy. They remind me of a posse in the Wild West. They ride into town,

shooting at everything—shooting at bad guys and good guys, even shooting at each other. I love a good Western, which is probably why I am wearing the bolo tie today.

To my Nationals colleagues, it has been an incredible experience to be part of a family who shares the same basic ideals I do. No matter whether you are a freshy or a salty, it was never about politics but just about getting a fair share for our communities. Together we have achieved an incredible transformation in regional New South Wales, something we will never see again and made possible only because we were a premiership-winning team. Like every family, we have had highs and lows. We have laughed and cried. We have been angry and frustrated. But we have always stayed true to our values, which we share with our communities. I will treasure the memories forever.

To my sidekick, Geoff, thanks for making me feel like a schoolkid again and making me enjoy this place, which we know can be brutal at times. Even after I have gone, do not be surprised to find me on your balcony, smoking a cigar, with the barbecue sizzling and the smell of onions wafting through the building. It has been an absolute pleasure, mate. You will be pleased to know that your Welsh mates Eyrn and Menir are in the gallery. Give them a wave. To all the ministerial staff members who keep the wheels of government turning, thank you for all your help. To all the parliamentary staff members—attendants, special constables, caterers, cleaners, groundskeepers—thank you for making life easy for us when Parliament sits. To all the scribes, media critics and social media hacks who started off altruistic and ended up as scarred cynics, there is a road to redemption, and I forgive you.

To The Nationals in my State electorate council who preselected me back in 2011, thank you for the faith you showed in me and for giving me the privilege to represent you in this place. I can only hope that I served you well and met your expectations. Your values and my values are shared by the regional people of New South Wales. To the people of Clarence, it has been an honour and privilege to serve you in this place, the oldest Parliament in the country. I have always put you first and you are the last thing on my mind when I go to bed. I will always be indebted to you and I hope I did not let you down. To my staff who have been with me for the whole journey, I cannot thank you enough for keeping me off the front pages of the paper.

Debbie Newton, who is in the gallery, has been an electorate office staffer for over 34 years. Her experience, work ethic and connection with our community has been invaluable to me. She knows the ins and outs of politics after 34 years in it—of course she would. She has connections with ministerial staff and knows all the movers and shakers who make the wheels turn. She is the type of person that no electorate office can do without. Thank you. Like Debbie, Janet Gould is also here today. She has a lifetime of experience in her role. She handles the phones and the prickly constituents, manages the office finances and gives me sage advice when it is most needed. Most importantly, she has kept the ATO at bay. Thank you, Janet. Everyone needs someone like her in their office.

Greg Bailey is not here today, but the first thing that comes to mind when I think about Greg is that he is one of the most decent and caring people I know. Anyone who has contacted my office has loved dealing with him. He is a terrific bloke. Every office needs someone like Greg. Murray Lees has been part of my political journey since 2007. He has worked on my campaigns, he has done media for me, he has given me advice and he has been a true friend the whole time. Thanks, Muz. It has been an absolute pleasure. My good friends Margaret and Graham Dobbin, who travelled down from Maclean, are in the gallery today. Thank you for your friendship and support for decades. You have been there for both Vicki and me through good times and bad times. I cannot thank you enough. You are very dear friends. Vicki's cousin Peter Brown and his wife, Carolyn Brown, are here today, as is their son James, who works for the President. He is a terrific young bloke. He would be an asset to any Minister or member. If you are looking for another job, James, I have just given you a plug.

Finally, I recognise my family. My sons Leon and Jarrad have lived away for most of the time that I have been in this place. Like most young people, they have their own views on politics, but they have always been there for me and deep down they share the same values as Vicki and me. I look forward to spending more time with them and my granddaughter, Olivia, when I leave this place. As for Vicki, it has been a roller-coaster ride. Spouses do not sign up for the job when members get elected, and often they end up with the rough end of the pineapple. But as rough as it has been, she has stuck with me through the good times and the bad. We have laughed, we have cried and we have argued, but we have always loved each other—not just over the past 11 years, but for the past 41 years that we have been married, which is quite a long time. I think it might be longer than the Leader of the Opposition has been alive.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** And the Premier.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** And the Premier. Well, 41 years for me and 41 years for Vicki is longer than both of them have been alive. I look forward to spending quality time with you, Vicki. I love that quality time so much—cleaning the shower, hanging out the washing, ironing, doing the cooking and all of those

other things on the list. And as Maxwell Smart would say, "And loving it." And I do love you—yes, I do. I have made light of some of my colleagues in this place but, in the words of that famous Australian pugilist, "I love youse all." Finally, in the words of that famous Californian Governor, "Hasta la vista, baby."

*Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.*

*Bills*

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (FAMILY IS CULTURE) BILL 2022**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (12:42):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022 to this House. The bill implements several recommendations of the report entitled *Family is Culture: Independent Review into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care in New South Wales*, which I will refer to as the Family is Culture report. I commend the Minister for Families and Communities, who has delivered on her commitment to bring forward consideration of the 25 legislative recommendations of the Family is Culture report, in consultation with stakeholders, with a view to progressing as many of those recommendation as possible by the end of 2022.

The Minister has wasted no time since she was appointed in December 2021. The Government has listened to the voices of Aboriginal people, community representatives and other stakeholders in bringing forward these legislative changes, including Aboriginal community-controlled peak organisations and our Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations partners, AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service. It has also heard from legal stakeholders, particularly the Children's Court of New South Wales, about the operational impact of the recommendations relating to court proceedings. The perspectives of all stakeholders have been carefully considered and have directly informed the bill that is before the House today.

The bill is a clear demonstration of the New South Wales Government's commitment to changing the way it does things to be more responsive to the needs of Aboriginal children, families and communities; to strengthen safeguards for Aboriginal children and their families; to support children and families now and into the future; and to ensure that the voices of Aboriginal children, families and entities are heard in decisions that affect their children. The Government acknowledges that Aboriginal children and young people continue to be over-represented in the child protection system and that more must be done to address this. It is not acceptable that Aboriginal children and young people make up almost half of all children and young people in out-of-home care. This often leads to poor outcomes for children across all major indicators—health, wellbeing, education and employment.

The bill is an important part of a suite of initiatives that this Government is implementing to connect families with culturally appropriate services and supports, including prenatal parenting programs, support networks, and early intervention and preservation programs to keep families together. This means working with Aboriginal children and young people who are in care, and their families, in a culturally appropriate way to address risks and provide support so that children and young people can return home to their parents and families safely and quickly. The bill requires a greater focus on culturally appropriate early interventions.

The Government continues to make targeted investments in this area, including an additional \$98.7 million to establish six new Aboriginal Child and Family Centres and expand the nine centres that already exist to provide culturally safe, integrated health and childhood services; \$38.6 million for statewide expansion of the Pregnancy Family Conferencing program for vulnerable women and their families, delivered jointly by the Department of Communities and Justice and the Ministry of Health to help families get the support they need before the birth of a child; diverting up to \$11 million per year for family preservation funding to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations by June 2024 to support around 300 more Aboriginal children and young people each year; \$3.9 million over four years to develop an Aboriginal-led commissioning model that involves Aboriginal communities in the design, delivery and monitoring of programs and services for Aboriginal families; \$8.6 million over four years to support local community-determined consultation mechanisms across New South Wales; and \$9.9 million over four years for families, who are at risk of having their children removed, to access legal advocacy support delivered by the Aboriginal Legal Service.

The amendments in the bill will enshrine best practice in legislation that lifts the collective focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people and strengthen accountability. I wish to briefly

acknowledge the important work of the Family is Culture report, which is the basis of these reforms. In 2016 the former Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, commissioned Cobble Cobble woman Professor Megan Davis to lead an independent review into the causes of the high rates of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care and to develop strategies to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care and improve pathways to family reunification. The landmark Family is Culture report was released on 7 November 2019 and made 125 systemic recommendations, that are, in the words of Professor Davis:

... the result of the courageous advocacy of the Aboriginal men, women, aunties and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers whose children, relatives and kin have been removed from their families in NSW.

Twenty-five of the recommendations were around changing legislation and court processes. In April and May of this year, following the release of a discussion paper, the department consulted widely across New South Wales with Aboriginal people and community organisations, legal and court stakeholders, child protection staff and other government agencies on these 25 recommendations. Their feedback has directly shaped this bill. As the Minister for Families and Communities did in the other place, I also express my deepest gratitude to everyone who took the time to share their views, particularly the many Aboriginal people and community representatives who shared their personal stories which revealed wounds that are still painful and raw.

Effective reform of the child protection system cannot be achieved without the participation of Aboriginal people and communities in decision-making about matters that affect them. The Government has done this and will continue to do this. The Government is also looking at ways to strengthen self-determination and agreed ways that Aboriginal people and communities can have control over their own lives and a collective say on the future wellbeing of their children and young people. Schedule 1 to the bill contains amendments to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, which I will refer to as the care Act. Schedule 2 contains amendments to several other Acts. I refer members to the Minister for Families and Communities' second reading speech in the other place, which explained in detail the provisions of the bill and the reform objectives.

Suffice it to say, the proposed amendments will improve how decisions are made to ensure that the focus is on helping families to care for their children safely at home and preventing children from entering or staying in out-of-home care. This is being done by requiring the secretary to take active efforts to reduce the entry of all children and young people into care and, where they have been removed, to restore them safely to parents and family as soon as possible; improving how restoration and permanency decisions are made by the Children's Court of New South Wales and how evidence of risks to children are presented in court, thereby strengthening the court's oversight of child protection casework; reinforcing requirements to keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safely connected to their families, communities and culture; improving casework practice so that it is culturally appropriate and informed by the participation of children, families and relevant Aboriginal organisations; and improving transparency, accountability and oversight of the system.

The safety and protection of children always comes first. The amendments in the bill do not in any way diminish the overarching principle in the Act, which guides all child protection actions and decisions—namely, that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person is the paramount concern. The Minister has comprehensively detailed the provisions of the bill in the other House, so I need not repeat them. However, I do think it is important that I draw attention to some of the key amendments in the bill as amended by the other House. One key amendment is that the bill puts a positive obligation on the secretary to comply with a new principle of "active efforts" in section 9A of the care Act. This specifically requires the secretary to make timely and targeted active efforts to prevent children and young persons from entering out-of-home care where it is safe to do so. Where children and young persons have been removed from their parents or families, the secretary must make an active effort to restore them safely to their parents or place them safely with family, kin or community.

This implements recommendation 26 of the Family is Culture report. This principle is modelled on legislation in the United States, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. But, unlike the United States model, which creates a tiered system as it only applies to American Indian and Alaska Native children, the positive obligation on the secretary to make active efforts extends beyond Aboriginal children. It will apply to all children and young people. This ensures that the highest standard of practice is the norm and is applied consistently across the board. We want to get it right for Aboriginal children and all children. This bill gives us that opportunity. Under the bill, active efforts need to be timely and practicable, thorough and purposeful, aimed at addressing the grounds on which the child or young person is considered to be in need of care and protection, and culturally appropriate, and should be conducted in partnership with the child or young person and the family, kin and community of the child or young person.

The bill sets out some examples of active efforts, including providing or helping with access to support services and other resources; finding and contacting family, kin and community; and making better use of alternative mechanisms for keeping children safe that already exist under the care Act, such as alternative dispute resolution. Active efforts must always be tailored to the specific family situation. It is therefore not appropriate

for legislation to prescribe an exhaustive checklist of active efforts that must be made. However, the description and examples in new section 9A provide clarity as to some minimum requirements and actions that would constitute active efforts. To ensure transparency and the Children's Court's oversight of the active efforts taken by the department, new section 63 positively requires the department to show evidence of the active efforts it has taken before bringing a care application to the court and the reasons that those active efforts were unsuccessful.

The care application must include evidence of these active efforts and alternatives to a care order that the department considered. However, this does not apply to emergency care and protection applications because of the nature of these orders. If the Children's Court is not satisfied with the department's evidence of the active efforts it made or alternatives to a care order that were considered, the court can adjourn the proceedings and make interim care orders or any other interim orders the court considers appropriate for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person, thereby strengthening oversight and accountability of casework practices. New sections 9A and 63 give effect to recommendations 26 and 54 of the Family is Culture review report.

Three amendments of a crafting nature were made to the bill in the other place, specifically to new sections 9A and 63 regarding the principle of active efforts, which the Government was happy to support. The first amendment adds that active efforts are to be "thorough and purposeful". This aligns with the purpose and intent of the principle. The second amendment substitutes the word "practicable" in new section 9A (3) (d) with "possible" and clarifies that active efforts must be conducted in partnership with the child and their family, kin and community to the greatest extent possible. The Government accepts that steps taken by the department to amount to active efforts should always be culturally appropriate, without qualification.

The third amendment clarifies and improves the drafting of new section 73 (5). It provides that if the Children's Court is not satisfied with the evidence provided by the department under subsection (1)—namely, evidence of the active efforts taken by the department or alternatives to a care order that were considered—the court must not dismiss a care application or discharge a child from the department's care responsibility unless the court is satisfied that it is in the best interests of the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child to do so. This is consistent with the paramountcy principle in the Act, which I have mentioned previously. The provision makes it abundantly clear that the court must put the children's safety and wellbeing above other considerations. The Government is satisfied that these amendments are consistent with the purpose and intent of the principle of active efforts and provide further clarity in the drafting.

Importantly, another key provision of the bill is new section 12A, which embeds into the care Act the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle published by SNAICC—National Voice for our Children. To avoid confusion with existing placement principles in the care Act, this principle is called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Young Person's Principle—a single principle comprising the following five elements: prevention, which recognises that Aboriginal children should be brought up with their own family, community and culture; partnership, which acknowledges that Aboriginal community representatives should be involved in service delivery and design and child protection decision-making; placement, which guides where an Aboriginal child should be placed if they are to be placed in out-of-home care, consistent with the established placement principles in section 13 of the care Act; participation, which ensures that Aboriginal children and their parents and family participate in all child protection decisions; and connection, which recognises that Aboriginal children must be supported to maintain connections to their family, community, culture and country.

Collectively, the five elements are aimed at enhancing and preserving Aboriginal children's sense of identity, as well as their connection to their culture, heritage, family and community. The bill requires all decision-makers to apply each of these elements when making decisions concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In doing that, New South Wales meets its national commitment to incorporate the SNAICC principle into New South Wales child protection legislation, ensuring New South Wales continues to be a leading jurisdiction in that area.

As the Minister explained in the other place, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young Persons Principle is also specifically incorporated into substantive provisions of the care Act—for example, in care and permanency planning. A cultural plan must be developed as part of every care plan for an Aboriginal child and, together with the care plan itself, should be developed in consultation with the child or young person; their parents, family and kin; and relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations or entities for the child or young person.

A cultural plan is an individualised plan for the child or young person that aims to develop or maintain their cultural identity through connection to family, community and culture while they are in care. The plan will include relevant cultural information that in most cases will be provided by the child or their family, which is why it is so important that the plan be developed with the child, family and community. The plan will also set out what activities the child may participate in to maintain their cultural identity and connections with family and



community, and the supports they need to maintain those connections and participate in the activities documented in the cultural support plan.

Cultural plans help to ensure that planning and decision-making for a child in care are culturally appropriate and are in the child's best interests. The importance of cultural planning for an Aboriginal child or young person cannot be overstated. Maintaining an Aboriginal child or young person in their culture reinforces their cultural identity, sense of belonging and connection with family, community and country, and is an important element for their lifelong wellbeing. To ensure compliance with the new care and permanency planning requirements, the bill requires the Children's Court to be satisfied the department has complied with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young Persons Principle before making a final care order. I note again that the paramount concern guiding all decisions made under the Act is the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person.

The proposed amendment to section 87 of the Act also embeds the partnership and participation elements of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young Persons Principle. Section 87 currently provides that the Children's Court cannot make an order that has a significant impact on family members who are not party to the proceedings unless a representative of the family has been given an opportunity to be heard. New subsection (2A) will allow Aboriginal community representatives to speak on behalf of family who may be significantly impacted by an order of the court so that they may be heard in proceedings.

Those amendments implement recommendation 71 of the Family is Culture report, as well as the Government's commitments under *Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031*. The combined effect of the new provisions is that Aboriginal children, families and community organisations will have greater involvement in decisions that impact on Aboriginal families, strengthening Aboriginal family-led decision-making and creating the foundations for greater self-determination within the child protection system.

Importantly, in the bill, the Government commits to reviewing those reforms within 12 months of operation. That review will consider whether the amendments have achieved the intent of the Family is Culture report recommendations and what more may need to be done to achieve the reform objectives. Our Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations partners, AbSec, the Aboriginal Legal Service and other stakeholders will contribute to the review. That safeguard can give confidence that the Government will be actively engaged in monitoring the implementation and progress of the reforms, which will be an ongoing process.

The bill represents the first legislative changes to give effect to the Family is Culture report. This is the beginning of the reform process. The department will continue to engage with the Aboriginal community and other stakeholders to progress the remaining recommendations, which are more complex and require more detailed consideration. Those consultations will focus on Aboriginal peoples' right to self-determination and exercise of authority within the child protection system. The Government has committed to genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities and organisations to continue the conversation on those significant changes into 2023.

In conclusion, the reforms in the bill will help keep families safe and together. These amendments are aimed at creating legislative obligations that are clear, understandable and operable within the current framework of the Act. The New South Wales Government is working towards reducing the number of Aboriginal children in the child protection system by implementing the Family is Culture report recommendations, increasing the supports provided to Aboriginal families and strengthening the accountability of our practice with Aboriginal families. Importantly, Aboriginal people will have much greater involvement in decision-making.

The bill will support the Government to meet the target under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to reduce the rate of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent by 2031 and ensure that children and young people in New South Wales have the right to grow up safely and supported in nurturing and culturally appropriate environments. The bill also supports the Government's commitments under *Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031* to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle into New South Wales child protection legislation and support self-determination.

These are reforms that Aboriginal people, grandmothers, members of the Stolen Generations, communities and organisations have been calling for. They are grounded in the extensive consultations, the yarning circles, the district forums and meetings, the public submissions received by the Family is Culture review, and the examination of the case files of Aboriginal children. During the consultations this year the Government heard broad and deep community support for the progression of these reforms, including to adopt the principle of active efforts and incorporate the SNAICC principle. Aboriginal families should not have to wait any longer for these reforms to progress. Accordingly, I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:06):** On behalf of the Labor Opposition I speak to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022 as shadow Minister for Family and Community Services, in partnership with my colleague and friend the member for Wyong and shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty. Everything that comes to this place is important, but the issues that we are debating today and the problems that the bill is attempting to address are painful. They are heartbreaking for families, communities, children and young people. They are so important but often not discussed or known by many because those at the heart of this debate and this bill are voiceless, vulnerable children.

Every year 1,100 First Nations children are removed from their families, often losing their connection to culture, community and country. Whilst First Nations people represent just 3.4 per cent of the New South Wales population, First Nations children represent almost half of the children and young people who are removed from their families by the Government and put into the care of the State. It is an unbelievable reality. Almost half of the children and young people in out-of-home care in this State are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, which means that a First Nations child is 12 times more likely to be removed from their family than a non-Aboriginal child. I will pause for a moment to reflect on the fact that behind those statistics are real children and real families. My reference to statistics is by no means intended to minimise or remove us from the very real harm and very real hurt that is being felt by individuals, families and communities on a daily basis across New South Wales.

Understandably, many people see the ongoing removal of First Nations children from their families by this and previous governments as a continuation of the Stolen Generations. Following the important and incredibly strong advocacy of many people, communities and organisations over decades and the acknowledgement of the Stolen Generations in Kevin Rudd's apology, a spotlight was placed on the plight of the removal of Aboriginal children from their families in this State. I give credit to Minister Brad Hazzard, the former Minister for Family and Community Services under this Government, for being willing to have the work of his department externally and independently scrutinised and for commissioning Professor Megan Davis to undertake a thorough review.

Professor Davis presented her final report in 2019, called the Family is Culture report and often referred to as the FIC report. It contained 126 recommendations, of which 25 were legislative. Last year former Greens MLC and now Australian Senator David Shoebridge brought a bill to this Parliament attempting to give effect to the legislative recommendations in the FIC report. It passed the upper House with the support of Labor and all crossbenchers aside from One Nation, including the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and Fred Nile. But the Government has not brought forward that bill to this House, which brings us to today: the sixth-last sitting day after 12 years of this Liberal-Nationals Government. The Government bill implements only some of the 25 legislative recommendations from the FIC report. To say that stakeholders are disappointed would be an understatement.

When the Minister introduced the bill in the other place, she admitted that, under this Government, out-of-home care "often leads to poor outcomes for children across all major indicators—health, wellbeing, education and employment." We must remember that these children are formally under the Minister's protection. She knows that change is desperately needed, as we all do in this place. Today we are discussing whether this bill is capable of achieving that change. When determining if the bill is capable of doing what needs to be done, I defer to the experts. Alongside my colleague the member for Wyong, I have consulted with AbSec; the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation; and the Aboriginal Legal Service. As always, I thank them for their candour and their strong advocacy. We have also consulted with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, the Australian Community Workers Association, the Children's Guardian, the Public Service Association and the Australian Services Union. We thank everyone for their contributions, both prior to the presentation of the bill and afterwards.

From the Aboriginal peak bodies I have heard the frustration, anger and fear at the lack of action following the Family is Culture report. I remind everyone that those findings and recommendations were delivered in 2019. Ever since, an increasing number of Aboriginal children have entered the child protection system every day, and little support is given to the Aboriginal-controlled organisations trying to turn this desperate situation around. As always, our focus must be on the best interests of vulnerable children. For that reason, the Labor Opposition believes the bill should be supported.

It is the strong view of the stakeholders we have consulted that, while the bill is not perfect, it is a small step forward from the current situation. In seeking to implement just some of the legislative reforms that were recommended in the Family is Culture report, the bill makes a number of changes to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act. It also effects minor changes to the Advocate for Children and Young People Act, the Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act and the Ombudsman Act. Principally, the bill implements recommendation 26 of the Family is Culture report, which states:

The NSW Government should amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) to require the Department of Communities and Justice to take active efforts to prevent Aboriginal children from entering into out-of-home care.

**Debate interrupted.**

## **PORT OF NEWCASTLE (EXTINGUISHMENT OF LIABILITY) BILL 2022**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 13 October 2022.**

**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) (13:14):** On behalf of the Government, I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extension of Liability) Bill 2022. At the outset, I indicate that the Government will be seeking to amend the bill. Accordingly, my contribution to the debate seeks to address the substance of those amendments. The amendments to the bill provide a sensible way forward because they do not give the Port of Newcastle something for nothing. If a person enters into a commercial agreement where they promised to make payments to someone, they cannot lobby for legislation to override that and extinguish their liability, otherwise that could be done for many other things.

The Government is proposing that, should it seek to extinguish its liability, the Port of Newcastle must pay the State fair compensation for the removal of the reimbursement provision. This is not about the deal that the State made back in 2014, from which everyone in this State benefited. This is not about the claim by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] that the commercial arrangements are anti-competitive, which was rejected by the Federal Court, although that is now the subject of a matter of appeal. The amendments assume the arrangements are enforceable and are directed towards being fiscally responsible and not letting sophisticated contractual parties avoid their contractual arrangements. The Government's proposed amendments are sensible.

Firstly, the provisions only allow the contractual liabilities of the Port of Newcastle to be extinguished if it pays the State compensation. That is laid out in the amendments to proposed section 8. Secondly, under the amendments to proposed section 5, the Port of Newcastle can trigger that process only once. The decision to request a compensation determination is to be initiated by the Port of Newcastle. The State cannot unilaterally determine compensation without that request first being made by the Port of Newcastle. That is a subtle but important point. The Government's amendments start from the premise that the State is to be compensated.

Thirdly, once the Port of Newcastle requests a compensation determination, the Treasurer must, as soon as practicable, appoint a suitably qualified independent person to make the determination. The appointment provision is found in the amendments to proposed section 6. The amendments to proposed section 7 set out the process for making an objective determination of the compensation. That compensation is determined by reference to "the amount by which the financial value of the right to operate and lease the assets of the Port of Newcastle for 98 years would have been reduced" by the reimbursement provision.

That is not a subjective test but an objective one, with the person being required to step into the shoes of a reasonable person—that is, the bidder—at the time of the transaction. It is not what the Port of Newcastle would have paid but what a reasonable bidder would have offered the State at the time of the transaction if there was no reimbursement provision. It may sound complicated, but it really is not. It is simply saying that, in 2014, the Port of Newcastle purchased an asset for a value that it considered at the time to reflect all the risks and opportunities that were present to it by the State in a package of commercial arrangements for the long-term lease of the Port of Newcastle. Its lawyers, commercial advisers and bankers would have pored over every clause in every contract to come up with a financial offer to the State back in 2014.

The Government is asking the reviewer to determine what the value of the assets would be, considering the circumstances at the time, if those provisions did not exist. The Government is asking for the independent person to make that determination and come up with a compensation amount, should the Port of Newcastle request it. The Government believes that this is fair to the taxpayers of New South Wales and to the Port of Newcastle. The independent person appointed to make the determination will receive information from both the State and the Port of Newcastle to help them in their determination. As the matters are complex, the Government has given the appointed person six months to make the determination.

The Government has also included a necessary regulation-making power to regulate for a number of procedural matters that will be necessary to support the determination process, including prescribing the qualifications and experience that the person making the determination must have. Section 8 of the amendments is the operative provision. If the Port of Newcastle pays the State the amount of compensation that has been determined by the independent person, it is released from the reimbursement provision because section 8 provides that these provisions will have no legal effect once that compensation is paid. Section 8 (2) sensibly allows for compensation to be adjusted for inflation, bearing in mind that nine years have passed since the transaction.

Section 9 contains regulation-making powers that will allow for further administrative matters to be prescribed, but the essence of the amendments proposed by the Government are clear on their face. The Government notes that the Port of Newcastle is free to develop a container terminal should it choose to develop a commercially viable business case. The port lease provisions never prohibited the Port of Newcastle from doing that. The Government requires that the Port of Newcastle does not short-change taxpayers across the whole of New South Wales in the process of getting further rights. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his constructive approach in working with the Government to come to a fair and equitable solution for the Port of Newcastle and the people of this State. The Government will seek to move amendments at the Committee stage. I encourage all members to support the amendments.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:21):** On behalf of the Opposition I speak in debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 and the Government's proposed amendments to the bill that the Minister outlined. It has been nearly a decade since Mike Baird and the Liberals stitched up the deal that led to the privatisation of the Port of Newcastle, Port Kembla and Port Botany. It was a plan for the then Liberal Government to make a quick buck. It was a plan to not just sell off public assets to the private sector but to entirely outsource the functions of the most important part of the supply chain of freight and ports across our State. The Liberal Party went against its own values to rake in quick dollars from port privatisation. Those values include free and fair competition, a level playing field and not picking winners. We regularly hear about those values from members on the other side of the Chamber. The Liberals are supposed to hold onto those values deeply, but they put together an anti-competitive deal that gave Port Botany and Port Kembla a virtual monopoly on the New South Wales container trade.

The port commitment deeds that were signed when Port Kembla and Port Botany were privatised in 2013 require the State to compensate those ports if container traffic at the Port of Newcastle exceeds a cap of 50,000 twenty-foot equivalent units [TEUs]. When the Port of Newcastle was privatised in 2014, another deed required that port's operators to reimburse the Government for any compensation paid to the operators of Port Kembla and Port Botany. The Government put together a privatisation deal that would prevent the development of the Port of Newcastle and the wider economic diversification of the whole of the Hunter. The Government cannot say that it was not warned about its privatisation deal's perverse consequences. Labor told the Government that it was a bad deal in 2013 and 2014, and it is still a bad deal now.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] has publicly said that the deeds are "anti-competitive and illegal". The Productivity Commission has been critical of the Government's bad port privatisation deal as well. The ACCC, the Productivity Commission, the Labor Party and a range of other voices are saying it is a bad deal. That is because the cap of 50,000 TEU imposed on the Port of Newcastle carries a real economic cost. It imposes a cost on the Hunter's economy and therefore on the State's economy. The Government was told that its failed ports plan imposed that cost, but it refused to listen. It has refused to listen until today, when it has been forced to move an amendment to the bill introduced by the member for Lake Macquarie to try to clean up its privatisation disaster. It is more than a monumental backflip, triple pike or somersaults. It is a fundamental admission that its signature policy of privatisation has failed, and everyone who was against it—be it the Hunter business community, the exporters of northern and western New South Wales, the Labor Party, the trade union movement, the Productivity Commission and the ACCC; it is a very long list—has been proven right.

The amendments to the bill proposed by the Government today are not the amendments that were circulated originally. They represent another backflip on a policy that the Government has been committed to for more than a decade, which created a monopoly on the container terminal in New South Wales and prevented the economic diversification of the Hunter. When the sell-off of the Port of Newcastle was announced, Premier Mike Baird said it was "a great result for Newcastle" and that "transactions such as this bring enduring benefits to communities and the economy". What were the enduring benefits that the Hunter got out of this port privatisation? First, the community had to wait for a decade, as the trade of coal began to decline. The community had to forgo new investment and diversification for a decade. The exporters from northern and western New South Wales, whose views members of the Minister's own Coalition have been voicing loudly, had to forgo the competitive benefits of a port that was geographically close to them for a decade.

Every time that everyone in the Hunter stood up and advocated for change, they were told that it would cost the State billions of dollars in compensation because the Government had signed them up to a bad deal—which they did not support. That was the case until today. The Government's amendments to this bill are very simple. They allow the Port of Newcastle to operate above the 50,000 cap established by the Government in its port commitment deeds. The amendments also require the Port of Newcastle to pay a level of compensation that is fair and equitable, and they require that level of compensation to be determined by an independent person or arbiter. However, it is important to go through what that means. It means that the Government has abandoned its port deeds that it wrote in 2013 and 2014. The Government has abandoned the cornerstone of its own port policy because it cannot defend the fact that it was fundamentally unfair.

Labor supports the Government's amendments, but I ask the Minister and further Government speakers in this debate to qualify whether they can confirm that the liability will not exceed the money collected from the Port of Newcastle. When the independent process is initiated, will that money amount to the liability that the State Government is subsequently, potentially, inheriting? We must be very clear that there is no doubt today that the Government is admitting its own policies have failed. The Government did not want this. It has been dragged here because of this Parliament. It has been dragged here by the member for Lake Macquarie, by crossbench members and by the New South Wales Labor Party because its ports privatisation deal was a dud. It has been for over a decade, which the Parliament is now seeking to rectify, and we must be in no doubt that this is not what the Government wanted to do.

It was Labor's proposed amendments to the bill that forced the Government to recognise that the Parliament and the public are of the view that its ports privatisation policy and its wider policies of privatisation have failed. The Government knew that if it did not admit these failures, it would lose the support of its own Coalition members. Even Coalition members have come to realise that privatisation is a failed endeavour in this State. They know that the public have had enough after 12 years of public assets being sold off. The Government sold off ports in a bad deal that will cost the taxpayer; it sold off toll roads in a bad deal that has created toll mania across Sydney; it sold off power plants and then tried to buy them back when electricity prices went through the roof. The Government's litany of failures goes on and on.

One thing is very clear: It is time to end these failed privatisation policies. Our State can no longer afford them. The people of the Hunter have voiced the need for change, and the Parliament has responded. The people of the Hunter and New South Wales need a government that is willing to invest in their future, not one that just sells everything off. They need a government with a real plan to navigate the changes that are coming. The Port of Newcastle has been the world's largest coal port for a very long time, but things are rapidly changing. The port is exporting less thermal coal every year. The people of the Hunter know that the region cannot put all of its eggs in one basket. They want to know that there is a plan to deliver secure, well-paid and skilled jobs into the future. They want a plan for economic diversification and development and an opportunity for our manufacturers and our farmers to export Hunter-made and Hunter-grown goods across the world, not just for the benefit of the Hunter region but also for the entire New South Wales economy.

At the moment, our State is losing out to our neighbouring jurisdictions. That is what this bad privatisation deal has done. The Government's bad port privatisation policy has to go. The Government has been dragged kicking and screaming to move amendments here today which begin that process. Labor has faith that the development of a large-scale container terminal in the Port of Newcastle will deliver benefits that will flow across our State. It will obviously benefit regions like the Northern Tablelands and the Far West. It will benefit the supply chain. But the people of the Hunter deserve more than just faith. Businesses, manufacturers and farmers throughout the Hunter need certainty. After almost a decade of being held back by the Liberal Party's bad privatisation deal, they deserve something more tangible. They deserve the opportunities that a container terminal and diversification will bring.

Over the past four weeks, Labor has shown that it is ready to work across the Parliament. It is ready to work with everyone of goodwill, so that we can end the unfairness brought about by this Government's bad port privatisation deal. Labor will work across the aisle. We will work with the crossbench. We will work with those who put the interests of New South Wales first. We want to work to end the mess caused by these privatisation policies. That is what this is all about: This is a fix for a failed Government policy that has cost the people of New South Wales for nearly 12 years.

In this changing world, we want the Hunter and all regions of our State to have the opportunity to grow and for people to get the secure jobs, opportunities and economic prosperity that they deserve. That is why we on this side of the House support the bill brought forward by the member for Lake Macquarie. Fundamentally it brings to an end one of the worst deals signed by a government in this country's history to privatise a public asset and to encumber it with provisions that meant its diversification was hampered for more than a decade. Today the Parliament is bringing the Government, kicking and screaming, to end its failed privatisation deal.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (13:34):** It is with a great deal of pride that I wholeheartedly support the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 introduced to this place by my good friend the member for Lake Macquarie. No-one has been able to wipe the smile off my face for the past 24 hours. I thank him, as do the people of the Northern Tablelands, for his boldness and leadership in this important area of public policy reform. I will touch on some of the detail later. I also thank the Leader of the House for bringing forward what I think are sensible arrangements that will make sure the Port of Newcastle has skin in the game in this public policy reform.

I indicate to the House that I will be supporting the amendments and, obviously, supporting the bill. I also thank the Leader of the House, the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier and everyone else from government who has

been involved in these protracted negotiations with the member for Lake Macquarie. Let me be frank: I was supporting this bill regardless, but these amendments mean I will be able to do so with all of my colleagues on both sides of the House and will no longer have to cross the floor. Fundamentally, the people of my electorate and I believe this bill is crucial. I welcome the amendments and the constructive way the Government has engaged with the member for Lake Macquarie on this issue.

This bill is the culmination of a 10-month campaign to remove the artificial monopoly provisions, as I describe them, that are contained within the port commitment deeds from 2013 and 2014. They are an outdated concept that restricts the operation of the Port of Newcastle. In my view, it should never have been done. Those provisions created a monopoly situation that, as the Productivity Commission has found, drove up the cost of the freight logistics chain in this State and pushed a lot of freight into Queensland, particularly from my electorate, that should be going out of New South Wales ports in containers, which is ridiculous. There is nothing I hate more than sending money up north to another State when that money should be staying in our State's economy.

The beauty of allowing the Port of Newcastle to operate in a free market on a more level playing field is it gives the capacity for the development of another deep-sea port and container terminal, which will undoubtedly reduce freight logistics chain costs for producers in the north of the State by at least \$16 to \$22 a tonne. That is money that stays in the pockets of producers and in our regional communities instead of being sent to Queensland as it is now. It also reduces the trucks being sent on an already strained and overstretched road network into the congestion of Sydney and Port Botany to pay a monopolistic price to get containers out or in.

This bill is fundamental to unlocking not only the potential economic growth at Newcastle and the jobs for the Hunter but also, importantly, the economic opportunities and the true potential of some of the most productive primary production areas in this country, specifically the Moree Plains, Narrabri, Gunnedah, Tamworth and all of that north-western region of the State. Combined, on average that region produces more than \$2 billion worth of primary produce each and every year. At the moment, all of that is being trucked out on a road network that cannot sustain the continual increase in heavy vehicle movements. We can now put it on rail.

This bill also helps underpin the Government's investment, on behalf of the taxpayers of this State, in special activation precincts such as the \$195 million site at Moree, the one at Narrabri or the intermodal facility at a place like Tamworth, in which taxpayers have invested tens of millions of dollars. It underpins the viability of those investments to get more of our primary produce being value-added as it comes out of the paddock, then containerised and exported in the cheapest way to keep more money in our State's economy rather than sending it somewhere else. Whichever way members look at it, this bill is not only common sense but, as people in my region will see it, it also rights a wrong. It does the right thing by our productive capacity not only at our port in the Hunter but also in rural and regional New South Wales, particularly in the north of the State. As someone who lives in country New South Wales, I am not always a fan of an absolute free market because often free markets advantage the people who have the bulk of the buying capacity. But in this case, the free market creates a playing field that allows a new container terminal to be developed. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:39):** I strongly support the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022, which removes the obligation on the Port of Newcastle to pay a levy to the ports of Botany and Kembla for every container that goes through its port. I acknowledge the leadership of my friend and colleague Greg Piper, the member for Lake Macquarie, in bringing this important bill to the Parliament. There are 93 members in this place. We will probably vote in a unanimous way to support the bill with amendment. However, it took Greg to do the work to bring the bill before the House, which shows the important role that Independent members play in the New South Wales Parliament.

I am not anti-privatisation. Sometimes the private sector is best placed to deliver services and provide much-needed competition. However, privatisation does not work when assets and services are sold off at the expense of public benefit merely to achieve a quick windfall. The privatisation of our ports infrastructure was one such deal. It sacrificed the economy—particularly the State's regional economy—the environment and Sydney's amenity to get a better price. That short-term decision needs to be fixed now. The container levy's detrimental impact on the Hunter economy was assessed by the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning during its inquiry into sustainability of energy supply and resources in this State, which I chaired. The committee found that diversifying the Port of Newcastle is critical to realising the full economic opportunities of the Hunter region as the world moves away from coal. Coal reserves in the Hunter may be exhausted in the next 30 years as mines reach their end of lives.

Across the world countries are moving to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by phasing out energy from thermal coal. Before the war in Ukraine, coal prices dropped and the fourth coal terminal at Newcastle was cancelled. Recent increases in coal prices are temporary and many countries are expediting their move away from coal. The Hunter and other coal-dependent regions desperately need economic diversification. At a time when the world is seeking to decarbonise energy production, the coal regions of New South Wales can use their unique

knowledge and skill sets from coalmining and power generation to support a new renewable energy innovation and manufacturing export hub. The Hunter and adjacent coal regions have the capacity to export solar, wind and hydro power technology and components to the world and to make this State a leader in renewable energy. But under the existing port infrastructure arrangements, renewable energy exports would have to travel 175 kilometres to Port Botany or 244 kilometres to Port Kembla, or pay the levy, which would add huge costs to their operations.

Other export industries, like wine, wheat, agriculture and manufacturing, experience those crippling economic impediments. Some of those industries are using the Port of Brisbane because it is cheaper and easier than sending containers to Sydney. Constraining the Port of Newcastle's container capacity means all imports that head north unnecessarily have to travel through Sydney, which congests our already choked roads and freight rail lines, causing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. I understand that 16.5 per cent of containers imported in this State end up in the Hunter and northern New South Wales. The committee heard that global shipping is moving towards ultra-large vessels and that Newcastle is the only deepwater port in Australia that can handle those vessels. Diversifying the port would also provide much-needed resilience in our import and export industries in the face of infrastructure disruptions from fire and flood—realities that it appears we will need to live with in a challenging climate ahead.

Creating a container terminal at the Port of Newcastle could create more than 4,600 jobs in the Hunter alone and boost a number of local industries across regional New South Wales. It is not in the State's best interests to maintain the levy. We must find a solution to ensure the Port of Newcastle can diversify its trade base and provide import and export services to the Hunter and regional northern New South Wales at a reasonable cost. We need to restructure our port facilities for public benefit. The challenge may have been created by previous leaders, but it is now one for this Parliament to fix, with the leadership of the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge the work done by the member's adviser, Jason Gordon, who is present today. Bringing a bill to this Parliament is a challenge for the entire team. I know how hard Greg Piper and Jason have worked together to get the bill to this point. I commend it to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:44):** I speak in support of the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. I acknowledge the marvellous work of the member for Lake Macquarie and Jason Gordon. There has been a huge amount of negotiation to put together the Government's foreshadowed amendments, and I thank the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, the Deputy Premier, the Premier and the Treasurer for their great work to address the concerns of many people and to arrive at a solution that is in the best interests of the people of the Upper Hunter and the Hunter broadly. I will address some of the concerns of members opposite because the Labor Party in particular has demonised the sale of the port as an evil privatisation deal, when it is actually a great privatisation success. The private sector now sees the opportunities in the Hunter and in Newcastle to push forward for a container port.

The State's port policy is focused on Port Botany, with an overflow going into Port Kembla. For many bureaucrats in Sydney, it makes perfect sense to focus infrastructure on one particular point in the State, with the hope that economies of scale will drive down prices. However, the privatisation and the inclusion of Newcastle will create competition all the way up the coast. That competition will drive down prices and create huge financial benefits and opportunities for the region. There is no denying that what was paid for was a coal port with limited container capacity and some bulk commodities. That is quite clearly what was bought, so there is absolutely no reason we should give away a provision in a contract for free.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** There is no such thing as a free lunch.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** There is no such thing as a free lunch. I support the Government's foreshadowed amendments because they allow the port to agree to a fair price to get rid of those provisions to make investment decisions and work out the best way forward. The private sector is the best place to make those decisions. It is important for the Upper Hunter that those investment decisions are made. We are looking to diversify our economy and we must make the best use of our assets, whether it is our current rail system, the power networks going out into various parts of the Upper Hunter or, most importantly, the New England Highway that goes all the way down to the port. It is important to develop that infrastructure to make the best use of our assets.

We certainly have a great vision for manufacturing in the Upper Hunter and in the Hunter Valley in general by making the best use of our assets to build new industries. We know we have a long future in coal, but we must make sure we have a strong market for jobs. I am focused on my vision for the Upper Hunter as an area where great jobs are available to support families to grow. We have set up incredible investment in the Hunter through the privatisation of the port. The economic benefits from the sale enabled the Government to put money back into the area for new hospitals, bypasses and the like. It will be a great area and remain as the industrial powerhouse. I believe that the future of manufacturing in the area is very strong. I commend everyone for sitting around the table and coming up with this amended bill. It is good for the upper Hunter region, good for the Hunter Valley and good for the State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:49):** I speak to the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 and make clear that Labor has opposed privatisation of the port from the get-go. It is easily the worst example of this Government's privatisation addiction. It is the worst privatisation we have seen in this country and may be the worst around the globe. It was cooked up and delivered by the secret deal the Liberal-Nationals Government signed, which not only privatised our port but also limited the economic potential of the Hunter region entirely.

Let us recap. In 2013 those opposite sold Port Botany and Port Kembla for more than \$5 billion to the NSW Ports consortium. In 2014 they sold off the Port of Newcastle for \$1.75 billion, signing a 98-year lease, which included the worst deal struck by a government in the history of New South Wales. Part of it, the Port Commitment Deed, takes the cake for dodgy deals struck by those opposite. It not only placed a cap on the number of containers Port of Newcastle could ship but also forced the taxpayers to pay compensation if that cap was breached. Those opposite need not take it from me and my Labor colleagues. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission described the deed as anti-competitive and illegal, and the productivity commissioner too has spoken against the deed.

The sale of the Port of Newcastle is just one of many dud privatisation deals imposed upon the Hunter region, such as the sale of our transport network or the disastrous privatisation of Vales Point Power Station. Dominic Perrottet continues to refuse to rule out further privatisations. What is next? Hunter Water may come to the table. We should keep that as a watching brief. First up we had the privatisation of the Newcastle transport network to French operator Keolis Downer. In 2015 Dominic Perrottet was one of the architects of that failed transport privatisation. What did it deliver: services cut, travel times increased, bus stops removed and children left by the side of the road. It is still happening. Vales Point Power Station was sold for \$1 million—which is a great little deal if you can get it. A few months ago it was sold for \$200 million. Even the Premier could not say that that was a good privatisation deal for New South Wales. That brings me to the jewel in the Government's crown of dud privatisation deals: the sale of the Port of Newcastle and the Port Commitment Deed. It has not just put a handbrake on the Hunter region's economy but also is an active impediment to the diversification of the Port of Newcastle.

The community has not benefitted from any of these privatisations, which have all ended in absolute failure. Despite this, we have a Government and a Premier who every day spruiks privatisation as essential. They have no shame about leaving the taxpayers of this State to pick up the bills into the future. One thing is for sure: As long as the Liberals are in government, everything in New South Wales is up for sale. The people of New South Wales, this great State, are paying for that. What is next? It may be Hunter Water or the remainder of Ausgrid. We have already seen thousands of jobs lost in the Hunter region due to the first iteration of that privatisation. That is not to mention the highest electricity prices ever seen in this State. It may be the privatisation of Essential Energy. Will the National Party members support that? We know that they have all got form because they voted for this. So, of course, the answer is yes.

We know that the diversification of the port is critical to our region as coal exports decline, as many members have said. We need to protect local jobs. The only way we can do that is by diversifying our port. I know that the Deputy Premier likes to wax lyrical about The Nationals being the supposed champions of the regions. Where were The Nationals when this bill came to the Parliament? They were sitting right there, voting for it. How did the then local Liberal representatives of the electorates of Newcastle, Charlestown and Swansea—Owens, Cornwell and Edwards—vote? They all voted for it. I have not seen those three names together since Operation Spicer. What about Adam Marshall? He plays the champion, but he voted for the bill too. While the bill is well intentioned, it does not extinguish the liability that has been placed on the Port of Newcastle. It still puts taxpayers on the hook. I would like the Minister to confirm in Parliament that the liability will not exceed the money collected from the Port of Newcastle. If the liability that the State will inherit is greater than the amount of money the Port of Newcastle has to pay to the New South Wales Government, the Minister should disclose that to the Parliament today. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:54):** I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. Government members are obsessed with privatisation. As we have heard many times today, the privatisation of the port has been one of the worst privatisations on record, even by the low standards of the Government. I remember when the idea was first discussed. Before I was elected to Parliament, and on behalf of my business, I was on the community liaison committee that asked, "What about the deed?" Everyone said, "No, there is no deed. It will all be the same." That is a big fat lie. Back in 2011 the Government was already fattening the pig for market, pushing up charges and investing in infrastructure. It could not admit that it was going to sell the port until 2013. Then on 28 May 2013 the former Nationals roads Minister, the Hon. Duncan Gay, ruled it out. But then about a month later, on 18 June, the Liberals said, "Nats, come over here. We are going to sell something." They all put their hands up. All they want to do is sell, sell, sell to support their Liberal masters, who ruin the lives of people in our country communities.



The Government sold the port for \$1.7 billion, but the kicker is that it could not admit to the deal. In fact, members only know about it because Labor pushed to have the deal made public. The member for Northern Tablelands has advocated for the bill—that is great. He was going to cross the floor, but the Government realised it had a problem with that, so it made some amendments. The member for Northern Tablelands, and former Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, was nowhere to be seen when \$2 billion worth of agriculture in his region had to get to port. The member for Upper Hunter has doubled down on defending privatisation, which I cannot believe. For the past couple of weeks there have been open rumours about the member for Northern Tablelands crossing the floor on the bill, but we have not heard from him about that until today. In fact, he is still defending the financial opportunities of privatisation all the way up the coast. What a joke.

This has been a brake not only on the Hunter—I am a proud Hunter MP—but also on the agriculture and other commodities that our State produces. An alternative to the Port of Newcastle has not been provided for that, and the Government is conflicted. Only recently it drafted an amendment to the bill to try to fix the problem, but after seven years it is still a mess. I want the Government to confirm whether the liability will exceed the money that it collects from the Port of Newcastle. If the liability that it will inherit is greater than the amount of money the Port of Newcastle provides, that must be disclosed to Parliament. The Government can do the modelling and let members know what the situation is.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR WOLLONGONG**

#### **MEMBER FOR CAMPBELLTOWN**

**The SPEAKER:** I send birthday greetings to the member for Wollongong and the member for Campbelltown, who celebrated their birthdays during the break.

*Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to guests of the member for Lismore, Jacklyn Wagner, Chas Glover, Liberty Wagner-Chavez, Estela Chavez and Jacob Wagner. I also welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, in particular, members of Lake Macquarie University of the Third Age. I welcome guests of the member for the Blue Mountains, Lydia Rose McKechnie and Olivia Walsh, who are work experience students undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award program. There are also some guests of the member for Newcastle here today, who include in particular Dr Claire Morbey, Anthony Wardley and Jarrod Burns. A special warm welcome to you also.

*Announcements*

#### **THROUGH THE HEART...A FLOOD OF FEARS AND TEARS PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION**

**The SPEAKER:** I note that Ms Jacklyn Wagner's photographic exhibition entitled *Through the Heart...a flood of fears and tears* opens in the Fountain Court tonight. The exhibition is in the area leading from the Fountain Court to the Strangers' Dining Room. Members of Parliament are invited to the opening and encouraged to attend. I am sure it will be quite poignant.

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that the Premier's photographer has been authorised to take still photographs of question time today from the side doors and the members' doors.

*Condolences*

#### **SOUTH KOREA STAMPEDE**

**The SPEAKER (14:17):** I inform the House that, on behalf of the members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of New South Wales, I have sent a message of condolence to the Consul General of Korea, Mr Sang Woo Hong, on the tragic death of young people on the streets of Seoul.

#### **INDIA BRIDGE COLLAPSE**

**The SPEAKER (14:17):** I further inform the House that, on behalf of members of the New South Wales Parliament and the people of New South Wales, the President and I have sent a message of condolence to the

Consul General of India in Sydney on the tragic death of people in Gujarat, India, who lost their lives in the recent bridge disaster. Members will be aware that Gujarat is one of New South Wales' two sister States.

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

*Announcements*

**PEOPLE MATTER EMPLOYEE SURVEY**

**The SPEAKER (14:18):** Members will be aware of the People Matter Employee Survey that was held across the New South Wales public sector. Staff of the three departments of the New South Wales Parliament joined the broader public sector in undertaking the survey, which is a valuable source of information for senior managers as they lead their departments. Since becoming Speaker, I have had the pleasure of seeing significant improvements in the People Matter Employee Survey results for the Department of the Legislative Assembly over time.

It is noteworthy that almost all, if not all, Legislative Assembly staff participated in the survey last year and this year, which of itself is an excellent sign of engagement. The high level of engagement and employee satisfaction that exists within the Department of the Legislative Assembly is a testament to the commitment of the Legislative Assembly staff and the hard work of the Legislative Assembly senior management team, capably led by the Clerk, Helen Minnican. I congratulate them and thank them for that.

*Members*

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House that the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy, will be absent from question time this week and the Premier will answer questions on their behalf. I inform the House that the Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing, will be absent from question time today and the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales will answer questions on his behalf.

*Question Time*

**ASSET PRIVATISATION**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:23):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier has spent \$520 million in compensation to drivers for privatised toll roads, he tried to spend \$239 million to keep Eraring Power Station open just years after having privatised it, he sold Vales Point Power Station for \$1 million and then it was sold for \$200 million, and now taxpayers will have to fork out hundreds of millions of dollars to unwind his failed ports privatisation deal, will the Premier finally admit that the Government's privatisation agenda has failed comprehensively?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. I call the member for Terrigal to order for the first time. I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:23):** The golden key is going great. On this side of the House we know the decisions that we made as a government—opposed by those opposite since 2011—have unlocked capital that we have been able to use to build a record number of schools, the Newcastle light rail, right across the board—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That is why here in New South Wales there will be \$112 billion of infrastructure over the next four years. That is twice as big as the Victorian investment in what they call the Big Build. Yet the Leader of the Opposition asked about privatisation.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor opposed the building of WestConnex; it opposed the transaction. But there we were on Sunday when a little article came up in *The Daily Telegraph*, "Canterbury Hospital scores makeover commitment from Labor."

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** How are they funding it?

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

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

**Mr Alister Henskens:** How are they doing it?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Stay tuned! We will come back shortly.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Swansea has the call. I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the second time.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Obviously, my point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Canterbury Hospital has nothing to do with this question.

[*A Government member interjected.*]

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Clearly the Premier has no problem accepting stamp duty funding or funding from poker machines. He is happy to spend that.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The member for Swansea will resume her seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The long-awaited answer was WestInvest. And where did the money for WestInvest come from? It came from the road that Labor opposed. Looking back, I noticed that not long ago the Leader of the Opposition said that WestInvest is all smoke and mirrors. It is all smoke and mirrors—until it is funding Canterbury Hospital. That is the difference between the Liberal-Nationals and Labor—we make the tough decisions to take this State to the next level. Labor has no ideas and no plans for a brighter future for this State.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (14:26):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberals and The Nationals are improving housing affordability for the people of New South Wales?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:27):** What a great and well-written question. I thank the member for Mulgoa for that question and for her interest in housing affordability. Hopefully we will see in the great upper House later this week or next week the Property Tax (First Home Buyer Choice) Bill 2022 pass the Parliament. What will that bill do? It will give first home buyers a choice of either paying up-front stamp duty or a smaller annual amount. The Labor Party needs to get out of the way of young Australians reaching the great Australian dream. We believe in freedom. We believe in opportunity and prosperity. Government members will make reforms that will make a real difference for generations to come.

This Government knows that one of the more challenging matters for young families across our State is saving up stamp duty, which can take up to 2½ years. By giving people choice, we will enable them to make the decisions that best suit them and their families' needs. How could anyone oppose that? Only the Labor Party could because Labor members are against choice. Today the Leader of the Opposition said he is going to back in The Greens' amendment. He also said, "We want to give voters choice." People are getting choice. The trick is in the name—first home buyer choice. Treasury's calculations show that the break even point between up-front stamp duty and an annual property fee would be 36 years for an apartment costing \$800,000, 28 years for a \$1 million townhouse and 26 years for a \$1.25 million house. That is why this policy is costing the budget over \$700 million. That is \$700 million back into the pockets of families right across our State. This is not about helping first home buyers get their dream home—it is their first home. It is designed to ensure that young people right across our State can get their keys to their very first home faster. We know that is true because everyone is loving it. The website recorded close to 50,000 visits of interest.

**Mr Ryan Park:** That's 49,000 from the Young Liberals.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The membership is not that great, unfortunately. The number of visits is close to 50,000. [*Extension of time.*]

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us look at where the main interest is across New South Wales. The number one electorate showing interest in this program is Granville, followed by Hawkesbury which comes in at number two, then Riverstone, Ku-ring-gai comes in at four, Seven Hills, Liverpool, Parramatta, Heffron Drummoyne and Coogee. We are coming for Coogee. This policy is on top of our \$3 billion investment in this year's budget when it comes to housing affordability in this State. We cannot have an Australia that cannot house

its children and that is why the New South Wales Government leads the nation with innovative solutions and policies right across the board on the demand and supply side.

Our shared equity scheme leads the nation. It has been copied by the Federal Government, but that is okay—imitation is the greatest form of flattery. It will help single parents, older singles and key workers get their keys to their homes. The New South Wales Government will assist through its Accelerated Infrastructure Fund, which the planning Minister is right across. The fund will provide infrastructure support to build more homes across New South Wales. Just last week the Minister announced 19,000 new homes for south-west Sydney with more to come right across the board. In relation to social housing, the New South Wales Government has put more investment into social housing and has upgraded 15,800 social housing structures.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We know that the last Labor Government, to its shame, closed 1,700 social housing residences across New South Wales.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This is such good news for first home buyers. The Government looks forward to that legislation passing the House.

### PORT COMMITMENT DEEDS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:32):** My question also is directed to the Premier. What is the full amount that New South Wales taxpayers are now going to be liable for over the remaining 40 years of the Port Commitment Deeds?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:32):** A surprise attack! When it comes to the Port of Newcastle, we have found a very balanced and measured response to the bill of the member for Lake Macquarie.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Oh, yeah.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No, we have. We have a port strategy in this State. Just as we want to support the communities of Newcastle, we also want to support the communities of Wollongong in relation to our approach. As we pointed out, when it comes to the Port of Newcastle and those arrangements if the cap is reached, compensation will need to be paid to the taxpayers of New South Wales. As I have said, though, when we are talking about privatisation, this is the change that has really set up our State for success.

**Ms Prue Car:** Privatisation?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Yet it has been opposed. What is the reason? On the weekend, there were Labor members, not having the capacity to fund—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Premier was asked a specific question relating to an amount of exposure under the ports deed, not what is written anywhere else.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** What is the point of order?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Standing Order 129, directly relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further from the Premier. I remind the Premier that it was a specific question. What is the full amount of liability under the deeds?

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Tell us the price, Dom.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I answered that.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Rockdale to order for the third time. That is his last warning.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There is a difference. The last time Labor was in government it announced project after project and cancelled every one of them. Why? Because it could not fund them.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Premier ignored your observations. He was asked a specific question. He can either answer it or not answer it but he cannot waffle on.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Premier to come more directly to the question.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have made it very clear that if the Port of Newcastle reaches a certain capacity it will be assessed and compensation will have to be paid to the taxpayers of New South Wales. On the weekend Labor announced more plans, and what did they do? They realised once again they could not fund them.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. This is becoming farcical. The Premier is claiming this is a huge success but he will not tell the taxpayers of the State how much they have to pay.

**The SPEAKER:** The time for the answer has expired.

#### RURAL AND REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:35):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how New South Wales is building critical infrastructure to support our regional residents?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:36):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He is a member who has seen the difference that we are making to people's lives through our investment in regional health. Last week the member for Coffs Harbour spoke to Robert Hanson from Armidale. Robert was very concerned about the travel and accommodation arrangements he would have to deal with to travel to Coffs Harbour for cancer treatment. Thanks to the investment made by the Government, we are able to expand the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme [IPTAAS]. We have been able to lift some of that burden for Robert and his wife, Pat, by saving them around \$3,000. He is one of 4,500 new patients who have taken advantage of the increased financial assistance available under IPTAAS. That ensures that the cost of travel is not a barrier for people seeking specialist treatment.

We have worked hard to ensure that regional communities are getting the best health care as close to home as possible. Two weeks ago I joined the Minister for Regional Health and the member for Wagga Wagga to open the new Tumut Hospital. This world-class facility for the people of the Snowy Valleys area features a new CT scanner, ultrasound and renal dialysis, as well as an expanded emergency department and improved maternity services. Previously locals had to travel to Wagga Wagga or Canberra to access these critical services. Now they can do it closer to home. This is where the journeys of so many locals begin, like Jakodi Mewett, who in December last year was the first baby born in the new birthing unit. It will also touch the lives of those who will come into contact with the facility, not only helping them during tough times but also putting them on a path back to good health. In addition, the new Tumut ambulance station, to be housed on the site of the new hospital, is nearing completion. This type of visionary—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Rockdale to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of three hours. He is lucky that it is not overnight.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** That is a good call. We are talking about an individual who is seeking cancer treatment and the member for Rockdale mocks that person and those communities.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** For 11½ years.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Rockdale under Standing Order 249. The member may return to the Chamber on Wednesday.

*[The member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 14:38 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** These are serious matters about supporting people who are doing it tough during a time when they need assistance. This Government provides that assistance. The member for Rockdale deserved to be thrown out because he mocks those people who need treatment. *[Extension of time]*

On the weekend we opened the new Forster ambulance station. That first-ever local station for the people of Forster will support the new ambulance station in Old Bar and the recently completed refurbishments at Taree, Bulahdelah and Tuncurry ambulance stations. This has all taken place because of the Liberal-Nationals in government and passionate advocates for regional communities like the member for Myall Lakes. Over the past few weeks the Leader of the Opposition has made a few more visits to the regions. I have to pay attention because if I blink I might miss them. He is Ten Minute Minns because that is how long he stays in the regions. To be fair, that is nine minutes longer than he stays in an emergency department in metropolitan areas. Ten Minute Minns goes into the regions, gets out of his car—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown takes a point of order.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** —announces a new candidate, poses for a photo, flicks his hair, and then goes back to Kogarah.

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier will resume his seat.

**Mr Greg Warren:** This bloke clearly has nothing else.

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

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

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

**Mr Greg Warren:** If the Deputy Premier wants to debate the good work of the Leader of the Opposition—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** If those opposite want to understand regional issues, they have to go to the regions and talk to people.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** They have to understand what the issues are in those communities. If we looked at his boots, we would find that he does not have a scratch on them. I have seen Mick Veitch's boots. They look as though they have been chewed by a dog. That is because he has worked so hard. What did they do to the only bloke—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** —that represented them in the regions? They knifed him. They got rid of him.

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

**Mr Greg Warren:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. This is a clear breach of standing orders. The Deputy Premier is making personal reflections on the Leader of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The member will resume his seat. I make it clear that I give both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition a little more leeway in the making of interjections. I also allow a little more criticism of both of them as leaders of their party but not when it comes to calling into account their integrity. If it is just a slight, then we are a little tougher than that. The Deputy Premier will continue.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Mate, how did you go? Did you back in Mick Veitch or did you knife him in the back as well? You should tell us where you stood on that.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about critical infrastructure in New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The time for the answer has expired.

#### **PORT COMMITMENT DEEDS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:42):** My question is directed to the Premier. Taxpayers deserve an answer and the Premier failed to answer the previous question. What is the full amount that New South Wales taxpayers will now be liable for over the remaining 40 years of the Port Commitment Deeds?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:42):** I answered the question. As I have said in relation to the decision that we made about the Port of Newcastle, it is a great decision that strikes the right balance, ensures that if at some point in the future—

**Ms Prue Car:** It didn't work. It failed.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No, it has been very successful. If at some point in the future—

**Ms Prue Car:** You have to turn it around at taxpayer's expense.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You have been very rude today.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea will come to order. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** If at some point in the future the Port of Newcastle decides to increase its capacity above the current limit, they will have to provide compensation to the taxpayers of New South Wales. That is the change that we have made. For Labor to talk about privatisation, when at the first moment on the weekend a substantive announcement—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This was a specific question about how much the taxpayers of New South Wales will be on the hook because of this failed privatisation.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has answered the question by saying that compensation will be paid. If he does not know the exact figure, perhaps he should say that. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** What team are you on?

**The SPEAKER:** I am on the team of fairness and impartiality.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I have made it very clear, but for Labor—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Premier cannot reflect on the ruling of the Speaker. He is supposed to be setting the example. It is not fun. Opposition members would be removed from the Chamber. I ask the Speaker to deal with the Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** The question was very specific. The Premier has answered it, albeit not specifically, and I have made an observation. The Premier will continue.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Less observations, more rulings.

**The SPEAKER:** That was my gentle ruling.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I have finished my answer.

### HEALTH AND SKILLS TRAINING

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:45):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Training. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is investing in health training?

**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) (14:45):** I thank the member for her question. I note that her community is an absolute powerhouse when it comes to skills and training in health. She is a great supporter of the training sector. It was great to be in her community last week talking about all things south-western Sydney. The New South Wales Government has delivered a world-class health system, and that is due to many things, including our world-class health training sector. We all know that imitation is the greatest form of flattery. On training, the Labor Party is taking flattery to an absolutely new dimension.

In this House and all over Twitter, NSW Labor has praised the Labor Prime Minister for his commitment to providing fee-free TAFE places across Australia and in New South Wales. But where did he get the idea from? Like all of Labor's good ideas, they stole it from the New South Wales Coalition Government. Our Government has delivered more than 200,000 fee-free courses in New South Wales. When we did that, what did NSW Labor say? Nothing. It was even more of a poor turnout than their effort at the New South Wales parliamentary touch football this morning at Allianz Stadium. The only person who turned up was the member for Prospect, other than the member for Coogee who was in the corporate suite having a champagne breakfast. Good on the member for Prospect for turning—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Can we have a bit more relevance?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister will continue.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Was it a continental or full breakfast, member for Coogee? When the New South Wales Government provided fee-free training, I did not see Opposition members there. When the New South Wales Government provided fee-free training, Labor said absolutely nothing. But when Federal Labor rips off our policies, they are out there cheering and making a big noise, which goes to show that they are all politics and no policy. By their own admission, they are not ready to govern. Just ask the member for Bankstown.  
[Extension of time]

Just ask the member for Bankstown, the best member for Bankstown ever, past, present and certainly future. Last week the member for Newcastle was in south-western Sydney doing what he always does, talking down TAFE, our training sector and our TAFE teachers. Despite Labor's negativity, we are undeterred. We are getting on with the job. We are investing a record budget in TAFE and skills and training in this State and helping more people get the skills they need for the jobs they want. Training is absolutely booming in courses such as disability support in places like western Sydney, whether it is in the Nepean; in Wetherill Park, in the great

electorate of Prospect; in the Hills; in Bankstown, the home of Chris Minns' dodgy mate Khal or Khaldoun, who is so dopey he did not even know that we had fee-free courses—

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

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: The Leader of the House should know that he must refer to members by their title or by their electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** I believe he is referring to a former member. That does not apply.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** He was referring to the Leader of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not hear that.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I certainly did.

**The SPEAKER:** If that is the case, he knows the standing order.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Hundreds more people are getting skilled for the jobs in the health and community services sector because of this Government. We care about jobs. We care about giving people the skills they need for the jobs they want. We do not care about Labor parliamentary wannabes who want to get a free Master of Business Administration provided by the taxpayer. We are delivering the skills we need—[*Time expired.*]

### FLOODS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (14:50):** My question is directed to the Premier. Recent flooding in towns across my electorate has left roads and public infrastructure in disrepair. Water has isolated towns, cutting off normal supply chains for everyday items. Repair is beyond the capacity of councils. What will the Government do to ensure that supply chains are not disrupted in the future? Will the Premier advise what the Government will do to improve roads and protect infrastructure when the water has receded?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:51):** I thank the member for Barwon for his question. I was in Forbes with him, the Deputy Premier and the emergency services Minister last week. We would have travelled into the electorate of Barwon but we were not able to gain access. I think that gives an example of the challenges that many of our regional communities are facing right now—not just our farmers, who were looking at having a bumper harvest and who will have lost that crop during these floods, but also areas in the member's electorate like Walgett, Wee Waa, Narrabri and Wentworth. They are going through a very difficult time.

It is not just a focus on the immediate in terms of the response. It is pleasing to see the SES and all our volunteers and emergency services crews being well coordinated on the ground right across regional New South Wales. It is also about getting financial support out for those small businesses, families and producers who need it. We have provided financial support, which also goes to councils at the moment, in relation to a number of areas. Category A, category B and category C funding has been announced under the 50-50 arrangement with the Federal Government, and that also provides our primary producers up to \$25,000 in financial support. Later this afternoon I will be writing to the Prime Minister in relation to category D funding support for those communities.

To the member's question in relation to infrastructure, it is a real challenge. I have seen firsthand the challenges with regional roads and roads across the State that are suffering from the effects of substantial flooding. The member is correct that in many instances councils have a lack of capacity to fund the infrastructure and the costs that will be borne as we move forward. As the member for Barwon, councillors and local members have raised with me, once we get through this immediate response period, we will work very closely with the councils and the Federal Government to provide the financial support that is required to not just reconstruct public infrastructure to the way it was before but to improve it for the next fire or flood that we know will come.

That investment is crucial to the lifeblood of those regional communities in being able to get produce from bush to town. My commitment to the member for Barwon is that we will do whatever we can to work with local councils and the Commonwealth Government to provide the financial support to make sure that once we move through this response, we have a very strong recovery in rural and regional New South Wales, including in the electorate of Barwon.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for East Hills, I am advised by the Minister for Veterans that a number of war widows have been in the public gallery. I am not sure whether they are still there, but I acknowledge that they have been in the public gallery.



### STATE ECONOMY

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:54):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberal-Nationals Government is investing in our local community?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:54):** As the acting Treasurer, it is back to the happy place. Already Fitch has reaffirmed our triple-A rating—off and running, back in the role. It is going well. In relation to the question from the great member for East Hills, the \$5 billion WestInvest program is making a real difference to communities in western Sydney across the board. As the member knows, we have just gone through the council-led proposals for community facilities in western Sydney. More than \$20.7 million has been allocated to eight projects in the Burwood local government area [LGA], in the member for Strathfield's electorate, including \$6.6 million for the Burwood Main Street Transformation Project, which will make a real difference to Burwood. In the Blue Mountains LGA \$22.6 million has been allocated to five projects, including the Wentworth Falls dam and lake recreational precincts. That will be fantastic.

In the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA \$34 million has been allocated to six projects towards the Belmore and Lakemba town centre renewals. In the Camden LGA \$24 million has been allocated to two projects, including the Cut Hill Reserve sports field development. The Campbelltown LGA has received \$26 million for 11 projects, including the Campbelltown City Centre Transformation Project, which will revitalise the Queen Street precinct with new pedestrian links and event spaces. The member for Campbelltown is very excited about that. The Cumberland LGA in the electorate of Auburn will receive more than \$29 million in funding for three major projects, including the Guildford Pool Modernisation project.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for South Coast will be silent.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Fairfield Showground is also getting an upgrade. Blacktown council is getting a revitalisation of the Mount Druitt Hub. The member for Mount Druitt even turned up for that announcement. He was not invited but he turned up anyway—a bit of a surprise attendance. That's okay; we know he wants to be part of it. We actually did not know that because we thought that members opposite opposed asset recycling, until all of a sudden the money is there and they want to spend it in their electorates. We know Labor electorates do better under the Liberal and Nationals. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** On the weekend they are enjoying the fruits of the very things that they oppose. They sit opposite and say, "We're against WestConnex", then they drive down it. They are against the WestInvest transaction and call it smoke and mirrors, but when all of a sudden the money is there, they want to spend it straightaway. That sums up the Labor Party—always spending wealth that it did not create. The Leader of the Opposition has policies of no asset recycling and of scrapping the wages cap. But where does the money come from? That is why nothing got built in this State under Labor. That is why there was a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog.

Under the Liberals and Nationals there are more planes in the sky, and more schools, hospitals, public transport and roads wherever you live in our great State—\$112 billion of infrastructure. Labor members know that our policies work. They realised that they did not have the money, so rather than announce their own policy on the weekend to fund their projects, they came after the WestInvest Fund. They opposed that fund because they oppose asset recycling. It is a party that never manages money well. But we have set ourselves up for success. Labor members say they do not want to sell things, but one thing they did sell out on over the weekend was their principles. If they oppose asset recycling— [*Time expired.*]

### PORT COMMITMENT DEEDS

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:00):** My question is directed to the Premier. Has the Premier received any advice indicating that the full cost of taking on the Port Commitment Deeds will, in fact, be far higher than the several hundred million dollars indicated in media reporting today?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:00):** I am able to answer very clearly in relation to this. We have a port strategy in Newcastle, Kembla and Botany. The proposal that we made as a State as part of that deal was to invest in the corridors based on the strategy that was in place. In relation to the Port of Newcastle—and the member has committed to the views and the position of the member for Lake Macquarie—we have said that if the Port of Newcastle wants to increase above the cap, then it can do that, but it will be paying compensation to the taxpayers of New South Wales.

## WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:01):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the impact of the Commonwealth budget on water projects in New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (15:01):** I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. I also thank him for his work in his electorate. Only last week I was able to join the member for the Melbourne Cup. While we enjoyed the races, members of the community came forward to thank him for his work on the ground delivering for them. He also still owes me \$20. I remember.

**Mr David Layzell:** That is true.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Water is the lifeblood of regional communities, but we only think about it when we have lost it. For years communities in regional New South Wales were on the brink of running out of water. We know how tough it is, and water security continues to be a high priority for this Government. We also know that a lot of city people take for granted access to clean, reliable drinking water. The Government has been working hard to ensure access to high-quality water for regional residents. In the past decade the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments have worked cooperatively to deliver major water infrastructure projects, like the Broken Hill to Menindee pipeline, which is worth \$11.5 million and involves constructing a pipeline across 320,000 hectares of farmland between Stephens Creek Reservoir and Sunset Strip to support 16 graziers in the Far West. There are also smaller projects like the Lake Wyangan water sustainability project, the Walcha off-stream water storage and the West Wyalong Water Reliability project.

Those projects do not mean much to members opposite because they do not understand that the water in those communities represents a lifeline for those areas. Critical investments like that ensure the future of those towns. Last month I was dismayed to see the Federal Labor Government walk away from regional New South Wales when it slashed vital funding to the National Water Grid in its budget. It is in Labor DNA to turn its back on the regions. It hates regional New South Wales. Its DNA only stands for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. It is just another kick in the guts for the people of regional New South Wales. It is one of the many projects that needs to be delivered for our communities. The Liberal-Nationals Government works hard each and every day for our regional communities. Federal Labor, with a strike of a pen, has wiped those projects. It will strip \$4.6 billion away from our communities over the next 12 years. Have we heard anything from those opposite? No, not a thing. There are crickets from those opposite. They do not want to talk about it. The leader of the Opposition was previously a shadow Minister for Water. He used to regularly travel to the west of the State. He has now given the communities in the west the cold shoulder. They do not get Ten Minute Minns; he has ghosted them completely. [*Extension of time*]

Our Government has a proud record when it comes to investing in water infrastructure in regional communities. In the most recent budget, \$1.1 billion was committed for water projects across New South Wales. That includes \$369 million over the next four years for the Safe and Secure Water Program, which is delivering critical infrastructure across the State. Right now the funding of water infrastructure projects is at jeopardy because the Labor Government has cut funding to those projects in towns like Tamworth, Orange, Bathurst, Griffith and communities on the South Coast where we know that current and future projects will be required for water security.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I call on Labor members to come clean and tell us which projects they are not going to be funding and which communities are going to be missing out.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Water security continues to be high on this Government's agenda. Labor has kicked those projects into the never-never, including the Dungowan and the Wyangala dams. Those projects are necessary for flood mitigation and are needed to ensure water security for those towns. This Government wants the Dungowan dam in the area of Tamworth delivered because that town nearly ran out of water several years ago, but Labor has kicked it into the never-never again. That is a clear sign that New South Wales cannot risk NSW Labor. In this State, only the Liberals and The Nationals continue to reach out and invest in our regions.

## ASSET PRIVATISATION

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:06):** My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier previously said that his privatisation agenda literally leads the world. He even called it the "golden key". Given that he has now signed up taxpayers to be liable for hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars—who knows

how much; he cannot or will not tell us today—to unwind one of his privatisations, does he still stand by those comments?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:07):** Do you still stand by paying for Canterbury Hospital out of WestInvest? If you want to have the highest standards, is there anything else we can fund for you?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Our policies are so good that we fund our promises and Labor promises because they cannot fund anything.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have unlocked billions of dollars that have been invested in every corner of this great State because of our policies. There you have it. On the weekend was Labor's first moment for a \$100 million, a \$200 million investment. Where did it go looking for the money? It went to the money it opposed the creation of.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** When it comes to the sale of WestConnex, when it comes to Land and Property Information, an investment that helped build stadiums across the State, a stadium that they opposed—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor members sat there with their arms crossed in front of them every single day during the election campaign. How did that go for them? Not well. They now sit wining and dining with corporate hospitality in the stadium that we built and they opposed.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** It's getting under your skin, Dom. You are really upset about it, aren't you?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Have you driven down WestConnex, Jo? Yes, she has. She opposed it and now she drives on it. They opposed NorthConnex and now they drive on it because it connects the Hunter, Newcastle and the Central Coast.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I caught the light rail, too, Dom, but it's still crap.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It is great. You should get on it more, mate.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They love it. In fact, I spoke to somebody this morning about the light rail. He caught it to work this morning and loved the trip.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: The Premier has no problem spending stamp duty money and pokie money. He is a hypocrite.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume her seat. There is no point of order. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The reality is that—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** You are a hypocrite!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —they do not have a financial plan for our State.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They do not have a financial plan because they tell people what they want to hear. The policies from this side of the House over 11 years have transformed New South Wales in every single corner. That is why on the weekend, at the first moment to stand by their principles, they knew that the only way to fund those major infrastructure projects was through options like asset recycling, which we delivered and they opposed. That is the difference between the Liberals and The Nationals and the backward Labor Party.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Hawkesbury, I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of Mr Martin Juillard, Consul-General of France. Welcome. I will meet with the Consul-General after question time.

**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Small Business. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to help small businesses across New South Wales?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:10):** I thank the member for her question and for her contribution and leadership in her community, particularly during tough times like COVID, fires and floods. She is always on the phone and messaging the community to help them out. Well done. As the Premier just said, there is no area inside the Government that has not transformed the State. Through the use of Service NSW, the Government has led the State and the country in small business. I will give statistics around that. It has been transformational.

**Mr David Elliott:** The data?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Absolutely. There is a lot of digital in that journey. It has been transformational in the way that we have helped business out. I was a member of the crisis Cabinet for 2½ years. I saw firsthand how hard the Premier worked to support small businesses throughout that time.

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

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** He strongly advocated for businesses to get the funds that they needed through various support grants. He also strongly advocated for initiatives, such as the Dine and Discover vouchers, to help businesses get money in their hands quickly. That is where the transformation of our State really shone. In a traditional way, businesses would have had to fill out numerous forms and wait for weeks and months to get paid. Through the Dine and Discover vouchers, for example, which was an inspiration led by the Premier, businesses were getting paid within three days. When cash flow is absolutely the blood flow for small businesses, that is what transformation looks like.

Other States and Territories in the country and the world look at us and say, "How on earth did you do that?" It is because Coalition governments will always look after small businesses far better than any other party. I highlight the size and dimension of small businesses in New South Wales: 800,000 small businesses make up 98 per cent of all businesses, they employ 1.8 million people and contribute \$425 billion to our economy. Some 517,000 small businesses have set up business accounts with Service NSW. It is a true "tell us once" experience, which means that they do not have to go from agency to agency to explain their history and details. That is what good government looks like and that is why we are the Government for small business.

**ASSET PRIVATISATION**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (15:14):** My question is directed to the Premier. Moments ago the Premier declared privatisation a giant success, yet he refuses to detail how much taxpayers will have to pay for the remaining 40 years of the Port Commitment Deeds. If privatisation is such a success, why will the Premier not detail the costs for which the New South Wales taxpayers will be liable?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:14):** If it is not a success, why are you spending the money? As a government, our asset recycling approach amounts to \$50 billion. That is 188 new and upgraded schools. While we are opening schools, those opposite closed them.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: This is the sixth time we have asked a direct question.

**The SPEAKER:** The question was less specific than previously. I am satisfied that the Premier is being relevant. The member for Heffron will resume his seat.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** He was still asked a direct question.

**The SPEAKER:** It was less direct. The Premier has the call.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There is a reason that 90 schools closed under Labor and we built 188. That is because they didn't have any money, just like we saw on Sunday.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** Point of order: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. We are a minute in. We have asked the Premier six times—

**The SPEAKER:** I have just ruled on relevance. The member for Summer Hill will resume her seat.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** —a very clear, direct question.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume her seat. I call the member for Summer Hill to order for the first time. The member is being disruptive.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Those opposite are sensitive because they know what works. We saw what works on the weekend. When those opposite wanted to invest, they knew the only way they could do it was to follow our asset recycling approach—which they have ruled out. There would be no Canterbury Hospital. There would not be the hospitals that we are building across the State, the 170 health projects, the North West metro, the Inner West Light Rail, the Newcastle Light Rail, the CBD and South East Light Rail, rapid bus services, 41 new Waratah suburban trains. It is everywhere. The entire State has been transformed.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. For two out of the three minutes—

**The SPEAKER:** I have ruled that the Premier is being relevant. The question was less specific. It was about privatisation more generally and he is on that topic. The member for Heffron will resume his seat.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us go to WestConnex, which is a road that we built and Labor opposed. Labor then opposed both tranches of the transaction that delivered \$11.1 billion and, as part of that, \$5 billion for western Sydney. Every single community in western Sydney has benefitted from our asset recycling program.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** Is that as much as the port compensation is going to be?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We stand for it every single day because we know it has improved the lives of every single person across our State. If it is a failure, why is the member for Summer Hill raiding the fund?

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:17):** My question is addressed to the Premier, representing the Minister for Health. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberals and The Nationals are strengthening our frontline health services?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:17):** Yes, I can. I thank the member for Camden for his question. Today I am also representing the health Minister. ScoMo, this is how it is done properly. This is working quite well. Last week or the week before I was out in Albury to announce joint funding on the Albury-Wodonga hospital, in partnership with Dan Andrews and the Victorian Government. The New South Wales and Victorian governments will each contribute \$225 million, on top of the \$108 million that we had received from the Commonwealth Government. This is a project that has been talked about for a long time. As Treasurer, I worked with the Victorian Treasurer to get that funding over the line. That hospital will make a real difference to the communities of Albury and Wodonga, who generally have to travel between both sites for their health care. Once again, it is a great example of two governments working together to deliver for the communities in Albury and Wodonga. Once again, it is another project that would not be possible without our asset recycling approach.

Wherever you live in this State, great investments are being made in our healthcare system. This year's budget had \$2.8 billion of capital investment. That is up 210 per cent since Labor's last budget. Labor did not recycle assets or make the tough decisions to take our State forward, and it could not pay to build hospitals. In addition, we are also working with the Victorian Government on the rollout of 50 urgent care clinics—25 in New South Wales and 25 in Victoria. Recently I was with regional health Minister Bronnie Taylor in western Sydney—the health Minister is sick at the moment—where we announced that expressions of interest are now open. In fact, the 25 urgent care clinics are not just in western Sydney. They are all across our State and many will be in regional New South Wales, where we know many people are struggling to access GPs. Those care clinics will provide extended hours so that people can get the support they need, rather than waiting in emergency departments for category 4 or category 5 presentations.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** You cut the funding, Dom, when you were Treasurer.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Cut funding? We have increased record amounts in health funding. As I said, \$2.26 billion in capital investment in this year's budget, a \$33 billion health recurrent budget—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It is the biggest on record. That is what happens when you manage money well—you have the means to deliver the best health care for people across our State.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Newcastle and the member for Swansea that they are on three calls to order.

#### AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:20):** My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales. Farmers across New South Wales are once again facing natural disasters, this time from flooding, and this comes on top of the ongoing pressures of land use conflict, especially from energy infrastructure. Will the Government now commit to a full-time independent agriculture commissioner?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:21):** I thank the member for his question. I will start off by saying that right now we do have an incredibly functioning agriculture commissioner who is independent and does the job that the member is talking about each and every day. I am proud that this Government introduced the ag commissioner in 2020.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for South Coast to order for the second time. The member will cease commentating throughout the answer.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** I am sure she is encouraging me, Mr Speaker. It is important that the commissioner has flexibility in the role to provide advice to Government. The commissioner deals with some of the matters raised by the member for Wagga Wagga, including land use conflict and the expansion of renewable energy. Only a couple of months ago I was in the Wagga Wagga electorate with the ag commissioner, staff of the member and interested community members to specifically talk about land use conflicts, particularly around renewables in the Wagga Wagga area. That is a particularly good example of the sort of work the ag commissioner does—hearing firsthand from landowners about the challenges they are facing. In that regard, the role is fit for purpose.

Daryl Quinlivan noted in his first report that given the scale and the variety of ag land use disputes, the role of the agriculture commissioner can more effectively address these through recommendations around policy, systems and structures, rather than adjudicating on individual cases. That comes from him directly. It is important to know that that role is in place and is covering a range of issues each and every day at the highest level, and I will encourage Mr Quinlivan to continue to do that. The member for Wagga Wagga raised land use conflict. It is one of the issues at the highest level and the ag commissioner has been working very hard on it. We need to protect and grow our agricultural land, whilst also looking at issues such as housing and energy supply. The commissioner's role is to provide advice on how we can best manage conflict around land use and where we are heading in the future.

Right now the commissioner is finalising his review of the policy settings around the growth of renewables and the growth of agriculture. That report will come before us in the not-too-distant future. For agriculture to remain viable, it is essential that we have a secure and reliable energy supply as well. Along with the commissioner's advice on land use conflict, he will also be providing his first report around improving the prospects for agriculture and regional Australia in the New South Wales planning system, which will include a range of things like paddock-to-plate, significant agricultural land policy and rural land strategy to guide councils on the importance of agriculture and how to mitigate land use conflict. The ag commissioner is doing significant work in the already existing role, and we will continue to see growth in that industry.

#### RURAL AND REGIONAL FLOODS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (15:24):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery. Will the Minister update the House as to the flood currently impacting parts of rural, regional and remote New South Wales?

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (15:24):** I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his question. I acknowledge the impact that this recent weather event is having on communities such as Moree, which I had the opportunity to visit with the Premier on 25 October some two days after the Gwydir River peaked at 10.5 metres. It is a very large flood event through that region. In relation to Moree, the SES has now led 2,881 rapid damage assessments. It has assessed that 664 buildings have suffered inundation, and 223 of those have been assessed as not habitable. As most members of the House would know, throughout the course of the year we have faced flood after flood. In fact, today is the fifty-sixth consecutive day of this current flooding event. Currently there are eight major flood warnings in place across the State.

Unfortunately, we are expecting another wet weather system to impact inland New South Wales from this weekend onwards. Today the areas of greatest concern are those isolated communities in the north-west as well as communities that face repeated flooding across the south of New South Wales. In the past 24 hours the SES

has recorded 719 calls to the 132 500 hotline. Of those, there have been 274 requests for assistance, including 10 flood rescues. We have had 360 SES personnel in the field in the past 24 hours. Indeed, there has not been a single day in 2022 when the SES has not been actively working on the ground somewhere across our State. Such is the nature of living through our third consecutive La Niña, with saturated catchments and spilling dams.

I thank our dozens of flooded communities across New South Wales that continue to work with us and abide by the advice. It is understandable that flood fatigue and complacency are very real risks not just for our volunteers and staff, who have been ceaseless in their efforts, but also for our communities. As the waters recede in places like Forbes—I know all members have been closely following that community—we will be able to commence rapid damage assessments on the ground. Our initial thoughts are that around about 400 homes and businesses have been impacted there. [*Extension of time*]

Before I wrap up my answer, I update the House that last week the Premier and I announced that \$25,000 grants are now available to primary producers across 66 local government areas to assist with the repair and clean-up costs. At this time I encourage communities right across New South Wales to remain vigilant and keep up to date with warnings and advice provided by the SES and the Bureau of Meteorology.

### *Business of the House*

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS: VALEDICTORY SPEECHES**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I move:

That:

- (1) Business before the House be interrupted on Wednesday 9 November 2022 at 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Balmain, followed by the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Riverstone.
- (2) Business before the House be interrupted on Tuesday 15 November 2022:
  - (a) immediately following the giving of general business notices of motions to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Oxley;
  - (b) immediately following the routine of business after question time to permit the commencement of a valedictory speech by the member for Cabramatta, followed by the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Wakehurst; and
  - (c) at 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Parramatta, followed by the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Vacluse, followed by the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Baulkham Hills.
- (3) Business before the House be interrupted on Wednesday 16 November 2022:
  - (a) immediately following the routine of business after question time to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for South Coast; and
  - (b) at 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Davidson, followed by the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Fairfield, followed by the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Ryde.
- (4) Business before the House be interrupted on Thursday 17 November 2022 at 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Pittwater.
- (5) That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Tuesday 15 November 2022 to allow for the member for Cabramatta to incorporate the remainder of his valedictory speech into *Hansard*.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Documents*

## **ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 32 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report of the Advocate for Children and Young People for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 24 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION**

### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 242A of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 25 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.

**CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 34F of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report of the NSW Child Death Review Team for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 25 October 2022.
- (2) Erratum to the Report of the NSW Child Death Review Team for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 1 November 2022.

I order that the reports be printed.

**OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with sections 31 of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report of the NSW Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 25 October 2022.
- (2) Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Formal Investigations—Summary Report 2021-2022: A summary of completed investigations under section 13 of the Ombudsman Act 1974 for the period from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022*, received out of session on 25 October 2022.

I order that the reports be printed.

**INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 16 of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of Custodial Services for year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 28 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.

**ELECTORAL COMMISSION****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 154 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018, I announce receipt of the report of the New South Wales Electoral Commission for year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 31 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.

**OFFICIAL COMMUNITY VISITORS****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 25 of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 and section 138 of the Children's Guardian Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of Official Community Visitors for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 31 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.

**CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 138 of the the Children's Guardian Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Children's Guardian for year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 31 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.

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

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 78 (2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 31 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.



**INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with sections 61A and 61B of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, I announce receipt of the report of the Information and Privacy Commission for year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 31 October 2022. I order that the report be printed.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with schedule 2 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, I announce receipt of report No. 5/57 of the Committee on Children and Young People entitled *2022 Review of the annual reports and other matters of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian*, dated October 2022, received out of session on 25 October 2022 and authorised to be printed.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE****Government Response**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the Government's response to recommendation 1 from report 8/57 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled *Examination of selected Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports August 2019 - June 2020*, dated October 2022, received out of session on 25 October 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***AUDIT OFFICE****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 12A of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, I announce receipt of the report of the Audit Office of New South Wales for year ended 30 June 2022, received out of session on 31 October 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING****Reports**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of report No. 3/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning entitled *Food production and supply in NSW*, dated November 2022, received out of session on 1 November 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***LAW REFORM COMMISSION****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Law Reform Commission Act 1967, I announce receipt of report No. 150 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission entitled *Bail: Firearms and Criminal Associations*, dated October 2022, received out of session on 4 November 2022 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT****Reports**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL:** As Chair: I table report No. 4/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Technology and the agriculture and mining sectors*, dated November 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 50/57*, dated 8 November 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** I also table the minute extracts of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 49/57*, dated 18 October 2022.

**COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION****Reports**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** As Chair: I table report No. 3/57 of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission entitled *Review of the Health Care Complaints Commission 2020-21 annual report*, dated November 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** As Chair: I table report No. 3/57 of the Committee on Law and Safety entitled *Embedded Networks in New South Wales*, dated November 2022. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Wakefield Park Raceway**

Petition calling for Wakefield Park Raceway to be reinstated as a viable motor racing circuit, received from **Ms Julia Finn**.

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

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

**Central West Pumped Hydro Project**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to reject the proposed Central West Pumped Hydro project, received from **Mr Paul Toole**.

**Timber Industry Work Practices**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to ensure safe workplaces for timber workers engaged in sustainable forestry practices, received from **Mr Chris Gulaptis**.

**RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

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

The Hon. Sam Faraway—Forster-Tuncurry bridge duplication—lodged 9 August 2022 (Mr Stephen Bromhead)

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor—Former New England area health service—lodged 20 September 2022 (Mr Adam Marshall)

The Hon. James Griffin—Trail and adventure motorcycling—lodged 20 September 2022 (Dr Marjorie O'Neill)

*Business of the House*

**BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 105, general business orders of the day (for bills), Residential Tenancies Amendment (Tenant Protection from Flood Response) Bill 2022 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Climate Change Response) Bill 2022, have lapsed.

*Bills*

**PORT OF NEWCASTLE (EXTINGUISHMENT OF LIABILITY) BILL 2022**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:36):** I am pleased that my contribution to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 was delayed. In question time the Premier was asked six times about the liability of the State Government that may arise from the Government's amendment, but he failed to answer. Mr Speaker, you might remember that you said that if the Premier does not know the answer, he should say so. It is clear in *Hansard* that this Government has absolutely no idea in relation to the financial management of our State. Yesterday and today the Premier doubled down and said that asset recycling and the wages cap are the way to make sure we get infrastructure, yet he does not know how much the worst privatisation deal in the history of this State—in fact, in this nation—will cost.

That tells us everything we need to know about the Coalition. It is astounding that the former Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales boasted of his 10-month campaign to address that inequity of the ports but did not do it when he was a Minister of the Crown and had the power to do it. The member for Upper Hunter doubled down in his contribution. It is privatisation all up and down the ports. I will be talking to the Eden port and all the ports up north to tell them what is ahead. The only way to stop these dodgy deals, these failed privatisations, is to vote Labor. People will be doing that, especially in the Upper Hunter.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:39):** I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 as the shadow Minister for the Central Coast, and shadow Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism. It is important to emphasise that the role of the Opposition is to hold the Government to account, which I was reminded of by the member for Northern Tablelands. In this case, rather than getting the best deal, which is what the Premier said, we got a deal that was not in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. It is not only the New South Wales Opposition that says that but also Justice Jago, who made some key points in her judgement on New South Wales privatising the port in 2013. Although the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission was not successful, she said:

The State's motive was profit maximisation. It wanted to ... ensure that bidders did not discount their bids because of the risk of the establishment of a container terminal at the Port of Newcastle.

Was it about getting the best deal for the people of New South Wales? Was it about getting the best deal for freight in this State? Was it about making sure that manufacturers and farmers in the northern part of New South Wales got a good deal? No, it was not. It was about the Government getting the biggest sugar hit it could at the time. It maximised its profit and a whole lot of short-term gain at the expense of penalising everybody else. The Government should admit that. Justice Jago's judgement also revealed that Morgan Stanley, which was hired in 2011 to advise the State, warned New South Wales Treasury in March 2013 that the Port of Newcastle could develop container capacity and if that issue was not addressed bidders were either likely to seek protection from potential future development or reprice their bids, which would create "a potentially material impact on transaction proceeds". It was all about money and nothing about value for the people of New South Wales. The Government should take ownership and admit that.

The Government should also admit that privatisation does not work in the long-term interests of the people of New South Wales. Incredibly, it sold Vales Point Power Station in my electorate for \$1 million. It has now been revalued and sold for \$200 million. How was that in the best interests of the taxpayers of New South Wales? All of our roads are being privatised and people will have to pay for more than 40 years to use the roads that they paid for in the first place. How is that good in the long term? This Government is about short-term gain and looking after their electorates so that people see the infrastructure being built but in the long term our children and grandchildren will have to pay for its mistakes. The Opposition's job is to hold the Government to account for its dodgy, dirty deals.

The bill goes some way to fixing a part of the problem. During question time the Opposition pointed out that we have not been told the liability in the longer term. The Premier had the chance to tell us. I am advised that Treasury has done some modelling. Obviously it is not good, if the Premier will not tell the people of New South Wales. The bill does not negate the issue that this was a bad deal from start to finish. In my previous role as the shadow Minister for Regional Development, I travelled across north-western New South Wales and across to the coast where people told me, as the member for Northern Tablelands said, they were sending their goods to Queensland, out of the ports of Gladstone and Brisbane, because it was too expensive to send them to the Port of Botany. How is that in the best interests of the people of New South Wales?

The New South Wales Opposition is doing its job of holding the Government to account. I commend the member for Lake Macquarie for this bill. The Government would oppose whatever bill Labor proposed, so it was left to an Independent. We support the bill because it introduces some measures to fix the issue. But the Government must admit it got it wrong.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:44):** I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. We are witnessing a shocking example of the Liberal-Nationals Government's privatisation obsession, which will yet again cost our State hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of dollars, because of a failed dodgy deal. Members know the Government's poor commitment deeds created an unfair monopoly that discriminated against the Hunter and prohibited the development of the container terminal in Newcastle, and Government members then spent years denying the contents of those deeds. They did not tell the truth; they misled our communities time and time again. They tried to pretend that the port privatisation deals were fair and that taxpayers were better off. We now know very clearly that that is not the case.

The privatisation deals were not fair at all, as several Government MPs have finally admitted on record today. Worse still, the Government's failed dodgy deal, which has now been partially reversed, may end up costing the taxpayers of this State hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of dollars. Today the Premier was unable to answer a simple question, which was put to him five times: What is this going to cost the taxpayers of New South Wales? He could not answer that simple question, either because he does not know or he is not willing to tell. Once again, all we get from the Government is cover-ups and lies. That money will not go to fixing our schools because we will be compensating others for the dodgy deal the Government made. That money will not be going to hospitals in crisis because the taxpayers are going to have to pay out to fix that dodgy deal.

Once again—it is not for the first time—the Liberals and Nationals have forced on the State a dodgy privatisation deal that will cost a bomb. Plenty of Government MPs have sought to rewrite history today, particularly those from the National Party, who would have everyone believe that this dodgy deal was done without their knowledge or consent. In truth, National Party members have their grubby fingerprints all over this. Their leader at the time, Duncan Gay, supported the deal 100 per cent. In fact, he was the ports Minister. All one has to do is Google "Duncan Gay" and "port privatisation" to get all the stories of the National Party supporting the deal, defending the deal, denying the truth, misleading the public and trying to pretend that Newcastle was not being screwed over.

Members of the National Party who tried desperately to blame everyone else should remember the chief architect of that dodgy deal was the then leader of the National Party. Ever since the deal was signed, the people of New South Wales have been lied to. The secrecy around it was almost as bad as the ideology behind it. Treasurer after Treasurer and Premier after Premier have told the Parliament and the community that Newcastle port was free to build a container terminal, but now they admit that was wrong. We simply cannot trust a single thing the Government says, especially when it comes to the Hunter. It is most infuriating that our communities will end up paying the price.

The Government's dodgy deal has created a huge compensation liability to private company NSW Ports, and that compensation remains, regardless of the Government's amendment today. Taxpayers will end up paying that compensation—and the Government is to blame; the National Party is to blame. Today the member from Upper Hunter said in the Chamber, "I see this as a great success of privatisation." Who is he kidding? His Government created this mess, his political party created this mess and now the taxpayers of New South Wales are going to have to pay through the nose to fix it. It is unbelievable. If the Government is re-elected in March, it will do it again because it is obsessed with privatisation.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Labor Party has already said that it supports the bill with the Government's amendments. This contribution is not relevant to the bill at all. It is just political sophistry and time wasting.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Port Stephens will come to the leave of the bill.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Clearly, the Leader of the House has taken a point of order in order to limit the time available to the Opposition to put on record everything the Government does not want to hear, especially the members who live in the Hunter and know exactly what the Government did to constrain the Hunter's economy. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (15:49):** The Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 is a very important bill because it impacts everyone in the Hunter and all of our citizens. Before I continue, I pay homage to my colleague the member for Newcastle. There has been no greater champion for the port expansion and construction of the container terminal than he. In fact, since he was elected in 2014, he has given many speeches in Parliament in support of a terminal. I pay my respects to the member for Newcastle for the work he has done to provide members with background on the matter and create an opportunity for that work to occur.

Following the privatisation of the Port of Newcastle in 2014 and Port Botany and Port Kembla in 2013, this ideologically blinkered and pro-privatisation Liberal Government introduced an anti-competitive clause that allowed Port Botany to seek unfair compensation from the Port of Newcastle should it exceed a cap on containers in and out of our port. That unfair cap was foisted upon Newcastle and the State by an unfair Government in an unfair deal. Since then, Newcastle port has been unable to build a container terminal, which is vexing to Newcastle and affects the entire State. If the Port of Newcastle exceeds the movement of approximately 500 containers, as stipulated in the anti-competitive arrangements, it would be subject to compensation payable to NSW Ports and the operator of Port Botany.

I can think of no other example of a government introducing an anti-competitive arrangement to suit a private corporation. It was introduced by a Liberal government no less, the supposed champions of the free market. How dare Government members proclaim themselves to be the party of free enterprise. How dare the Liberals call themselves the party of choice and the party that champions the market economy. Members opposite were happy to heap unfair practices upon the Port of Newcastle, to its disadvantage for eight long years. They were happy to disadvantage Newcastle and the Hunter and deprive our region of jobs and opportunity. In so doing, they have damaged the economic prospects of our entire State. The bill from the member for Lake Macquarie seeks to overturn that ridiculous anti-competitive arrangement that was implemented by the Baird Liberal Government a decade ago.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Federal Court made a very clear decision on whether or not those provisions were anti-competitive. That decision was made by a Federal Court judge whom the Federal Labor Party has now appointed to the High Court. It is quarrelling with a decision of the Federal Court of Australia to suggest that it is anti-competitive.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** There is no point of order. The member for Wallsend has the call.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** I was paying homage to the member for Lake Macquarie and thanking him for introducing the bill. Yet again I pay my immense gratitude to the member for Newcastle because thanks to him we have got this far. The Newcastle and Hunter region has experienced a decline in industry and would welcome a container terminal in the area because it will create jobs, investment and opportunities for the people of Wallsend, Newcastle and the rest of the Hunter. In closing, I have two questions for the Premier following question time. The Premier needs to confirm that the liability of the State Government not exceed the money collected from Newcastle port and if the liability that the State Government is inheriting from the decision is greater than the amount of money that Newcastle port pay the New South Wales Government—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Time.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** —then the Minister needs to in Parliament—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: This is not question time and the member's time has expired.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (15:55):** The very first question I asked in this place was about a container cap at the Port of Newcastle and a compensation provision in the privatisation deed. That was on 6 November 2014—almost eight years ago to the day—and just a fortnight after the by-election that saw me elected to this Parliament here today. The number of times I have raised this issue is in the thousands—more questions on notice, notices of motion, speeches, question time, budget estimates, parliamentary inquiries, newspapers, television, radio. I even met with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to ask it to investigate the cap and compensation.

One thing that I have been saying for a very long time is that the Government could fix this if it wanted to. The amendments to this bill brought by the Government show that I was right. They also show that it just did not

want to—its hand had to be forced. I am not the only member in this place who recognised the anti-competitive clause in the privatisation deed for exactly what it was—dodgy. One of those people is the member for Lake Macquarie, who has also been on the record for a long time supporting the diversification of the Port of Newcastle. I thank him sincerely for his commitment, not just recently but over many years. I thank him for his willingness to work with all MPs and all political parties. When I say years, I mean it. That is how long it has taken to get to this point. It has taken sustained pressure from stakeholders all over New South Wales.

The tide started to turn in the Coalition in 2019 when The Nationals passed a motion at their State conference to remove the obstacles that were holding back the development of a high-intensity container terminal at the Port of Newcastle. They too saw that this container cap did not just hurt the port, it hurt producers all across the north of the State, who were being forced to pay more to export through Brisbane or Sydney. It hurt the importers who were forced to bypass Port Botany due to congestion and have their goods discharged interstate. It hurt the people of the Hunter, who can see the writing on the wall at the world's largest coal port and know that the way to avoid irreparable damage to the local jobs and the local economy is to diversify.

Fixing this dodgy deal, like all good legislation that is brought to this Parliament, is not always about Opposition versus Government, us versus them. Good legislation and good ideas do not get blocked by party lines. They will always receive the broad support of this place, whether you are a member of the Labor Party, the National Party or on the crossbench. We have all been elected to this place to work for the betterment of our local communities and for the betterment of the people of New South Wales. A container cap on the Port of Newcastle does not do that. A container cap on the Port of Newcastle is for the betterment of just one entity—the private consortium that bought a monopoly on this State's container trade for almost 100 years.

The Minister needs to confirm in Parliament that the liability to the State Government will not exceed the money collected from the Port of Newcastle. If it will, then the Minister needs to disclose this in Parliament. I could stand here and wax lyrical about how the Liberal obsession with privatising everything in this State continues to hurt the people of New South Wales. This capitulation on the container terminal, the handbrake on the Port of Newcastle, demonstrates it very clearly. But I do not want to keep having this conversation about the port. I am sick of talking about container caps and compensation clauses. I want this speech to be the very last time I have to mention them in this place. The next time I speak about the Port of Newcastle here I want it to be about how well it is progressing with its container terminal. I also thank it for its advocacy on this issue. We have been on a very long journey together to fix this, but it is time it came to an end. Finally, the community has come on this journey with us. Thank you for hanging in there, thank you for your help and thank you for believing that we could get this done.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:00):** The Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022 would not need to be introduced had it not been for a dubious privatisation deal done by the NSW Liberal Party and The Nationals in the first place. It would not have had to be introduced had it not been for this Government's obsessive approach to the sale of government assets—\$93 billion worth to date and more on the way if it gets its chance. It would not have been introduced if the Government was not now wanting to desperately clean up a mess of its own creation. Labor has always opposed the privatisation of our ports. We were attacked by the members opposite for the trouble. Members of The Nationals might now be trying to pretend that they put up a fight. But the praise their former leadership heaped on the port privatisation deals is on the public record forever.

Most members were only aware of this latest deal this morning, when they read it in the paper. The chaos and confusion around ports' policy in this State continues. It has been the hallmark of this Government and in its twilight days it has been writ large this morning. Why does it matter? Because ultimately the arrangements for ports in an import-dependent economy impacts on the cost of goods and services to every household and every business in every community. It also matters because of the investment climate it creates. Those opposite fondly talk about climate and sovereign risk. This is a textbook case of it. Changing the arrangements for one port in New South Wales impacts on all others.

Port Kembla was slated as the second container port in New South Wales for very sound, logical and economically justifiable reasons. It is so close to south-west and western Sydney, with infrastructure connections to that third largest economy in the country. It has a development approval in place for a 1.2 million TEU terminal in the outer harbour. It currently handles 100 per cent of motor vehicle imports into New South Wales and delivers more than half a billion in gross regional product to the Illawarra. It has large bulk agricultural export facilities. It can import and export bulky materials needed for the construction and mining industries. It is capable of handling large cargo. It is the port that built the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and the Bass Strait oil rigs. It is the port that is likely to be central to a large offshore wind industry in the future. It supports thousands of jobs in the Illawarra. It has great potential and features prominently among the plans of the New South Wales Government to deliver its economic outcomes.

That said, the restriction on the Port of Newcastle could hinder its capacity in the region to diversify its operations. Limiting competition was the Government's key intention when it introduced the cap on Newcastle in the first place. It has been called highly anti-competitive by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, but the bottom line is that this deal came about because members opposite were trying to maximise the value of the sale of the ports. It was never about the best deal for taxpayers, for exporters, for transport operators; it was always about getting as much money as it possibly could for a dubious privatisation deal. It is an open-and-shut case. A Government whose now leader described privatisation as the "golden key" has realised that all he did was cuff himself to an anvil. This bloke really is the Wile E. Coyote of New South Wales public policy.

To the specifics of the amendments before us, section 5 of the bill triggers a series of tests in order to satisfy the Treasurer of the day that the restrictions should be removed. Section 6 requires the Treasurer to appoint a qualified person to determine the compensation. Section 7 sets out the process for making a fair determination of the compensation and a time frame for it. Section 8 allows the Port of Newcastle to be released from its deed once the payment of compensation has been made. But it appears that the Government forgot that there are two deeds in place around ports in New South Wales. It has kept the taxpayer on the hook for a payment of further compensation—size unknown.

The Premier could not even shed light on it today in question time, despite multiple questions and plenty of time to source the answer from his advisers in the corner. He simply does not know how much he is signing taxpayers up to, in his desperation to get a political solution to a policy problem of his own Government's creation. There is also no clear purpose of the funds collected for the relinquishment of the Port of Newcastle deed. I suggest that a sensible thing to do with any funds from a compensation payment from the Port of Newcastle should be reserved for port-related infrastructure. NSW Labor proposed a more sensible approach, being highly conscious of the fact that the privatisation mess could likely lead to taxpayers being on the hook for an unknown amount of money. Our approach had broad agreement, but the Government has not recognised its own failings. Mr Temporary Speaker, and member for Heathcote, is a member of the Government who supported the privatisation of Port Kembla.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** That is correct.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** You sat motionless when the money from that privatisation basically left the region, just about every cent of it. So I look forward to you explaining how the region will be better off after tinkering with your ports policy.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: This is an attack on the Chair of this House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is the truth.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Mr Temporary Speaker, this is an outrageous attack on you personally.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is not an attack on the Chair. He is the member for Heathcote. He should explain how it will benefit the Illawarra.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Wollongong will resume his seat. I place the member for Wollongong on three calls to order. The member's time has expired.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:05):** For 12 years this Government's privatisation obsession has been undermining our State's future growth. The sale of the Port of Newcastle is the best and the worst example of the kind of short-sighted cash grab that has come to define this Government. At the time, my predecessor, former member for Charlestown Andrew Cornwall, crowed about the benefits of the lease. He told the ABC:

It's a fantastic day for the Hunter, we're getting a great deal out of the port transaction and that will also create future jobs within the port.

I do not know where he got that idea. It was a bad, anti-competitive deal then when it was forced through, despite the wishes of Novocastrians, and it is a bad deal now, and it is about time the Government came to its senses.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The Leader of the House will come to order.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** After years of short shrift—sticking a secret provision into the port privatisation deal, which forced the Port of Newcastle to compensate its competitors if it transported more than 50,000 shipping containers a year—and after taking pains to trade Hunter's long-term future for a short-term sugar hit to this Government's structurally unsound budget, the Premier has begrudgingly acknowledged, because of political imperative, that this unfair, uncommercial, unreasonable constraint on the port and the economic future of our region and our State has got to go. The Productivity Commission was incredibly critical of the existing arrangement, stating, "Port privatisation processes have penalised any development of container capacity at the Port of Newcastle." The commissioner said, "There is a clear need for increased container terminal space over the

next 30 years. We are looking at a doubling or tripling of containers coming into Australia." The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission was also damning in its assessment, calling the bad deal "inherently anti-competitive".

For a government that has claimed to believe in the power of the free market to fix everything and has used this as a justification for offloading even revenue-generating assets such as the Port of Newcastle, the hypocrisy of this decision has been staggering. Today's *Newcastle Herald* editorial says, "In joining with Mr Piper and Labor, the Government is implicitly accepting that the original deal was as anti-competitive as the ACCC and its other critics said it was and wrong in principle." This backflip highlights not just the failures of the Port of Newcastle privatisation deal, but the failures of this Government's fundamental approach to privatisation. My Opposition colleagues and I and the member for Lake Macquarie are committed to working across the Parliament to fix this bad deal and to get the best outcome possible for the local people in my area, for the Hunter and for New South Wales as a whole.

Because the privatisation was a bad deal for the people of New South Wales, it is complex to untangle. We need to make sure that the people of this State do not end up footing the bill for fixing up the mess. We are hearing that the decision implicit in the amendment moved by the Government might actually cost the taxpayer billions of dollars. I would like the Minister to confirm in Parliament that the liability to the State Government will not exceed the money collected from the Port of Newcastle. If the liability that the State Government is inheriting from this decision is greater than the amount of money the Port of Newcastle has to pay to the New South Wales Government, then the Minister has to disclose this in Parliament. Let us be clear, no matter who is in charge, as the Government churns through Premiers and Cabinet Ministers, this Liberal-Nationals Coalition always comes back to a short-sighted privatisation agenda, with the Premier, even as recently as the last few days and indeed in question time today, refusing to rule out further privatisations.

How long before the Liberal-Nationals sell off Hunter Water? What about the remainder of Ausgrid and Essential Energy? We are already seeing power prices explode. I simply cannot fathom what would happen if the only remaining energy companies are fully privatised. With its privatisation agenda, the Liberal-Nationals are working against the future interests of this State. With the privatisation of Newcastle port, they actively undermined the Hunter's and our State's future prosperity. Among other bad decisions in relation to privatisation has been the Newcastle buses. We have seen what a terrible outcome that has had for the people of Newcastle. Privatisation in this State has to stop. The Government has to come clean on exactly how much undoing this bad deal will cost the people of New South Wales.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:10):** I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. As most people would know, I have immense respect for the member for Lake Macquarie. He is the best chair of the Public Accounts Committee there has ever been and he is a very hardworking member of Parliament.

**Mr Greg Piper:** It's mutual, mate.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie: I am the best member. This bill, in theory and in practice, should not be before this House. During the first Liberal Government term of 2013, when this dud deal was presented and delivered and impacted directly on the people of New South Wales, I was one of the people, together with my Labor colleagues, who opposed it. Mr Temporary Speaker (Mr Lee Evans), you and your Liberal-Nationals party colleagues supported and delivered it. In fact, it was the member for Heathcote who was critical of us for describing it as a sell-off rather than a lease. It was a sell-off, not a lease!

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: He cannot attack the Chair.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** It is not acceptable for members to attack the Chair. I place the member for Keira on three calls to order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** This whole transaction and the bill that we are examining today are a direct result of the Government's economic and ideological failure and its obsession with privatisation. It has taken place in relation to toll roads, Vales Point Power Station and our ports. The people who suffer are the men and women of our communities, who need infrastructure and services such as hospitals, schools, roads, rail and police. This will directly impact upon them. This afternoon during question time, on a number of occasions it was made very clear that this Government cannot tell the community what the liability is for this latest debacle relating to privatisation. I make no bones about it: A debacle is what this is. It was a disgraceful decision. It was a dud deal from the start. It was a dud deal for the people of the Illawarra, it was a dud deal for the people of the Hunter, it was a dud deal for the people of New South Wales.

It was an asset that should never have been sold off. As a result of that dud deal, as a result of the Government being too smart by half, and as a result of some of the clauses in the deed, we now have a situation



where the government of the day cannot even tell the community what liability they may face going forward. That is a disgraceful situation. I will not be lectured, even once, by Government members about them being so-called economic managers and economic geniuses. They are a joke and a laughing stock. The privatisation ideology and obsession of this Government, which the National Party has weakly allowed to happen, will come home to roost for generations to come. The people of New South Wales will be paying for this failure for generations to come. The people of the Illawarra and the Hunter will pay and New South Wales broadly will pay for this failure. It is about time it gets called out.

I understand why the bill has been brought before us today and I understand why the member for Lake Macquarie and others are agitating and arguing. Let us be clear: The member for Wollongong said earlier that this proposal should not be in place because from the very beginning it was bad for the people of the Illawarra and the Hunter and bad for New South Wales residents. Today in Parliament we made it clear that we want to know what that liability is and what the cost of this privatisation obsession is. Before the end of the debate we would like the Minister to confirm in Parliament that the liability to the State Government will not exceed the money collected from the sale of the Port of Newcastle. If the liability that the State Government is inheriting from this decision is greater than the amount of money that the Port of Newcastle has to pay the people of New South Wales, tell them what they are up for. Disclose it in the Parliament. It is the Government's duty to do that. It stuffed it up the first time and the people of New South Wales have a right to know how much that stuff-up will cost them.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:15):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak in debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. I acknowledge the work of the member for Lake Macquarie. He is an outstanding member whose contribution to the House is acknowledged by everyone in the Parliament. When I was first elected in 2011 the issue of the original privatisation was brought to the House. It came on the back of the former Labor Government, which had engaged in a range of privatisations—waste services, lotteries and the issue around electricity. I acknowledge the position that I believe Labor has now taken consistently of opposing privatisation, which should be welcomed. Today is an example of what can go wrong when governments try to engage in privatisation of this sort in order to maximise the returns to government that lead to long-term strategic and systemic issues for a region in our State.

A well-functioning port is critical. I am the member for Balmain, and obviously there are ports in the electorate I represent. I am a strong supporter of working harbours. My father worked in heavy maintenance on ships his whole life. My mother's father was a dock worker his whole life. A working harbour for me is critical. The restrictions placed on this importance piece of economic infrastructure undermine the capacity of that region to grow and develop and was a significant public policy failure. It was a failure for a range of reasons that members have described, but now it is time to undo that failure. It is important for farmers, who we know have an increased impost when it comes to exporting grain, in particular. The trucks moving the grain have a significant ecological impact, an impact on carbon emissions and an impact on our roads. It is a far superior option to put those bulky goods on ships, as we see in Sydney ports and in my electorate in White Bay with the bulky goods terminal and the silos. Shipping, especially strategic deep water ports, is critical. We need to unleash the opportunities that these ports offer.

It is doubly important in this port, because we want to see this region diversify in the future away from coal. We know that coal has a limited life and a limited future. Our community and our parliaments need to make sure that we have just transition plans for the workers but, importantly, the economic capacity and capabilities to allow for that diversification. The bill assists in that process. Whether it is in manufacturing or a range of different job opportunities, we know that having a container port that is not restricted by these inappropriate limits is important for Newcastle and the region. It makes sense in its environmental outcomes, jobs for the local community and reducing the costs for people who are using the facility. Critically, it means that we can see a clear forward path of investment, to be able to build that piece of infrastructure to make sure it benefits the whole community and we leverage that throughout the region. It is particularly important to unblock these restrictions as there will be benefits not only for Newcastle but also for the entire region. We know that for these important logistics hubs it is not just about 10 kilometres around the area; it has a significant flow-on effect for the whole economy.

By introducing the bill and negotiating it through the House the member for Lake Macquarie has demonstrated exactly what crossbenchers can achieve. I have been able to have a bill passed in this place. The member for Sydney, the member for Lake Macquarie and others have come to the Government with commonsense legislation that perhaps they were not able to move, but we moved it and they were able to support it. That is an example of how powerful crossbench members can be. I acknowledge members from the Government side of the House who said that they took it so seriously they would consider crossing the floor. That is exactly what we need. We need members of Parliament who stand up for their regions and their communities, regardless of the factions and the politics. A democratic system works well when people represent their communities with the passion and the vigour that is required that reflects the truly democratic heart of the Parliament. It is not about parties; it is

about representing our constituents. I commend the bill to the House. I acknowledge all those people, including the hardworking staff members, who helped make the bill a reality. I look forward to the time when this port prospers and grows with the support of the whole region.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:20):** I speak in favour of the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. The Shellharbour community has grown and thrived on port activity along our coastline, including Port Kembla. The Illawarra would not be the amazing community that it is today without the port industry and its workers, who have toiled for over a century to ensure that industries in the Illawarra have access to critical materials and supplies. Port assets are an integral part of the New South Wales economy. Letting them be privatised is like a time bomb and this bomb has exploded in the face of the Liberal-Nationals Government. It is a shame that our port assets have been treated just like another cash cow on behalf of a wasteful government. Twelve long years of this Government have resulted in the privatisation of everything that is not nailed down. The Government wanted to make a quick buck from this port privatisation, but it has failed miserably. The deals that it struck when privatising these ports have been an absolute disaster.

The residents of New South Wales have paid enough for the mismanagement by this Government. I would like the Minister to confirm in the Parliament tonight that the liability to the State Government will not exceed the money collected from the Port of Newcastle. If the liability that the State Government is inheriting from this decision is greater than the amount of money that the Port of Newcastle has to pay the New South Wales Government, the Minister must disclose that in Parliament. Privatisation does not work, especially when regional assets, such as ports, are sold off by a government that wastes the money on half-baked projects in Sydney, or that tries to fix the budget because it wasted \$3.9 billion due to its mismanagement of icare. After rampant privatisation for 12 years under this Liberal-Nationals Government, New South Wales has the weakest economy of any State in Australia.

We now have this mess—a massive bungle, fully supported at the time by the member for Kiama. It is a shame that he cannot be in Parliament this week to have a say on this matter. I am sure he would be defending his former Liberal colleagues on this issue. But no, the member for Kiama, who loves privatisation, is back in his electorate making sure that council issues such as potholes are looked after. He would privatise potholes and sell licences to fish in them if he could. The member for Kiama loves privatisation and so does this Liberal-Nationals Government. The Government cannot wait to have the member for Kiama back in the House voting with it, selling off everything it can. Sydney Water must be looking very tempting right now. I bet it can't wait to privatise that.

But the residents of Kiama need not worry for much longer; they will soon have the opportunity to elect a fantastic Labor representative in Katelin McNerney, who will come into this House and vote to end privatisation. The Government has sold off billions of dollars' worth of public assets. If it is given another four years, it will keep selling off everything that is not nailed down. Then it will take a claw hammer to those assets that are nailed down. If they are given 16 years in government, nothing will be left. The privatisation of the port assets by this tired 12-year-old Government is why we are in this current mess. We cannot afford to give them another four years. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for bringing the bill to the House and for exposing the incompetence of this tired Government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I call the member for Oatley to order for the third time.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:24):** I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for bringing the bill to the House. The bill has been a long time coming, and I am pleased we are finally debating it. Over the past 30 minutes, members have talked about how the bill impacts regional areas and port areas in their electorates. That includes the electorates of Newcastle, Charlestown, Wollongong, Port Stephens, Maitland, Shellharbour and even Balmain. The privatisation of the Port of Newcastle has impacted so much of this State. We have not heard from a representative from western Sydney.

I will talk about how the privatisation of the Port of Newcastle has had a detrimental effect on the electorate of Prospect. As members may know, the Prospect electorate has the largest manufacturing and logistics base in the Southern Hemisphere, providing tens of thousands of jobs. The economy in New South Wales is one of the biggest in the world; I think it is ranked twenty-second. It is a large economy. Manufacturers in Prospect make tens of millions of dollars of products but when it comes to exporting those products to the world marketplace, time and again, company after company has to send them to Queensland and Victoria for export. When they cannot go to the Port of Botany because it is too overcrowded, they have to go interstate—when Newcastle is not that far away. They cannot go to Newcastle because of the caps on freight.

What I find most disturbing, though, is that the Minister involved in the privatisation grew up in Newcastle. He sits in the Chamber heckling. He knows better than that. I would have thought that instead of gloating about a failed privatisation, he would step up and say, "Yes, I want to do what's best for the Newcastle community, which

I grew up in." He will not do that, but Labor will. The impact of the bill is obvious because no-one from the Government is contributing to the second reading debate. The Minister should confirm that the liability of the State Government will not exceed the money collected from the Port of Newcastle. If the liability of the State Government, inherited from the Government's decision, is greater than the amount of the money that the Port of Newcastle has to pay to the New South Wales Government, then the Minister must disclose that to the Parliament.

The privatisation of the Port of Newcastle failed and has cost the State hundreds of millions of dollars in export earnings. It needs to change and needs to be fixed. The privatisation was a short-term fix. The Government got its cash injection, which it wasted and which put us into even more debt. I am concerned for the families in my community because the cost-of-living pressures are so high. Because of water rates and electricity prices, families continue to struggle and will struggle more and more as inflation rises. The State debt is so high that I wonder when the Government will start privatising the rest of its kitty, like Sydney Water, Hunter Water, WaterNSW, Endeavour Energy, Ausgrid, Essential Energy, the city harbour crossings, icare, the Forestry Corporation of NSW and Landcom. The privatisation will go on and on. That is the future of New South Wales if this Government wins in March 2023. Privatisation will not stop; it will continue. At the last election, the then Premier lied and said there would be no more privatisations. There were more and there will continue to be more and more.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Name them.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** I have already named them.

**Mr David Harris:** WestConnex.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** WestConnex. That is another one. The Government has to stop purging western Sydney. It has to stop the privatisations.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:30):** I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. Dominic Perrottet has created an unfair monopoly that is penalising the people of Newcastle, the people of the Central Coast, anyone who operates a farm in northern New South Wales and generations to come. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for bringing the bill to the House. It is time something was done. The bill reflects Dominic Perrottet's absolute commitment to privatisation, which is a short-term grab for money that creates a long-term pain for our communities. Hopefully that will change when the bill is passed.

Dominic Perrottet's privatisation does not get the best deal for the people of New South Wales, for taxpayers or even for manufacturers in the electorate of Prospect. Privatisation is impacting exporters and importers across New South Wales. The Government's record on privatisation is absolutely appalling. The people from the Port of Newcastle in the public gallery know about Eraring Power Station. The Government sold that in 2013 for \$1 and has been forced to keep it open, paying \$239 million more of taxpayers' money. That is \$50 per person. That is a carton of beer for each person in New South Wales to keep the State's electricity going. The Government has wasted taxpayers' money with privatisation. The Government then sold off the toll roads.

I will talk about an exporter in my electorate who is paying the price, not just because of the port but also because of the toll roads. The toll roads are a huge monopoly that costs all commuters hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to get to work. The Premier is out of touch. He is short-term Dom bringing long-term pain to our community. When the Government sold off the Port of Newcastle, it added a condition limiting the number of containers the port could ship, which slowed down the growth and drained the economic potential. I wonder what is in place for the people of the Port of Newcastle when the coal disappears, under the short-term vision of this Premier.

I spoke to Kane Dyson of Dyson Logistics, which is a multi-award winning family business on the Central Coast specialising in customs clearance and logistics. It has a fantastic team of employees, who I think are watching this debate live. They know that the privatisation of the Port of Newcastle is hurting their business; it is anti-competitive. Geographically the Central Coast is a lot closer to Newcastle than it is to Sydney and especially with the congestion across Sydney to Port Botany. Every time people on the Central Coast charge for freight, they have to charge a hundred bucks extra to get through the toll roads. There is a massive time cost as well. Rather than getting items on the same day from Sydney, people on the Central Coast have to wait an extra day. That would not be the case if the Port of Newcastle opened up.

Hopefully the bill will improve the turnaround. Kane says that there will be lots of efficiencies and that from his point of view it would be a massive boost for all businesses on the Central Coast that are exporting and importing. I thank Kane. In question time, the Premier would not release the long-term cost to taxpayers to undo the privatisation. That is an absolute disgrace. The Premier owes that to the people of New South Wales. It is

taxpayers' money. Once again, short-term Dom has a long-term cost for the people of New South Wales. How far into the future will this price be paid by taxpayers? Six years, eight years, 10 years?

The Port of Newcastle has to be the worst privatisation deal of all of them, and yet the Government keeps going with privatisation plans. What is next? As the member for Prospect said, will it be Integral Energy, the rest of Ausgrid or Hunter Water? Will it be the radiology departments of our hospitals? Who knows what the Government is going to flog off next. Will it flog off our trains? The people of New South Wales are paying the cost of toll road privatisation, the privatisation of Vales Point Power Station and the privatisation of our ports. The people of the Central Coast should watch out. This Liberal Government has forced the amalgamation of our councils and it is now talking about privatising the water and flogging that off as well. The cost of the port privatisation program by short-term Dom to New South Wales taxpayers is an absolute disgrace and it must be stopped.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:35):** I make a contribution to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. The privatisation of government-owned monopoly assets does not work. It never has worked and it never will work. The privatisation and sale of the Port of Newcastle, Port Botany and Port Kembla, and the arrangements entered into by the New South Wales Government, are the worst examples in Australia of a failed anti-competitive privatisation agenda. That is not just my opinion; it is also the opinion of Rod Sims, the chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC]. On 27 July 2016 he called out governments for blatantly structuring asset sales to maximise profits at the expense of consumers and Australian businesses. He said that he had been a strong advocate of privatisation for 30 years because he believed it enhanced economic efficiency, but he now believes that people in the street who oppose privatisation had it right because, based upon the recent port sales in New South Wales, it raises prices.

He also said that he was at the point of opposing privatisation because State governments are becoming increasingly blatant about structuring sales to maximise proceeds at the expense of competition. That was an absolute indictment by the independent chairman of the ACCC. He is not alone. Shortly after I entered Parliament, on 17 October 2012 when the Ports Assets (Authorised Transactions) Bill 2012 was being rushed through, I warned the House. Before I contributed to debate, at 5.21 p.m. the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, the then member for Castle Hill, accused Labor of a scare campaign. He said:

... the Government's decision to enter into a long-term lease of Port Botany and Port Kembla will provide immediate income to invest in the infrastructure ...

I warned the House 10 years and one month ago that the policy would fail. That bill was one of the worst examples of privatisation, the cost of which cannot be explained to the House by the person who 10 years ago said that Labor was running a scare campaign. It could cost billions because it will also tie up deeds that were entered into for Port Botany. Unfortunately, that cost will have to be borne by the New South Wales Government because, by any independent measure, it is a failed port privatisation. On 17 October 2012 I also warned the House that the Government would lose the \$200 million a year in revenue that it received from Port Botany. What is the Government now short of? It is revenue.

To maximise the return for Port Botany, the Government removed the cap on the number of containers that could go through the port to try to inflate the price. As a result, the port cannot now cope with the volume of containers and vehicles moving through it. The Government committed \$10 billion for the WestConnex so that containers could be moved from the M4 to Port Botany, but \$23 billion later and the road does not go within eight kilometres of Port Botany. What did the new owners of Port Botany and Port Kembla do with their monopoly assets? They increased the prices of imports and exports in and out of Australia. The users of the port, who had invested in infrastructure in that area, were caught by a monopoly.

I pleaded with the then Treasurer to at least exercise some control over the prices through the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to protect port users and, ultimately, consumers. But that was not considered because the Government wanted to maximise the privatisation return in what is, according to the independent organisation that is supposed to judge these things, the worst example of an anti-competitive arrangement in the history of this nation. It could leave the State liable for billions, and the Premier has no idea how much.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:40):** I contribute to debate on the Port of Newcastle (Extinguishment of Liability) Bill 2022. One of the truisms in the debate—and there have been many un-truisms today—came from the member for Upper Hunter when he said that there are no free lunches and that someone has to pay for transactions like this. That is very true. Unfortunately, when it comes to the privatisation of New South Wales ports, as my colleague the member for Heffron just touched on, the consumers of New South Wales have paid for this free lunch, and they will continue to pay for the next 99 years. Anyone who buys anything that is imported through a port in New South Wales will pay more because of the 99 years of privatisation.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is not 99 years.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The privatisation is for 99 years. During the second reading debate on the Ports Assets (Authorised Transactions) Amendment Act 2013 on 19 June 2013, regarding the Port of Newcastle, I said:

I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Ports Assets (Authorised Transactions) Amendment Bill 2013. Neither the Opposition nor the people of New South Wales were given notice of this bill before it was introduced without warning in the House today. Members of the Opposition and crossbench members have had possession of this bill for about 1½ hours and have had little or no opportunity to read its contents.

I am sure the member for Lake Macquarie remembers that day well. I continued:

There is no salient reason for this bill to be rushed into this House today without any warning.

...

I also find it intriguing, conjoined with the haste with which this legislation is proceeding today, that a scoping study—which cost a bomb—was undertaken by Morgan Stanley for the sale of Port Botany and Port Kembla. That study has not been released; it remains a big, fat secret. But there is to be no scoping study for this sale.

...

What will the potential impacts of this transaction be on the international and national shipping of coal from this terminal? What will the impacts be for transport costs to the New South Wales and Australian economies? What will the impacts be on the environment? Where is the discussion paper? There is none. What will the potential impact be on traffic congestion in the future in respect of this port? Did the Government seek any views in respect of competition issues? Did the Government seek any views in respect of transport issues or congestion issues? The answer to all those questions is no.

...

The Port of Newcastle is also a good revenue-producing asset but it will not be for long—

not for the people of New South Wales, anyway—

It has gross revenue of \$92-odd million every year with a very low debt of about \$80 million. That revenue will be converted into concrete and steel liabilities around Newcastle. This will not be a good economic outcome for New South Wales. At the time, we did not know that the haste was all related to the secrecy of clauses inherent in the port commitment deeds—no free lunches indeed. The free lunches have all been dished out and New South Wales consumers will be the ones who pay. This is what happens when governments behave badly. Government members of the day, whom members opposite have been happy to approve of in reinventing the history of that time, voted for those transactions to go through with secret provisions in the contracts. That only came out after much hard work. The Government behaved badly. It inserted a clause into the contract that sought effectively to restrain the ability of the State Government to plan strategically for growth on the east coast of Australia. That is what it did.

People will say, "Oh, no, but the Port of Newcastle could have engaged and still could engage today in the construction and operation of a container facility." The clause was meant to penalise them and dissuade them from doing it. Why? To fatten Port Botany and Port Kembla land for sale. That clause was reprehensible. When governments behave badly, they induce other people to behave badly and accept clauses like this. This clause should not have been accepted. Bidders cannot be blamed for this. This is all on Mike Baird, Gladys Berejiklian and Dominic Perrottet. This is what happens when governments behave badly. Today is an effort by this place—and it was always coming back here and might still again in five, 10, 15 or 20 years' time—to clean up this Government's mess.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:45):** In reply: I note that the crossbench has brought all members together again, which is fantastic. We are in fierce agreement about the direction that container logistics in New South Wales should take in the future.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Lake Macquarie will be heard in silence. He is speaking in reply to the debate. He does not need help.

**Mr GREG PIPER:** After listening to the contribution of members, most would agree that the sale of the ports in 2013 and 2014 was a mistake. It was a mistake then and it is a mistake now. This is an opportunity to make it right. A lot of the debate has been about the owners of the ports. I recognise members of the Port of Newcastle in the Chamber today—chief executive officer Craig Carmody, Tanya McDonald, Lucas Coleman, Steve Crowe and others. With all due respect, I am not particularly interested in them. Everybody would understand that. It is not about the Port of Newcastle; it is about the people of New South Wales and the opportunities that can be brought to them and to our farmers, who are also in the Chamber today. I welcome NSW Farmers to the gallery to listen to the debate.

I acknowledge the farmers, the large agribusinesses that work off the farm production and also the manufacturers. We are here to talk about them today. There have certainly been some interesting contributions.

I was not sure that my friends in the Opposition would support the bill, but I thank the member for Summer Hill for sticking in there. I acknowledge the members representing the electorates of Ku-ring-gai, Summer Hill, Northern Tablelands, Sydney, Upper Hunter, Swansea, Maitland, Wyong, Port Stephens, Wallsend, Newcastle, Wollongong, Charlestown, Keira, Balmain, Shellharbour, Prospect, Heffron and Maroubra. All members spoke passionately about this matter, as they should.

There is concern about the unknown cost to the taxpayers of New South Wales. It is my understanding that in 2014 the Port of Newcastle paid a lesser amount because of the restriction on it, as opposed to the premium that NSW Ports paid for the restriction that was put on the Port of Newcastle. The proposed process in the Government's amendments will go a long way towards addressing the concerns of the Opposition. An independent arbiter—an expert—will come in to weigh and measure the differential that was there. That will be paid to the New South Wales Government. Where that will be parked and how that will be dealt with is up to the Government. We cannot discount and dismiss as insignificant the \$6.8 billion that was taken from the ports in the sale of those assets and has been applied to a range of goods for the people of New South Wales over that time.

While debating the ports and the opportunities for them, a churn of business activity will be generated. The member for Northern Tablelands spoke about the efficiencies that would be generated for people in his electorate. The member for Upper Hunter spoke about broadacre farmers who will have much more efficient and cheap access to an export market for their produce. Manufacturers will also come to the area because they can rely on good access to the best deepwater port on the eastern seaboard of Australia. There are many good reasons to unpick this. I believe that the Government will manage this correctly. I thank the Treasurer, Matt Kean, who cannot be in this place today. The Treasurer and his deputy chief of staff worked well with us to reach a solution. I believe that the bill in its current form is worthy of the support of the House. I thank the Government for the amendments. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alister Henskens.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses. The question is that clauses 1 to 4 be agreed to.

**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) (16:50):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-178I in globo:

**No. 1 Extinguishment of liability by payment of compensation to State**

Page 2, clause 4, lines 8–20. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

#### **4 Definitions**

In this Act—

**appointed person** means the person appointed by the Treasurer under section 6 to determine the relevant compensation under section 7.

**Deed** means the "Port Commitment Deed" entered into by the State on or about 30 May 2014 relating to the leasing of the Port of Newcastle, as in force from time to time.

**Port operator** means the operator of the Port of Newcastle who is required to pay an amount to the State under the reimbursement provision of the Deed.

**reimbursement provision**, of the Deed, means a provision of the Deed relating to the requirement for the operator of the Port of Newcastle, however described in the Deed, to pay an amount to the State following receipt of a notice that the State is required to pay an amount to an operating entity associated with another port.

**relevant compensation**—see section 7(1).

**Note**— The Interpretation Act 1987 contains definitions and other provisions that affect the interpretation and application of this Act.

#### **5 Port operator may request determination of compensation**

- (1) The Port operator may, by written notice to the Treasurer and in accordance with the regulations, request a determination of the relevant compensation under section 7.
- (2) The Port operator may make a single request under subsection (1) only.

#### **6 Appointment of person to determine compensation**

- (1) As soon as practicable after receiving a request under section 5(1), the Treasurer must appoint a person to determine the relevant compensation under section 7.
- (2) The Treasurer must appoint a person who has—
  - (a) appropriate qualifications or experience to determine the relevant compensation, and
  - (b) no pecuniary or other interest that appears to raise a conflict with the proper exercise of the appointed person's functions under this Act.

## 7 Determination of compensation

- (1) The appointed person must determine the amount by which the financial value of the right to operate and lease the assets of the Port of Newcastle for 98 years would have been reduced, in the opinion of a reasonable person at the time the Deed was entered into, because of the inclusion of the reimbursement provision in the Deed (the *relevant compensation*).
- (2) The appointed person must determine the relevant compensation under subsection (1) within—
  - (a) 6 months of being appointed, or
  - (b) another period prescribed by the regulations.
- (3) In determining the relevant compensation, the appointed person may—
  - (a) obtain and consider information from the Port operator and the State, and
  - (b) obtain and consider information from other persons, including legal or financial advice, and
  - (c) consider any other matters the appointed person considers relevant.

## 8 Extinguishment of liability by payment of compensation to State

- (1) From the date on which the Port operator pays the relevant compensation, adjusted for inflation under subsection (2), to the State, the reimbursement provision of the Deed has no legal effect.
- (2) The amount of relevant compensation must be adjusted for changes in the Consumer Price Index for the period between the date on which the Deed was entered into and the date on which the Port operator pays the amount.
- (3) The regulations may provide for the calculation of the amount payable by the Port operator to the State under this section.
- (4) Subsection (1) prevails to the extent of an inconsistency with another Act or law.

## 9 Regulations

- (1) The Governor may make regulations about the following—
  - (a) matters this Act expressly requires to be prescribed by regulations,
  - (b) matters this Act expressly permits to be prescribed by regulations,
  - (c) other matters, but only to the extent that making regulations about the matters is necessary or convenient to give effect to this Act.
- (2) The regulations must not be inconsistent with this Act.
- (3) Regulations may be made about the following matters—
  - (a) the appointment of the person under section 6, including the following—
    - (i) the required qualifications and experience,
    - (ii) the terms and conditions of the appointment,
    - (iii) remuneration,
  - (b) the functions of the appointed person,
  - (c) the matters the appointed person must consider in determining the relevant compensation,
  - (d) the use and disclosure of information obtained by the appointed person, including information obtained from the State and the Port operator,
  - (e) dispute resolution procedures for disputes between the Port operator and the State, including disputes in relation to the amount payable by the Port operator under section 8.

### No. 2 Long title

Omit "extinguish certain liabilities of the operator of the Port of Newcastle relating to an agreement between the State and the operator of Port Botany and Port Kembla". Insert instead "establish a process for the extinguishment of certain liabilities of the operator of the Port of Newcastle in relation to the Port of Newcastle Port Commitment Deed".

I explained the amendments in my contribution to the second reading debate. I will not add to those observations. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:51):** I briefly contribute to debate on the Government amendments, as moved by the member for Ku-ring-gai, and commend them to the House. I have been in dialogue with the Opposition, in particular, the member for Summer Hill, Jo Haylen, who took the lead on this. It was a fruitful and genuine attempt to resolve the issue before us. The Government, with its access to Treasury and its resources for legal advice, has crafted amendments that are workable for the people of New South Wales and, most importantly, for the Port of Newcastle. The amendments will give it confidence that it can go ahead and trigger the process that will lead to investment in the area.

I thank the member for Summer Hill, the Treasurer and the member for Ku-ring-gai. I thank everybody who has participated. It may not be perfect to everybody and some people might have some concerns, but I am satisfied that this will land New South Wales in a much better place. The economic opportunity that will come out of this is not just for the Port of Newcastle; it is for the manufacturers, farmers and agribusinesses right across the State. I commend the Government's amendments to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:53):** Labor supports the Government amendments fundamentally because they are an admission by the Government that its port privatisation policy has comprehensively failed and, indeed, that its wider policy of privatisation has failed. The bill finally begins to clean up the anti-competitive deal that was done by the Liberals that gave Port Botany and Port Kembla a virtual monopoly over the New South Wales container trade. The passage of the bill in this place, and then hopefully subsequently in the other place, will allow the people of New South Wales to deal with the consequences of the Government's bad deal and failed privatisation policies. Members across the Parliament have spoken today about how the deal held back the development of the Port of Newcastle. It held back the wider economic diversification of the Hunter as a whole, and it subsequently held back our State.

The Government cannot say that it was not warned about the consequences of that at the time. It was a bad deal in 2013, it was a bad deal in 2014 and it is still a bad deal now. The amendments moved by the Government today and the bill as a whole mean that we can start to deal with those consequences. The Government still has some serious questions to answer, though, about the consequences of what the people of New South Wales will end up having to pay. We asked the Premier today in question time, and he did not answer. In fact, we asked him six times about the full amount of compensation that the New South Wales taxpayers would have to pay. We asked him, "What is the full amount that New South Wales taxpayers are now going to be liable for over the remaining 40 years of the port commitment deeds?" He refused to answer six times.

The people of New South Wales are faced with two possibilities: Either the Premier does not know the full cost to the public of his failed privatisation policies, or he is simply not telling the truth. It is truly extraordinary. I call on the Government right now to come clean and tell the people of New South Wales the final total sum that they will have to pay for its bad deal. What is the true cost of privatisation? It is time to end 12 long years of privatisations that the people of New South Wales have had to pay for, that the people of the Hunter have had to pay for, that the people of Newcastle have had to pay for and that the public will continue to pay for, thanks to this bad port privatisation deal that was stitched up by this tired Government. From today we move on, but the Government still has serious questions to answer.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-178I be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 to 4 as amended and the long title of the bill as amended be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr GREG PIPER:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**



**CHILDCARE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FUND BILL 2022**  
**CONFISCATION OF PROCEEDS OF CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**  
**CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (APPOINTMENT OF LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR AND**  
**ADMINISTRATOR) BILL 2022**  
**ELECTORAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**  
**ELECTORAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2022**  
**STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2022**

**Assent**

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

**ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING ENFORCEMENT BILL 2022**

**Consideration in Detail**

**Consideration of Legislative Council amendments.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 20 October 2022*

**No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2022-180]**

Page 6, clause 16(6), definition of *maximum amount*, paragraph (a)(i), line 15. Omit "\$1,650,000". Insert instead "\$10,000,000".

**No. 2 GRNS No. 2 [c2022-180]**

Page 6, clause 16(6), definition of *maximum amount*, paragraph (a)(ii), line 16. Omit "\$44,000". Insert instead "\$250,000".

**No. 3 GRNS No. 3 [c2022-180]**

Page 6, clause 16(6), definition of *maximum amount*, paragraph (b), line 19. Omit "\$110,000". Insert instead "\$250,000".

**No. 4 GRNS No. 4 [c2022-180]**

Page 6, clause 16(6), definition of *maximum amount*, paragraph (c), line 21. Omit "\$1,650,000". Insert instead "\$10,000,000".

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**Consideration in Detail**

**Consideration of Legislative Council amendment.**

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 20 October 2022*

**No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2022-181A]**

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 27—

**1.2A Home Building Act 1989 No 147**

**Section 33A Disqualification from holding authorities**

Insert after section 33A(l) —

- (1A) The Secretary may determine that an individual, or a body corporate or partnership with which the individual is associated, is disqualified from holding an authority, other than an owner-builder permit, if satisfied that the individual has previously engaged in conduct that led to a disqualification of another person.
- (1B) The Secretary may disqualify a person from holding an authority under subsection (1A) permanently or for a specified period of time.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TREASURY AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of Legislation Council amendments.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 20 October 2022*

**No. 1 GOVT No. 1 [c2022-183B]**

Page 7, proposed section 24D. Insert after line 32—

- (1A) The published policy guidelines must be tabled in each House of Parliament as soon as practicable after publication.

**No. 2 GOVT No. 2 [c2022-183B]**

Page 9, proposed section 241. Insert after line 17—

- (6) The annual report must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 6 months after the end of the financial year to which it relates.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.****CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (FAMILY IS CULTURE) BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:00):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022. The bill's implementation of recommendation 26 of the Family is Culture report recognises that keeping children safe and keeping families together safely is the ultimate goal of our child protection system. When a care application is made to the Children's Court, the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice will be required to demonstrate that active efforts have been undertaken to assist the family, and to prevent the child or young person from entering out-of-home care. For a child who has already been removed, the secretary will be required to demonstrate that active efforts have been undertaken to restore the child or young person to their parents or, if that is not possible, to family, kin or community. Importantly, the active efforts must always be meaningful attempts to safeguard and promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child.

The new provisions will not apply where a child is at risk of serious harm and the department has made an emergency care and protection application; however, in the vast majority of cases, these changes will require more rigorous attempts to work with families to keep them safely together. Of course, these additional requirements on the department and on caseworkers will require additional resources if they are to be successful. That is fundamental. It is critical that caseworkers receive the resources they need to implement these reforms, and I will return to this issue in shortly. The bill before the House also inserts into the Act the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle developed by SNAICC, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care. The five elements to be inserted into the Act include prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection.

As a result of this bill, any decision relating to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander made under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act must be made in reference to these child placement principles. Embedding these elements in the Act will strengthen the decision-making processes within the department and ensure that connections to Aboriginal identity, culture, heritage, family, community and country are maintained. A number of other improvements are contained in the bill regarding cultural plans, permanency planning, rules of evidence procedures in court proceedings and NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal review pathways. While the bill is not perfect, it does implement some important changes. In many ways, for the sake of the children, we cannot afford to wait, and we cannot afford to let the perfect be the enemy of the good. However, I do have a fundamental concern—which I have raised directly with the Minister—and that is the issue of resourcing.

We cannot continue to expect more and more from already overstretched caseworkers without providing them with the support and resources they need to do the job properly. If these changes become a simple box-ticking exercise when making an application to the court, children will not benefit from this bill. That would be a tragedy, given the intentions of the bill. These changes will work only if the Government is serious about implementing

active efforts and building an environment where active efforts lead to better outcomes. Often in cases where active efforts may not have been undertaken, it is not because the caseworker is lazy; it is because many communities have no services to engage. There is no social housing available, so families remain homeless and their children are taken. There are no mental health services, so parents continue their battle alone and their children can be removed. There is very little access to prenatal support or supported playgroups, leaving young vulnerable parents to possibly fail and have their children taken. There are very few drug and alcohol services, so addictions go untreated and children are taken.

Active efforts are entirely reliant on services and supports being available. In too many instances under this Government they are not available, particularly in rural and regional communities. In my own electorate I am aware of young single parents being given no-fault evictions, finding themselves homeless and forced to live in their cars due to a lack of other options. Too many people across the State find themselves in circumstances that could see children enter the child protection system just by virtue of there not being social housing. Under the bill, the department will now be required to work with homelessness services and public housing to help that parent find suitable accommodation rather than simply removing the child. Many people would assume this already happens, but sometimes it does not. But if there is no social, emergency or other housing available, the end result will be the same: The child will be removed.

This bill will potentially change that dynamic, but only if the Government changes its priorities and makes the investments that are needed in those on-the-ground services that make our communities stronger and help vulnerable families stay together and children stay safer. That is the key to unlocking the ambition and aspiration of Professor Megan Davis' Family is Culture report. Members cannot view this bill as an island, a bill that is going to save a system. There has to be so much more built around families and communities to make sure those services and supports are in place for vulnerable families and disadvantaged children. This will ensure access to those services so the active efforts of this bill can actually be given effect.

The bill before members today has already passed the upper House and includes amendments moved by both Labor and The Greens. Having heard the concerns of stakeholders about the lack of enforceability of active efforts in the bill as first proposed by the Government, Labor successfully moved an amendment in the upper House, which was supported by the Government. Labor's amendment significantly strengthened the requirement for active efforts to be demonstrated to the court, which will improve the practical outcomes of this bill. Under the Government's original bill, if the court was not satisfied that active efforts had been taken to prevent the removal of a child, the court was limited in the actions it could take. Under the Government's original bill, the court was only empowered to adjourn a case for further consideration if the active efforts test was not satisfied.

Labor's amendment, proposed by stakeholders and supported by the Government, will strengthen the expectation on the department to ensure active efforts are taken prior to an application being made to the Children's Court. The court will be empowered to dismiss or discharge a case if it is not established that active efforts were undertaken, while guaranteeing the primacy of the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child, as is always the case. This will serve as a significant incentive for the department to ensure the active efforts test is met prior to an application being made to the court. In practice, it should lead to more support for families and, hopefully, fewer children being removed from their families.

After years of worsening child protection outcomes, this bill is a welcome change, but there is so much more to be done. Under this Government there have been reports on top of reports and reviews on top of reviews, with hundreds of recommendations coming out of those reports and reviews. But, fundamentally, nothing has changed. The dial has not moved and the system is still broken. For too long there has not been the interest, inclination or political will of the current Liberal-Nationals Government to tackle these problems. No-one can say that vulnerable children are safer after 12 long years of this Government. No-one can say that families or their communities are stronger after 12 long years of this Government. The trajectory of the child protection and out-of-home care system in New South Wales paints a picture of this Government that cannot be denied. Surely it is an uncomfortable reality for this Government, but it is the truth.

Labor feels these issues deeply. As local MPs, we see them daily. We recognise that a whole-of-government approach is required to start rebuilding and overhauling the child protection system in New South Wales. Federally, the new Albanese Labor Government has publicly committed to delivering the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, including a Voice to Parliament so Aboriginal people finally have a say in the laws that affect them. Here in this State, if NSW Labor is fortunate enough to form government, we will begin the process of treaty to empower our First Nations communities and edge ever closer towards reconciliation. These issues are not removed from the bill that members are debating today. In fact, they will be complementary and they will be necessary. They will strengthen our communities, support families and empower all children to live safe and fulfilling lives where no-one is denied the opportunities to succeed.

Should Labor be fortunate enough to form government in March next year, we commit to working closely, genuinely and collaboratively with all stakeholders to improve the lives of First Nations children, families and communities across the State and to keep children safe and connected to culture, community and families. This bill is a small step forward, but there is so much more to do. This bill provides for a statutory review in 12 months' time to assess whether or not these changes work. There is a lot of hope among members on this side of the House that Labor will be the party to ensure the contents of this bill are both given effect and taken further. The bill is a small step forward and for that reason Labor supports it, but my colleagues and I commit to doing so much more.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:11):** I contribute to debate on the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022. Madam Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge your deep commitment to this area, your work as former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the substantial changes you made in your time in that role. I also endorse the words of the shadow Minister, the member for Port Stephens, and acknowledge her commitment to this issue. This issue was front of mind over my seven years as shadow Aboriginal affairs Minister. Any member of this place would find the statistics quite sobering.

As stated by the shadow Minister in her contribution—and I am sure the Minister, who is present in the Chamber, would acknowledge this as well—the bill is the beginning of what needs to be done. Certainly it is not the end. Members recognise there is no silver bullet to this issue. It is a very complex area. It is about families. It is about drugs and alcohol. It is about gambling. It is about health. It is about education. It crosses every area and impacts on young people, which I saw particularly as a primary school principal. I worked with families who were going through very difficult times and were unfortunately having a lot of interaction with what was then the Department of Community Services, or DOCS.

The most important thing members must recognise is that this Parliament passed historic legislation to support and pay reparations to the Stolen Generations. Many Aboriginal people liken the current situation to being another Stolen Generation. Whether members agree with that language or not does not matter; the statistics speak for themselves. In 2019 when the Family is Culture report was handed down, some 40 per cent of children in out-of-home care were Aboriginal children. In 2020 that rose to 41.4 per cent and in 2021 that became 43 per cent. At a time when we should be trying to close the gap and do better, more children than ever are being removed from their homes. Despite only making up 5 per cent of the children in the State, Indigenous children are 12 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous kids. That sends us a very powerful message, which is why we were pleased to see an emphasis in this bill on active effort. In many of the cases that were brought to us, including to me as the shadow Minister, there was not enough active effort to place children in a kinship model and keep them connected to culture. That is not a criticism of the workers involved, but too often, for a range of reasons, children were placed into areas that did not particularly meet their needs.

Like the shadow Minister for Health, I also acknowledge the Hon. Brad Hazzard, who, in 2016, commissioned the independent review. Between July 2015 and 30 July 2016 some 1,153 Aboriginal children and young people entered out-of-home care, which was seen as a crisis. Today those numbers are very similar and, in some cases, may have even grown. Professor Megan Davis' report included 126 recommendations for structural change to the child protection system—23 of which, as the shadow Minister said, were legislative—and over 3,000 recommendations about specific children and young people organisations, which is significant number. The effect of that report was mind blowing.

It is probably relevant that in the final hours of the last Parliament in 2019 in this place we argued over legislation that reduced the amount of time required before children could move to the adoption stage. We also argued that for Aboriginal families, particularly those in regional and remote New South Wales, the time limit being put forward in legislation was not sufficient for people to get assistance for drug and alcohol problems. Quite often it would have meant that Aboriginal children would have been moved to adoption, which would have been a real tragedy. The Government has acknowledged that, because some services do not exist, more time needs to be put in place to make sure that young people and their families have at least the potential to be reunited.

I am a member of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services, which held an inquiry into prenatal care in New South Wales. One of the most disturbing parts of that inquiry was that many young Aboriginal pregnant women were not accessing services because of what was colloquially known as the "black book". The fear was that if a person had had a child removed previously, their new child would be removed as soon as they were born if they engaged with medical services. That meant Aboriginal women were not seeking proper help, which goes to show the depth of this issue.

As the member for Port Stephens said, we welcome the bill as a first step. We are happy that, after Professor Davis's report was released in 2019, legislation has finally been introduced by the Government. I also acknowledge Mr David Shoebridge, who is now in the Federal Parliament, for introducing his bill, which may have put some pressure on the Government to bring forward its strategy to introduce this legislation. As we have just seen with the previous bill on the Newcastle port, sometimes the crossbench members can assist in accelerating the move

of some of these issues to the top of the pile. We supported Mr David Shoebridge's legislation. Today we are debating a different bill, the Government's bill, which the Minister subsequently introduced. A review after 12 months is important, and that issue has to be revisited over and over.

I acknowledge the words of the member for Port Stephens, who said that dealing with human beings is the most expensive industry and resourcing will always be a challenge for governments. Having spent many years dealing with young people and their complexities, I know that there are no cheap solutions. But we can put in place a framework that is supportive of families and that assists them to stay together if they are able—and I emphasise that—to repair their lives. I also acknowledge, and say clearly, that the safety of young people must always be the priority. Where those lives cannot be repaired sufficiently to ensure the safety of those young people, we have a responsibility to make sure that they are located into a safe family. I look forward to moving forward in the future Parliament to extend this and grow the services that support young Aboriginal people in our community. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:21):** The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022 is an important step in removing biases in our child protection system and providing support to families to stop the appalling number of First Nations children and young people removed from their families, their communities and their culture. We look back on the time not too long ago when governments sanctioned the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, placing them in institutional care, as very dark days. Those children were mistreated and grew up without the love and support of parents, kin and Elders, or other important connections to country.

Unfortunately, those days are not behind us. We have a modern crisis in First Nations child removal that is creating a new Stolen Generation. Close to 7,000 First Nations children and young people are in care in this State. Aboriginal children are 16 times more likely to be taken from their families than non-Indigenous children. Some of the people losing children were part of the Stolen Generation and have to endure that trauma again with lifelong impacts on their children. We cannot stand by and continue to let their families be torn apart and create a new generation of First Nations children raised in State care without family love or cultural support. No-one benefits, especially the children going into care. There is growing evidence that out-of-home care is linked to poorer outcomes for children. Children placed in care are more likely to end up in the justice system, disrupting their education. The flow-on effects include a greater likelihood of unemployment, poverty, substance abuse and contact with the justice system as adults. Child removal is a major factor in the cycle of disadvantage that disproportionately affects First Nations people. We will not close the gap unless we slow the rate of removal of First Nations children from family and country.

The 2019 Family is Culture review report delivered by First Nations academic Professor Megan Davis and commissioned by the Government, provided a blueprint for turning this situation around and protecting First Nations children. The report included a comprehensive review of the case files of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person in out-of-home care between 1 July 2015 and 31 June 2016—some 1,144 children and young people. The team also consulted with Aboriginal communities and families, government agencies, lawyers, non-government organisations, the out-of-home sector and child protection case workers. The report found significant harm to children in out-of-home care and brought down 126 recommendations for systemic change.

I welcome the Government's decision to bring the first stage of reform forward as a result of the report after it first said we may need to wait until 2024. There are some excellent provisions in the bill, including to ensure active efforts are taken to prevent children going into care, to restore removed children to family and to place removed children with family, kin and the community. Care plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people will include cultural plans developed in consultation with those affected and Aboriginal organisations. Parents with complex needs will be given more time to address those needs before their child is removed and the courts will no longer presume that a child automatically needs care and protection if their parent had a previous child removed. Those are important provisions to ensure family members' voices can be heard in court matters and to make more First Nations persons authorised caregivers.

I will not go through all the changes, as they have broad support, but I am concerned that they may not achieve the structural change needed to overturn the deep-seated flaws that have accelerated the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Peak bodies the Aboriginal Legal Service and AbSec identified other recommendations from the Family is Culture report that should be implemented immediately, including the key need for judicial officers to consider the known risks of harm to an Aboriginal child of being removed from their parents or carer before issuing an order. There is an assumption that children in families that are struggling will be better off if they are removed, but the evidence shows that removal exposes them to danger and trauma, including being subject to abuse and severing their connection to culture. That truth should be considered by the Children's Court before a child is removed to ensure a more balanced decision.

A statutory review will start 12 months after the bill comes into effect. I am hopeful that that early review will provide an appropriate opportunity to build on the work that has been done with further reforms and in line with the Family is Culture report. I foreshadow that I will move amendments at a later stage to improve oversight of active efforts in the bill as they are key to its success. I acknowledge the work of Senator David Shoebridge who, when he was a member of the other place, introduced a comprehensive bill to legislate the Family is Culture report recommendations. Without that bill, we may not have had this bill. I acknowledge my Independent colleague Mr Greg Piper for his work in this field and for introducing the bill of David Shoebridge to this House. In conclusion, the bill is an important step forward in closing the gap and I look forward to further legislation. There is other work to do on incarceration rates, protecting First Nations cultural heritage, providing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament and achieving a treaty. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Public Interest Debate*

**RURAL AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Coffs Harbour, I remind the following members that they are on three calls to order: the member for Oatley, the member for Keira, the member for Newcastle, the member for Rockdale, the member for Swansea and the member for Wollongong. A number of other members are on two calls to order.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:27):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the Federal Labor Government for cutting billions of dollars of funding for projects in rural and regional New South Wales in its recent budget.
- (2) Condemns the Federal Labor Government for misdirecting much-needed water infrastructure funding into a secret fund for more water buybacks.
- (3) Calls on the NSW Labor leader to stick to his word when he said, "The people of New South Wales, all of them—no matter where they live, no matter how they vote—deserve a positive vision," and join the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals in condemning Federal Labor's attack on rural and regional New South Wales.

Anthony Albanese promised that if he won government, no-one would be held back or left behind. That is ironic because the State Leader of the Opposition made the same commitment in his budget reply speech. We on this side of the House have heard that before. Labor Party members talk a big game when it comes to supporting the regions but, when it comes to the crunch, they pull the rug out from under us. Last month we voiced our concerns in this place that that would happen again when the Federal Labor Government delivered its first budget and we were howled down by Opposition members. The member for Lismore said, "There are no cuts. It is really la-la land stuff." That quote has not aged well. Federal Labor gave regional New South Wales yet another kick in the guts, axing programs and delaying critical projects right across the State.

I will start with the Building Better Regions Fund. Round six will not go ahead. Some 815 projects around Australia worth more than \$250 million will be scrapped. That fund provided \$9.8 million to build the Northern Rivers Rail Trail in the electorate of the member for Lismore. It funded the extension of the Eden Killer Whale Museum in the electorate of the member for Bega, which was worth \$640,000. It also provided \$4 million for the Birubi Point transport interchange upgrade in the electorate of the member for Port Stephens. I ask those members to tell us again that there are no cuts. But it does not end there. Federal Labor has axed the \$2 billion Regional Accelerator Program, which was poised to provide communities with funding opportunities targeted at local priorities in infrastructure, manufacturing and industry development, skills and training, research development and education. Of course, that fund was replaced with another worth half as much. Labor takes with the left hand while giving us half as much with the right hand, and boasts about the fact.

Meanwhile in New South Wales the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered \$3.3 billion in the Regional Growth Fund alone. The Federal budget will also scrap \$2.8 million in funding for the Agricultural Shows and Field Days Program. That might not mean much to members opposite, but agricultural shows bring rural and regional communities together. Entire families look forward to them every single year. The Nationals, as part of the Coalition Government, supported agricultural shows by committing an additional \$15.4 million to improve the amenity of showground infrastructure for their six million annual visitors. That funding came on top of almost \$100 million that was previously provided to regional shows to build new pavilions and exhibition areas; install seating, shade and weather protection; upgrade accessibility; improve public safety and animal welfare; and upgrade power and energy efficiency.

In my electorate, the Labor Party cut funding to the Southern Cross University's new health services precinct. The \$27 million that was committed to by The Nationals was slashed by Labor. The precinct would have

delivered a community health clinic to serve the community and provide clinical placements for students. The project included state-of-the-art labs and teaching facilities in bioscience, anatomy, physiology and chemistry, and simulation labs to support science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees. An additional 800 students would have been able to study on campus potentially in the town that they grew up in. That is yet another project in regional New South Wales that was shamefully slashed by the Labor Party.

I will provide another example. Despite having one of the largest cohorts of returned servicemen in the country, the Labor Party turned its back on the veterans of the mid North Coast. Regional New South Wales and the mid North Coast specifically have been completely overlooked in the recent allocation of funding for veterans' wellbeing services in Labor's budget. In April 2022 a \$5 million commitment was secured by The Nationals and funds were to be allocated from the existing 2022 budget. Labor has shamefully overturned that decision and has seemingly reallocated those funds to Labor electorates elsewhere. My Federal colleague put it best when he said to the Federal Parliament, "Watching Jim present the budget was like watching Santa bypass your home on Christmas Eve."

And who is pulling Santa Chalmer's sleigh? No Dasher and Dancer but Slasher and Axer; not Prancer and Vixen but Scrapper and Scratcher. He flew his sleigh over regional New South Wales, living up to our already low expectations of the Australian Labor Party. That is yet more evidence that Labor believes New South Wales means Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. I call on those opposite to stand up for our regions and call out their Federal colleagues on those shameful cuts.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:33):** Correct me if I am wrong, but is this not the sixth last sitting day of the Parliament for the Liberal-Nationals Government's term in office? This is the Government's second-last chance, and The Nationals' last chance, to choose a topic of public interest to discuss. Is that right? Your last chance and—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Port Stephens will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** The National Party members choose to bring a National Party beat-up based on pure rubbish. This is a predetermined and desperate campaign that the Liberals and The Nationals started pushing out well before the Federal budget was even released. Weeks ago we had the absurd spectacle of this same motion in this Parliament falsely claiming that the Federal budget was cutting money to the regions, but the budget had not even been released then. Of course, is it not true. Now the Federal budget has been released, we can see that there is actually more investment in regional and rural New South Wales than ever before—in infrastructure, Medicare, NDIS and aged-care facilities across the board.

People who live in rural and regional New South Wales, like in my community, are much better off under the Albanese Labor Government than the years of chaos and lies under the former government. The adults are back in charge and the people in my community, even those who voted Liberal, tell me that they are relieved. The Nationals have been running this ridiculous and false campaign about regional funding cuts. But really what has happened is their beloved rorted slush funds—which the Australian National Audit Office said were dodgy and were not based on merit—have been axed by the new Federal Government and the money has been moved into two new fairer, transparent regional infrastructure funds: the Growing Regions Program and the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program. That is what being a good government is about—transparency, openness and being fair across the State.

Despite the absurd claims being putted pushed by the National Party in this place, the recent Senate estimates process revealed that there is now more money being spent on regional infrastructure. But that has not stopped the National Party and the campaign it drew up before the budget was even announced. The member who has moved the motion is asking when. Well, you can just look it up. I have the transcript here for the Senate estimates hearings.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Port Stephens will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** I have the transcript. The Senator asked the head of Infrastructure Investment, "On the facts, just so I understand, there's been an increase, hasn't there, in the funding to regions as against the previous budget? That's what you're saying—more projects, more funding. Is that what you've said?" Benjamin Meagher, Assistant Secretary, Infrastructure Investment, replied, "That's correct, within the Infrastructure Investment program". So there we have it. When you strip away all this rubbish, all these falsehoods that you peddle in this place, you are left with a desperate National Party peddling more lies about Labor.

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** On this side of the House we like telling the truth. We talk about what is important to the people of New South Wales. I suspect that the National Party MPs are telling mistruths again

because they do not want to talk about what is really happening in rural and regional New South Wales. They do not want to talk about their failure to deliver in communities like mine. For example, Medowie's missing public high school, promised in 2011 by your party, never delivered after 12 long years. They do not want to talk about, in my community again, Tomaree Community Hospital—not even run as an actual hospital, it is run under community and aged care. It is not even treated as a hospital. It has not got the resources and the staffing that it needs. The Nationals do not want to talk about the failed privatisations that are costing people across New South Wales more money every single day. The Nationals do not want to talk about failed offshoring of manufacturing, which would have seen local jobs in rural and regional communities, and we would have even had trains that fit the tracks.

The Nationals do not want to talk about their failure to deliver social and affordable housing in rural and regional communities across New South Wales. They really do not want to talk their failure to protect our precious environment, which, under the 12 long years of their government and winding back of protections, has seen skyrocketing land clearing across the State. The Nationals definitely do not want to talk about the teacher shortage crisis because it is affecting every single Government school.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (17:38):** It is an insult to one's profession to have to respond to that rubbish. Fair dinkum. No wonder members opposite are happy to say that Federal Labor has delivered for the regions because they never know what delivering for the regions is. Those opposite will never again win a seat west of the great divide in this State because they do not understand. They fail to listen; they fail to learn. The only thing that I could find in the Federal budget that delivered for regional Australia was an investment in an additional 4.8 million hectares of protected areas. Well, great. Just more land that is locked up from productive capacity. But do not worry, those opposite are committed to doing the same thing. When tested in this Parliament to back rural people, they failed to support the Right to Farm Bill. They failed to support legislation that actually allows people to engage in tilling the land to grow food and fibre in this State constructively whilst protecting biodiversity.

Labor's idea of investment in regional New South Wales is to lock it up—locking up all the farms around the State and tying them up in green and red tape—because that is all they know. "You paid for it, you pay rates on it but we are going to make you do the work for the public of New South Wales to protect the biodiversity. Instead of working with those in productive industries, we are going to punish you." We can see that also in the Federal budget. Biosecurity funding has been cut. Last financial year \$229 million was invested. Their offer in Canberra now is \$134 million over the next four years. That is a massive cut. One would have thought a bit of foot and mouth in Bali would have showed that we need to increase our expenditure to protect our primary producers, instead of cutting it like they are doing down in Canberra. Then there is the Global Methane Pledge—a tax on cows! Bloody hell. Now they are going to tax cows as well down in Canberra, just as they wanted to tax farm machinery, tractors and cars before the last State election.

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

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** It is no wonder that those in Canberra, as with members opposite in this place, do not hold seats in the bush. They never will because they do not—the member for Port Stephens should not laugh, it is true. You will never get a starter. You do not get it but, more importantly, you do not want to get it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** At their heart they not only have ignorance, they have disdain and contempt for the people who work hard in the regions to make sure that we grow things and we generate the electricity. We even absorb all of the protected areas to make people who live around concrete and bitumen feel good about themselves because the people who are most concerned about environment biodiversity are the people who, coincidentally, live the furthest away from it. Yet, it is the people who are using their land for productive purposes that have to cop it. And we are happy to do it, as long as it is done in a balanced way. I support the motion of the member for Coffs Harbour. It is valid to highlight the fact that one thing gets said before an election and then at the first test of their word, they take the axe to anything regional. You can make an argument about grant programs and how they are administered. I do not take any umbrage with governments making spending priorities around grant programs. But I take issue with cutting spending on biosecurity, putting more protected areas in the regions, and signing up to a tax on livestock. The absolute kick in the guts is scrapping—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland will cease interjecting.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** —the agricultural visa. We need 172,000 workers coming into this country to actually help harvest—to pick berries, to pick fruit and to harvest crop—and we are going to cut that as well.

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



**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** We cannot bring the workforce into this country. Shame on them down the road in Canberra for once again showing not only can they not be trusted but also that they have disdain and contempt. If that is what the opposite side are willing to stand by and support in Canberra, then God help the people of New South Wales if they ever occupy the Treasury benches. If that is the standard which they are not only willing to accept but support, then God help them if they ever win office in New South Wales. What will they foist upon the people of country New South Wales? I support the motion. In this place we should point out the deficiencies down in Canberra.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:44):** I oppose the motion. I do so as a member of Parliament representing a regional area in the Central Coast on the New South Wales coastal strip between Newcastle and Sydney—a region with its own identity, its own aspirations and its own determination to be treated as a region that is distinctly separate from Newcastle and Sydney. It wants a future in which people will have a better and fairer place in which to raise their families. It is in that spirit that I mention a matter of public record—that the Central Coast returned two Labor members for two Federal electorates on the Central Coast: Robertson and Dobell. I acknowledge the hard work and achievement of my colleague Dr Gordon Reid in Robertson, who returned that electorate to Labor. He represents the people of the Central Coast for Labor in our Federal Parliament, with his colleague Emma McBride, the member for Dobell. The people of the Central Coast voted for a positive vision.

Before I get onto the positive vision, let me talk about what they voted against. They voted against a Federal government that time and again talked big locally but failed to deliver. I was reminded by my staff today of an article in the newspapers in the lead-up to the election that \$30 million had been promised for commuter car parking on the Central Coast in the 2019 election by the Federal Liberal-Nationals Coalition. It talked big before this year's Federal election about what had happened. A million dollars had been promised that had not been spent. They spent three years looking for the location of the car park to be constructed at Woy Woy. After three years, they informed the community that the car park at the Woy Woy railway station would be constructed near the Woy Woy railway station. That was all they had done after three years. It was a big achievement! Surprisingly, the people of the Central Coast said, "Couldn't you have done a little bit more over the past three years?" There were no funds for Gosford and there was no progress on the Gosford railway station. Again and again, they talk big about these things but they fail to deliver.

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

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** What has Federal Labor done in the very short time it has been at the helm of government in the national Parliament? I zero in on one of the important commitments Gordon Reid made during the election—a commitment to which he has been true. The commitment was to local roads, which is a big issue on the Central Coast, particularly as we have an amalgamated council. That was part of the architecture that was supposed to move our region forward. It was supposed to make everything more efficient and cheaper on the Central Coast because two councils would be amalgamated and the single council would be run more efficiently. We would get more done and it would not cost as much as it cost when two councils were in operation. Mike Baird visited the Central Coast and was spruiking about the benefits of amalgamation: It was going to be great.

The reality for the people of the Central Coast is that our rates have gone up and we have an administrator operating a non-democratic council. It is a council that works under the dictates of the Liberals and Nationals in the State Parliament without any input from the local community. Despite all that, Federal Labor was determined to try to help out with local roads, wherever possible. Federal Labor did just that. It promised \$40 million for local roads and provided the sort of support for our local council that Government members refused to offer the Central Coast. Instead, when the council got into difficulty, the Government's prescription for our council and our communities was redundancies. Hundreds of people lost their jobs at the council. Borrowings amounted to \$150 million, which the community is now repaying to the banks because the Government would not support its failed amalgamated council.

Thank goodness for Gordon Reid and the Albanese Government and its \$40 million, no-strings-attached funds to fix local roads on the Central Coast. For a whole bunch of reasons, I welcome the election of the Albanese Government to the Federal Parliament. I suggest that Government members take a look at themselves before they have a go at the Federal Labor Government. Locally, we are still waiting for the New South Wales Government to start the Wyong Road upgrade— [*Time expired.*]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for The Entrance will resume his seat.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:49):** I think we have just got to the nub of this debate because the member for The Entrance has just said that people who are in a Federal Labor electorate will be looked after by the Federal Government. That is what we just heard.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order. The member for Gosford will come to order.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** That is interesting because let us consider the \$5 million allocated to a new maternity ward in Yass. The local health district said that it is not viable or safe. We have had \$1 billion snatched from the New South Wales hospital system by the Federal Labor Government, yet we managed to find a bit of funding to go to a Labor electorate. This is the issue we have in regional New South Wales because Labor is just not there.

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

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** There was mention of this being a Nationals versus Labor debate. In question time today a really important question about roads funding was asked by the member for Barwon. He referred to the damage that we are seeing across our roads systems because of the impacts of the floods. I divert my attention away from the Nationals and Labor and refer to my Federal colleague Helen Haines, the Independent member for Indi. She spoke about our roads systems and flood damage in the context of the Federal Labor budget.

**Ms Kate Washington:** She is in Victoria.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** She is a Federal regional member and this is the point.

**Ms Kate Washington:** She is in Victoria.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Albury will not be interrupted.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** I am happy to take the interjection because the member for Port Stephens can defend the Federal Government when it comes to funding for our roads system. Dr Haines said:

Everyone knows how bad the roads are at the moment, and the third La Nina in a row this summer is making it incredibly difficult for local councils to keep up with the necessary repairs.

She went on to say:

This area needs significant investment—

I am sure Labor members of this House would agree we need significant investment by Federal Labor in New South Wales as well—

and Labor has missed an opportunity to strengthen roads further in light of the recent floods.

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

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** We are still waiting for you to do your regional notifications.

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

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** Those words were spoken by an independent member and Labor members do not want to hear that. It upsets them. On one hand we have funding that goes to Labor electorates for projects that are not safe or viable—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** As opposed to yours, which go to none.

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

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** —and on the other hand we have an important need for improvements to our roads, given the severe flood impact right across our State. We have Independent members of the Federal Parliament saying Labor has missed an opportunity, yet all we hear from Labor members in this House is a defence. All this House asks is that we come together and say, "Federal Labor needs to be funding our regional areas, our regional communities." I love how the member for Port Stephens can say there are projects that do not deserve to be funded when she talks about wiping out things like the Building Better Regions Fund and the Jerilderie long day care centre. She says, "No, we don't need long day care centres in our regional communities. Let's get rid of it. Why do we need that funding?" Labor members have the temerity to support and back in Federal Labor slashing funding in the budget.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** What about Federal Labor's funding?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland will come to order. I really do not want to remove her from the Chamber.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** We can talk all day. It is like shooting fish in a barrel. We have heard from the member for Coffs Harbour. This year alone the New South Wales Government has allocated \$229 million to research lumpy skin disease, whereas Federal Labor allocated \$134 million over four years. Anyone who has an

interest in agriculture in this State would recognise the need for biosecurity funding because the spread of diseases is one of the biggest threats facing our communities in regional areas. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government allocated \$229 million, but the Federal Labor Government allocated \$134 million over four years. Will Labor members of this House support that level of funding to protect biodiversity?

Other members have referred to Federal Labor underfunding the agriculture visa, which has resulted in regional areas of Australia being short of 17,000 workers to get products from paddock to plate. The Labor Party supports its Federal colleagues, saying that funding projects that are not safe and viable is worth doing, while at the same time taking funding from important programs like the Building Better Regions Fund. Where is the support for important infrastructure across our State such as roads impacted by flooding? It is not there.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:54):** That is a bit rich coming from a member of The Nationals. I state at the outset that I do not support the motion. The Nationals are the party of sports rorts, Bridget McKenzie and the king of pork-barrelling, John Barilaro. We all remember the sports rorts—a \$100 million community sports infrastructure program that was pork-barrelled in Federal Coalition electorates. The blatant rorting was so bad that even Scott Morrison felt compelled to step in and try to act. It is timely that The Nationals bring this motion to the House on the very same day that the Department of Premier and Cabinet has released its report into the sports rorts saga. Those opposite should read the morning newspapers. The report found that Bridget McKenzie breached ministerial standards in administering the scheme. Of course, we cannot forget the NSW Nationals' pork-barrelling—\$177 million in bushfire recovery funds went to Coalition-held seats. Shameful. When pushed on this issue during the upper House inquiry, John Barilaro said:

You want to call that pork-barrelling, you want to call that buying votes, it's what the elections are for.

No accountability. No transparency. After a decade of neglect by The Nationals in New South Wales and in Canberra, the recent budget finally restored some funding to regions like the Hunter. This is critical funding to clean up The Nationals' mess. I provide some facts for the House. There is \$2.2 billion for regional connectivity, made up of \$400 million to expand mobile coverage and improve the resilience of the communications system, which is necessary; \$30 million to accelerate Australia's agricultural sector through the On Farm Connectivity Program—that is a fact; and \$200 million for two more rounds of the Regional Connectivity Program for communications infrastructure in rural, regional and remote communities. Communities like mine will certainly take advantage of that. We struggle with phone reception all the time and it is only a Labor government in Canberra that takes the issue seriously.

What we have is substance, not theatrics. No funding area has seen a bigger boost than health since the Albanese Government was elected. Under the Liberal-Nationals, the distribution priority area classification for the Hunter was changed. That has led to major shortages of local GPs and added pressure on local emergency departments. The Premier says it every day. Where were The Nationals then? They were missing in action. It gets worse, because those opposite teamed up with the Morrison Government to shut down our local GP access clinics. I said at the time that my community was outraged and that it would put more pressure on our emergency departments. But the cuts went ahead anyway, and emergency department waiting times increased. At Belmont Hospital only 61.5 per cent of patients who presented at emergency began treatment on time. That is a disgrace. It is not only below the State average, but also the lowest percentage on record under those opposite.

Thankfully, the Albanese Government has restored funding to re-establish GP access clinics. I applaud it—and so does my community. Labor has gone further by announcing in the recent budget 50 Medicare urgent care clinics, including one in Cessnock. That is welcomed. The Nationals have a disastrous record on health in our regions, and the people know it. That is why they are looking to Labor for answers. Today we heard the Premier in question time talking about the urgent care clinics. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting all words after "House" and inserting instead "Notes that the Government has overseen a health system in crisis that is failing rural and regional communities."

I remember when I was elected to this Parliament—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order: The amendment—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We will deal with the amendment later.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** —The Nationals had 17 members in this House. Four years later, they were down to 13. One wonders what will happen in March 2023. Let us see how that goes. The truth is that the motivation for these theatrics is people in the regions know that when it comes to the tough issues, like selling out farmers and privatising the Newcastle port, The Nationals do not have the backbone to stand up for the regions. I do not support the motion. It is nothing but theatrics. As the member for Port Stephens said, if this is the best The Nationals have got, I suspect their numbers will go south.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Swansea to provide the amendment to the Clerks at the table.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:59):** In reply: I address the comments made by those opposite in the debate. The member for Port Stephens lectured us—I cannot think of another word to use—and said how dare we bring this motion to the House. This issue is important to us. Regional funding is important to regional electorates. The member also said that people in her electorate were much better off. I cannot understand by what metric they are better off. Not a single cost-of-living measure was introduced in the Federal budget. The member also referred to the Senate estimates hearing. It confirmed that \$1.2 billion was cut from critical social and economic infrastructure in regional New South Wales. I thank the member for Northern Tablelands, who spoke about biosecurity, the agriculture visa and the importance of that to our regions, and the complete betrayal by Labor federally. I thank the member for The Entrance for his contribution and for reminding us that Federal Labor contributed only \$40 million to the Fixing Local Roads Program, while the Coalition Government in New South Wales committed \$500 million, plus another \$50 million for fixing potholes and helping councils.

I thank the member for Albury. I thank the member for Swansea, particularly for her childlike amendment. I am saddened but not surprised by the reaction of NSW Labor, whose members refuse to stand with us and back the regions. They are happy to see funding ripped away from the regions and given to their city counterparts because they plan to do exactly the same. Taking from the regions to give to the cities is in Labor's DNA. What is the Labor policy on agriculture? What critical regional infrastructure projects will it commit to? How is Labor backing our regional businesses? I do not hear anything from Labor on those subjects. We have to judge Labor by its actions. It opposed the Right to Farm Bill 2019, deregistered the Country Labor Party, knifed Mick Veitch on the floor of its conference—

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: The member for Coffs Harbour has veered into territory that is—

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

**Ms Kate Washington:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The remarks by the member for Coffs Harbour are not relevant. There is absolutely no relevance whatsoever.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** At the last election Labor proposed a tractor tax. Its leader rarely ventures out of Sydney and now its Federal colleagues have taken an axe to the regions in their very first budget. This has not gone unnoticed in the regions. Only one side of the House stands for the people of regional New South Wales, and it is the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour has moved a motion to which the member for Swansea has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Swansea be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....30  
Noes .....43  
Majority.....13

#### AYES

Aitchison, J  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

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

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

#### NOES

Ayres, S  
Clancy, J

Henskens, A  
James, T

Provest, G  
Roberts, A

## NOES

Conolly, K  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Crouch, A  
Dalton, H  
Davies, T  
Elliott, D  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M  
Greenwich, A  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S

Layzell, D  
Lee, G  
Lindsay, W  
Marshall, A  
McGirr, J  
O'Dea, J  
Overall, N  
Pavey, M  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Piper, G  
Preston, R

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

## PAIRS

Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Lalich, N  
Minns, C

Kean, M  
Hazzard, B  
Bromhead, S  
Anderson, K  
Dominello, V

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....40  
Noes .....31  
Majority.....9

## AYES

Ayres, S  
Clancy, J  
Bali, S  
Conolly, K  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Crouch, A  
Dalton, H  
Davies, T  
Elliott, D  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S

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

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

## NOES

Aitchison, J  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

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

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

NOES

Harris, D

PAIRS

Anderson, K  
Bromhead, S  
Dominello, V  
Hazzard, B  
Kean, M

Lalich, N  
Barr, C  
Minns, C  
Bali, S  
Atalla, E

**Motion agreed to.***Bills***CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (FAMILY IS CULTURE) BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:17):** I am pleased to contribute to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022. The bill is of great significance and has been a long time coming. I had hoped to see the original Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family Is Culture Review) Bill 2021, which I introduced with former member of the other place Mr David Shoebridge, debated long before now, but here we are. I appreciate that the Minister has acted in good faith to get the bill to this point. I recognise the member for Port Stephens, who was very involved in the preparation of the 2021 bill, of which I had carriage. It would be fair to say that she and I were disappointed by the way in which the bill was truncated—we just could not get it there—so it is important that this bill is dealt with in the most respectful of ways.

We would not be debating the bill if it were not for the work of Mr David Shoebridge, who has long championed this cause and the need to act on the 2019 findings of Professor Megan Davis' Family is Culture report. Mr Shoebridge introduced the 2021 bill because the Government said it would start its response to the report only in 2024. That was an outrageous failure and was clearly not good enough. Of course, these long-awaited reforms should only ever be about advancing the welfare of children first and foremost, and, in particular, the cultural ties of First Nations children to their families. I note that while the bill does not respond to all of Professor Davis' recommendations, it does respond to some important ones. I accept the comments of the Minister for Families and Communities in the other place that public consultation on some of the more complex requirements will continue and that a further round of reforms will be forthcoming next year. I will make sure that happens to the best of my ability, regardless of the make-up of the new Parliament.

I do not intend to speak for long, but I feel it is important to place my views on record, given I had carriage of Mr Shoebridge's bill in this place. I have not forgotten the conclusions of the Family is Culture report, which described catastrophic rates of removal of First Nations children by the child protection system, poor outcomes and a failure to recognise the harm of removing a child from their culture and country. The Stolen Generations did not end in the 1950s, the 1960s or even the 1970s. They are real and are still happening now. I feel a sense of shame and alarm knowing that Aboriginal children are 11 times more likely to be taken from their families than non-Aboriginal children. Any decent, right-minded person would feel a sense of alarm and shame about those kinds of numbers. Further, First Nations children removed from their families and placed in out-of-home care are more than 15 times as likely to be under Youth Justice supervision than those who are not. That dramatically increases the likelihood of that child ending up in adult incarceration. However uncomfortable that makes members feel, it remains up to us to fix it. I believe the bill is a genuine attempt to start that process.

I note that the bill differs somewhat from the Shoebridge bill in that it still provides the courts and agencies with some flexibility when placing First Nations children in out-of-home care. The bill requires that all active efforts are made to keep the child with family, kin and community first and foremost, and that a court would need to be satisfied that those objectives are met before even thinking about placing an Aboriginal child in the care of a non-Aboriginal family. I accept that change in the Government bill, given that the court will be required to preserve the sense of identity of a First Nations child as well as their connection to culture, heritage, family and community first and foremost. If we are ever going to turn back the shameful tide of the number of First Nations children currently in out-of-home care in New South Wales, we must act now and not in two years.

I accept that this type of reform is extremely difficult to navigate. It is also critical to address the very important issues identified in the Family is Culture review. I appreciate that the Minister has brought forward some of those reforms in the Government's time line. It is not everything that is required, but it is certainly a good start. We cannot give up on the rest of these reforms. Every year that it is delayed, more First Nations children are likely to be removed from their families and culture, perhaps experiencing the long-term intergenerational harms that the Family is Culture review identified and urged us to fix. I again acknowledge the work of Mr David Shoebridge on this issue. I also thank the Minister for Families and Communities, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, for introducing the bill and for the many meaningful discussions that we have had over recent months. I look forward to working with the Government and the Minister of the day to continue the work that has been done in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:23):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022. Earlier this year we celebrated the 25-year anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations in the Parliament. Of course, in 2008 the nation also made an apology. The impression that I get from much of the community is that the business of the Stolen Generations is done and dusted and that it is all finished. We have said sorry and everything should now be okay. But an apology means nothing without action to make up for past wrongs. Yes, there is a strategy for Close the Gap, but it is moving slowly.

Out-of-home care has been a particularly significant issue. Many members have already reflected on the statistics. One in 18 First Nations children are in out-of-home care—a rate of 10 to 11 times that of non-First Nations people. Out of 12,300 people in out-of-home care in 2019-20, 4,600 were First Nations people—that is, 40 per cent. That extraordinary figure should make us reflect on whether the necessary action has been taken to really apologise and make up for the Stolen Generation. Why is that the case? Clearly, there is good will. It must be recognised that First Nations people are at significant social and economic disadvantage in our system. A history of government policies of assimilation has led to the concept of the Stolen Generation and has built a significant lack of trust in government services for First Nations people.

Our system, with the best will in the world, is geared at rescuing children at risk and protecting them from further harm. Of course that is important; no-one is suggesting otherwise. Children at risk must be protected and saved, but the system is not geared at preventing children from coming into situations of harm. It is not geared to making sure that children have the opportunity to grow up with their family, kin and community, particularly for First Nations people. The bill does much to begin to redress those issues. It implements the recommendations of the Family is Culture review report by Megan Davis. In particular, the report focuses on ensuring that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person placement principles of prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection are taken into account when agencies are making decisions around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

It also requires that active efforts are made to restore children or young people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background to their parents or, where that is not practicable, to family, kin and community. Those are incredibly important principles. Legislating them will create the impetus for government agencies to start building those processes into the way they operate. Clearly, there is a need to build capacity in our system. That will not happen overnight. In fact, for many years, Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal communities lacking the capacity to provide the required care has been used as a reason for not progressing with this. There are challenges, as there would be in any organisation and community with the history of First Nations people, but that is no excuse for not building up that capacity and supporting people in those situations.

Unfortunately, our focus on rescuing children has meant that our system has neglected the important aspect of prevention, which requires building up capacity in organisations and communities. There is an urgent need for that now. By legislating the requirement for active efforts and the key placement principles, that focus will be brought to our agencies and our society. There is an urgent need for support and leadership for those communities from the Government. There is also a need for our First Nations communities to lean into this work. That will not be easy with the history of deprivation and a lack of trust in government services. But I believe the bill legislates the principles and way of operating that will help build that trust. We must begin to build that trust. We can and we must begin to do that work now.

Finally, I acknowledge the work of the Minister. She has done an extraordinary amount of work in a short period with her office. I congratulate her on what she has been able to achieve. As the member for Lake Macquarie pointed out, I acknowledge the work of the Hon. David Shoebridge, a former member of the other place who really drove this reform. I acknowledge the work of the member for Lake Macquarie, with whom I was proud to co-sponsor the bill of the Hon. David Shoebridge in this place. I also acknowledge the work of the member for Sydney and the member for Port Stephens. Finally, I acknowledge that the Government has done the work and brought this to fruition. It gives me great pleasure to support the bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:29):** On behalf of The Greens, I indicate that we support the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022. We do so with a sense of disappointment at the lost opportunity in the bill that my Greens colleague, then upper House MP and now Senator, Mr David Shoebridge, had prepared and drafted in response to the significant recommendations and independent report prepared by Professor Meagan Davis. We recognise, along with others in the Chamber, that the member for Lake Macquarie, the Opposition spokesperson Kate Washington—who has carriage of the bill—and a number of other members have been actively involved in trying to bring this reform through. It is with a sense of compromise that The Greens support the bill because it is not where it needs to be.

All members realise the seriousness of what was an absolutely damning report, and the significant realities of creating ongoing injustice to First Nations children and families. As my colleague in the other place Sue Higginson identified when speaking in debate on the bill, it is important that we are committed to working with experts, those with lived experience, those on the front line of these services, the community, the Opposition and the Government to improve the bill and pass it. We must also be clear that this is not the same bill that was passed through the Legislative Council earlier. We must recognise that the bill does not seek to implement all of the recommendations handed down in the independent report. Many members in this place have spoken about the importance and tragedy of the ongoing trauma and injustice that is faced as a result of us not dealing with all those recommendations. It is with a level of reluctance that The Greens offer our support today.

We recognise that this bill is a small step forward, but the level and gravity of how bad the situation is needs more than a small step. The Government should not be moving a small incremental change in the last days of this Parliament. We would have liked support for The Greens bill, which was brought before the House with co-sponsorship and which recognised the need to shift and make significant change. We support that the bill has a built-in early review mechanism of 12 months and reporting within 24 months. I acknowledge that the member for Sydney is seeking to insert additional reviews for the active efforts that are being put forward.

We are very concerned that the bill in its current form departs in part from the principles of self-determination. We are concerned that the bill does not have what is substantively necessary to keep First Nations families together and ensure that every First Nations family dealing with the ongoing trauma of colonisation and dispossession is fully supported, and that children are no longer ripped from family, culture and country. That is what the Family is Culture review report called for. It provided a pathway forward, and that is what the family is culture legislation being considered should be doing in full.

The Family is Culture report called for genuine partnership with Aboriginal controlled organisations in changing the way we approach First Nations child protection and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led responses. Aboriginal controlled frontline response organisations have been clear that the bill does not substantively address the forced removal of First Nations children. They do not feel that they have been active partners in developing the bill. Instead, they once again feel that they have been forced to sit by as the Government writes critical legislation about their communities without genuinely listening to the solutions proposed. In a joint submission to the Department of Communities and Justice Family is Culture legislative review, AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW unequivocally recommended that the Government commit to implementing all of the systemic recommendations of the 2019 Family is Culture report. This bill does not do that. AbSec said:

We believe that in its current form it will not make a significant difference for Aboriginal children and families as it does not adequately implement the Family is Culture recommendations.

Implementing all recommendations of the Family is Culture report is the only way we will have a chance of meeting any of the targets that this Government has set to remove the appallingly high number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are being taken from their homes and their families. The Public Interest Advocacy Centre has also been clear. It said:

Fully implementing the 126 systemic recommendations of the Family is Culture Review, in genuine partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations would significantly improve the chances of meeting this target.

By failing to do this, the Government has no chance of meeting its own target. We should be walking step by step alongside First Nations communities to develop responses to ensure true self-determination. Something driven by a department that has inflicted years and decades of torture and trauma and continues to do so to this day cannot be seen as addressing the cycles of intergenerational trauma, hurt and harm that is being caused. I point to some key areas where this bill needs further attention and work. The Family is Culture report states:

The inclusion of a legislative provision directing attention to the harm of removal will unambiguously signal to all Magistrates that removal is often a harmful practice that must be undertaken with due care.

The Government's bill makes no mention of the presumption of harm despite it being a key recommendation in the report. This presumption is necessary. Presumptions provide legal frameworks upon which all operations and decisions are framed and based. We know that taking First Nations children from family, out of community and



off country causes ongoing harm across generations, which is why this should be recognised and considered in any circumstance where such a removal may be considered. I also turn to the principle of "active efforts" in the bill. While I acknowledge the intention of requiring active efforts to be made to restore children to family and community, the bill in its current form fails to ensure proper or appropriate oversight that guarantees active efforts are not just another hurdle to be stepped over or another box to be ticked before placing children in out-of-home care and tearing them away from their families.

The principle of active efforts in its current form is vulnerable to being nothing more than words. I take as an example families and individuals who have been separated from their loved ones as a result of being on a public housing waiting list. I am sure all members have examples of this in our communities. Children have been separated from their mother because she does not have the bedroom space in her public housing to demonstrate that she can have her children back home. Do active efforts include the Minister providing access to a larger public housing property for that mother to ensure that those children can be returned to her immediately? Are active efforts simply putting someone on a public housing waiting list or a transfer waiting list? It can take somewhere between six months to two years to 10-plus years to get a transfer. Meanwhile, those children have grown up in another household because the Government has failed to invest in the maintenance and the delivery of public housing deemed suitable for them to live in. Does putting them on the waiting list count as "active efforts"? Or is "active efforts" actually providing them with a home?

In addition, does "active efforts" include providing families with the same level of fortnightly income support given to people who are carers and under guardianship allowances, which is of the order of anywhere between \$540 and \$1,344 a fortnight? Does it include the ability and the power for the Minister or the department to reallocate the resources that would be given to the foster carers to the children's family? Maybe those are the active efforts that we should be considering. We should go to every possible effort to keep those children in their family circumstances. I also take a moment to address the really in-depth and built-in level of paternalism entrenched in this bill and how it presents the very notion that First Nations children need protection. This implies that Aboriginal families do not protect children and that the out-of-home care system—the system that has caused so much trauma and harm—actually provides the protection required when in reality it does not. [*Extension of time*]

The reality is that the out-of-home care system has provided lasting trauma and damage to many. It is paternalistic language that reeks of the history of the Stolen Generation, which is what got us here in the first place. Governments, institutions and the department caused this mess and this trauma felt by so many people. They have failed First Nations communities. Now these same departments and this same systemic racism will be entrenched with the power to engage in these "active efforts". It is not good enough. This is a step away from where we are, but where we are is so bad that we need more than just a small, incremental change. These very same institutions over-police First Nations people, punish First Nations families and cause ongoing intergenerational harm and trauma. It is bitter and disappointing that the Government has brought this bill without implementing all the recommendations of the independent report. We had the opportunity and we have an obligation to do better. It is crucial that we do this.

It is significant that this Parliament recognises that it is incumbent upon all of us who return to this place to do more and to make sure that the rest of these recommendations are not forgotten in the transition from this session of Parliament to the next. I hope that, if we find ourselves in this Chamber with different people sitting on the government benches after the election, we will see further movement to implement the full suite of recommendations before us that are ready to be acted on. This nation and this State are better at keeping First Nations children locked up in our prisons than they are at keeping them in our schools. Aboriginal young people are 10 times more likely to be taken from their families. This must stop. We can do so much more. Separating women from their children—mothers from their young children—because of failures in the system and failures to provide adequate housing, domestic violence support and adequate income support should not be tolerated.

I acknowledge and pay respect to those stakeholders and organisations with expertise that have provided support and formal input into the development of this report and the legislation that is before us, as well as The Greens' legislation. I also acknowledge the incredible emotional, physical and traumatic heavy lifting of so many in the First Nations community who have tried to push and advocate for these reforms and highlight the damage that has been done. I put on record my appreciation for my former Greens colleague David Shoebridge from the other place and the incredible efforts of his team, including Alison Martin, for the work that they did in preparing the bill that passed the Legislative Council. The Greens will continue to stand with First Nations communities and support genuine self-determination. We are committed to ensuring that this is the start of a process, not the end. We will add our weight and our voices to provide the heavy lifting needed to make sure that there is an end to the systemic racism and the trauma caused as a result of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (18:43):** On behalf of Mr Victor Dominello: In reply: I acknowledge the extraordinary work of the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones in the other place, who has responsibility for this bill, and her office to get the bill to this place today. I also acknowledge all the members who spoke. I recognise and thank them for their support for this bill. They include the member for Port Stephens, the member for Sydney, the member for Wyong, the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Newtown.

After listening to the contribution from the member for Newtown, I reiterate some of the bill's nuances. Under the bill, active efforts need to be timely, practicable, thorough, purposeful and aimed at addressing the grounds on which the child or young person is considered to be in need of care and protection. They must be culturally appropriate and should be conducted in partnership with the child or young person and their family, kin and community. The bill sets out some examples of active efforts, including providing or helping with access to support services and other resources; finding and contacting family, kin and community; and making better use of alternative mechanisms for keeping children safe that already exist under the care Act, such as alternative dispute resolution.

The Act guides all child protection actions and decisions—namely that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person is the paramount concern. The Minister has comprehensively detailed the provisions of the bill in the other House, so I need not repeat them here. However, it is important that I draw the attention of the House to some of the key amendments in the bill as amended by the other House. One key amendment is that the bill puts a positive obligation on the secretary to comply with a new principle of active efforts in new section 9A of the care Act, which specifically requires the secretary to make timely and targeted active efforts to prevent children and young persons from entering out-of-home care where it is safe to do. Where children and young persons have been removed from their parents or families, the secretary must make active efforts to restore them safely to their parents or place them safely with family, kin or community. That implements recommendation 26 of the Family is Culture report.

Active efforts must always be tailored to the specific family situation. It is therefore not appropriate for the legislation to prescribe an exhaustive checklist of active efforts that must be made. However, the description and examples provided in new section 9A provide clarity as to some minimum requirements and actions that would constitute active efforts. It is good news that the Opposition, the Independents and The Greens support the bill, and the Minister has confirmed to me that this is only the first in a number of steps that will be needed to bring forth legislation and make changes to our system after the report.

In conclusion, the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Bill 2022 will make amendments to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and several other Acts to implement recommendations of the final report entitled *Family is Culture: Independent Review of Aboriginal Out-of-Home Care in New South Wales*. Those amendments will make improvements to child protection decision-making that are in the best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and all children and young people across New South Wales. We have listened to the voices of Aboriginal people and community representatives; our Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations partners, AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service; and other legal stakeholders. Those perspectives have directly informed the bill.

The bill will improve how decisions are made to ensure that the focus is on preventing children from entering or staying in out-of-home care by requiring the secretary to take active efforts to reduce the entry of all children and young people into care and, where they have been removed, to restore them safely to their parents and families as soon as possible; improving how restoration and permanency decisions are made by the Children's Court of New South Wales and how evidence of risks to children is presented in court, thereby strengthening the court's oversight of child protection casework; reinforcing requirements to keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safely connected to their families, communities and culture; improving casework practice so that it is culturally appropriate and informed by the participation of children, families and relevant Aboriginal organisations; and improving the transparency, accountability and oversight of the system.

This is the first of the Government's steps to give effect to the Family is Culture report in legislation. It is the culmination of years of tireless advocacy by Aboriginal people and organisations—particularly by the Aboriginal people impacted by child removals, sometimes over generations. The Government will continue to engage with Aboriginal communities and organisations and other stakeholders in the ongoing reform process to improve the child protection system and to keep families safe and together. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alex Greenwich.****Consideration in Detail**

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

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:51):** By leave: I move amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2022-188D in globo:

**No. 1 Commencement**

Page 2, line 8. Insert ", [24A]" after "[24]".

**No. 2 Minister to report on active efforts**

Page 10, Schedule 1. Insert after line 38—

**[24A] Section 266**

Insert after section 265—

**266 Minister to give annual report about active efforts**

- (1) The Minister must prepare an annual report relating to the implementation and impact of the principle of active efforts for each of the 5 financial years following the commencement of this section.
- (2) Each report must include details about the following matters for the financial year to which the report relates—
  - (a) the actions taken by the Secretary to implement the principle of active efforts,
  - (b) funding that was directly invested in active efforts measures, including to—
    - (i) the Department, and
    - (ii) non-government organisations and Aboriginal community controlled organisations, and
  - (c) steps taken to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and participation in decision-making, including steps taken to implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young Persons Principle.
- (3) The Minister must report to Parliament—
  - (a) for the first report—within 6 months after end of the first financial year immediately following the commencement of this section, and
  - (b) for each subsequent report—within 6 months after the end of each subsequent financial year.

The inclusion of mandatory active efforts is the cornerstone feature aimed at reducing child removal, restoring removed children safely to parents and placing children that cannot be safely retained or restored with family, kin or community. Active efforts will see the department work to achieve those outcomes for the benefit of keeping families together and protecting First Nations children's connection to culture and country. If done right, active efforts could stop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children ending up in out-of-home care. But active efforts must be exercised using all tools possible, with sensitivity and in partnership with families. They cannot become a tick-a-box exercise on the pathway to court for a care and protection order.

There is some nervousness amongst stakeholders about how active efforts will be exercised, as was expressed by the member for Newtown. While I believe the Government is committed to ensuring that active efforts become a genuine exercise, I believe the system would benefit from additional accountability. My amendments would require the Minister to provide Parliament with an annual report on how the department is implementing active efforts, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young Persons Principle and steps towards self-determination and participation. The report will also include funding and investment in active efforts measures. The amendment will ensure that the Parliament, stakeholders and the wider community will have the appropriate oversight into how active efforts are being exercised. I thank the Minister, her staff and the departmental staff for working with me on that important accountability measure. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:53):** I support the amendments of the member for Sydney, but I also make a small contribution to the debate. I thank the Government for finally introducing the bill. Thanks must also go to Mr David Shoebridge, who forced the Government to finally introduce the legislation. He pushed the Government to provide some of the wraparound services that we so desperately need in the electorate of Murray and across rural New South Wales. It is a small step in addressing a huge problem.

When I asked my First Nations friends about the bill, they pleaded with me to urge the Government to provide an alcohol and drug addiction rehabilitation centre for everyone on country. We cannot start to address that problem in Murray until we provide that essential service, particularly around Griffith. We want services on country in our country, not triaged to a regional city far away from supportive networks. Country is healing, and culture and rehabilitation are part of the solution.

"Collective focus" is a lovely phrase, but in reality it offers nothing more than lip service. We must change direction and take Indigenous Australia with us to address the reality of generational government neglect. We must safeguard Aboriginal children and their families. For far too long, government has turned a blind eye to delivering services to the most vulnerable. This legislation, while far from perfect, is a starting point. It must be noted that collective focus is probably the solution. It has got to be done. I acknowledge all those who have contributed to the bill. Let us begin to make the quantum change today.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:54):** The Opposition supports the amendments of the member for Sydney. They serve to reinforce accountability and strengthen the bill's key aspect, which is the application of active efforts when children are both removed from families or restored to families. Increased accountability around that aspect is welcome. They also serve to reinforce the amendment that Labor moved successfully, with the Government's support, in the upper House in terms of the Children's Court having greater powers to ensure that the department presents any case to that court with a clear display that active efforts have been undertaken. Now, with the amendments of the member for Sydney, the Government will have additional responsibility to ensure that those obligations are met by reporting to this Parliament. On that basis, the Opposition supports the amendments.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (18:56):** I put on record my thanks to the member for Sydney for his constructive work with the Minister and her office to bring forth sensible amendments to this place. Well done.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that amendments be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

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

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

### **Third Reading**

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** On behalf of Mr Victor Dominello: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **GOVERNMENT SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 19 October 2022.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:58):** I speak to the Government Sector Employment Amendment Bill 2022. I acknowledge that all public sector workers in New South Wales provide essential government services and support to the people of the State every day. Their contributions during the COVID pandemic cannot be underestimated either. Just like essential workers throughout our State, our public sector workers ensured the continuation of services and assistance to people during the pandemic of the century. More than that, public sector workers were pivotal in ensuring that government support and safety nets were accessible to families, workers and businesses whose lives were put on hold by lockdown or put at risk by the virus. The Opposition understands how important public sector workers are to the people of the State. We understand that these workers should be supported, that they should feel safe and secure in their roles, and that their job security should be bolstered, because a strong public sector reflects a strong New South Wales.

To that end, I address the Government Sector Employment Amendment Bill 2022 through the lens of ensuring that this Parliament makes sure that the New South Wales public sector is robust, open, transparent, efficient and independent. The Opposition does not, in principle, oppose the bill. We have, however, a number of concerns and, in the interests of public sector workers and, by extension, the people of New South Wales, they must be addressed and resolved. I acknowledge the briefing that I received from the Premier's office. The Public Service Association, Unions NSW, my colleague Anthony D'Adam and I attended a briefing today. We had a number of questions as a number of issues arise from the bill. I understand that there may need to be some

amendments to the bill in the upper House—I do not foreshadow any amendments in this place, but I put that on record.

I acknowledge that the Government drafted schedule 1 to the bill in response to the Graeme Head report as well as the Pearce report—which I note was handed down two years ago, in 2020. The Head report was commissioned in response to the appointment of a former member of this House as trade commissioner to New York. The impetus of that report was to ensure that the appointment process within the public sector is transparent and independent, thereby reflecting the democratic values of this great State. However, unintentionally or otherwise, there are oversights in this schedule that must be addressed. I draw the attention of the House to schedule 1 [1], which gives the Public Service Commissioner the power to adopt a code of ethics and conduct that government sector employees must comply with. Of course, the public sector, like all sectors, must have some form of guidance on how workers can act ethically within their sector. In principle, the Opposition does not oppose this. But we are concerned about employer participation in the drafting and adoption of the code of ethics.

It was explained to me that this code of ethics will be embedded in the Act, but, of course, agencies have their own codes of ethics because of the specific nature of the work that public servants do in their particular areas. Currently there exist consultative requirements in government sector awards for the adoption of a code of ethics. Giving all the power to the Public Service Commissioner to adopt a code of ethics may alienate public sector employees. This issue is very important to workers operating in the sector, so their input is invaluable to the Government and to the Public Service Commissioner. I raise that as an issue. After the briefing today, I understand the merits of the proposal, but I flag the issue and ask the Government to make sure that it does not override existing codes of ethics in awards, especially in light of award negotiations regarding various public sector awards. It is always important to listen to views on various issues put to the Government by the public sector unions.

Schedule 1 [7] refers to government sector senior executives who leave the public sector to pursue a career in the private sector. The effect of item [7] is that any government sector senior executive who intends to accept an offer of employment in the private sector must seek guidance from the Public Service Commissioner. The requirement to seek guidance depends on two conditions: whether the work that the executive intends to do in the private sector relates to work they did in the public sector, and whether the private sector role relates to any responsibilities held by the executive in the public sector during the previous two years. The guidance that the Public Service Commissioner must provide includes, but is not limited to, advice on how to manage actual or potential conflicts and how an executive might use in their private sector role information they learnt about the public sector. I acknowledge that the bill, and particularly this aspect of it, is about improving transparency.

As we learnt from everything that came out of the Barilaro inquiry, there are a number of shortfalls that must be discussed. At today's briefing I raised that the amendment does not define "guidance". Will the guidance be provided through a letter or a course? Will it be binding? What does "guidance" mean? Is there a set of principles or points? Is it a casual conversation between an executive and the Public Service Commissioner? Does it resemble a session or a one-on-one conversation? What does it mean? I put it to the Government to provide us with that information. The second issue is the level of transparency regarding the guidance. I acknowledge that executives are entitled to a level of privacy. However, in their role as very senior people, they would have gained a wealth of knowledge about how their area operates, and they could, of course, use that information in the private sector. There are provisions in the private sector about employees not working for a competitor for a length of time. So we are asking the Government to provide a set of principles as to what "guidance" means.

Schedule 1 [9] to the bill inserts part 5, section 22 into the government services Act. New section 22 will clarify the operation of section 52 of the Act. Currently section 52 stipulates that the industrial relations secretary may make determinations for the employment conditions of a workplace or sector if the workplace condition is not adequately covered by legislation or by an award. Schedule 1 [9] intends to clarify that a determination of the industrial relations secretary may be amended or rescinded. We have asked what is the reason for that. Determinations are meant to plug the legislative and award holes in employment conditions for new roles. Once those conditions have been covered by a legislative instrument or an award, the determination becomes obsolete. Clarifying that the secretary can amend or rescind determinations at his or her leisure has no practical value, on the surface.

In fact, there is great concern amongst the public sector unions and stakeholders that the secretary could use his or her powers to amend and rescind a determination as a tool of undue influence during industrial action and disputes. Accordingly, any amendment to the government services Act that may undermine the ability of the public sector workers to engage in industrial action must be approached cautiously. In a discussion with the Premier's office—which, again, I appreciate—we were given an explanation, and I have been provided with the obsolete determinations to be archived. It is a very lengthy document. I understand that my colleague from The Greens will move an amendment. It is quite a sensible amendment. We are not saying that there is any other

motivation at all; I think we are all on the same page. It will just give us clarification and lock around to make sure that the bill is watertight.

I now move to schedule 2 to the bill, which refers to the Pearce independent review of the relevant scheme. As I mentioned earlier, the review was completed almost two years ago. Schedule 2 [1] inserts the definition of "personal information or health privacy law". For the purpose of the Government Sector Employment Act, "personal information law" will refer to the Privacy and Personal Information Act, and "health privacy law" will refer to the Health Records and Information Privacy Act. Legislative instruments that protect the private and confidential information of the people of New South Wales are important and should not be overridden without good reason. However, schedule 2 [2] amends section 16 (4) of the Government Sector Employment Act. Currently, section 16 (4) of the Act operates to allow the provision of reports and information between the Public Service Commissioner and heads of government agencies. The amendment seems only to further clarify this point. There is seemingly no apparent reason for this item in the bill and its inclusion ought to be scrutinised.

I note that schedule 2 [17] to the bill raises the same questions. Schedules 2 [6] and [7] to the bill aim to amend the current Act to allow an executive to be reassigned. This point concerns me, and I raise it because I need to understand the reasons. I understand former Minister Pearce undertook the review a couple of years ago and the Government has now brought this bill before the House. We need to understand the basis for those items in the bill. What is the foundation, the research, the background? The Premier's office provided us with some information, but it would be important if the Minister could explain the basis for those items in the bill.

Without disclosing our conversation today with the Department of Premier and Cabinet [DPC] officials and the Premier's office, I note that when Greg Pearce was a parliamentary colleague and Minister, we were at loggerheads with him for a number of years in relation to industrial relations. I thought, "Wow, this is another Greg Pearce special." I was advised it is not a Greg Pearce special. I want to make sure that we are very clear about exchanging the health information of public servants. At this stage I need to understand the Government's point of view. We will scrutinise this issue. If we need to move an amendment in the upper House, we will. I am not foreshadowing that at the moment, but I need to understand it and make sure that the key stakeholders and unions are satisfied. A number of them have contacted me, and I am sure the Minister would understand their concern about the provision of health information to the Public Service Commissioner.

Schedules 2 [6] and [7] to the bill aim to amend the current Act to allow an executive to be reassigned within the public sector to a lower band and their remuneration adjusted down, only with the executive's consent. The requirement for consent in such circumstances can easily be coerced consent at worst, patronising at best. I want further clarification about that. Schedules 2 [10] and [11] have similar aims to items [6] and [7] but relate to public sector workers. These clauses will empower heads of government agencies to reassign public sector non-executive employees to lower bands of work, with remuneration adjusted down, but only with the employee's consent. Again, there is concern that this consent can be coerced and may even disincentivise skilled public sector workers from bringing their skills to extremely important work, as they may not want to accept pay cuts. These items in the bill are not consistent with good practice of incentivising skilled workers and, therefore, are counterproductive to the aims of the public sector.

Not only is it patronising to state that consent is required in situations where workers have little choice, but it also risks disincentivising a flexible workplace environment and an environment that encourages talent to move where it is needed within the public sector. We were given a number of examples. We understand that people move intrastate and around the country. However, my colleague identified that when there are restructures within the public sector, these items in the bill become important. We just need to understand this better and get some examples to make sure that they are watertight. In an employer-employee relationship, the employer or manager has the power balance in their favour. When seeking somebody's consent to be demoted for whatever the reason, particularly in a restructure or moving across to other work within the public sector, it is not really consent in most cases—and members know that. We just need to get that clarified. I am not foreshadowing an amendment in that regard, but if the Opposition is not satisfied, it is something we will look at in the upper House.

Between the bill moving from this House to the upper House, there needs to be consultation with the public sector unions with respect to some of these issues. I urge the Government to talk to the public sector unions about this. I acknowledge the intent of this bill is to improve transparency, but I am a little sceptical that the Government has brought in this Pearce review, which has been sitting there for two years, and mixed it with the Barilaro changes. The Opposition is just being cautious. We support the bill in principle, but we just need an explanation. We will scrutinise those issues further. We give the Government the opportunity to offer those explanations and to consult with the public sector unions and then we will make a decision on the amendments in the upper House. I thank the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (19:16):** On behalf of The Greens, I address the Government Sector Employment Amendment Bill 2022. Every cloud has a silver lining, and hopefully the good that comes from the

dark clouds that poured so heavily on the Government when the whole Barilaro arrangement was being picked apart is a bill that addresses the shortcomings in procedures and processes within government. I acknowledge that the Government has at least undertaken the Department of Premier and Cabinet [DPC] inquiry, examined it and worked in an instructive way to try to ensure that the shortcomings identified can be resolved. That is what building integrity into the system is about. It is about acknowledging mistakes, moving forward and building on that.

I welcome the comments of the member for Canterbury in her contribution and encourage those clarifications the member proposed. They are particularly important. It is good to see a bill like this before the House. At elections we often get a "law and order auction" with politicians saying, "We're harder"—but where is the integrity auction? The Liberals are on the front foot on this matter when compared with Labor because the integrity frame is now moving squarely into the gambling space. At least the Premier has indicated that he will not be doing deals with the gambling lobby until the NSW Crime Commission issues have been resolved. Where is the Leader of the Opposition? We need all parties, all groups and all members of this Parliament to recognise that the Crime Commission report cannot just be swept away by a few lines from the gambling industry. It needs to be addressed head-on in a significant way, and obviously the cashless gaming card process is an important part of that.

Today members have before them a bill from the Government on managing government sector employment processes. Today members were briefed on the ICAC bill. I note the person from the Premier's office who conducted that briefing is in the Speaker's gallery. She identified the importance of that bill in taking forward the recommendations from ICAC. More often than not, recommendations from ICAC are not implemented. Those recommendations from ICAC include, for example, codifying bribery, misconduct and corruption in statute. That is something that ICAC proposed and that governments have not acted on.

I encourage the Premier's office to go back and have a look at recommendations made by ICAC. Let us make this election an integrity election. People in the community want to see politics improved. They want to see politics cleaned up. They believe those parties with the strongest possible position on integrity issues are the ones that deserve to be occupy these benches and deserve to be in the Parliament. I encourage both the Government and Opposition to continue the momentum with regard to improving and strengthening our processes and making sure that we identify these shortcomings. Whether it is in relation to the lobbying report that the ICAC has undertaken, pork-barrelling, the inquiry regarding the member for Drummoyne or other matters, I encourage both the Government and Opposition to ensure that all of these issues are carried through not just in the headline findings but also in the recommendations that need to be assiduously pursued.

As identified by the member for Canterbury, this amendment bill sets out very clearly a mechanism for implementing the recommendations of the inquiry into the appointment of the Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner. It does so in a very straightforward way. Schedule 2 to the bill gives effect to a statutory review of the Act. Both schedules to the bill are important. I note that the member for Newtown will move a very sensible amendment to the bill. I wanted it to be more radical, but the member for Newtown held me back and said, "No, today we're being sensible". I think that amendment has merit and clarifies the situation. That is how good policy should work. Members discuss the issues and sensible amendments that clarify situations should be adopted. It is not only in the common interest but also in the interest of good public policy, which in the end is why we are here in this Chamber. If members can get bills right and work in a collaborative way, why should we not?

I commend the bill to the House and acknowledge the important steps that have been taken. I acknowledge the staff in the Premier's office and, I am sure, others in DPC who have worked on the bill. It is not an easy bill. When members consider the mechanisms of it and how it seeks to implement its intent, they will appreciate the challenge. I acknowledge that my colleague will move an amendment, but the bill as stands is something that The Greens will support.

**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) (19:22):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Canterbury and Balmain for their contributions to debate on the Government Sector Employment Amendment Bill 2022. We will miss the member for Balmain. I will deal with his contribution by simply saying that I agree with its sentiment. I will work through the points raised by the member for Canterbury in more detail.

The first point the member for Canterbury dealt with was with regard to the code of ethics, which appears in proposed new section 8A. The government sector code is not intended to extinguish or contradict agency-specific codes of practice. To date the government sector code has been expressed at a high, principles-based level that reflects most importantly the government sector core values in section 7 of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 concerning integrity, trust, service and accountability. The current

code sets out some mandatory conflict-of-interest disclosure requirements and mandatory conduct requirements to act consistently with the "Ethical framework for the government sector".

Currently, departments and agencies may supplement the code with requirements and advice specific to their organisation's operating requirements but not alter or subtract from it. It is unlikely that general principle-based provisions of the government sector code would contradict agency-specific codes. The intention is that the government sector code and agency-specific codes will complement each other, not contradict each other. In practice, the commissioner has consulted with the sector and unions when making or amending the government sector code in the past, including recent updates to the government sector code and gifts and benefits guide 2022, and will continue to do so for future changes to the government sector code.

The second matter raised by the member for Canterbury concerned item [7] of schedule 1. The earlier comments dealt with item [1] of schedule 1: code of ethics and conduct. Item [7] of schedule 1 relates to employment after leaving certain senior executive employment. The proposed amendment requires senior public servants, band 3 and above, to seek the guidance of the Public Service Commissioner before accepting private sector employment where that employment relates to roles or responsibilities held during the previous two years. The content of the guidance given by the commissioner will depend on the employee's previous role and the offer of employment they are considering, but the proposed amendment clarifies that the guidance can include advice regarding the management of conflicts of interest, and the use of information and knowledge gained in the course of employment. The amendment is similar to the requirement on Ministers under the Ministerial Code of Conduct to seek the advice of the Parliamentary Ethics Advisor before accepting any offers of employment related to their current portfolio responsibilities or any portfolios held in the last two years. This requirement applies to all current Ministers and to former Ministers for 18 months after leaving office. The advice is published.

However, under agency codes of conduct and, in the case of secretaries, their contracts of employment, former public servants are subject to strict continuing obligations in order to uphold the integrity of the public service and minimise corruption risks. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to strengthen these requirements by requiring guidance to be sought in light of these obligations. A record of the advice would be required to be made and kept under the State Records Act 1998 and would be able to be sought from the commission under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. The public interest test under section 13 the Government Information (Public Access) Act would apply to the information. Further details about the implementation of this requirement, including any additional reporting or publishing requirements of the commissioner, such as where a senior public servant accepts an offer of employment following receipt of the commissioner's advice, will be developed in consultation with the Public Service Commission and communicated to affected employees before this provision commences.

The member for Canterbury then referred to item [12] of schedule 2. The proposed amendment is to make clear that the industrial relations secretary can amend or rescind a determination made by the industrial relations secretary under section 52. I think the member for Canterbury was concerned that it may have an impact on industrial action. I do not believe that is the case. Determinations relating to employment conditions of public service employees not covered by a State industrial instrument or law may be made by the industrial relations secretary under the existing section 52. Such determinations apply to employees not otherwise covered by State industrial instruments. The proposed amendment clarifies the application of the existing sections to support administrative efficiency and would facilitate a number of outdated determinations being rescinded. By "outdated" I mean determinations that do not impact on any employee at all.

A review of determinations in 2015 and 2019 identified over 900 determinations made under various Acts. Public sector agencies and unions were consulted to assess the status of all determinations and 743 instruments were identified as obsolete, with the remainder considered to be still current. The amendment will facilitate these outdated determinations being rescinded, which is intended to remove uncertainty about their application, and to protect employees who could be covered by a determination unintentionally and be worse off under a determination. As it is not the intention to adversely affect the conditions of any public sector employee, we intend to agree with the amendment that I expect to be proposed by the member for Newtown on this matter.

The next matter raised by the member for Canterbury concerned items [2] and [17] of schedule 2, which relate to personal and health information. Neither of those amendments impact on the obtaining of any personal and health information from workers. They only concern how information already lawfully obtained may be confidentially shared between different senior public sector employees. The proposed amendments to sections 16 and 83 of the Act clarify the circumstances in which information may be shared under those sections. The proposed amendments make it clear that the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 do not prevent the sharing of information in the specified circumstances in sections 16 and 83 which are very formal circumstances—that is, where information is provided by the head of a government sector agency to the Public Service Commissioner and vice versa under section 16.



Similarly, the provision of information to the Public Service Commissioner or the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet conducting an inquiry under section 83 and vice versa.

The circumstances under which the information may be shared are limited clearly by the proposed wording of the amendments. Section 16 in its current form allows the commissioner to receive personal information. Currently, section 16 does not permit the disclosure of personal information from the Public Service Commissioner to the head of a government sector agency, or the disclosure of any health information by the Public Service Commissioner or by any head of a government sector agency. The current version of section 83 does not contain any exemption from current privacy laws. However, it may be necessary for health or personal information to be shared for an effective inquiry to be conducted—for example, into allegations of harassment, violence or bullying at an agency. This does not mean that the individual's health or personal information would be published to the world at large or to third parties. It just means that the commissioner would be able consider and use such health or personal information when making recommendations on improvements either to the agency concerned or to the sector at large.

All safeguards regarding personal and health information in existing legislation will apply to any such information—for example, if the commissioner receives personal or health information, the commissioner will not be permitted to disclose it to third parties or the public, or to use it for purposes unrelated to the purpose of requesting the section 16 report or the conduct of the section 83 inquiry. Finally, the member for Canterbury referred to items [10] and [11] of schedule 2. The intent of those amendments is not to coerce someone to take a lower-level position; it is quite the alternative. It is actually to facilitate a voluntary taking of a lower position without prejudice to the employee who for family or other circumstances or, indeed, if they wish to continue working at a lower level, are able to do so without any penalty and without having to resign and then re-apply for a position.

The Act currently provides for the assignment of public service senior executives, other than heads of agencies, and public service non-executive employees at level—that is, within their current band or classification of work. The proposed amendments will enable public service employees, both public service senior executives and public service non-executive employees, to be assigned to a lower band or classification but only with the prior written consent of the employee concerned. If that consent was in any way coerced, which was one of the matters the member for Canterbury raised, that would be a deemed dismissal and there would be rights that would apply from that. A coerced consent is not a proper consent in law. The amendments will promote mobility by ensuring that a public service employee may be assigned to a lower graded role, if the employee consents, without being required to go through a merit selection process. This facilitates the retention of talented, experienced staff with knowledge of government in the event of a change to the employee's circumstances.

These amendments will also enable government sector agencies to accommodate a request by a public service employee for assignment to a lower band or classification, should they wish to accept a lower graded role for personal or other reasons. That may include, for example, wishing to have a tree change or towards the end of their career wishing to lower their employment demands. Having addressed the matters that have been raised in debate, I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Ms Jenny Leong.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2, and schedules 1 to 3 be agreed to.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:34):** I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2022-202A:

#### **No. 1 Amendment and rescission of determinations**

Page 9, schedule 2 [12], proposed section 52 (5), line 5. Insert ", but only if no public service employee will be adversely affected by the amendment or rescission" after "section".

The amendment seeks to ensure that there are no adverse outcomes for public sector workers and government employees as a result of the so-called administrative change identified in the bill. Under the current drafting of the bill, the industrial relations secretary could simply wipe away various determinations that established very significant and long-held conditions of employment, which would be a very significant unintended consequence. I note some of the most recent determinations that have been made in relation to that include paid parental leave, miscarriage leave and support for employees experiencing family and domestic violence. Obviously those are serious determinations that significantly impact the rights of, and protections for, workers in the public sector.

I recognise that the Government and Opposition have indicated their support for the amendment. By no means do I seek to imply that there was an intention to do anything untoward in that space. However, we do not know who may hold that power in future, nor do we know the intentions of future governments. It is always important to include protections for workers' rights. A "better off overall" test or a "not worse off overall" test should be applied to any changes to, or removals of, determinations. I understand that is particularly relevant to determinations that no longer relate to or are no longer applied to government sector employees, but it is important to do that.

As such, this very sensible—the member for Balmain, it is controversial, so do not spread the word—and necessary amendment will ensure that no determination could be used that would see a public sector employee adversely affected by the amendment or rescission of a determination, so nobody is worse off. I acknowledge and thank those who picked up on that potential loophole and provided advice on the amendment. We must protect and lock in the hard-fought protections for workers' rights. I commend the amendment to the Chamber.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (19:37):** Labor supports the amendment as it addresses our concern. However, Labor will look closely at the bill before it goes to the upper House, where I foreshadow that the Opposition may seek to introduce a more strict amendment.

**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) (19:38):** As I have already indicated, the Government will support the amendment. There was never an intention to adversely affect employees. The Government believes there was a very low probability that that would be the case as those determinations are usually ultimately incorporated within awards, but I take the point and the Government accepts that there is a theoretical risk of that happening. It not being the intention to do that and to tidy up obsolete determinations, the Government has no difficulty being constrained to not do something that was not intended to be done. I am concerned that the member for Balmain may influence the member for Canterbury into making more radical changes, but we consider this change to be very reasonable and practical.

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

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

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

### **Third Reading**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **MEDICINES, POISONS AND THERAPEUTIC GOODS BILL 2022**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 19 October 2022.**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (19:40):** I contribute to debate on the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Bill 2022, which I thank the Government for introducing. I understand the bill has undergone a significant amount of consultation. In his second reading speech, the Minister outlined the range of different important groups relating to the medicines sector that were consulted such as the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and others. The bill repeals and remakes the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act [PTGA] to ensure that the framework governing the supply chain for medicines and poisons is updated, robust, fit for purpose and, very importantly, integrated with other legislation. Importantly, I acknowledge the Minister's office for the briefing on the bill. In a previous life I held a similar role, so I know it is sometimes a challenging one, but I respect and thank the Minister's staff for that briefing and for the work they have done in that area over the course of this Parliament.

The bill replaces the PTGA to provide for a more modern and appropriately regulated supply chain. It is always about ensuring access to medicines, poisons and therapeutic goods where appropriate but, very importantly, it is also about restricting supply to protect health and safety. We saw some of the challenges of that during the pandemic, which I will talk about in a moment. Part of the bill will adopt the list of scheduled substances in the national Poisons Standard established under the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act 1989. Each schedule of the national Poisons Standard contains a list of substances that share similar risks and recommended

control measures. Many members in the Chamber would be aware of the substances that are restricted such as, in schedule 4, prescription-only medicines and, in schedule 8, substances and drugs of addiction that are tightly regulated and controlled, as they should be.

Importantly, the bill sets out who can undertake activities with scheduled substances and therapeutic goods. It looks at a component around wholesale supply, which can be undertaken by licenced wholesalers. However, the bill allows certain wholesaling to occur without a licence to recognise the safe modern practices that those organisations and institutions have in place. An example of that is wholesaling between public health facilities, which took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and should remain in place. That may be carried out with a lot more ease than it did during the pandemic. I have said consistently in this place that every legislator must understand what worked well and what we must do more or less of for the next pandemic because there will be challenges. I am glad the bill retrospectively identified that area and looked at improvements that could be made.

The second part relates to who can undertake activities around scheduled substances and wholesale supply, including public health entities such as public hospitals, State vaccine centres, prisons, residential aged-care facilities, private health facilities and pharmacies. Certain registered practitioners can also obtain wholesale supply for obvious reasons. They must ensure that the population can be serviced with appropriate drugs. Non-wholesale supply obviously relates to certain registered health practitioners—for example, doctors and nurse practitioners. Vets can obtain non-wholesale supply in the course of practising their profession. Non-wholesale supply can also be undertaken by a pharmacist when dispensing medication or a prescription. The supply of particular high-risk medicines will still require the approval of the Secretary of NSW Health. Certain health practitioners, for instance, doctors, nurse practitioners and vets, can issue a prescription—we are all familiar with that—in the course of practising their profession.

The bill also modernises the enforcement options by providing for on-the-spot fine and compliance notices, and maximum penalties will also increase to better reflect the seriousness of offences. This area of regulation is important, and must be strictly protected. In my view, it is an area of legislation that should, wherever possible, be done in a bipartisan way because it is critical that the community has access to drugs, poisons and therapeutic goods. But, for a range of different reasons, it is also important to have stringent safeguards, and the industry should be highly regulated. We should not apologise for that. Sometimes in this place we are quick to go down the path of reducing red tape. Health regulation—certainly from what I have read and learnt from the opportunity to engage with hundreds of different healthcare professionals over the past four years—in New South Wales and nationally puts us in good stead.

All of us in this place respect that and appreciate the ability to access good-quality medication when we need it—in a way that is safe, appropriate and properly regulated. We should all bring that context when looking at pieces of legislation in this area. The legislation will also enable the Secretary of NSW Health to respond to public health risks more effectively through a public health risk authorisation order, which could, for example, authorise the wholesale supply of COVID-19 vaccine for public health organisations to residential aged-care facilities. That is critical because of the speed at which COVID impacted our community, especially the most vulnerable.

We must ensure that Kerry Chant, Susan Pearce, whoever follows them and their respective teams—whoever is in government—have the ability to move and respond to public health risks more effectively. I feel very strongly about that. All of us have a strong duty when we legislate in this area. From now on, we should always be thinking about what has happened over the past three years and what we could have done to make it easier for our public health teams and our leading public health experts to manage a pandemic that was moving rapidly through the community. That is important, and I also understand that Ministers of the Crown receive other advice outside of their public health experts.

This morning I met with Bill Bowtell, a good public health expert and one of the leaders in the campaign to protect our citizens from HIV/AIDS. I have engaged with him for no reason other than the fact that he brings an interesting perspective to some of the challenges faced in the public health sector. He said that all legislators have a duty to learn from what happened over the past three years and not have the view that that was then and we are moving into now. There will be more pandemics. The next Parliament is likely to face them. That is the reality. As we debate this bill, COVID cases are rising again. No-one is sitting in this place and saying that we want to go back to some of the challenging public health restrictions and regulations. But we have a duty as legislators to remember that from now on we must legislate with an assumption that we are likely to face another pandemic in some form. That will certainly be my approach.

I feel strongly that, as leaders in our society, we should take a pragmatic view and learn from the best outcomes that occurred from the strategies we implemented, and some of those that perhaps were not implemented as well as we would have liked. That is not a criticism of any government of any political persuasion; it is a reality that a future Parliament will have to deal with. It does not matter what side we are from or who we believe in

more, we will have to face those challenges. I am glad and I appreciate that the Minister and his team have taken that into consideration in modernising the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Bill.

The bill also aims to reduce duplication and create more cohesion between the legislative frameworks and other New South Wales and Commonwealth legislation. That is important from an administrative perspective. Harmonisation and reducing duplication in creating greater coordination between legislation across the State and Commonwealth jurisdictions is important. I am always worried when the Feds have anything to do with health, but that is for another day, I am sure. I was pleased to be briefed on the draft exposure bill that was developed, and this new legislation is the result of extensive consultation. The Minister mentioned many groups in his second reading speech, in particular the Pharmacy Guild and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. I acknowledge the Pharmacy Guild in particular. It is a terrific advocate for frontline pharmacists and chemists across primary health, which is extremely important.

We know there are some real challenges of access to primary health care at the moment. Those challenges can sometimes result in more and more people finding their way into our hospitals. It is important that we have available to us a strong primary healthcare system, and pharmacists play a key role in that. I thank the Minister for bringing forward this legislation. I acknowledge that it is done in a spirit of consultation with the industry. I also acknowledge that it is done in a way that reflects the challenges that we faced during COVID. Hopefully in this one piece of legislation, we begin to look at ways in which we can improve on what occurred to ensure that we deliver the health care and the medicines to people when they need them in the most efficient way possible, whilst still maintaining high levels of safety and regulation.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:53):** On behalf of Mr Brad Hazzard: In reply: I thank the member for Keira for his contribution to debate on the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Bill 2022. I note the constructive role that he, in his capacity as the shadow Minister for Health, has played in this reform. Medicines, poisons and therapeutic goods are constantly evolving, as are the associated industries and technology. It is critical we have a flexible and contemporary framework to provide for appropriate regulation in this area. The bill ensures that the framework governing the supply chain for medicines, poisons and therapeutic goods in New South Wales is robust, fit for purpose and reflects contemporary requirements. The bill represents one of the key functions of the healthcare system because it ensures access to medicines where appropriate, while mitigating the risk of adverse health outcomes and diversion to the criminal supply chain. On behalf of the Minister for Health, I thank everyone who made a submission on the draft bill or provided feedback in relation to these important reforms. I also thank the Minister's team for their work in bringing the bill before the House. The submissions and the feedback received have positively informed the development of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** On behalf of Mr Brad Hazzard: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **DISTRICT COURT AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 19 October 2022.**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (19:55):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the District Court Amendment Bill 2022. The Opposition supports the bill and my comments will be brief. The bill is uncomplicated, uncontroversial and timely. The bill seeks to amend the District Court Act 1973 to increase the civil and equitable jurisdictional limits of the District Court. The bill amends the District Court Act, firstly, to increase the general jurisdictional limit in civil proceedings from the current \$750,000 to \$1.25 million. Secondly, it increases the limit in the equitable division from \$20,000 to \$100,000. Thirdly, it increases the jurisdictional limit from \$20,000 to \$100,000 in proceedings that relate to temporary injunctions for breaches of negative stipulations in a contract.

The District Court's general civil jurisdictional limit has not increased for 25 years and its equitable jurisdictional limit has not increased for 32 years. Of course, it goes without saying that there are different jurisdictional limits for different courts. Small and uncomplicated matters—if I can put it that way—are filed in the Local Court. Increasingly expensive matters and matters that have a different jurisdictional limit will go to the District Court and then onwards to the Supreme Court. These jurisdictional limits have not been adjusted for inflation for 25 years and 32 years. One of the things that has intrigued me about these scales—if I can use that

term loosely in legal matters—is that regardless of which party is in government, there has been a reluctance to index them. I would have thought rather than walking in here every five or 10 years, they should be indexed. But that is probably a discussion for another day.

The lag in increasing the jurisdictional limits has meant that in real monetary terms the value of the limits has dropped substantially since they were last increased. One of the attractions of the bill for litigants will be that court fees are much lower in the District Court compared with those in the Supreme Court. I note the Attorney General's indications that these amendments will reduce court fees for litigants and increase access to justice in our State. It will also align them more closely with those of comparable courts in other jurisdictions. One of the salient clauses in the bill will ensure that matters in the Supreme Court with monetary damages to the increased limits will continue to be dealt with in the Supreme Court if they are filed prior to the date this legislation commences. That is one of the matters that my colleagues have been concerned about—namely, that there is not a deluge of cases that swamps the District Court that would otherwise have been dealt with in the Supreme Court. It has been dealt with in clause 15 of the bill. It will assist the District Court in managing its workload associated with the amendments.

I also note the Attorney General's indications that the District Court will absorb these additional cases and it will result in the optimisation of the use of judicial resources in the court. The Attorney General says that the view was formed, firstly, on the basis that the court's pending civil case load has decreased significantly over the five years to October 202—an average annual decrease of 4.4 per cent—and, secondly, that many civil and equitable matters settle prior to the first hearing date. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (20:00):** In reply: I thank the member for Maroubra for his contribution to the debate. He raises the alternative of indexing jurisdictional limits from time to time, rather than periodic increases. I did give consideration to that as an alternative in the way—for example, that we index the limit on damages claims under the Defamation Act or the Civil Liability Act. It did not find favour with some stakeholders. Rather than do that, we are having a hefty increase with nice, rounded figures and will review it every several years.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## CRIMES AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF CRIMINAL DEFENCE LAWYERS) BILL 2022

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 19 October 2022.**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (20:01):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Crimes Amendment (Protection of Criminal Defence Lawyers) Bill 2022. Like the District Court Amendment Bill 2022, which we have just dealt with, this bill is uncontroversial and uncomplicated, so I will be brief. It is disappointing though that we should have to gather to promulgate such legislation. There should not be any sort of inappropriate behaviour directed to any judicial officials or anyone connected with law and order or judicial proceedings in the State. The fact that there have been celebrated instances in the last year or so, which have received media coverage, that have brought us here is, in my view, unfortunate, but nevertheless here we are. The Opposition supports the bill.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to extend provisions that currently exist in respect of public justice officials in the Crimes Act to an Australian legal practitioner acting for a defendant in a criminal matter or acting in connection with criminal proceedings against injury and detriment or threats to do or cause injury or detriment. Specifically, section 322 of the Crimes Act states:

#### Threatening or intimidating judges, witnesses, jurors etc

A person who threatens to do or cause, or who does or causes, any injury or detriment to any person—

- (a) intending to influence a person called or to be called as a witness in any judicial proceedings to give false evidence or withhold true evidence or to not attend as a witness or not produce anything in evidence pursuant to a summons or subpoena, or

- (b) intending to influence any person (whether or not a particular person) in the person's conduct as a juror in any judicial proceeding or to not attend as a juror in any judicial proceeding, whether he or she has been sworn as a junior or not, or
- (c) intending to influence any person in the person's conduct as a judicial officer, or
- (d) intending to influence any person in the person's conduct as a public justice official in or in connection with any judicial proceeding,

is liable to imprisonment for 10 years.

Section 326 states:

**Reprisals against judges, witnesses, jurors etc**

- (1) A person who threatens to do or cause, or who does or causes, any injury or detriment to any person on account of anything lawfully done by a person—
  - (a) as a witness or juror in any judicial proceeding, or
  - (b) as a judicial officer, or
  - (c) as a public justice official in or in connection with any judicial proceeding,
 is liable to imprisonment for 10 years.
- (2) A person who threatens to do or cause, or who does or causes, any injury or detriment to another person because the person believes the other person will or may be or may have been called as a witness, or will or may serve or may have served as a juror in any judicial proceeding is liable to imprisonment for 10 years.
- (3) For the purposes of this section it is immaterial whether the accused acted wholly or partly for a reason specified in subsection (1) or (2).

Finally, section 324 states:

**Increased penalty if serious indictable offence involved**

A person who commits an offence against section 321, 322 or 323 (offences concerning interference with witnesses, jurors, judicial officers and public justice officials) intending to procure the conviction or acquittal of any person of any serious indictable offence is liable to imprisonment for 14 years.

One would think those serious penalties would be wide enough to include almost all people who are engaged in public legal actions, but unfortunately those sections do not include defence lawyers. Therefore, the bill will amend the Crimes Act to provide an Australian legal practitioner who is acting for a defendant in a criminal matter or acting in connection with criminal proceedings with the same protection from threats, intimidation and reprisals that currently exist for jurors, witnesses and judicial officers, prosecutors and public justice officials. Section 322 will be amended so that in addition to where an injury or detriment is caused or threatened with the intention of influencing another person's conduct as a judicial officer or public justice official, a person will commit an offence where they engage in such behaviour with the intention of influencing a person's conduct as an Australian legal practitioner acting either for a defendant in a criminal matter or otherwise in connection with criminal proceedings.

Similarly, the bill amends section 326, which I have spoken about, so that causing or threatening to cause an injury or detriment on account of anything lawfully done by an Australian legal practitioner acting for a defendant in a criminal matter or in connection with criminal proceedings will constitute an offence. The bill amends both provisions to state that the alleged acts must be engaged in without reasonable excuse. The bill contains a non-exhaustive definition of "reasonable excuse", which includes making complaints to a professional body or ending a retainer. Labor supports the bill.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (20:07):** In reply: I thank the member for Maroubra for his contribution to the debate. The bill will amend the Crimes Act 1900 to provide an Australian legal practitioner who is acting for a defendant in a criminal matter or acting in connection with criminal proceedings with the same protections from threats, intimidation and reprisals as exist for jurors, witnesses, judicial officers, prosecutors and public justice officials. There will be reasonable excuse carve-outs, which are appropriate in these circumstances. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Third Reading**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Community Recognition Statements***YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:08):** Iyas, a student from Oran Park Anglican College, recently represented Camden in Youth Parliament, which is a program that provides high school students with the opportunity to engage with civic leadership, policy development and democratic parliamentary debate. During the week of debate and discussion, Iyas participated and spoke with passion and skill. Following on from Youth Parliament, Iyas joined the Camden electorate office to complete work experience. In the electorate office, Iyas learnt all about the types of inquiries received and the many ways we communicate with the Camden community. Iyas also attended Parliament where he learnt about the ways members represent their electorates. I congratulate Iyas on the work he participated in and his strong interest in the work that members of Parliament and their electorate offices do in serving our local communities.

**STOCKTON SHARKS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR LARA REGAN**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:09):** One would think that between school and playing for the Broadmeadow Magic, Lara Regan would not have much time to spare on her hands, but the 11-year-old has given back so much that she has been named the Stockton Sharks volunteer of the year. This year Lara stepped up to the role of coach, taking on her sister's under-9s team. When she was not busy on the sidelines, she was on the field as a referee or helping out in the canteen. Lara threw herself head first into the challenge, seeking mentorship from her own coach and passing on to her young charges the skills she has learned as a player. She has also put in the work to plan training sessions and expand her knowledge by attending a coaching course. I congratulate Lara on her award. Her efforts are most appreciated in our community.

**VOLUNTEER IN POLICING ERIC GALBRAITH**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (20:10):** I recognise Eric Galbraith for his dedicated work as a volunteer in policing [VIP]. Eric has been a VIP for the past 17 years and is currently based at Sutherland Shire Police Area Command. For many years Eric has volunteered in the Sutherland police emergency trailer crew, where he provides support and assistance at crime scenes. As a volunteer, Eric performs a range of duties that include assisting police with victim support and customer service; supporting witnesses during the court process; participating in policing initiatives such as safety audits and engraving programs to help during times of disaster and emergency; maintaining local registers, including those relating to citizens at risk; maintaining the public noticeboard in the foyer to help with youth programs; and promoting crime prevention initiatives by distributing prevention materials to the public. He has also volunteered for three years in the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol with NSW Marine Rescue. He has also served as a justice of the peace since 1969. Volunteer service is fundamental to making our community what it is, and I thank Eric for his service to the Sutherland Shire community and local policing.

**EAGLES RAPS**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:11):** Marten and Sally Wynd are the founders of Eagles RAPS, which started in 1997 as a community initiative to respond to social challenges faced by the youth across Blacktown, which unfortunately in some circumstances lead to youth suicide. The Eagle RAPS Youth Centre started as a drop-in recreational centre in 1997. By 2001 it had begun to assist young people who did not fit into the school environment. It has supported hundreds to complete their year 10 education. Eagles has transformed into a successful education and training organisation, and is an accredited registered training organisation. Today, Eagles offers various courses, including foundation skills, IT, first aid and the white card. Eagle RAPS delivers a vital service to the youth supported by partnerships with Amazon Web Services, Blacktown City Council, Rotary and many other organisations. Eagles RAPS is making a real difference and creating real and life-changing experiences for the youth in our local area. More importantly, young people are alive today because of the efforts of Marten, Sally and the team at Eagles RAPS.

**KETTLEBELL COMPETITORS CHERYL SCHNEIDER AND SHANNON PIGDON**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:12):** I congratulate Cheryl Schneider and Shannon Pigdon from Albury, who have competed in the International Union of Kettlebell Lifting World Championships in New Delhi, India, this October. Kettle bell sport, also known as girevoy, is a unique cyclical power endurance sport. It is a combination of weightlifting, incorporating whole body movements with aerobic qualities. Both Ms Schneider and Mr Pigdon went through a vigorous six-week training session at Lavington's Lone Dog Personal Training. This is a true commitment that involves a blend of both strength and endurance work. I commend Ms Schneider and Mr Pigdon for their dedication to training, which has led them to represent our country and our region in this international competition. I wish them the best of success.

### TRIBUTE TO KENNY WILLIAMS

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:13):** I acknowledge the remarkable life of Kenny Williams. A husband, father, Catholic church altar boy, wild street kid, wharfie, Labor man, Swannies super fan and staffer, Kenny lived his life to the fullest. Community was at the heart of Kenny, who volunteered with the Swans for 40 years, maintaining his health and fitness to ensure that he could be there with the boys. He attended every home game up until 2019 when he fractured his back. Such was Kenny's love for the Swans that he once snuck out of the Prince of Wales Hospital with a drip attached to his arm to attend a game, only to be caught by a nurse who saw him being interviewed on TV at the game. Williams famously led the Swans' celebrations following the 2005 grand final, when the club broke a 72-year premiership-winning drought. While Kenny described himself as "just a bloke behind the goals originally from Port Melbourne", he was so much more than that to the Swans and the decades of players he mentored and supported. A Labor man, a trade unionist and a diligent supporter of the underdog, Kenny will be missed. May he rest in peace.

### OZHARVEST CHARITY WORKER JULIE FERGUSON

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:14):** From day one, Julie Ferguson has been the driving force and the smiling face of the food rescue charity OzHarvest in Coffs Harbour. So it was the end of an era recently when Julie folded up her famous yellow T-shirt for the last time and stepped down from her leadership role. The Coffs Coast community owes a debt of gratitude to Julie for her dedicated and tireless service, putting in countless hours collecting donated food to be given to those in need. Julie founded the Coffs Harbour chapter of OzHarvest. With almost 10 years under her belt building and leading the chapter, the time has come to hand over to someone else. She can rightly be proud of her achievements over the years, particularly coming to the aid of countless individuals and families needing help. Two years ago, on the eve of International Women's Day, I was honoured to congratulate Julie on being named the Coffs Harbour electorate 2020 Local Woman of the Year. She has always been an unstoppable force of kindness, with her big heart and a devotion to helping as many people as she can. I thank Julie for her commitment to OzHarvest and our community. I wish her well in her future endeavours.

### ST HURMIZD ASSYRIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:15):** I congratulate St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School on celebrating its twentieth anniversary. It was an honour to attend the celebration on Sunday 30 October 2022 at the Odessa Hall in the presence of His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, AM Metropolitan; His Grace Mar Benyamin Elya, Bishop of Victoria and New Zealand; and reverend fathers and community members. From humble beginnings, the school commenced with 86 students, providing faith-based Christian education to children from the Holy Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East. Over the past 20 years the school has grown markedly, with over 700 students now enrolled. I pay tribute to the principal, Mr Benjamin Khoshabeh, teachers and staff for their dedication and commitment to educating local Assyrian children in the Assyrian language, religious studies and all NSW Education Standards Authority key learning areas. The gala dinner was a splendid event, with tributes paid to the forebears of the school and an acknowledgment of the current student body, which was on display through song and dance. I once again congratulate St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School on its twentieth anniversary celebrations.

### SPORTS JOURNALIST STEVE HILE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:16):** I congratulate Steve Hile on publishing his biography of Young Griffo, a great Australian sporting legend well known for his boxing skills and larrikininess all around the world. Steve has been working on this biography for almost a decade and completed a sports journalism diploma in between to better prepare himself for the task. I also acknowledge the significant amount of work that goes into completing a biography. A lot of research, time and effort goes into properly recording the history of individuals, especially when that individual is an Australian boxing legend who moved to the United States to further his career. Once again, I congratulate Steve on this remarkable achievement.

### TRIBUTE TO CHRYS MEADER

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:17):** I am deeply saddened by the recent loss of Chrys Meader, a truly exceptional voice in our inner west community. Chrys passed away peacefully last week, leaving behind a remarkable legacy. As a librarian and inner west historian, Chrys dedicated so many years of her life to preserving the memory and heritage of her Marrickville home. In so many ways she became the mouthpiece for our history and, by extension, our identity. Chrys was an educator and a published author. She was so kind to pass on her knowledge to all of us during her iconic walking tours and through the many conversations she had with me and residents every day. Following the many achievements of Chrys' life, she received the 2021 Inner West Citizen of the Year award. We were so proud to have her voice represent our community. I know that Chrys' legacy will



continue to shape our lives for the better in the inner west. A kind and delightful friend, Chrys Meader will be missed by all of us.

#### **NEPEAN BUSINESS NETWORK**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) (20:18):** I recognise the fantastic work that is being done by the Nepean Business Network, particularly its annual Melbourne Cup charity breakfast. The network is a fantastic collection of local Penrith businesses, often very small businesses and sole traders. They work across a wide range of areas. They host one of the great events that happens every year in Penrith. This year the breakfast was at the new Log Cabin alongside the Nepean River. They raised a whopping \$53,000, which went to WestCare, one of the great charities in the wider Penrith community. That builds on a wonderful legacy of supporting other charities like the Luke Priddis Foundation, the Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia and the Penrith Community Kitchen over the past few years. What a fantastic result. It is great work by the Nepean Business Network and all the businesses involved, and I am sure that WestCare greatly appreciates it.

#### **ENFIELD ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (20:19):** I congratulate the Enfield Rovers Football Club under-16 division one team on taking out the championship of the fifty-second Football NSW Champion of Champions finals on 23 October 2022. After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, the 2022 championship was a chance for the team to demonstrate its incredible skill and determination in what was a hard-fought championship match. Bringing together a rock-solid defence with strategic and skilful offence, Enfield Rovers worked as a unit, creating and taking their opportunities. A first-half goal from an opportunity created by a corner kick set the winning stage. Victory was sealed by a goal in the second half that led to a commanding final score of 2-0. With such a scoreline, especially in a grand final, it is clear that the boys are a formidable team. The Enfield Rovers' win marks the first time the club has won a championship since 1996. I congratulate coaches Tony Santangelo and Michael Perugini, manager Felicity Santangelo and all members of the team.

#### **GREENETHORPE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL HALL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (20:20):** I recognise the 100th birthday of the Greenethorpe Soldiers Memorial Hall following a gathering in celebration on Saturday 8 October. This is a very special milestone for a building that was completed in August 1922 at a cost of £1,200. A kitchen was later added in 1928 and an honour board would follow, unveiled in 1929. In 1947 a large brick memorial porch was added, which is the facade that can still be seen today. The community of Greenethorpe gathered over a barbecue to share a few stories and to help mark the occasion. They have compiled a special centenary cookbook, which was launched as part of the event. The cookbook was collated by Jane Tyrrell, who has done a tremendous job. As is the case with many small halls across the Cootamundra electorate, a terrific group of volunteers help to ensure the longevity of this important community meeting place. On that note, I thank committee members past and present, including Warwick Hodges, Jim Bryant, Corrie Bryant, Lynne Watt and Jill Allen. Through this beautiful, small hall they have continued to foster a strong sense of community for the wonderful village.

#### **CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:21):** Recently, I had the wonderful opportunity of joining the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre at its annual general meeting, learning about the centre's work and successes supporting women across the coast in 2022. For over 40 years the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre has empowered women across our community by providing personal, medical and social services, and assisting women to thrive in all aspects of life. Offering a range of services such as clinical services, counselling, advocacy, legal advice, workshops, social groups and supports for women in crisis, the organisation provides a bedrock of support for women in our community.

Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre achieves successful outcomes by providing a holistic approach to women's health, recognising the diverse needs of women of all ages, backgrounds and cultures, enriching residents' lives for the better. I also thank Jen Hogan and her team at the Central Coast Local Health District and congratulate them on the work they are doing to support victims and survivors of sexual violence. Jen made an inspiring presentation about this growing sector in our community health team. I thank everyone at the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre for all they do.

#### **WAMBERAL AND MACMASTERS BEACH SURF LIFESAVING CLUBS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:22):** I acknowledge and thank Central Coast surf lifesaving clubs for their participation in and support of the recent 24-hour row for mental fitness. Locally, Wamberal and Macmasters Beach surf lifesaving clubs both committed to rowing for 24 hours straight. Anyone who has used a

rowing machine for an extended period will confirm that this is truly a monumental effort. Incredibly, MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club raised \$14,501, which was the most money of all participating surf clubs across Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Further, Craig White of Macmasters Beach was the leading individual fundraiser, raising an impressive \$6,778. The fundraising goes to an outstanding cause. The Gotcha4Life 24 Hour Row is a fantastic event, which has raised a total of \$308,403 to support mental health. All donations go towards educational workshops and programs that destigmatise mental health. By starting the conversation, they provide a safe space to talk. Working at a grassroots level to reduce suicide, the team encourage community engagement. I could not be more proud of Wamberal and Macmasters Beach surf lifesaving clubs for their contributions to such an important cause.

#### **TRIBUTE TO FERDINANDO LELLI**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:24):** There is genuine sadness within the Illawarra and broader union movement following the passing of committed unionist Ferdinando Lelli—or Nando, as he was better known. Nando migrated to Australia from Italy as part of the post-World War II migration program, rising from a labouring role to lead the Port Kembla branch of the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia [FIA], representing tens of thousands of steelworkers in the Illawarra. The fact that Port Kembla steelworks operates today is in part because of Nando's efforts. He, along with other FIA leaders, was responsible for the campaign and lobbying that led to the Hawke Government's Steel Industry Plan and the steel industry development agreement, which led to the restructuring of Australian steel production. As a committed unionist, Nando also led the South Coast Labour Council, serving as president. As former president of the FIA and Australia Workers' Union Port Kembla, South Coast and Southern Highlands branches, Andrew Whiley said on Nando's passing:

Nando believed very strongly in rank and file democracy, workers determining their own future as well as social democracy, workers having an active voice in the shaping of their lives and wider society outside the workplace.

#### **WAGGA WAGGA CANCER COUNCIL CEO AWARDS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (20:25):** I congratulate the Wagga Wagga Relay For Life volunteering committee and local Cancer Council employee Sheridan Evans, who are finalists in the charity's prestigious annual CEO Awards. The awards reflect on the contributions made to Cancer Council NSW. Ms Evans joined Cancer Council NSW in May 2021 after 19 years as a radiation therapist at the Riverina Cancer Care Centre, and quickly made a positive impact on the organisation. In her position as community programs coordinator, she has supported people affected by cancer. The relay committee, comprising Alan Pottie, Michael Gordon, Connie Gordon, Greg Johnson, Leonie McCallum, Dallas Tout, Ang Roberts, Pat O'Donoghue, Leigh Ryan, Belinda Barker, Bron Worrell and Trevor Argus, has been nominated in the Volunteer Team Award section, while Ms Evans has made the Employee of the Year category. The Wagga relay was held virtually in 2020 and 2021 because of COVID, and raised about \$100,000 for Cancer Council's research, prevention and support programs. When rain threatened this year's event, the committee and participants shelved existing plans in favour of an indoor event. They raised \$75,000.

#### **M&G TRAVEL AIRPORT GROUND HANDLING TEAM**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (20:26):** I recognise the longstanding commitment of M&G Travel personnel as they served as the ground handling team at Moree Regional Airport. Their familiar and friendly faces will be missed after 43 years serving passengers in the early hours and late at night in all kinds of weather. Liz Whiteley commenced at the airport in 1979; Allan Whiteley in 2005; Catherine Simons, née Vanbest, in 2008; Dennis Humphries in 2016; and Katie-Anne Warner earlier this year. I thank the ground handling teams over the years who ensured the professional administration of Moree Regional Airport passengers. On Monday 26 September the ground handling team closed the gate for the final time, with some retiring from airport operations, while contractors Liz and Allan enter a more relaxed working lifestyle. I congratulate M&G Travel on receiving the well-deserved recognition award from QantasLink in appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the operation in Moree. I commend M&G Travel on delivering a first-class service for Moree passengers and a warm welcome to visitors, providing their first and last impressions of our wonderful region.

#### **TRIBUTE TO EMMA RYALL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:27):** On Saturday 29 October 2022 the rugby league community of Shellharbour celebrated the memory of Stingrays junior rugby league player Emma Ryall at the inaugural Shellharbour Shield. The event was established by Emma's parents after she tragically died by suicide last year at the age of just 12. The local derby between the Shellharbour Sharks and Shellharbour Stingrays provided an opportunity for Emma's teammates and friends to take to the football field, not just to compete but to remember their friend and raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention. Representatives from organisations including Lifeline were present at the event, with funds raised on the day going towards the excellent work that such organisations provide to those in need of support. While the Stingrays prevailed as the inaugural

winners of the shield, the event was a massive success in the remembrance of the life of Emma and in raising awareness that there are people who can help, listen and support. On behalf of the entire community, I offer my condolences to Emma's family and friends, and thank all players, organisers and other volunteers for creating such a wonderful event.

#### **NORTH SHORE SENIORS FORUM**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:28):** I thank the local seniors who joined me at North Shore seniors' forum held earlier this week in Mosman. Seniors from the community had the chance to join with me and the Minister for Seniors, Mr Mark Coure as well as staff from government agencies and community organisations such as Service NSW, Trustee and Guardian, the New South Wales seniors team, the NSW Police Force, Cancer Council NSW, North Shore Historical Society, some of our local councillors, and a team from the Northern Sydney Local Health District. On the day, seniors who have contributed to our community were honoured with a North Shore Seniors Achievement Award. Leona Geeves was recognised for her active involvement and dedicated volunteer work in our community's heritage preservation, music and artistic life. I thank Davie Macdonald and his 68-year-old therapy dog, Zara—nine in human years—for their outstanding contribution to assisting communities through recovery after the devastating bushfire and flood events. I am incredibly proud to be a part of a community that comes together for meaningful and informative events like this. I thank everyone who attended and all the representatives who gave up their time to help the older members in our community. We are very proud of our North Shore seniors.

#### **DIXON PARK SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:29):** In 1932 members of the Dixon Park Surf Life Saving Club began patrolling the ocean between Bar and Merewether beaches. Some 90 years later, they are still there providing a valuable service to the Newcastle community. Having no official premises for their first two seasons was no deterrent, with the club digging a hole to store gear and serve as a meeting point. It was not long before they were able to acquire their first shed, repurposing a former fire-damaged shoe repair shop, which was transported by horse and dray from Hamilton. Soon the club was thriving, establishing itself over the decades as the home club of champion paddlers, surf boaters and iron men, all the while excelling at their core business: keeping people safe. I congratulate the club on 90 years, and look forward to seeing its successes in the future.

#### **HAKOAH CLUB WHITE CITY SPORTS FACILITY**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (20:30):** On Friday 23 September the Hakoah club officially launched the commencement of construction for the White City state-of-the-art sports and community facility. I joined Hakoah president, Steven Lowy, AM; life governor, Sir Frank Lowy, AC; the Premier; and the Minister for Sport to unveil the club's two foundation stones. When the club opens in 2024, it will offer the use of a gym, two swimming pools, a football field, multipurpose sports courts and nine tennis courts. I congratulate the club, led by Steven Lowy, on making this long-awaited community project a reality, made possible through the generosity of the Jewish community with the support of the New South Wales and Australian governments. I congratulate vice-president George Farkas, treasurer Kevin Wunsh and directors Greg Enfield, Phil Green, Ali Linz, Lance Rosenberg, Jessica Mendoza-Roth, Danny Yezerski and Simon Weinstock. I also congratulate chief executive officer Andy Hedges, project director Robert Woolf, and team members Gary Samowitz, Pam Lewin, Allen Linz and Phil Wolanski, AM.

#### **OXI DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:31):** On 28 October Greek people across the world come together on Oxi Day to remember a brave act of defiance in the name of protecting their nation's sovereignty, when Greece took a stand against Mussolini's forces and refused to allow fascist troops to cross their border. This year was the eighty-second anniversary of Oxi Day, and the Inner West Council held its annual commemorations in Marrickville, which is home to a thriving Greek-Australian community. I had the privilege to stand shoulder to shoulder with this wonderful community at Marrickville Town Hall during a wreath-laying ceremony to honour the courage, sacrifice and democratic values of Greek people. I thank Archbishop Makarios, the wonderful councillor Zoi Tsardoulis, mayor Darcy Byrne, and the Inner West Council for the work that went into organising such a moving ceremony. I extend my thanks to my colleagues the member for Canterbury and the Hon. Courtney Houssos for standing with our Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, during the wonderful occasion. Finally, my appreciation goes to all Greek Australians in the inner west who had the courage to share their culture and history with us.

#### **SURFING LEGEND DAVID BELL**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (20:32):** I recognise David Bell, local surfing legend and radio host. On Monday 17 October I unveiled a blue plaque at Freshwater Surf Life

Saving Club in honour of Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku, who introduced surfing to Australia in the summer of 1914-15. This fantastic plaque could not have been opened without the help of David Bell, who successfully nominated Duke Kahanamoku and Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club. I thank him for his great passion and care for Manly and Australian surfing history. Further, I recognise Mr Bell for his fantastic local radio program, *Crescent Swells*. Manly is truly better off because of community-focused individuals like David Bell.

#### **SOCCEROOS SQUAD CENTRAL COAST REPRESENTATIVES**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:33):** I congratulate Danny Vukovic, Jason Cummings and Garang Kuol, who have been chosen in the Socceroos squad to represent Australia during the FIFA World Cup. It is the biggest representation that the Central Coast has had on the world stage, and an amazing achievement. The youngest in the team, Garang Kuol, moved to Australia with his family as a refugee from Egypt, and joined the Mariners only in 2021. Now he is representing Australia at the FIFA World Cup. It is fantastic see a young local reach those great heights. Danny Vukovic has the cleanest slate of any goalkeeper in the A-League, and is the only keeper to have ever scored in the A-League. Jason Cummings was selected in the Australian squad back in September to play against New Zealand, scoring a penalty in the second half and helping to a secure a win for the squad. Those fantastic players show that anyone on the Central Coast can reach the world cup. The team's campaign is underway on 22 November against France in group D. I wish all selected, especially those three coasties, the best of luck in their upcoming matches. I cannot wait to watch on proudly at all they achieve.

#### **GUY SEBASTIAN AND PICTON HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (20:34):** In September this year my electorate was left reeling and lost for words when a tragic car accident in Buxton claimed the lives of five teenagers. Left behind are devastated families, friends and teachers, and the entire community is still in mourning. To help boost morale at Picton High School, the iconic Australian singer Guy Sebastian surprised the school and performed at their assembly on 26 October. Words cannot explain how joyous the atmosphere was, as students screamed and cheered when principal Warren Parkes announced a "surprise" and Guy came onto the stage to perform three of his hit songs. Guy also participated in a music workshop with students, who had the opportunity to craft a song with him. I offer my deepest gratitude and thanks to Guy for helping bring back smiles to Picton High. I also thank Guy's wife, Jules, his team and principal Warren Parkes for helping make this incredible event happen.

#### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION TRAINER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER DEBORAH MERCER**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:35):** I offer congratulations to Deborah Mercer of Atwea College on her commendation as a finalist for the Community Education Trainer of the Year Award. Deborah's acknowledgement follows almost two decades as an aged-care and disability care educator, currently teaching at both certificate III and certificate IV level in ageing, disability and infection control, as well as delivering workshops and providing on-the-job support to trainees. Outside of Atwea, Deborah continues to give back to the industry, volunteering her time at the RFBI Kurri Kurri Masonic Village. This award recognises Deborah's valuable contribution to aged and disability care, Atwea College and the students who come through its doors. Congratulations, Deborah.

#### **CASTLE COVE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:36):** On Friday 21 October it was my great honour to be present at the seventieth anniversary celebrations of Castle Cove Public School. I pay tribute to the rich contribution Castle Cove Public has made to the education of boys and girls across Willoughby for seven decades. Since its founding in 1952, Castle Cove Public has been dedicated to providing a quality education, where all students are valued as learners, experience success and have achievements recognised across a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities. Castle Cove Public is not only dedicated to the success of individual students but it is also heavily vested in building community. On this occasion, a beautiful new playground was opened and a special tree planted. I thank principal Jeanette Cope and P&C president Mayank Gupta for organising such a wonderful celebration. It was also a pleasure to meet the school's first registered student, Ian Taylor. I congratulate Castle Cove Public School on this special anniversary and commend all of the staff, students and parents of the school who live up to its motto of seeking "Truth and Honour".

#### **ONE PENNY RED AND VERNON'S BAR**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:37):** Following another incredible award season, One Penny Red and Vernon's Bar remain the pride of Summer Hill's food and nightlife culture. Located in the old Summer Hill Post Office building, the charming restaurant and bar combo is renowned for its excellence, inviting people from across Sydney to appreciate our suburb's rich heritage. It came as no surprise when One Penny Red was recognised as the Most Outstanding Restaurant and Business of the Year at the 2022 Inner West Local Business Awards. One Penny Red also won in the Contemporary Australian Restaurant—Informal category at this year's Restaurant and

Catering Awards. That night Vernon's Bar received its rightful title as best wine bar. The combo was later recognised in Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards, due to some expert drink curation. I am delighted to extend my warm congratulations to David Murphy, Nina Alidenes, R J Lines, and all the wonderful staff. With each year that passes, One Penny Red and Vernon's Bar make great strides in delivering the most refined dining and bar experience in Summer Hill.

#### **SOUTHGATE PHARMACY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (20:38):** I congratulate the incredible team at Southgate Pharmacy in Sylvania on winning the Pharmacy of the Year category at the 2022 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Southgate Pharmacy is a family-owned business run by a father-and-daughter team, John Skyllas and Carolyn Charalambous, and ably assisted by their dedicated team. As a trusted part of our local community, the team at Southgate Pharmacy delivered over 2,000 COVID-19 vaccinations at the height of the pandemic and continued to provide flu shots to ensure the safety and wellbeing of community members. Today the friendly team is an important source of medical information for their customers, reliably providing numerous vaccinations and dispensing various prescriptions. This NSW Small Business Month is a fantastic opportunity to highlight local businesses like Southgate Pharmacy, which are an important part of our community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I again congratulate the team at Southgate Pharmacy on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **AUSTRALIAN MEN'S NETBALL TEAM PLAYER NOAH STEPHENSON**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:39):** I send a huge congratulations to one of our very own, Noah Stephenson, who at the age of 15 is the youngest of our under-17s Australian men's netball team. Noah was selected for the team earlier this year, with much love and support from his friends and family as well as the fantastic leadership, care and great training at the Gosford netball club. The team went across the ditch and absolutely trounced the Kiwis, winning five out of five games to take home the gold medal. I might also say that the New South Wales women's parliamentary team trounced the Kiwis as well. Our community is so wonderfully blessed to have such amazing athletic talent such as Nicola McDermott, Matt Graham and now Noah Stephenson. I know Noah is amongst them as a promising athlete with a bright future.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **PENRITH ELECTORATE**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) (20:40):** As we come to the conclusion of this parliamentary term, this is a good opportunity to reflect on many of the things that have happened in the Penrith community over the past four years. As members reflect over this period of time, no doubt one of the things that will dominate a lot of those reflections is how their respective communities dealt with a once-in-100-year pandemic. From the outset, the work of our health professionals and so many community organisations across Penrith has been, quite frankly, amazing. I am thinking, first and foremost, of the heroes who went in to shore up Newmarch House during what was an incredibly challenging period of time. I do not use the word "heroes" lightly. These people put themselves in harm's way to save the lives of others, and we will be forever grateful for that.

I was incredibly proud of the way in which the Penrith community came together and fought off COVID to get to where we sit today. I look across my community and see so many things that have come to bear which simply would not exist without the Liberals and The Nationals being in government since 2011. I think of a completely changed Nepean River precinct, the Yandhi Nepean Crossing and the establishment of the East Bank restaurant precinct. As people move around the Nepean River, they can now see our wonderful new Regatta Park under construction. A fantastic outcome of the City Deal, the Parks for People program is delivering a complete refurbishment, renovation and upgrade to the Tench Reserve area. This Nepean River precinct is the beating heart of Penrith, and we want to be able to bring more people close to the river. We know how much people love it, and it is fantastic to see the private sector investment that has come off the back of the public investment into the broader Nepean River precinct.

I, like many other people, am looking forward to the next hospitality venture that is coming to Penrith. Down along the river the Orchard, which I think will be opening around Easter next year, is another reflection of the private investment that has so much confidence in Penrith now, following on from what the Government has done. I also think about the reconstruction and rebuilding of the Log Cabin, a wonderful Penrith institution that unfortunately was burnt down many years ago. But once again, supported by the confidence of investment into the Penrith community, that private sector investment has come off the back of public investment.

If I swing over towards the eastern part of the electorate, I think of the \$1 billion redevelopment of Nepean Hospital. It has changed the Penrith skyline. Stage one is complete. We are moving a lot of material, and wards are moving into the new tower. Work is about to start on stage two, which will take that investment to more than

of \$1 billion. Once again, that investment into this world-class teaching hospital will deliver fantastic health care to the people of Penrith for the next generation and the generations beyond that. It has also led to an explosion of private sector investment in health care. We are seeing more private health operators come into the Penrith community, giving people across Penrith more choice about where they can access their health care. We know there is a lot of confidence, and private hospitals, private health clinics and new surgery wards are all coming together in and around Kingswood. These things could only ever have been dreamed of in a Penrith under a Labor government. It is a completely new community.

The people of my electorate have also seen the fantastic work in our road and transport infrastructure, such as the upgrading of Penrith train station, the new train station car park at Penrith and the one under construction at Emu Plains, and the widening of The Northern Road. People now drive down to Narellan on The Northern Road in a journey that takes half as much time. It has completely changed the way our community interacts with the south-west of Sydney. Once again, it is a road that people could only have dreamed of under a Labor government that never, ever really understood Penrith because it constantly took it for granted.

We have delivered so many things in our community, which has created such a great confidence around Penrith, but I say there is so much more to do. There are great things we want to deliver around public amenity. We have opened so many fantastic school projects, with more to come. We want to make sure that over the next four years we take Penrith from the great position it is in now to something stratospheric.

### **EMPIRE BAY BOATSHED AND MARINA**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:45):** Today I talk about a beautiful event that I was invited to on the weekend. I am glad the member for Terrigal is in the Chamber. While it is part of the Brisbane Water, the Empire Bay boatshed and marina is a crucial piece of history on the edge of the waterfront. It is a gorgeous heritage boatshed built over 100 years ago by Arthur Davis and his family. It was the third building in Empire Bay, following Davis' home and the general store. I understand that a family of three was raised in the top storey of the boatshed, which is a tiny space. The boatshed is a symbol of the fantastic boatbuilding history that exists on the Central Coast. The Brisbane Water was opened because of its tall trees, fantastic timber and the skills of our boatbuilding families who resided on the coast. Arthur Davis was possibly a son of or relation to Rock Davis, who was a very colourful boatbuilder in our community.

Sadly, as the member for Terrigal knows, the previous tenant neglected this beautiful facility and it took a little bit too long for Crown Lands to act and terminate that agreement. The poor old boatshed has become very dilapidated. I thank Crown Lands for the work it has done keeping the community updated. It has taken over the care, control and management of the boatshed following the cancellation of the previous owner's licence due to lots of breaches. I think some of those breaches are causing the delay. The historic boatbuilding industry—my dad was part of it—used red lead paint. We painted our boats with red lead, and there is contamination in the waterways. There are old fuel tanks that have to be removed. There is also a lot of work needed to get that boatshed safe and up to scratch.

Currently the boatshed is fenced off, which is really sad because it means that our ferry has no place on the Brisbane Water to moor for its maintenance. Previously it used to moor up beside the facility and was stored there at one stage. Disappointingly, at the moment the ferry is on a mooring in the middle of the Brisbane Water. I do not think there would be any other such public transport that did not have a home beside a wharf and had to use a power cord from a private house to a public wharf. I am saddened that the State and local governments have not been able to work together to find a better solution for our Central Coast ferries. I encourage the Parliamentary Secretary to not only work with the ferry company but also visit this fantastic community in Empire Bay on the beautiful Central Coast.

On the weekend probably a couple of hundred people turned out at the boatshed. Unfortunately, the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast was unable to be there. I was there with the Federal member, Dr Gordon Reid. It was fantastic event. The barbecue chef was cooking the snags with "Save the boatshed" written in fluoro on his apron. He is fourth-generation Empire Bay and has amazing memories of the boatshed. He values the boatshed and the importance of keeping it in the community. It will take a huge effort to restore it. The tradies in the local community are also really keen to try to restore the boatshed and keep it there. The boatshed sits in front of some houses on the gorgeous waterfront and is an amazing community facility. Lots of young families want to see this place saved so the people of Empire Bay and environs—there were lots of people from Davistown and Saratoga at the event—have somewhere to sit and be on the waterfront. It has got so much potential, from kayaking to the 15 to 20 boat berths for 20-foot boats, which is something we should have been using over the time—those facilities could have generated lots of money to pay for that restoration—but also as a home for the ferry.

Tonight in the Parliament I commend Errol Baker, a local barber who has been the advocate and campaigner to save this boathouse. Whilst Errol's efforts behind the scenes to save this boatshed may not have been listened to by numerous members of Parliament, hopefully those members will hear about how much momentum is behind the issue. Errol was amazing. Also at the presentation was a lovely fellow from the Australian Maritime Museum. He reinforced the importance of this being the last boatshed on the edge of the Brisbane Water. Once it goes, public access to the boatbuilding history of the region will possibly be gone. I understand there are concerns from the progress association, but given the grants given out in my community I assure it that if the boatshed was operational as a community facility, grants would not be removed from the progress association. It will really only enhance the sense of community. Tonight in the Parliament I urge the Parliamentary Secretary to work with Crown Lands and the community to save this fabulous community facility on the beautiful Central Coast.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:50):** I also acknowledge the turnout on Saturday at the Empire Bay boatshed. Sadly I could not be there because I was attending a police function, and the event was originally scheduled for the week after, which I could have attended. I acknowledge Errol Baker, Craig Hillman, Ray Price and Lee Fleming. The great thing about the weekend was the outcome achieved by them setting up an association. I am pleased because this enables the association to work out what the community wants. I have met with Errol Baker multiple times, along with the ferry operators and the progress association regarding their concerns about the boatshed and marina. Sadly, the boatshed saw decades of neglect by the former leaseholder, which led to extensive contamination of the site. The construction or deconstruction—or whatever might need to be done—of that facility must keep the safety of the community paramount. The level of contamination on the site is incredibly high. I look forward to working with the newly formed association and Crown Lands to see what we can do in the future for the boatshed.

#### NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE ROADS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (20:51):** I share with the House a crisis facing most of the local government areas within my electorate on the back of the unwelcome, lingering and loitering La Niña. As a lifelong resident of country New South Wales and someone who has spent a number of years in local government—like so many before entering this place—I am not really capable of uttering the words, "No more rain, please", but I reckon out our way we are pretty close to caving in on that particular rule. I spent last week on the ground in Moree trying to help out where I could throughout the record-breaking flood disaster that is still tragically gripping that particular part of the Northern Tablelands. Sadly, Moree and the towns and villages that surround this temporary Venice of the West, as it has been described, have been there and done that before with major floods. Led by the dedicated and tireless mayor, Mark Johnson, his councillors and staff, and a full complement of emergency service crews, the response this time was exemplary. I am pleased to report to the House that the shire is recovering, emerging from the mud stronger than ever before.

However, across the Northern Tablelands this event has exacerbated an underlying problem that existed even before the flooding: the deterioration of our local road network. Even though we have had the rainy skies for the past 12 months, only when that rain stops will the true cost be known. Across the Northern Tablelands there are literally tens of thousands of kilometres of local road network, all of it maintained by the seven local councils. The relentless weather has not only deteriorated those roads but also prevented council crews actually getting on and doing the proper maintenance and repairs. I speak not just of potholes but the entire failure of the road pavement and the erosion of the structure underneath the bitumen. For gravel roads, it is almost the complete gouging out and removal of the road. As I have seen in the west of the Northern Tablelands and the Moree Plains shire, all that is left is literally the black soil. All of the gravel has been completely removed.

In the Moree Plains shire alone, the damage bill to reinstate the roads to the condition they were in prior to the flood is in excess of \$70 million. In the neighbouring Gwydir shire that cost is close to \$20 million. But in my view the flood is an opportunity for us, as legislators and as members of Parliament, to step back for a moment and think very seriously about what we are going to do the future to address the issue of road maintenance. As we know, local councils are responsible for maintaining more than 80 per cent of the roads that our constituents drive on every single day, but they receive a mere fraction—less than 3 per cent—of the total taxation that is collected across this country.

That equation is not sustainable. Whilst State and Federal governments—and more power to them; it is brilliant—provide funding to councils to reinstate roads that have incurred natural disasters, that only reinstates the roads to their condition prior to that natural disaster—reinstating what is damaged or removed altogether. It does nothing to strengthen, bolster or improve, to insert box culverts, to concrete causeways, or to lift them out of floodwaters so we are not continually pouring taxpayers' dollars time and again into an almost bottomless pit.

We can do that only if we have a proper conversation between Federal, State and local governments about how we fund these things properly so that there is a sustainable, long-term funding pipeline, regardless of who

controls the Treasury benches, so that local governments that control, maintain and care for the vast majority of our road network have the financial capability and workforce to match to maintain and gradually upgrade it. Without good local roads—it does not matter how good our highways are—our produce will never get out and the important inputs will never get in. That would be hugely detrimental to not only rural communities but also every person who lives in our State, whether in Sydney or in the most remote place in western New South Wales. I appeal to decision-makers in this place, in Canberra and across the country to work to resolve this issue for the long term, not just for a short-term bandaid fix.

### FOOTBALL NSW CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS TOURNAMENT

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (20:56):** The fifty-second Football NSW Champion of Champions finals were held on 23 October. The Champions of Champions is the most prestigious tournament in grassroots football in New South Wales. Champion teams from each football association in the State compete against each other in a battle for supremacy. Due to COVID-19, this year was the first time in two years that the Champions of Champions tournament could be run. I congratulate Cronulla Seagulls Football Club on its success. Cronulla Seagulls under-21s men defeated Sans Souci Football Club 6-0. That is a fantastic achievement. I congratulate coach Jordan Harrington, assistant coach Michael Harrington, manager Ben Harrington, and the following players: Benjamin Armstrong, William Lumb, Cooper Sachr, Nathan Dresser, Jackson Sumich, Adam Castle, Luke Roberts, Lachlan Webb, Kyle Yeo, Ryan Hardie, Max Watson-Steege, Bailey Fowler, Jamie Bollard, Martin Chave, Lachlan Zdebski, Anthony Mann and David Khoury.

I congratulate Grays Point Soccer Club on its success. Grays Point under-18s men defeated Collaroy Cromer Strikers FC 2-1. It was a tight match, with Grays Point behind at half time. Grays Point quickly overturned this with two second half goals, sealing the title with a last kick of the game. It was a fantastic win for Sutherland shire football. I commend coach Peter Slater, manager Jeff Poulter and the following players: Ruben Wilshaw, Alex Bruce, Campbell Poulter, Bailey Pickup, Grady O'Brien, Harrison Slater, Rowdy Graves, Zac Poulter, Andres Vallejos, Luke Hewitt, Ethan Mifsud, Toby Allen, Eli Poulter, Fabian Schwoepfinger, Joel Cox and Evan Dracopoulos.

I congratulate Lilli Pilli Football Club on its success. Lilli Pilli under-13s girls defeated Manly Allambie United 1-0. This was the first year that Football NSW introduced the under-13s girls age category to the Champions. I congratulate coach Brad Penfold, manager Kane Bourke, assistant Glenn Hebert and the following players: Stella Hebert, Isabella Lyons, Isabel Adams, Zara Tindall, Alarna Penfold, Kayla Babington, India Knight, Emiline Bourke, Ava Degan, Grace Graham, Ruby Street, Kalani Anderson, Maya Matthes, Scarlett Macartney and Tahli Weignand.

### NEWCASTLE PRIDE FESTIVAL

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (20:59):** Just over a month ago Newcastle Pride had to postpone the opening of its month-long Pride festival because the forecast was not looking kind. It was a good decision because on that evening it absolutely flogged down with rain. Was that an omen of things to come? Absolutely not. On Saturday this amazing festival wrapped up with a fair day, a celebration of the absolute best of the LGBTQIA+ community and Newcastle at large. It came after a month-long celebration that included a youth formal, bike ride, cabaret, parties and theatre, even branching out into Lake Macquarie. The fair day was its first since 2019, after COVID played its hand in 2020 and 2021. Under clear skies at Gregson Park we had great stalls, wonderful food, spectacular outfits, effervescent drag performances and dog parades. People could even get a free sexual health test.

I had a great time. I met so many people. I got to work on my selfie game, and even got to pretend I was on a tropical beach with the member for Wallsend and the Federal member for Newcastle. The day could not be faulted. But events and festivals like this do not come together by accident. They take hundreds, if not thousands, of hours of work. They take people who are not seeking anything in return giving up their time. They take energy and vision. Proud Awabakal woman Lee-Anne McDougall leads Newcastle Pride with exactly that: pride. Throw in passion, an exceptional work ethic and a team of legends around her, and we ended up with an event that was out of this world. It was not just well organised or with great entertainment; something else jumped out at me. There were a lot of people with a disability there. I attend a lot of big events, and while I am definitely noticing an improvement in accessibility, it is, sadly, rare that I see an event have so many people with a disability in attendance.

There were people who were using wheelchairs, people with low vision and people with intellectual disabilities, amongst others. Yes, change is happening but, overall, we are still an ableist society. We should not be—it is 2022—but we are. What I saw on Saturday was true inclusion, though, starting right from the official opening with a smoking ceremony and an Auslan interpreter. Disappointingly, events are still held in our city where the effort to include people with a disability is not made, but Newcastle Pride did go to the effort, and it



has not gone unnoticed. As much as we would like it to, creating a truly inclusive event does not just happen. It starts with a culture that accepts and respects people for who they are. It is very clear that that is the culture that underpins Newcastle Pride, and I have no doubt that that was why so many people from more vulnerable communities were drawn to the fair. That culture was everywhere you looked on Saturday—I would love to be able to bottle it and give it away. As a result, all I saw were happy people.

I was so impressed by the fair day that I had intended to come into the Chamber, talk a little about Newcastle Pride and congratulate them on what it had just done. But the more I reflected, the more inspired I felt—that's the effect it had on me. If I, a cis-het middle-aged white man, can leave the Pride fair day feeling that way, I can only imagine what that day, the entire festival and the Newcastle Pride organisation mean to people of diverse sexualities and genders, and also people of vulnerable communities who came along and felt included. I congratulate Newcastle Pride. It has absolutely outdone itself.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I vouch for the member for Newcastle. It really was a fun day.

### **TERRIGAL ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:03):** Over the past few months I have outlined the massive investment the Central Coast region has received from the Liberal-Nationals Government since I was elected to this place in 2015. I am very proud to be part of a government that has left no stone unturned, from one end of the Central Coast to the other. Most recently I spoke of the investment in the electorate of Wyong. The member for Wyong was in the Chamber at the time. I congratulate him on his advocacy for his electorate. He also knows that Labor electorates on the Central Coast, be it Gosford, Wyong or The Entrance, have received more money under the Liberal-Nationals Government than they ever received from Labor during its 16-year tenure. That includes the period in which a Labor member held the seat of Wyong.

The Government made a huge commitment to upgrade the M1—or the F3 as we prefer to call it—between Somersby and Kariong. The M1 goes through Tuggerah and Dawson in the electorate of Wyong. The upgrade benefits thousands of users of the motorway every single day as they go through the Central Coast. Some \$391.6 million worth of investment was provided for that upgrade by both the Federal Government and our Liberal-Nationals Government. In addition, the Wyong electorate has been provided with an extensive amount of funding for road upgrades. They were well needed, as the Central Coast was neglected by Labor for 16 years. Under the Fixing Local Roads Program, \$727,056 was provided to upgrade Gavenlock Road in Tuggerah and just over \$1 million was provided to upgrade Jilliby and Hue Hue roads in Jilliby.

Under the Safer Roads Program, \$600,000 was provided to upgrade the Wallara Road and Hay Street intersection at Gorokan and \$3.54 million was provided to improve the Pacific Highway at Charmhaven. Under the Fixing Country Bridges Program, which is a favourite of the member for Goulburn, the Wyong suburbs of Cedar Brush Creek and Little Jilliby as well as Tuggerah received \$3.25 million in funding to upgrade four bridges. In addition, the Government committed another \$34 million for more commuter car parking and accessibility upgrades at Tuggerah station under the Transport Access Program [TAP]. We must remember that under Labor not a single train station on the Central Coast received any upgrades to transport accessibility for people with disabilities.

Under the TAP, the Government has delivered upgrades to every single train station on the Central Coast, including Tuggerah, which is a major station, valued at \$34 million. That was a complex build. I congratulate Transport for NSW on its extensive community consultation. Early works have commenced on that project. The Government committed that money in the budget and it is being delivered. Again, it is amusing when members on the other side of the House carry on about how long accessibility upgrades take. Under Labor, those upgrades never happened. It is great that across the Central Coast every single station from Tuggerah to Point Clare will receive transport accessibility upgrades.

To further ensure that suburbs throughout the electorate of Wyong are equipped for population growth, the Government has committed \$800,000 worth of stormwater drainage upgrades, footpaths and road and safety upgrades at Louisiana Road in Hamlyn Terrace, under the Housing Acceleration Fund. In 2021 the area also shared in over \$190,000 from the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund, but recent government funding is even more significant. Last week I was at Norah Head Lighthouse. Under the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund, that fantastic facility has received almost \$1 million worth of upgrades including new accessibility paths, a new shed to store volunteer equipment and new lighting. The Norah Head Lighthouse trust has done a fantastic job applying for and receiving Crown reserve funding, which provides not only essential upgrades to the Norah Head Lighthouse but also valuable work to local tradies when times were tough. I spoke to the local builder who did the job. He delivered it early and did a fantastic job. That work was all done by local Central Coast tradies.

In addition, creek crossing repairs were completed at the Pioneer Dairy in Tuggerah, work was done to control the blackberry weeds around the Tuggerah Nature Reserve, a bushfire protection zone and water rise garden was provided to the Yarramalong School Community Centre and work was done to control pest rabbits in Wyong Creek at Mardi. The list goes on. I am proud to say the Government supports new and existing businesses. A particular favourite of mine is the Regional Job Creation Fund, from which the Central Coast has received millions of dollars. Late last year I was pleased to visit the Cordina Food factory—most people would know that name—in Wyong. It received \$2 million under the fund to provide up to 100 full-time jobs across the Central Coast and purchase equipment. For that we should be incredibly proud. It is exceptionally exciting for the owners of Cordina Food.

### GOULBURN ELECTORATE FLOODS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (21:09):** On the night of Monday 31 October the electorate of Goulburn was subjected to torrential rain and flash flooding. Parts of the historic township of Gunning, including most of the main street, went under water when a strong storm event combined with the existing high-water levels, in what has been characterised as a once-in-a-lifetime weather event. Massive amounts of rain fell in a matter of hours. The water peaked at 10.00 p.m. and did not recede until 4.00 a.m. the following day. Parts of Yass Street, Warrataw Street and other locations were also submerged. A number of businesses and private residences were inundated.

The New South Wales Rural Fire Service's Southern Tablelands zone and the State Emergency Service received several requests for assistance from residents in the Goulburn Mulwaree, Hilltops, Upper Lachlan Shire and Yass Valley local government areas. Crews attended multiple jobs including downed trees, cars trapped in floodwaters, and flooded homes and businesses. Last Friday I joined Upper Lachlan Shire Mayor Pam Kensit and Federal member for Hume Angus Taylor to see firsthand the devastation in Gunning and liaise with community members and businesses. It was an emotional day filled with sadness, anger and desperation. Every shop on the main street was damaged. The Telegraph Hotel was hit hardest, with the water rising as high as the chairs in the bar. The historic Coronation Theatre, which recently received a grant for renovations totalling \$500,000, was also impacted. The structure was inundated underneath, but the prompt response from the Gunning Fish River RFS, under the exceptional leadership of Captain Andrew Johnson, helped to reduce the damage.

In parts of Boorowa, residents and businesses were also severely impacted by the strong storm event. The local caravan park, which is located beside Boorowa River, was evacuated to the showground. Several homes were left without power or were completely lost and are uninhabitable. That is the case for Boorowa residents Norm and Kerrie Dansey. A number of businesses were also inundated in Yass, including Riteway Curtains and Blinds, which I visited on Friday. The owner told me of the impacts on that business. I acknowledge the incredible work of our extraordinary frontline emergency services workers. Many of those officers are local mums and dads. Some had to face a horrific scene when, tragically, Sydney fathers Bob Chahine and Ghosn Ghosn lost their lives. They were swept off the rear tray of a ute while crossing a causeway at Prestons Creek, Bevendale, 50 kilometres east of Boorowa. A large-scale search involving several rescue services located one of the men last Thursday night, and the second man was discovered on the Sunday morning after the floods retreated.

Such tragedies are never easy to talk about and they are much more difficult to write about. It is with a heavy heart that I extend my condolences and the deep condolences of the Parliament to those families during this challenging period. The harrowing incident and the tragic circumstances that unfolded have broken the hearts of many. My thoughts and prayers are also with emergency services personnel including local police, police divers, police rescue and members of PolAir and the SES. It will take a significant amount of time for those workers to recover after searching for the two men. Such a task is not easy, and all too often we forget the impact of those events on our emergency services workers and their families. On behalf of the electorate of Goulburn, I express my sincere gratitude to all our emergency services workers and volunteers, who risk their lives to assist the community in its time of need.

The Government has moved to declare a continuation of the disaster declaration that was issued in September for the Goulburn Mulwaree, Hilltops, Upper Lachlan Shire and Yass Valley local government areas to ensure that the community has immediate access to much-needed funding. It will unlock support for vulnerable people and provide funding for councils to repair damaged infrastructure, freight subsidies for primary producers and concessional loans to primary producers and small businesses. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the Gunning Lions Club and the town's development association, which has provided \$500 to every affected business and property. The community of Gunning is resilient, hardworking, spirited and formidable. Both local and distant RFS and SES units continue to work tirelessly and around the clock with residents of the community to clean up in the aftermath. The recovery efforts are well underway to get the electorate of Goulburn back on its feet. I commend those community members who have been diligent in responding to and helping everyone in the community to get through the absolutely tragic circumstances that have occurred over the past week.

## WARRAGAMBA DAM

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (21:14):** This evening I want to discuss issues that are continuously raised in my electoral office and also most recently at an environmental community town hall meeting that I held. A significant number of people in the electorate of Coogee raised deep concerns about inaction on climate change, the destruction of our environment and the Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. This Government has consistently shown that it does not care about preventing or mitigating the effects of climate change and that it just wants to ensure its developer mates can do whatever they want. In my electorate, people see the overdevelopment. They are acutely aware of the lack of affordable housing and they were outraged when this Government stripped climate change mitigation and sustainability requirements from developments.

In the eastern suburbs, people are disgusted by the lack of action on water pollution and the disregard to its consequences on the health of people, wildlife and our beautiful but struggling ecology. Under the Perrottet Government, helping developers will always be the number one priority, often at the expense of the environment and local people. This is abundantly clear with its decision to raise Warragamba Dam wall. Mr Perrottet describes his Government's focus as "people before plants", which is incredibly offensive not only to the effect on local Aboriginal communities but also to the countless people affected by flooding in the region. Water experts such as Jamie Pittock from the Australian National University point out that on average 45 per cent of floodwaters that reach the valley come from catchments that would not be controlled by the dam. Pittock, a longtime critic of the project, argues the proposal is driven by a desire to expand residential and commercial development in the flood plain. Jamie Pittock said:

The premier may say he is putting people before plants. I say he is putting developers before people.

I could not agree more. As Harry Burkitt of Wilderness Australia has pointed out there is still no funding for evacuation routes, no action taken on development on the flood plain, and no action on adaptively managing the existing dam for flood mitigation purposes. The independent inquiry into the February and March flooding did not recommend the dam wall be raised, and instead made recommendations to stop building on flood plains and arrange buybacks for people already living on them. Neither recommendation has been acted on yet.

Raising the dam wall will destroy the local environment. The Government has stated that inundation by sediment-laden floodwaters would occur in the world heritage area for five weeks at a time. Based on WaterNSW published flood levels, up to 4,700 hectares of the world heritage-listed Blue Mountains National Parks and 65 kilometres of wilderness streams would be inundated by the 14 metre dam wall raising. The wild rivers of the southern Blue Mountains form a landscape that has been largely untouched by modern society. The area is home to 48 threatened plant and animal species, ancient river valleys, rare dry rainforests and hundreds of Indigenous cultural sites. The significance of the southern Blue Mountains landscape led it to being inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000. The raising of the wall will reduce rare biodiversity, including 40 per cent of the nationally threatened Camden white gum forest.

The raising of the Warragamba Dam wall would flood a koala refuge. The lower Nattai Valley is home to one of Sydney's refuge koala populations. By raising the wall, the valley will be inundated and will destroy this refuge. Raising the wall will destroy Aboriginal heritage. The southern Blue Mountains is an extensive and rich cultural landscape belonging to the Gundungurra People. The rivers, waterholes and mountains of the Blue Mountains landscape tell one of the most intact and documented Dreamtime stories in Australia. When Warragamba Dam was built in 1960, it resulted in the flooding of a large proportion of the cultural heritage and Dreamtime stories of the Gundungurra people. If the dam wall is raised, the remaining sites of this story, including Indigenous archaeological sites, creation waterholes and cave art, will be destroyed. Raising the dam wall will not only put communities at risk, it will destroy precious environment and heritage. That is why we cannot support raising the wall. It is absolutely shameful that the Perrottet Government wants to do it.

## FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE HUMANITARIAN GROUPS

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (21:18):** The Fairfield electorate is one of the most culturally diverse of all the 93 electorates in the Parliament of New South Wales. The Fairfield local government area is home to 24,938 people who originate from Iraq and 5,768 people from Syria. Further, 11.9 per cent of people in Fairfield speak Assyrian or Aramaic, 4.8 per cent are Assyrian Apostolic, with another 3.7 per cent being of the Eastern Catholic faith. As the elected representative for Fairfield, I am proud to work alongside many culturally and linguistically diverse groups that go out every day to assist people in the community. Over the years I have assisted these groups through advocacy, whether it be via direct ministerial representation, letters of support for grants, congratulatory messages for achievements and milestones or during difficult times through messages of condolence.

One of the valued programs available to members of Parliament and the community is the Community Building Partnership [CBP] Program and, when times arise, an opportunity for members of Parliament to donate

excess IT hardware or furniture from their electorate offices. One such group that has benefited from the CBP program and the IT recycling program has been Shayna Humanitarian Services Inc., run by Deacon Oliver Sliwa. Shayna Humanitarian Services Inc. is a not-for-profit non-government organisation that offers assistance to vulnerable members of the Fairfield community. Throughout the COVID period and lockdown, they distributed food hampers to members of the community impacted by the pandemic. They also assisted in the distribution of healthcare and wellness packages through the Fairfield Electorate Care Package Program, in conjunction with the fantastic team from Good360.

Shayna Humanitarian Services also offered a spiritual care package for parishioners who were not able to attend church services due to health restrictions. These were delivered in a unique manner via a drive-through, contactless pick-up at St Hurmizd's Cathedral, St Mary's Church, St Peter's Cathedral and St Peter's Church. In the 2021-22 CBP round of funding, Shayna received \$60,000 to partially fund a 12-seater minibus to help transport refugee families from home to church, services and activities. It is only one example from the many community groups that have helped the high number of humanitarian refugees that fled Syria, Iraq and other parts of the Middle East due to the evil works and reign of terror inflicted by the members of ISIS.

In this House I have shown solidarity with groups through the words I have spoken in parliamentary speeches. In this House I have repeatedly denounced acts of violence, terror, bigotry actions and racist speech perpetuated towards members of the Fairfield electorate and beyond in other electorates. At public gatherings over the past 12 years, I have affirmed my support and committed to those who have been impacted by the actions of terrorist organisations. It is very clear that what I have said in public has also been placed on the record in this Chamber. It would be remiss of me to express an opinion in this place and then go back to my community and say something else. The Fairfield electorate door has always been open to constituents who have been subjected to the most heinous of crimes committed against them by barbaric individuals and terrorist organisations.

My recent comments in relation to the return of citizens with links to terrorists reflect the mood of my community. I am therefore honour bound and indeed duty bound to present the views of the members of my community who have suffered abhorrent acts inflicted on them and their family members by ISIS in their homeland and who continue to experience post-traumatic stress to this day. It is incumbent on us in this place never to forget these acts so that they never happen again. That is why today I am calling on the New South Wales State Government for assistance for the non-profit non-government organisations like those in my community I mentioned earlier.

Let us face it, with all the cuts that have been happening left, right and centre with this Government, it is those organisations that will be picking up the slack. Instead of passing the buck and saying, "The Federal Labor Government made the decision; nothing to do with me," I call on Premier Domenic Perrotet to release funding to not-for-profit organisations in my area and other areas where refugees are being placed so that they do not have any extra burden that will push them to breaking point. It has been too long that this Government has neglected these organisations who have done so much to bring local communities out of the pandemic and who continue to work their guts out on limited funds. The buck stops here, today.

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (21:23):** Recently, along with my colleague the member for Keira—whom I note is in the Chamber this evening—I met with several teachers from schools throughout the Wollongong area to discuss what is happening in their schools. It followed a similar discussion I had with teachers from local catholic and independent schools who raised similar concerns.

Their stories were not dissimilar from those of friends of mine who are teachers. These hardworking teachers outlined the pressures on them that had increased since COVID restrictions had ended. They outlined the additional pressure on teachers primarily driven from teacher shortages resulting from colleagues leaving the profession. Incidentally, their stories were not dissimilar from the findings of the interim report of the inquiry into teachers shortages in New South Wales, which was released earlier today and which revealed that the impact of teacher shortages in this State is declining education outcomes, merged classes, minimal supervision and out-of-field teaching. The inquiry also found that the casualisation as well as administrative load was leading to burn out and teacher attrition.

There is no doubting the passion of teachers. They entered the profession to make a difference to the lives of the kids they teach. They were proud and committed professionals with a long history of teaching. They had seen the good times but that is not what they are seeing now. One would struggle to find anyone who has any connection to a school anywhere in New South Wales and who is not aware that there are teacher shortages. Earlier this year there were 2,500 casual vacancies in public schools. Of those, 30 were in the Wollongong electorate and a further 18 were in the Keira electorate. While positions are vacant, policies of the members opposite have led to the widespread casualisation of the teaching profession. In 2011 there were 11,695 full-time

equivalent temporary teaching positions in New South Wales. By 2021 that number had increased to 21,366—a whopping 82 per cent increase. Temporary or casual roles now represent more than one in three teaching positions across the State—I emphasise: one in three.

It is natural that such a level of job insecurity is causing teachers to leave the profession. For a young teacher without a permanent position, it makes it hard to plan and make decisions about other parts of their life. Can one try to buy a home in the area where one is teaching? Will one be there in future? These are the questions they are asking. But those who pay the highest price are students. Between 2006 and 2018 New South Wales students dropped from sixth to twenty-third in reading, ninth to thirty-first in maths, and third to twenty-third in science. NAPLAN results of a week ago give a sense of the impact on students: record low student outcomes, particularly when it came to grammar and punctuation outcomes for year 9 boys—the poorest on record. A whopping 12,500 year 9 students cannot write within the minimum standard. Almost 9,000 year 9 students cannot read within the minimum standard. That is the record of the current Government and it is not good enough.

Not investing in our human capital is a handbrake on the capacity of our economy and our society. It virtually guarantees lower productivity and, ultimately, a lower standard of living. Its impacts are felt over an entire lifetime—I emphasise "an entire lifetime"—not just on the day a test result is received. It limits the ability of every student to achieve everything they should and could achieve, and it flows through generations. While this is the record of members opposite, there is a plan to address this and to start to reverse the decline in teacher numbers and education outcomes. If elected, a Labor government will bring permanency back to the New South Wales teaching workforce because parents and students deserve an education system that is dedicated to their interests and that starts with stemming the tide of teachers leaving the profession. That is why NSW Labor has committed to creating 10,000 more permanent teaching roles in this State by shifting temporary positions into permanent roles—good commonsense policy, good commonsense outcomes for teachers and even better commonsense outcomes for students and parents.

It will give teachers job security and encourage them to stay in the profession. It will give schools the flexibility they need to deliver lessons. It will give parents the confidence that their children will be taught by a teacher and not spend time in a merged classroom or sitting in the middle of an oval. NSW Labor also is committed to scrapping the wages cap so that not only wages but other industrial matters can be resolved by negotiation—not just by ignoring the problem in the hope that it will go away.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: I have waited for a fairly long time. The member had been mentioning Wollongong up until about the last minute and a half.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Oh, come on!

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** He has made this a purely political speech. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. This is a private member's statement. The member is not referring to his electorate anymore and has not been.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** In Wollongong there will be more permanent teachers. Just because members opposite do not want them, we do, and we will fight up hill and down dale as long as we can to 25 March next year to make sure we do because Wollongong residents deserve it.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Is that still a PMS?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (21:28):** I am responding as a Minister.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Yes, responding as a Minister and the member at the table, who can also be a Parliamentary Secretary.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** I think the member's speech was a lovely reflection of the fact that we all respect and value teachers. The policy referred to by the member for Wollongong directly reflects exactly what the Government is doing. A pretence that Labor is coming up with a policy would be a miracle. The 10,000 part-time teachers the member referred to is already what the Government is doing. If the member had listened to any of the policies that the Minister has spoken about, he would have been aware of that. The point that the member is trying to make is a purely political point. Right now we are doing private members' statements, reflecting on our electorates, as opposed to making a political statement, which is unacceptable, from my perspective. I look forward to getting back to private members' statements.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Minister will resume his seat. Private members' statements can be political as long as the matter raised affects the constituents of the member. I believe that the member for Wollongong did that.

### SEARCH DOGS SQUAD

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (21:30):** Last month I attended the launch of the New South Wales Volunteer Rescue Association's Search Dogs Squad at the VRA headquarters in Dubbo. The squad has area search dogs, scent-specific trailing dogs, and is also training for avalanche and alpine searches. I had the privilege of seeing a few demonstrations and these dogs are quite remarkable. They can help in a range of conditions, including at night and in rough and dense terrain, making it much safer for volunteers. The dogs are valuable in searches for vulnerable people, like small children, people with autism or dementia, or those at risk of self-harm. One dog is worth about 20 people on the ground. Dogs can often find people who do not want to be found, but they also provide great comfort to people who are distressed.

The squad has been working together since 2017 and is waiting to get the nod to operate alongside emergency services in New South Wales. Its persistence and dedication should be applauded. I want to recognise a few key members. Someone with a very personal motivation for joining this team is squad president and senior deputy captain Phil Campbell. Based near Wellington, Phil has had extensive experience, not only in the animal welfare space but also in emergency services including the SES, the Rural Fire Service [RSF] and Fire and Rescue. When Phil's four-year-old autistic son went missing, he was found by Max, a German shepherd that Phil had trained for trailing. Phil is currently training Caesar, who is a gorgeous eight-month-old German shorthaired pointer, for area search and scent-specific trailing. I got to see the pair in action and while Caesar's still only a pup, his nose is already incredibly good.

Sue Pritchard leads the team as squad captain and media officer. She has over 30 years' experience in emergency services, including in surf lifesaving, SES and VRA. In 2016 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research the integration of volunteer search dog teams and emergency services internationally. Mel Potter is the squad's technical training officer. Her operational search dog, Jato, is qualified in area search, which I got to see firsthand, and he is an amazing dog. Jato is also qualified in scent-specific trailing and is currently training in avalanche search. Mel's background is also impressive. She has worked as a first responder since 1998, including in New Zealand, Canada and France, and has even worked as an avalanche dog handler. Malika Bailey is a handler and trainer and her dog, Bentley, has been operational in area search for three years. Malika has a background in zoology, exotic animal husbandry, animal behaviour, dog sledding, and she has even worked as a Canadian mountain guide. Her involvement in dog search and rescue began in New Zealand and she has a decade of experience in emergency services, including as the current commander of the SES Snowy River unit in Jindabyne.

Jacqui Stone is the deputy captain, recruitment. Her dog, Roxy, is a kelpie-cross cattle dog, and is certified in area search, while also in training for scent-specific trailing. Jacqui has been an SES volunteer since 2018 and has worked extensively with dogs for more than 20 years, including in obedience, behaviour, search, and even foster care. Sean Leary is deputy captain, personnel and safety, and is an operational area search dog handler for border collie, Ziggy. Sean has extensive experience with the SES bush and alpine search and rescue as well as the Australian Defence Force. Tash Whiteman is the squad's vice-president. Her golden retriever, Obi, is training to become an area search dog. Originally from Slovenia, Tash moved to Australia four years ago and has been involved with the SES bush and alpine search and rescue teams, and now search dogs. Matthew Stone provides vital support to the squad as its secretary, treasurer, data coordinator, and search navigator. Matt has been an SES volunteer for almost 17 years, responding to over 1,000 requests for assistance, including storm damage, flood rescue and land searches.

The team also has the support of Paul Martin, who has vast experience with search and rescue dogs in Scotland, where he attended over 200 search call-outs. Everyone at VRA headquarters, especially Commissioner Mark Gibson, championed this capability, both internally and across government. The squad has also worked closely with Western Australia's SES Canine Unit, especially Leonie Briggs and Scott Campbell, whose mentoring, training and assessment support has been crucial. I also give a shout-out to the Petbarn Foundation, which has committed more than \$175,000 over three years to support the team. Last year alone VRA volunteers attended 83 search call-outs. I have no doubt the VRA search dogs will make a massive difference well into the future. I congratulate everyone who worked tirelessly to make this squad a reality and everyone who is part of the squad.

### BANKSTOWN HOSPITAL SITE

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (21:35):** It would seem that the member for Bankstown and I are on a unity ticket on many things lately. When it comes to the site for the new Bankstown Hospital, I agree with sections of the member for Bankstown's speech in *Hansard* on 21 October 2021. She said:

I understand that a couple of sites have been considered there and there have been a lot of rumours that potentially the TAFE site would be used as a new teaching hospital for this \$1.3 billion hospital. That is not an appropriate site for a new hospital as it has a tremendous amount of traffic congestion. A train line cuts the Bankstown CBD in half ...

The ambulance station was moved from Meredith Street in Bankstown because of issues pertaining to that area. In general, it is difficult for vehicles to manoeuvre from one part of the Bankstown CBD to the other. The current hospital site is in close proximity to Canterbury Road. ... the underused Bankstown Senior College is across the road and I believe that the number of adults enrolled in the college has reduced. In addition, a new private hospital with a mental health facility will be built close to the existing hospital site.

It is important for the Government to make the right decision now about the new hospital site. ... It should be an appropriate site that is not in the Bankstown CBD and will not disenfranchise the East Hills community and the west Bankstown community.

I clarify some points in the member for Bankstown's private member's statement. A planning proposal for Bankstown Private Hospital at 297-299 Canterbury Road and the corner of Mavis Street, Revesby, was adopted by council at its ordinary meeting on 25 May 2021, after having been on public exhibition. There is no mention of a mental health facility in the attachments found in council's agenda items. However, it does state on page 6 of attachment G at item 3.2 that following the gateway determination and council's request, a modified scheme for a five-storey hospital, comprising approximately 195 beds and spaces for over 400 vehicles, would include pathology, imaging, pharmacy, GP clinic, operating theatres, post-operative services, intensive care unit and a hydrotherapy pool, along with back-of-house facilities.

It also states on page 49 of the ordinary meeting of council that works such as footpaths and public domain improvements between the site and Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital are to be provided by the proponent at no cost to council. That is practical because health precincts such as Westmead Hospital, St George and Sutherland, where there are private and public hospitals together, indicate that Bankstown Private Hospital, the existing Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital site and the new Bankstown Hospital site should also be next to each other. The member for Bankstown also states that the ambulance station was moved out of Meredith Street in the Bankstown CBD. That is correct. The new ambulance station is located on Canterbury Road, a 1.5 kilometre drive from the current hospital site. I spoke to ambulance officers at the ambulance station on Canterbury Road and they were shocked and horrified when they realised that there was speculation that the new hospital may be moved to the Bankstown CBD.

On 21 October the member for Bankstown also stated that the Bankstown CBD is cut in two by the train line. The South Terrace train bridge is very low and I doubt that an ambulance would fit under it. The train bridge at Greenwood Avenue, leading into Marion Street, gets very congested because it is serviced by a roundabout on Brandon Avenue coming off Chapel Road South. There is a no right turn onto Greenwood Avenue coming from Olympic Parade to try to avoid the Brandon Avenue congestion. There are also significant traffic impacts on Chapel Road South caused by Bankstown Girls High School, Bankstown Public School, Bankstown Oval, Bankstown Sports Club, Bankstown Arts Centre and people wanting to go to Saigon Place. Coming from Marion Street west, traffic also builds up turning left under the Greenwood Avenue train bridge heading towards Meredith Street.

Those are just some of the traffic issues heading into the Bankstown CBD from the south that would cause the ambulance station to be moved out of Meredith Street in the first place when it was in the Bankstown CBD. Last Wednesday it took me 45 minutes to drive five kilometres from Padstow to the Bankstown CBD. There was no accident or trucks broken down; this is the everyday pain of commuters endeavouring to get to the Bankstown CBD. The member for Bankstown was a student at Bankstown Senior College and states that she believes that the college is underused and that the number of adults enrolled has reduced. I can confirm after conversations with School Infrastructure that the seniors college numbers have indeed reduced and now sit at just over 300 students. That is in stark contrast to the thousands—I repeat, thousands—of students who currently attend the Bankstown TAFE site. I end where I began: The current member for Bankstown, who has represented the people of Bankstown for close to two decades, agrees with me that the hospital should not be in the Bankstown CBD. I have been in this area for 50 years and there is no way that the hospital should go into the Bankstown CBD under any circumstances.

### AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (21:40):** I speak on the importance of an independent, full-time agriculture commissioner in New South Wales. Our farmers have battled over the past decades with many natural disasters, droughts, fires and now devastating floods. In the midst of this, they are now facing the issue of land

use conflicts for some years. Agricultural land is important for our nation. The New South Wales Government wants agriculture earnings to be \$30 billion by 2030, having just reached \$20 billion. Food for our people and food for the planet are critical. Yet between 1973 and 2017 there was a 14 per cent decline in land use for food and fibre production in Australia. Farmers are now facing even greater pressures on land use.

In the Wagga Wagga electorate we have been experiencing these issues around land use conflict with solar factories and transmission lines. It seems to me to make no sense to put solar factories on some of Australia's best agricultural land. We know we need renewable energy, but there are many more appropriate locations, such as the State's renewable energy zones, where solar factories could be developed. Why put them on prime agricultural land and why put them so close to regional cities? Rural and regional New South Wales will also be carrying the burden of the renewable energy revolution by hosting thousands of kilometres of transmission lines. That is something city people seem to ignore.

We must protect our agricultural land and communities by ensuring that there is adequate consultation and improved compensation, and that the best possible routes are chosen for these lines. The routes should go through public land where possible and the undergrounding of these lines must be seriously considered. The Planning Institute of Australia 2019 *Rural and Regional Planning Position Statement* states, "Land use conflict is, arguably, the most immediate planning issue facing rural and regional NSW." In his 2021 report, *Improving the Prospects for Agriculture and Regional Australia in the New South Wales Planning System*, the NSW Agriculture Commissioner refers to "the complexity of the planning framework, dispersed decision-making, and the need to constantly resolve conflicting priorities" that affect the planning process at a strategic level. The report notes that "recent experience indicates stronger planning and a new conflict reduction process are both required".

It appears that when it comes to agricultural land use we lack direction, coordination and accountability. In terms of direction, we need a clearly defined policy approach and, above all, a means of recognising State-significant agricultural land. In terms of coordination, the activities of multiple government departments have the potential to impact farmers. Currently, there does not seem to be a whole-of-government approach. We also need a mechanism to resolve conflicts. Finally, there is no process for checking that State-significant agricultural land is being protected—no accountability. This is where I believe an independent, full-time agricultural commissioner could be a great step forward. That is no criticism of the current commissioner, who is working hard within the constraints of his part-time role. In fact, I appreciate the work that he and the Minister have done in relation to strengthening the planning framework for large-scale renewable energy projects. But there is more than enough work for a full-time role.

In July this year the commissioner and the Minister for Agriculture visited Wagga Wagga to meet with landowners affected by solar projects. The landowners raised their concerns about food security, land use conflict, dryland salinity, soil degradation, bushfire risk, visual impact and the toll living near proposed developments had taken on their mental health. I was pleased that the Minister and the commissioner visited to hear firsthand what was happening, but the process clearly showed me that the commissioner is working within a government department and battling with other parts of the Government. It is not a whole-of-government approach, and that is why I believe the role should be independent.

Furthermore, the role would oversee the process of identifying and setting targets for State significant agricultural land and then would need to ensure that those targets are met and the classifications are respected by all parts of government. That would better protect agricultural land because it could be scrutinised independently, the government policy could be checked and the protection of agricultural land could be kept foremost in the mind of the Government. In other words, it is time for our Agriculture Commissioner to be full-time and to be independent of government.

#### ALBURY ELECTORATE

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:45):** As the year draws to a close and the end of the parliamentary term looms, I reflect on the electorate of Albury and its many new projects, including a new school for Thurgoona; the Nolan House redevelopment, which is now one part of a new hospital for Albury-Wodonga; an upgraded courthouse; the Davey Road Interchange; the Corowa Saleyards; the Grubben Road rail crossing; the Jerilderie preschool; the Tumbarumba preschool; the Albury Convention Centre; and the Murray Conservatorium. Underpinning all of those projects are passionate people in our community, including those who drive the projects and the advocates. I feel most deeply about the people, not the projects, and the events that we have shared along the journey over the past 3½ years.

At the front of my mind when I think of that are the bushfires. I think of the Green Valley and Dunns Road fires in 2019-20, when we lost Sam McPaul. It was my privilege to meet amazing people like Catie Inches-Ogden. I think about the night I was on Tumbarumba Road and Jingellic Road, meeting people like Pud Keogh, John Hawkins, Graydon Davis, Jed Taylor and people who were battling that fire on behalf of their community



like Mary Hoodless, who was serving food to the RFS at the Jingellic Rec Reserve and then had to see whether she still had a house to go home to. At the Albury RFS I met people like Marco Dodds, Hugh Watson and Meredith Ashton who were led by Pat Westwood. They are some amazing people. I was privileged to meet Shane Fitzsimmons in that journey as well. That reminds me of the Lavington RFS and seeing cars queued up for kilometres, with people from across the community bringing donations.

That makes me think of the social organisations that I have had the privilege to witness over the journey. During the bushfires that included FoodShare, with the team led by Peter Matthews. I also had the privilege to witness the work of Carevan, which is a grassroots organisation developed in Albury and led by John Brabant and Leanne Johnson. That makes me think of people like Rob Godson from Xypex who donated a van to Carevan this year. It makes me think of Yes Unlimited and the journey I have had with Di Glover as we work towards a new domestic violence refuge to replace Betty's Place. I think of Boys to the Bush and Clontarf Foundation and having a fantastic morning with Tommy Boyle and the lads from Clontarf Foundation around the basketball court at James Fallon High School.

I think of COVID and the border closures, and the amazing people in some of our senior leadership positions across our community like Paul Smith, and the NSW Police Force and the work that it did with the Australian Defence Force. That makes me think of other amazing people like Troy and Shane Martin from Victoria police and New South Wales police. Their father, David Martin, does amazing work with veterans. That makes me think of the work of Legacy and the RSL. With COVID and the border closures, I think of State leaders such as Kerry Chant, who came to Albury, Joe La Posta, and Lucy Wallace and Edwina Hayes locally working in the multicultural space. I think of our schools and teachers Norm Meader, Jen Parrett, Darryl Ward, the day out at Savernake school, our hospitals, our medical teams, and fire and rescue.

I also think of meeting people like Charlie Smith, a young boy, and his mum, Kate. I think of meeting people like Deb and Jackie, who lost Lindon and Ben Pascal through a work accident. I remember when they met Minister Anderson and that deeply heartfelt moment. I think of people like Bruce and Kathy Barnes, who have served the RFS. Bruce is now going through his cancer journey. They are amazing people. To the people in Parliament, the Premiers, Treasurers and Ministers, it has been my deep privilege to witness good people doing good things across our community. It is with deep gratitude that I thank my community for the opportunity to serve.

### TELLEVERYBODY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:50):** I acknowledge the much-loved and respected *TellEverybody* community newsletter on reaching the significant milestone of its 500th issue since its inception in 1996. The regular publication keeps the community updated, reporting local news, events and interests of the growing population of the beautiful seaside town of Harrington. *TellEverybody* was launched 26 years ago by Harrington residents Ray and Gaye Taggart, who saw a need for establishing a local bulletin for the community. Pitching the concept to the then Harrington Crowdy Head Tourist Association, the idea soon became a reality, with issue one hitting the streets in mid-March 1996. Issue one was a single page layout, which read:

New to Harrington-Crowdy Head. A great idea - what's happening, what's available, look for this publication every fortnight. Be in it, keep it alive, open to everybody ... see Ray and Gaye at your friendly post office.

In those early days of *TellEverybody*, Ray and Gaye compiled the fortnightly publication at their residence while running the Harrington Post Office. It was not long before businesses and organisations jumped on board and *TellEverybody* became popular across the community, with 900 copies of each issue printed for distribution. I offer a huge thanks to the Harrington Lions Club, which supplied the photocopying resources and the Taggarts, who compiled and edited the news ready for publication. As technology advanced, so did *TellEverybody*, with people like Arthur Williams joining the team to digitalise and streamline the publication. Back then, issues were circulated across the rural towns of Harrington, Crowdy Head, Moorland, Coopernook, Lansdowne and even as far north as the Johns River Hotel, thanks to the delivery efforts of the Taggarts and local volunteer Joan Hall.

After 15 months of producing the local communiqué, the Taggarts retired and Cheryl Collins stepped up to fill the position of editor. *TellEverybody* moved to Ritchie's Bait and Tackle, and printing responsibilities fell to the capable hands of Lion Barry Carey and Mark Elmer from LJ Hooker. Later, the Harrington Bowling Club obliged with printing, allowing the Lions Club to focus its efforts and fundraising on its community projects. As the community expanded, a growing enthusiasm for local news began to evolve in 1998, allowing provision for editor Cheryl and her team to expand the publication to four pages until July 2001, when two additional pages were included. Five years on, editor Cheryl Collins retired from her business and soon after *TellEverybody*, with the new owners of Ritchie's Bait and Tackle, and Phil and Sandra Bell volunteering as contents contact.

The first black-and-white photos were published in June 2003 and a new editor in David Brown was found in August 2003. The next month Jim and Marie Bourne from Harrington Food Stop took over the role as contents

contact and the paper expanded to eight pages, with a 10-page addition included in December to thank the Harrington Bowling Club for printing over the past seven years. Things continued to progress, with 2006 marking the first year that *TellEverybody* was printed partly in colour. In 2008 Greater Taree City Council offered a computer and use of a room in the library to establish a new headquarters for reporting, writing and publishing. That was a much-welcomed gift to the volunteers, who had moved in and out of businesses with no real permanent place to call home. Training in Microsoft Publisher advanced the professionalism and simplification of content. That year *TellEverybody* increased to 16 pages and was distributed to 2,000 households. The magic of systems and resources had clearly changed from once a two-person, in-home operation to a quality regional newspaper editorial.

Credit is due to John McPherson from Manning Valley Printers for taking on the printing role and of course a strong volunteer committee made up of Dianne Pasfield, Jim Dyer, Jack Swift and Maurie Nancarrow. Tracey Stayman was editor at that time. Those I have not mentioned as past editors include Donna, who served in May 2003; Libby, who assisted David Brown in August 2003; former chamber president Rob Archer in December 2003; Heather Clarke; Kylie Hokin; and Jennifer McIntosh and Maurie Nancarrow in the same year. Jennifer was editor for six years until November 2016, when current editor Kym Stanley signed on to lead the paper, with deputy editor Roger Stanley joining the team later. Today *TellEverybody* consists of several writers, photographers and distributors. It has a print base of 2,600 and comprises a constant 40- to 48-page paper and online publication. I thank the outstanding volunteers past and present who can be credited with the growth and longevity of *TellEverybody* and who have moulded and shaped a once humble but pertinent beginning to a refined and formidable local media community bulletin.

Word on the street could not be more praiseworthy for *TellEverybody*. Joy Cooksey described it as "my Harrington Encyclopedia, more reliable and accurate than any social media". Local Marisa Wicks writes, "every important local issue is covered" and "every community organisation is covered". Colleen Ford notes that "it informs, enlightens and brings everyone together" and "makes you feel part of the town". I congratulate everyone involved in the publication of the 500th issue of *TellEverybody*.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

#### **VALE IAN BOURKE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I pay tribute to Ian Bourke, president of Cronulla RSL Memorial Club, who passed away in October aged 80. Ian was a generous and much-loved member of the Sutherland Shire community. Ian served on the board of Cronulla RSL Memorial Club for more than 19 years and was president for the last 14 years. A former champion swimmer and police diver, Ian was also a life member of Cronulla RSL, Cronulla RSL Swimming Club, Cronulla Polar Bears Swimming Club, and St George Leagues Club. Ian is remembered by many as someone dedicated to improving the lives of Cronulla RSL members and the broader community. Ian led Cronulla RSL through a period of major growth, including the spectacular redevelopment of the clubhouse. Ian's presence at the club and within the community will be dearly missed. I extend my sympathy to his wife Ann, daughter Stephanie and extended family.

#### **KIRRAWEE HIGH SCHOOL – 2022 AND 2023 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate the 2023 school leaders at Kirrawee High School. Estelle Stark and Tom De Soza were elected as school captains, and Amelia Kirby and Amadene Edwards were elected as vice-captains. Annaliese Mustapic is the principal's representative and the following students were elected as prefects: Ava Harbrow, Amy Hummerston, Jack Christodoulou, Tirrapon Gallaher, Melissa Dodd, Phillip Bova and Lachlan Hutcheon. Student leadership provides a unique opportunity to grow and develop skills in public speaking, communication and leadership styles. These skills are not only important at school but are in the modern workplace and the broader community. I recognise the efforts and mature leadership shown by the 2022 school leaders. Connor Mead and Lilian Davis were the outgoing captains, and Harry Slater and Tori Giles were the outgoing vice-captains. The outgoing principal's representative was Evan Briggs and the outgoing prefects were Lachlan Button, Sarah Chew, Keira Collier, Jade Curtis, Elena Mbeya, Lachlan Staples, Taylor Pollard and Aiden Price. I wish them the best of luck in their HSC results and future endeavours.

#### **WOOLOOWARE HIGH SCHOOL 2022 AND 2023 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Woollooware High School on their appointment. Leila Fullicks and James Whittaker were elected as school captains and Estelle Bessiris and Dante Ten Brinke were elected as vice-captains. Keira Moran and Isaac Hayward were elected as presidents of the SRC. Charlize Bessi, Piper Cox, Trent Fullicks and Jordan Maquiran were elected as the 2023 prefect team. I thank the outgoing 2022 school captains Sarah Waser and

Curtis Bevern, vice captains Indiana Zezovski and Baxter Kitteringham, and SRC presidents Zhina Nikibin and Levi Crimmins for their leadership. I wish them luck on their future endeavours. Student leadership is a unique opportunity to develop essential skills in public speaking, communication, and leadership. As captains, Leila, James, Estelle, and Dante will learn the art of relationship building and teamwork. These skills are important for both school and the modern workplace. I commend the efforts of the leadership team and wish them luck in their new leadership roles and studies in 2023.

#### **TOP BLOKES FOUNDATION – MELISSA ABU-GAZALEH**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—On behalf of the entire Illawarra community, I thank Melissa Abu-Gazaleh, Founder and Managing Director of the Top Blokes Foundation. The Top Blokes Program aims to raise awareness about male issues and strategies that can be applied to improve the development of young male health and well-being. Melissa and her team inspire young males to reach their full potential through peer-inspired environments, increasing their social inclusion and healthy peer relationship. Congratulations to Melissa and all of the amazing co-ordinators, youth workers and young men who participate in this invaluable program.

#### **DAPTO HIGH SCHOOL STAFF AND STUDENTS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate the staff and students of Dapto High School for their dedication to their school community and embracing environmental sustainability. I had the pleasure of visiting the school recently where I met with Jess and Tilly from the school's Sun Safe Committee to discuss the huge impact this has on students, and how Jess and Tilly are working towards getting wide-brim hats designed and manufactured to keep the students safe from sun damage. I also spoke with students Sketch and Aidan about how they are raising funds for current projects at the school by collecting plastic waste for the Return and Earn program. What a fantastic initiative. Thank you to Andrew FitzSimons, Principal of Dapto High School, for his outstanding and unwavering advocacy for the school.

#### **GRACE PANELLA**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Behind all successful athletes is this overwhelming desire to be the best they can be. Talent certainly plays a role but there is no doubt that hard work, dedication and work ethic are also critical factors. That is particularly relevant for Grace Panella. On November 7 this year, the Menangle Park resident etched herself into the history books with her 100th harness racing win. Aboard Beatboxer in the first race at Newcastle, Grace surged home to mark the occasion in style. The 100th win came close to 30 months after she rode her first winner at the local track at Menangle Park aboard Scenic Sky. Given Grace is still only 20, it truly seems like the sky is the limit for this harness racing superstar. She may have originally hailed from the Hunter region but there is no doubt that Grace is now a true Campbelltonian. I look forward to seeing Grace's career continue to blossom in future years and I know that the Campbelltown community is well and truly supporting her. Well done again Grace and here is to many winning rides.

#### **APPIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—About 15 minutes drive south of Campbelltown's CBD lies the township of Appin. A small yet ever-changing town rich with history. At the forefront of preserving that history and heritage items are the members of the Appin Historical Society. It's fitting that the society are now based out of the Appin Inn – a building originally built in 1826 by William Sykes. I had the pleasure of recently visiting members of the Appin Historical Society recently and viewing the displays that they had curated. Like everyone that has seen the displays, I was extremely impressed. It is so important that organisations like the Appin Historical exist. Without the our history, historical items and the stories would be lost and unable to be enjoyed by future generations. There are a number of other historical landmarks in Appin including St Bede's Catholic Church, which was officially opened on the 8th of October 1843. Once again I would like to recognise the efforts of all the members of the Appin Historical Society. There is no doubt that future generations will reap the rewards of their hard work, passion and dedication for many years to come.

#### **2022 MURRAY-RIVERINA BUSINESS AWARDS - BEAU SCHILG**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Beau Schilg, Head Distiller at the Corowa Distilling Co, who was awarded 2022 Outstanding Employee at the Murray-Riverina Business Awards on 3rd November. The gala night was held at Whitton Malt House in the heart of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Beau and the team at the Corowa Distillery offer an in depth experience for whisky drinkers in the NSW historic border town of Corowa, a site that was historically a flour mill. Well done Beau for your work in putting Corowa on the map as a centre of excellence for Australian Whisky.

**DAVID HILL - ALBURY TO WAGGA WALK TO RAISE MONEY FOR LEUKEMIA**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate David Hill from Albury who embarked on a challenge close to his heart, raising money for the Leukemia Heart Foundation. David walked from Albury to Wagga Wagga in three days setting his goal at 130kms. The walk was undertaken in memory of his three-year-old grandniece Billy Grace Richards, who tragically passed away with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and its complications. David was determined to raise \$100,000 but has since surpassed that amount due to the support he has drummed up through his long walk. The money raised will contribute towards more research and assist those in requiring care now. David, the walk has become a beautiful act in honour of your niece Billy Grace Richards and a memorial to her passing. It is now also an inspiration to others to walk the extra mile to raise funds to defeat disease.

**ALBURY WODONGA VOLUNTEER RESOURCE BUREAU - COFFEE IN THE HOOD**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Albury-Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau who are providing opportunities for people from other cultures now residing on the border. Albury Wodonga Volunteer Rescue Bureau has been running a 'Kitchen in the Hood' offering those from a CALD background to learn new skills in preparing and serving food. This service, which is provided from a food trailer in Albury, is now expanding with the addition of a coffee machine. The 'Coffee in the Hood' initiative will introduce a relaxed environment to not just learn the art of coffee-making, providing also a great environment to connect with others from within our community - helping those who may feel isolated and separated. It is a welcome development in the way a community can make life easier for refugees and newcomers, improving wellbeing and meeting new neighbours. Refugees from Ukraine, Congo and Nepal have all been training on the program and will be given the opportunity to upskill in the art of the barista. Thank you for your ongoing support and continued commitment to our community whilst providing pathways for our new residents.

**PETER WOSEEN**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—To be awarded life membership of any organisation, is to be recognised for years of long-term dedication, loyalty and passion. For more than 40 years Peter Woseen of Jesmond has shown his commitment to the Australian Labor Party. This was acknowledged at the 2022 State Labor Conference, with Peter being presented with life membership of the party. Peter was nominated by his local branch, Wallsend. Peter had also previously been a member of the Shortland Day Branch. Peter originally joined the party in the 1970s, a tumultuous time in Australian politics, and has been a steadfast supporter of local candidates and causes ever since. Thank you, Peter, for your contribution to the Australian Labor Party, and congratulations on your well-deserved life membership.

**PAMELA BURNS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—To be awarded life membership of any organisation, is to be recognised for years of long-term dedication, loyalty and passion. For more than 40 years Pamela Burns of North Lambton has shown her commitment to the Australian Labor Party. This was acknowledged at the 2022 State Labor Conference, with Pamela being presented with life membership of the party. Pamela was nominated by her local branch, Wallsend, which she has been a member of since the early 2010's. Pamela originally became a member of Jesmond Branch. She has been involved in politics her entire life, and it has always been a huge part of her endeavours. From her days debating in high school, she has fought for progressive ideals and has been an active campaigner throughout her time in the party. Thank you, Pamela, for your contribution to the Australian Labor Party, and congratulations on your well-deserved life membership.

**FRANK HEWSTON**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—To be awarded life membership of any organisation, is to be recognised for years of long-term dedication, loyalty and passion. For more than 40 years Frank Hewston of Waratah West has shown his commitment to the Australian Labor Party. This was acknowledged at the 2022 State Labor Conference, with Frank being presented with life membership of the party. Frank was nominated by his local branch, Georgetown Waratah, which he has served as president. Frank has been a stalwart of the branch for many years, and an invaluable help to many Labor candidates and causes in the Newcastle area. Thank you, Frank, for your contribution to the Australian Labor Party, and congratulations on your well-deserved life membership.

**OLYMPIA SLEIMAN 100TH BIRTHDAY VISIT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I would like to congratulate Olympia Sleiman, a constituent within my local area who recently celebrated her 100th birthday! It was wonderful getting to spend the morning with Olympia and her family on this very special occasion. Organised by Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre, I was fortunate enough to be invited to the event

alongside the Seniors Arabic Group, as well as family and friends of Mrs Sleiman. It was a wonderful morning spent with the lovely Olympia, with refreshments, food and cake being served. Mrs Sleiman was born in North Lebanon and migrated to Australia in 1970, where she and her husband Richard raised their eight children. Olympia continues to enjoy shopping and living independently, whilst coming to the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre once a week to meet with friends and learn new things. I'd like to say a special thankyou to Anne Farah-Hill, the CEO of Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre, for putting on a fantastic birthday celebration for Mrs Sleiman. It truly was a wonderful way to spend the morning!

#### **CONNELLS POINT NETBALL CLUB PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I recently got the opportunity to visit the Connells Point Netball Club presentation day. It was a pleasure presenting players with certificates which recognised their achievements over the netball season. There were 19 awards presented to those who played at a representative or squad level in 2022 overall, and a further 8 for girls who displayed exceptional sportsmanship throughout the season. Grassroots sport is truly a pillar of our local community, and I am so proud of all the work that Connells Point Netball Club do to facilitate this. Not only is sport important for physical health, but also mental health. It helps kids to get outdoors, get involved and make new friends. I would like to thank the fantastic Julian Finch and Gail Connolly, who have showed commitment and dedication to the club in their position of leadership. Running a grassroots sporting club is no easy feat, however the pair do a fantastic job in supporting their players and the local community. I look forward to Connells Point Netball Club's presentation day next year!

#### **NEW TOILET BLOCK AT GRC OATLEY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—Georges River College at Oatley is already an incredibly well-equipped local school. Therefore, I am so pleased that they are set to further benefit from a \$50,000 investment by the New South Wales Government to construct a new toilet block on their school oval. I was able to visit the school recently to announce the funding for the new toilet block, which will include state-of-the-art shower and changeroom facilities. This will benefit students, teachers and those who utilise the playing fields at the school, including local primary schools and sporting clubs. I would like to thank the Principal of Georges River College Oatley Senior Campus, Anna Girginis, who works incredibly hard to create an inclusive and supportive environment within the school. I have always supported her vision for the Oatley Campus and look forward to working closely alongside her in the future to deliver real change for students in the Oatley electorate. I look forward to supporting Georges River College well into the future, with the New South Wales Government investing \$8.6 billion in school infrastructure over the next four years.

#### **BONGONGO PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I would like to congratulate Bongongo Public School in Adjungbilly for becoming state touch football champions in the annual small school's touch football competition which was held in Sydney. Consisting of students from year three to five, Bongongo Public School knocked out Ladysmith Public School and Burrumbuttock Public School before progressing to the quarter final where they defeated Glen William Public School followed by Manifold Public School in the semi-final. Lastly, Bongongo played Eurongilly Public School in the grand final which was closely contested. Coming from 6-3 down at half time, Bongongo managed to level the scores at 8-8 in a thrilling second half before proceeding to extra time. Both teams began to show signs of fatigue and in a match that could have gone either way, Bongongo emerged 9-8 winners over Eurongilly. Congratulations to Olivia, Joe and Harvey Graham, Harry and Ed Smith, Isobel and Oscar Welsh, Max Weston, Finn Onus and McCauley McCann.

#### **JUNEE HIGH ABORIGINAL DANCE STUDENTS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I wish to congratulate the six young ladies who have been selected in their audition for the School Spectacular 2023 as well as the NSW Schools Aboriginal Dance Ensemble. Amy, Aleasha, Breiana, Natalie, Emily and Laycie should be extremely proud to receive this prestigious invitation, and I am sure they will do Junee High School, the town of Junee and the whole of the Cootamundra Electorate and the Wiradjuri nation proud with their performance. I am looking forward to getting the opportunity to watch these six Aboriginal dance students at this event on television later in the year. To be able to perform at this spectacular and as a part of the Aboriginal Dance Ensemble is an incredible achievement. Congratulations once again to these amazing young ladies. It is wonderful to see young women from the region bringing their talent for a wider audience to appreciate.

### BLAND SHIRE RFS VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I wish to recognise the tremendous efforts of nine local Bland Shire Fire Fighters whom I recently presented with National Emergency Medals. The recipients received the National Emergency Medals recognising their heroic efforts during the 2019-2020 bush fire season. The recipients of these prestigious awards were; Mr Andrew Carter captain of the West Wyalong Rural Fire Brigade, Mr Nathan Chantrill, Captain of the Ungarie Rural Fire Brigade, Mr Brenton Clarke, Deputy Captain of the Ungarie Rural Fire Brigade, Mr Bradley Crofts, Member of the Ungarie Rural Fire Brigade, Mr Mark Hoskinson, Group Captain and a member of the Kikoira Anona Rural Fire Brigade, Mr Jordan Hoskinson, Captain of the Kikoira Anona Rural Fire Brigade, Mr Grant Kitto, Captain of the Tallimba Rural Fire Brigade, Mr Raymond Mackellar, Senior Deputy Captain of the Weethalle Rural Fire Brigade and Mr Richard Mason, Member of the Winnunga Rural Fire Brigade. Each of these recipients were deployed across NSW during the 2019-2020 bush fire season working day and night to help save our precious state. Congratulations once again and thank you for your ongoing service to the people of the Bland Shire and NSW.

### EMPIRE BAY MARINA COMMUNITY GATHERING

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would like to recognise a recent community gathering regarding our Empire Bay Boatshed and Marina. I thank the Empire Bay community for bringing their concerns to my attention, and, in particular, would like to acknowledge the efforts of the coordinators, Craig Hillman, Errol Baker, Raymond Pries and Lee Fleming. Previously, the Empire Bay Boatshed and Marina which sits on Crown Land had its licence revoked by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment due to ongoing safety concerns and environmental breaches. I appreciate the importance and sentiment of this location to our community, as voiced by a 200-person-strong community turn out last Saturday. I look forward to working with the community to come to a solution as to how the site can be improved moving forward, with both the local community and environment in mind. Further, I am more than happy to continue to make representations on behalf of the community. Thank you again to Empire Bay locals for voicing their concerns around the future of our Empire Bay Boatshed and Marina; I hear you, and look forward to receiving to your suggestions for the site moving forward.

### CCAS AWARDS CEREMONY

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would like to celebrate the sporting excellence of the Central Coast. Recently, the Central Coast Academy of Sport hosted their Annual Presentation Evening, acknowledging local sporting talent. Kaiden McNamara, Athlete of the Year, is an upcoming AFL star. At the beginning of his professional career, Kaiden has had a year of immense personal growth and development including trials for the Sydney Swans Academy. Congratulations. The Chair's Award was taken out by golfer Georgie Clune. An enthusiastic and passionate athlete, Georgie has had some incredible results this year, including winning Ladies Club Foursomes at Everglades by 15 shots. This is an amazing achievement. Congratulations to Allie Reid and Charlotte Russell who received the Ray Sandell Dedication to Sporting Excellence Award. Both Allie and Charlotte are keen netballers; these young women are dedicated team leaders, enthusiastic and incredibly talented. Congratulations to you both. Congratulations to Robyn Low Hart, recipient of the RASi Coaches Award. Her wealth of triathlon experience developed an outstanding program, encouraging consistent improvement for local triathletes. Congratulations and thank you Robyn. I would like to congratulate all award winners. I can only admire your elite dedication, commitment, and skill.

### JOURNALIST AWARDS

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—Three papers from my electorate were recognised at the recent Country Press NSW conference and awards night! The Dubbo Photo News dominated the night, claiming 4 out of the 15 awards including Best Free Newspaper and Best Front Page! Best Sports Photograph went to Mel Pocknall for a stunning shot taken during a local rugby match, while the campaign "Everyone reads the Dubbo Photo News" claimed Best House Advertisement. The Narromine Star's Sharon Bonthuys was named Journalist of the Year, while the Star was highly commended in the Best Paid Newspaper category. The Wellington District Leader took out Best Human-Interest Photograph, for Jo Ivey's photo of local kids Zahra and DJ Kemp playing touch football. The Leader was also highly commended in the Best Newspaper Advertisement category, for the Wellington Race Club's campaign "Get your backside trackside at the Wellington Boot Carnival". The ad was created by club secretary Dale Jones, featuring an image by local racing photographer Janian McMillan. CPNSW is Australia's oldest newspaper industry association, and it's great to see even our newest publications recognised! Congratulations everyone!

### CASEY MARTIN MINING AWARD

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—I want to congratulate Dubbo's Casey Martin, who was named Thiess Outstanding Australian Tradeswoman, Operator or Technician of the Year at the BHP 2022 Women in Resources National Awards in September. Casey has been working in the resources industry for 17 years, moving from CSA to Endeavour and then the Peak Gold Mine at Cobar, before starting last year with Tomingley Gold Operations as an underground boggler operator. In doing so, she made history as the first woman to work underground at the local mine site, just outside of the Tomingley township. Casey told the Narromine Star it's been "amazing to watch" the number of women in the industry grow, and the value women bring. TGO general manager of operations, Jason Hughes, told the Star Casey "started out [at a time] when it wasn't easy for females", and the company is "very proud" of what she's achieved throughout her career. One day, Casey hopes to be a shift boss, but for now she's "really enjoying" her role as a boggler operator. Congratulations Casey, and can't wait to see where your career takes you next!

### 7TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION AIF ASSOCIATION'S 57TH ANNUAL COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I had the honour of attending the 7th Australian Division AIF Association's 57th Annual Commemoration Ceremony at Dick Payten Reserve, Bass Hill on Saturday 29 October. I acknowledge the attendance at the ceremony of veterans, including Kokoda veteran Reg Chard, Ms Alice Kang, representing the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Bankstown PAC Chief Inspector Bradley Thorne, the Late Dick Payten's family including Sue Swinfeld and Lyn Brown as well as the members of the Australian Air League Riverwood Hornets, Bass High students and broader community who also attended to pay their respects. Once again I wish to acknowledge the 7th Australian Division AIF Association for organising this important annual remembrance and would like to thank Secretary Maha Dunne and Sue Swinfeld for the kind invitation to attend the service.

### LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL – DISTRICT 201N2 CONVENTION

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I am proud to place on the record my appreciation of the important role played by the many Lions Clubs across NSW, in particular the Lions Clubs in Southwest Sydney. Recently in October, District 201N2 celebrated its 65th Convention in Liverpool. The District comprises 67 Lions clubs and 3 Leo clubs, with over 1500 members. The motto of Lions In Australia is: 'Together we can change the world' and the Lions Clubs in Bankstown, Southwest Sydney and throughout NSW are definitely achieving this goal. The incredible Lions volunteers do tremendous humanitarian work in every community in NSW. Just some of the causes championed by Lions Clubs include: Diabetes research and prevention, addressing Vision Impairment and Blindness, Hunger, Childhood cancer research, The Environment, and sustainability. Importantly, each individual Lions club also conducts local fundraising to improve their home communities. The year marks 75 years of Lions club presence in Australia and I thank and every single Lions Club volunteer from the many clubs within District 201N2 for the important work they do in their local communities.

### BANKSTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION 60TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND 2022 PRESENTATION

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was delighted to attend the Bankstown City Netball Association 60th Anniversary Dinner and 2022 Presentation at Revesby Workers Club on Saturday 29 October, where I had the honour of presenting awards to some of the many well-deserving recipients. I extend my congratulations to all the players and volunteers whose invaluable service and sporting achievements were recognised on the night. I wish to acknowledge Bankstown City Netball Association President Nicole Oram, Treasurer Deanne Mawer, Administration Assistant Kylie Myers and Registrar Helen Lee for their invite and warm hospitality. I commend the Bankstown City Netball Association on their valuable contribution to local sport in Bankstown, by giving players of all ages the opportunity to play competitive netball, develop skills and nurture lifelong friendships. I wish the Bankstown City Netball Association and all their organisers, coaches, volunteers, umpires and players much success for the next season.

### LISA CHAPMAN AND CLAUDIA CAVE WIN AWARDS FROM KIAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—I would like to congratulate local residents Lisa Chapman and Claudia Cave, who both work for the Kiama Community College. They recently received a combined Achievement Award for Contribution to Innovative Delivery in the inaugural Community Education Trainer of the Year Award, run by Community Colleges Australia which was held in Sydney on Tuesday 13th September 2022. The Community Education Trainer of the Year Award celebrates the work and underlines the importance of Australian adult and community education [ACE] trainers and teachers. I thank the many inspirational teachers across our region who motivate, inspire, mentor and guide their students to learn new skills and grow. I would also like to acknowledge

and thank Helen Zwicker and Diane Manns who are senior staff at the Kiama Community College for their ongoing dedication and hard work.

#### **MINNAMURRA PS BASKETBALL TEAM WINS KNOCKOUT COMPETITION**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—The Minnamurra Public School boys basketball team has ended a very successful year with a big win at the Primary School Sports Association Knockout competition. The team earned their place in the competition held in Sydney in late October after defeating all South Coast public school teams in the preliminary rounds, and Jerrabomberra Public School in the finals. The Knockout saw the students face eight teams from around the State. After fighting their way through to the semi-finals and then the grand finals, the team ended up winning easily against an athletic and talented Scone Public School team 58-38. The boys won which came as a great relief to their parents, grandparents and siblings after two close games, making them the 2022 PSSA Knockout State Champions. It is the first time a team from Minnamurra or the Kiama Community of Schools have won the competition in its forty year history. Congratulations to Minnamurra Public School and a big thanks to the coach Mr Tanner.

#### **GERRINGONG KITE FESTIVAL AT MICHAEL CRONIN OVAL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Gerringong is getting a new event that embraces its natural winds and may potentially grow into an annual event that will bring benefits for the town. The joint initiative of the Rotary Club of Gerringong and Kiama Council is bringing the Gerringong Kite Festival. The event will include live music, food trucks and activities for children in what will be a family-friendly community event. Gerringong Rotary member, Graham Hanna, is one who believes the initiative could grow into a big annual event, similar to the kite festivals held in Harden and Bondi. With the main street of Gerringong up the road, it will encourage people to come and spend money in the town. I would like to acknowledge and thank the President of Gerringong Rotary Sue McGilvray for her involvement and hard work behind the scenes. Kiama Municipal Council is also handing out 500 kite kits to schools, so children can make their own kites and bring them on the day this weekend. The Kite Festival is being held this Saturday 12th November 2022 at Michael Cronin Oval in Blackwood Street, Gerringong from 10am to 1:30pm.

#### **CHARITY GOLF DAY**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)**—The Ninth yearly Shoalhaven Business Chamber and Macey Insurance Brokers Charity Golf Day is just around the corner, the event is set to be held on the 25th of November and is already looking like its going to be a successful day. The Charity Golf Day will be held at the Nowra Golf Club, it is all about supporting local charities and bringing the community together for a fun filled day, I am delighted to hear the event is already a sell-out for playing slots and with only eight holes remain open for sponsorships. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who has been supporting the not-for-profit sector in our community and congratulate everyone for their massive efforts to have already raised nearly 100 thousand dollars! We have a very generous local business community, and I am extremely honoured to be able to acknowledge the Charity Golf Day and I cannot wait to see the success of the event and hear about all the had fun over the day.

#### **WAGGA WAGGA CWA EVENING BRANCH**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—For more than a century, the Country Women's Association has been fighting on behalf of country women and children across the state. While the association is this year celebrating its centenary, the Wagga Wagga Evening Branch has chalked up a milestone of its own. Last month, branch members gathered to celebrate the branch's 50th anniversary, attended by more than 70 members from across the Riverina. I was delighted to attend and celebrate with branch members. It was great to see two branch members, Lola Attwood and Hillary Cohen, awarded life memberships. My congratulations to both. My congratulations as well to branch member Julie Morrison, who was presented with a 50-year badge in honour of her contributions to the CWA. The late Pam Fuller, who had also been a member, was posthumously recognised for her service, with her family on hand to receive the recognition. I look forward to the branch continuing to advocate for country women and children, just as they have done recently with a branch suggestion the association should call for more trained mental health staff in schools. Best wishes to the branch for another 50 years of advocacy and support.

#### **GREEN INNOVATION FINALIST EMPIRE VALE SCHOOL**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the innovative talents and vision of the students in the senior class at Empire Vale Public School which led to their being nominated as finalists in the 2022 Green Innovation Awards. The 15 students envisioned, designed and produced re-usable coffee cup trays using 3D modelling and 3D printing. The trays featured personalised designs each student believed best represents them as individuals, and are part of a "closed loop" recycling system intended to keep them out of landfill. Formulated



from a poly-lactic acid that is made from fermented corn starch, they are both durable and fully compostable within 10 weeks. The class, guided by teachers Karen Rantissi and Peter Sugden, is also studying what it would take to commercialise the product, taking it from the classroom to the marketplace. With an estimated 250,000 cardboard trays being dumped every year, the students' innovation is a planet-saving idea. I congratulate each of the students involved; Blake Bailey, William Bosch, Lourdes Coyto, Selena Coyto, John-Carlo Gonce, Harry Hughes, Jack Hughes, Koda Johnson, Spiral Lane, Mia Manclark, Bailey Mott, Rubi Nowland, Lewis Radburn, Keirah Strickland, and Matthew Tansley.

#### **DOROTHEA LECHNER JUSTICE OF THE PEACE 50 YEARS' SERVICE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate and thank Mrs Dorothea Lechner for her outstanding 50 years' service as a Justice of the Peace in NSW. To selflessly carry out this role is a testament to a person's good and compassionate character. To carry out this role for 50 years is truly admirable and is a positive testimony to the meritorious qualities that are at the heart of a great community. I know that Mrs Lechner has persevered in this role for 50 years not for recognition but fulfilment of duty and service, however it is important that such a wonderful achievement of service is recognised. I again thank and congratulate Mrs Dorothea Lechner for her great achievement of serving the community for five decades.

#### **GEOFFREY HOOK JUSTICE OF THE PEACE 50 YEARS' SERVICE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate and thank Mr Geoffrey Hook for his outstanding 50 years' service as a Justice of the Peace in NSW. To selflessly carry out this role is a testament to a person's good and compassionate character. To carry out this role for 50 years is truly admirable and is a positive testimony to the meritorious qualities that are at the heart of a great community. I know that Mr Hook has persevered in this role for 50 years not for recognition but fulfilment of duty and service, however it is important that such a wonderful achievement of service is recognised. I again thank and congratulate Mr Geoffrey Hook for his great achievement of serving the community for five decades.

#### **BRIAN STEWART JUSTICE OF THE PEACE 50 YEARS' SERVICE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate and thank Mr Brian Stewart for his outstanding 50 years' service as a Justice of the Peace in NSW. To selflessly carry out this role is a testament to a person's good and compassionate character. To carry out this role for 50 years is truly admirable and is a positive testimony to the meritorious qualities that are at the heart of a great community. I know that Mr Stewart has persevered in this role for 50 years not for recognition but fulfilment of duty and service, however it is important that such a wonderful achievement of service is recognised. I again thank and congratulate Mr Brian Stewart for his great achievement of serving the community for five decades.

#### **GRANDPARENT'S DAY**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Grandparent's Day was celebrated across NSW on the 30th of October. Grandparents are truly the backbone of our families, providing invaluable support to our parents and teaching core values that are passed down to new generations. The day marks an important reminder to celebrate our grandparents and others that fill this role in our lives and to check in with them through a simple phone call or visit. No one in the community has been left untouched by the social isolation experienced as a result of COVID-19. However, this has been a particularly trying time for older generations who already experience increased social isolation as the opportunities to socialise through work and other activities decrease post retirement. This is not to mention our grandparents and elderly living in retirement homes when no visitors were allowed due to COVID-19. This makes it even more important to reach out to our Grandparents to make sure they know they are cared for and loved. Thank you to all the Grandparents!

#### **THE INAUGURAL OWLOWEEN 2022**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—The Wollondilly Shire Council and Australian Wildlife Sanctuary, located in Bargo, collaborated recently to hold the first 'Owloween'. The event was a celebration of Halloween and Australian wildlife, with everyone encouraged to wear their spookiest costume. Event-goers were able to enjoy meeting the animals, including owls, amongst other fun activities such as educational theatre performances, live performances and best costume prizes. The event was a great success, as it sold almost 1000 booked tickets. Owloween provided an excellent opportunity for the whole family to learn about Australian native wildlife, including the importance of conservation. The event was catered by the Picton Rotary Club, who will use the funds from catering the event to build new kitchens for the Wollondilly Riding for Disabled Association and the Wollondilly Pony Club. Well done to all involved!

### HEARTS IN THE PARK 2022

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—The Southern Highlands Suicide Prevention Program is an initiative of Lifeline. The program is aimed to help people in distress by finding them the appropriate help and preventing suicide by raising community awareness and skills to respond to issues of suicide. The committee's dedicated volunteers meet monthly in Bowral to help achieve the program's goals. The 22nd of October marked the annual event of Hearts in the Park. Run by the Southern Highlands Suicide Prevention Program, hand cut paper hearts were placed around the gardens to commemorate and pay respects to loved ones lost to suicide. October was Mental Health Month in NSW. The month is dedicated to highlighting the importance of maintaining and prioritising our mental health and wellbeing and eliminating the stigma associated with mental health. The month serves as a reminder that we all need to check in with our mates to keep connected.

### GOULBURN RUGBY CLUB

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise Goulburn Rugby Club. This year the Goulburn Rugby Club will celebrate its 150th anniversary, being Australia's oldest country rugby club. The club was founded on the 22nd of July 1872. The club has certainly much to celebrate, beyond its longevity. The club was a founding member of the original Southern Rugby Union, going on to play against Sydney premiership teams and even playing the international touring British Lions. The club also saw eight Wallabies don the Dirty Red guernsey. More recently the club has enjoyed numerous successes not only on the field. Now they have a second oval, Klem Oval, refurbished clubhouse, and greeted a women's team who won the 2022 premiership. The richness of the club exudes a proud passion not only for the game of rugby but the camaraderie within the club remains unfailing from the youngest Fizzie Reds to the golden oldies. Celebrations for the anniversary will include a dinner, four matches the naming of three Hills at Rugby Park, and the 150th Anniversary Reunion Ball. I offer my congratulations and reflect upon not only the past but to look inspirationally into the future success for years to come.

### EXETER VINEYARD

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise the resilience and determination of Michael and Katrina Archer. Back in 2017 Michael and Katrina embarked upon their journey to obtain their dream of opening a winery and cellar door. Michael and Katrina purchased their seven-acre property in Exeter. As the looming bushfires approached the property in 2019 Michael was going to stay and defend the property until the fires had reached the front yard, leaving no option other than to evacuate. Gratefully the RFS were able to save the vineyard. After two years of drought, bushfires and then luckily rainfall in the following year allowed the vineyard crop was able to get some growth. Excitedly, their vision has come to fruition and the Dawning Day Wines opened in November 2021. The winery produces cool climate wines such as pinot noir, chardonnay and gamay. I again acknowledge and congratulate Michael and Katrina for their vision, steadfast and diligent work to accomplish their dream and wish them all the very best for the future.

### TUESDAY CLUB

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Forty years ago, a group of local women came together at Fosseys at the old Charlestown Square. They met every Tuesday, so they called it the Tuesday Club, and over the years it has become a fixture of so many local women's lives. The Tuesday Club now meets at The Place, Charlestown's community centre, each week during school term. A senior ladies friendship group, the weekly social mornings include morning tea, club announcements, and either a guest speaker, entertainment or games. The club also organises trips and outings throughout the year. It was my pleasure to join the Tuesday Club on Tuesday 1 November for their fortieth anniversary celebrations and share in the community and friendship they've built together. Two of their members are over a hundred years old, and it was a special privilege to get a chance to chat with Dot, who recently celebrated her 103rd birthday! My thanks to the wonderful Place for hosting the anniversary celebrations, providing a home for the club and helping to keep this important part of the Charlestown community going. And most of all, thank you for the invitation, ladies! Here's to many more years of the Tuesday Club.

### JANE EKHOLM

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—My congratulations to Jane Ekholm, who was named the 2022 Australian Inspirational Virtual Assistant of the year at the Australian Virtual Assistant Awards. Each year, the awards are held to both recognise and honour the dedicated work of Australia's best in the Virtual Assistant Industry. The Awards are a way to bring VAs front and centre to celebrate the collective impact the industry has on businesses. More than thirty per cent of the award nominations went to members of the Newcastle VA Network, which is made up of more than a hundred and fifty active members. Jane set up The Jane Edit in an effort to support small businesswomen in the creative industry in 2016. Since then, her business has grown to offer many

complementary services. Jane has worked hard as part of the Newcastle VA Network to build support for her fellow workers, and I thank her for her extraordinary efforts. This is a well-deserved award, recognising the achievements which come from a lifetime of building skills. My congratulations to Jane and the other nominees from the Newcastle VA Network. Great work!

### **RECLAIM THE NIGHT**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—A Reclaim the Night event was held at the Warners Bay Foreshore on Friday 28 October. Starting at the Warners Bay rotunda at six o'clock in the evening, the event was hosted by Lake Macquarie City Council and organised the Domestic Violence Committee, made up of representatives from Nova for Women and Children: Homelessness and Domestic Violence Service, East Lakes Family Support Services, and CALM. The march saw people of all ages and genders come together to raise awareness of violence against women in our community and worldwide. There were similar events around the region and across the country. I was invited to speak at the Reclaim The Night event at Gregson Park in Hamilton. Reclaim The Night started in the UK during the 1970s and has become a worldwide movement standing up against male violence against women. This year's event was a stark reminder that sexual violence is still prevalent, and in fact reported rates of sexual assault and domestic violence are increasing. Unfortunately, the message of Reclaim The Night is as timely as ever.

### **LOCAL RESTAURANT RADIO CAIRO TURNS 30**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge one of our local North Shore restaurants, Radio Cairo, recently celebrating its 30th anniversary on the 23rd of October. Located on Spofforth Street, right near Military Road in Mosman, Radio Cairo serves eclectic African, Indian, and Caribbean-style dishes. The smell of their cuisine attracts cinema-goers at the nearby Hayden Orpheum and locals from all parts of my electorate, and their delicious food and excellent service keep people coming back for more. I know businesses have done it tough the past few years with the uncertainty of the pandemic and Public Health Orders. It is great to see local institutions still flourishing after what has been quite a challenging period. I congratulate Srian, the owner of Radio Cairo, and their entire staff for this significant milestone. Srian's birthday also coincided with Radio Cairo's anniversary, so I am sure the celebrations were high. I wish Srian and the Radio Cairo team all the best in the future, and we hope to see another 30 years of fantastic food in our local area.

### **BEAUTY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL – COLOUR EXPLOSION FUN RUN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I congratulate the Beauty Point Public School community for the success of their Colour Explosion School Fun Run, held last Friday, the 28th of October. The fun run is a fundraiser held by the school's P&C, raising just over \$25,000, which will go towards upgrading the computer room of the Robotics & Technology Hub. For every \$20 raised by the fun run, the school committed to having a coral plant planted in the Great Barrier Reef through an initiative to reduce our environmental impact. I acknowledge the hard work of P&C member Shar Allen, who coordinated the event, and the amazing parent volunteers who got to rejoice in throwing colour bombs as the kids ran past. Seeing the whole school community come together to make this event happen is so special. I am sure the kids had a blast running around and getting splattered with coloured powder whilst also learning more about sustainability and environmental conservation. Once again, I congratulate Beauty Point Public School P & C, teachers and parents and thank them for contributing to protecting and preserving our incredible environment.

### **VALE KEN COWLEY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the passing of well-known Mosman resident Ken Cowley. Ken had sadly been battling motor neuron disease and died at the age of 87 after suffering a stroke. Ken's legacy in making News Corp a media giant in Australia is well recognised, and his leadership was crucial for the company's growth from a small publisher. He spent 40 years of his career working alongside Rupert Murdoch to make the company the success it is today. Ken's work has undoubtedly had a lasting impact locally and throughout Australia. Rupert Murdoch spoke on Ken's passing stating, "I admired his loyalty, integrity and business leadership." Ken also worked in the financial sector and as the owner of the iconic and much-loved brand R.M. Williams. Outside of his career, he deeply appreciated the Australian outback and horse riding. I extend my deepest sympathies to Ken's family and loved ones, including Maureen, Matt, and Melinda, throughout this difficult time. Vale Ken.

### **KYOGLER BULL RIDE SPECTACULAR IS BACK**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—It is fantastic to see the much loved and anticipated Kyogle Bull Ride Spectacular will be coming back with a bang this Saturday November 12 at the Kyogle Showgrounds. Gates open at 4pm for a 6pm start. This is the 24th bull ride and after two years of cancellations and the committee losing many of their beloved members it is wonderful to see it back in action. It will be a special event. Kyogle

will buckle up for a night of many events and bull rides including the Open Bull Ride - Barry Fuller Memorial and the Novice Bull Ride - Josh Fuller Memorial. Barry loved bull riding and passed this love onto his grandson Josh. Some of Josh's bulls will be there on the night which will be extra special for the Fuller family. Other events include the Under 12 Mini Bull Ride, the Gary Piggott Memorial and Col Predo Memorial. I acknowledge stock contractors Garry Fuller, Northern Rivers RTodeo Promotions, MC Bucking Bulls, GW Bucking Bulls and Doak Bucking Bulls for providing top quality stock for the ride. I thank sponsors McKid Medical and Hogans Sawmill. Buckle up for a big night!

### **MURWILLUMBAH SHOW 2022**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—The Murwillumbah Show was back this year with a bumper crowd of thousands of locals flocking to enjoy the best of Murwillumbah and Tweed Valley. It was a pleasure to be at the opening of the show and give the vote of thanks to life member Ian Dawes who gave a moving address about the history of the show and how the show survived and thrived for 120 years carrying tradition into the modern era. I thank Tweed Regional Agriculture Society President Peter MacDonald and the entire show society for putting on a great show and spectacular grand parade held on Saturday. I congratulate winner of the Murwillumbah Young Woman of the Year competition Jemma Gilliland from Doon Doon and it was inspiring to hear her address at the show. I also caught up with runners up Amy Partridge and Layla Dodds and Regional Young Woman of the Year Jenna Robinson. Our future is in bright hands with these young women as our leaders. We then headed down to give out awards to our nation leading cane growers with Sunshine Sugar. As Ian Dawes says it was great to get on with the show!

### **BR JOHN HILET – OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO MARIST EDUCATION**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate Br John Hilet of Trinity Catholic College Lismore on receiving the 2022 Outstanding Contribution to Marist Education award. Br John Hilet fms commenced his teaching career in 1983—a career that continues to this day. His passion for young people—their education, welfare and holistic development—remains strong four decades later. For 18 years Br John served as Principal in two large, regional schools: Red Bend Catholic College in Forbes (2005-2012) and Trinity Catholic College in Lismore (2013-2022). His Principalships have not been easy. From financial pressures, draughts, floods, pandemics, building projects and the myriad of pastoral issues one faces as a leader in large school communities. Br John has remained adaptable, forward thinking and unwavering in his commitment to others. Br John has made a positive and lasting contribution to many school communities, including those he has led as Principal. Now he is a leading figure in our flood recovery as the Director of Master Planning. He has lead Trinity Catholic College through difficult times but he has lead in a calm, focused and compassionate way. Gaining him the great respect of the school and wider community.

### **DULWICH HIGH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Congratulations to Dulwich High School student, Kathy Nguyen, for receiving a 2022 International Student of the Year Award! Every year, this prestigious award is presented to international students all around NSW who have made outstanding contributions to their communities. In the three years since Kathy arrived in Sydney from Vietnam in 2019, she has been a powerful voice and role model in the Inner West. In 2021, Kathy became School Captain of Dulwich High School. In this role, she organised many important fundraising events for different charities, including Vouch for Lismore, the World's Greatest Shave, and Black Rainbow. Kathy has been so generous to share her cultural experiences with other young people around the Inner West, but has also ensured to lift up other international students in her community. Kathy has been a guest speaker for the University of Sydney's Vietnamese International Students Society and collaborated with SET Education to assist other Vietnamese international students in their study abroad. Thank you Kathy for your excellence as a role model in our community - what a well-deserved award!

### **INDEPENDENT SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I would like to express my gratitude for the hard work of the teachers at our local independent schools. Back in August, I had the opportunity to meet with teachers from Casimir Catholic College in Marrickville, Stephanie Bohane and Kevin Boyce, accompanied by Independent Education Union Organiser, Lee Cunningham, to discuss the increasingly distressing conditions of the field. Amid a staffing crisis, there has been unjust pressure placed on our teachers to take on additional, unpaid work just to keep their heads above water. Hearing their first-hand experiences, it was made clear to me that these challenges go beyond the stresses posed by COVID-19. This demands serious action to correct both a system that does not give our teachers the recognition or autonomy that they deserve. During our meeting, we discussed the IEU campaign, "Hear Our Voice" which calls for better respect and working conditions for independent teachers, including: raising the salary cap, giving adequate time to plan lessons, and addressing the decreasing supply of teachers in

NSW by creating better work incentives. I thank Stephanie Bohane, Kevin Boyce, and Lee Cunningham for speaking with me about these concerns and fighting to let our teachers teach.

### **POETS AT THE PETERSHAM BOWLO**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Poets at the Petersham Bowlo is a monthly gathering of the Inner West's finest spoken word and performance artists. The Open Mic soirée takes place at our beautiful and iconic Petersham Bowling Club on the third Thursday of every month. The night hosts a friendly and encouraging atmosphere where all kinds of performances are welcome: poems, short stories, comedy, music. For many years, it has been a great way for local poets to connect with each other, as well as to meet artists from other performance scenes around Australia. The October event featured well-established and published Melbourne poet, Peter Bakowski. The space also offers a great opportunity for emerging artists to take the next step in their creative endeavours - whether this may be performing for the first time or getting published themselves! Each year, those who have presented original material during an Open Mic soirée are able to submit their work to be published in an annual anthology. At a fantastic bar and bistro, new and old friends can gather and share their stories thanks to the Poets at the Petersham Bowlo.

### **2022 SPECIAL OLYMPICS NATIONAL GAMES – JOSHUA FROST**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Joshua Frost, a local athlete from Greystanes who represented our community in this year's Special Olympics National Games in Launceston, Tasmania, from the 16th to 21st October 2022. The Special Olympics is a fantastic sporting organisation, giving people with a physical or intellectual disability the opportunity to prove their athletic abilities. Joshua has been an athlete for 20 years, training at the Sydney West Club located in Greystanes, a training facility for Special Olympics Australia. It is truly fantastic that Joshua has made our Western Sydney community proud, winning a Bronze Medal in 50 metres freestyle. He also came fourth in backstroke and fourth in the 4 x 50 metre relay, with two personal bests at the games. This is an extraordinary feat, where Joshua consistently ranked in the top four in these swimming events, out of the 96 athletes from NSW attending the Special Olympics National Games. Thank you, Joshua, for representing our Western Sydney community at this year's Special Olympics National Games. You have made our community and your family very proud. I look forward to seeing what you will achieve in the future.

### **DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE NATHAN GABRIEL – NSW POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Detective Senior Constable Nathan Gabriel, Drug and Firearms Squad, on being awarded NSW Police Officer of the Year 2022 and the Investigations and Counter Terrorism Award on November 4th 2022. Detective Senior Constable Gabriel's exceptional approach to investigations is evidenced through his work on Strike Force Highway. Using his deep understanding of how organised crime syndicates operate, Detective Senior Constable Gabriel developed a compelling investigative plan, systematically exploring multiple lines of inquiry, incorporating traditional methodologies with dynamic and imaginative ways to progress the investigation over months. When the Covid pandemic was at its peak, nationwide lockdowns severely hampered target movements, diminished investigative opportunities and delayed the overall progress of investigations. However, Detective Senior Constable Gabriel remained steadfast in his resolve to press on. His skilled police work led to his team arresting three suspects, charging them with murder, leading to the recovery of buried human remains on a remote property. This demonstrates Detective Senior Constable Gabriel's talents as a Detective and as a very deserving recipient of this Award. Thank you Detective Senior Constable Gabriel for serving our community and bringing organised crime members to justice.

### **HYCAST METALS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 14 October 2022, it was a pleasure to attend the First Nations smoking ceremony and tour of the Hycast Metals manufacturing facility in Smithfield with The Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, and Councillor Lisa Lake, Mayor of Cumberland City Council. Hycast Metals is a local manufacturing success story. For half a century, this family business, owned by the Kell family for three generations, have provided many local jobs for our Western Sydney community. Their products are exported to both the international and domestic market, even having a place in Sydney's cultural history with some of their metal works contained within the spires of St Mary's Cathedral. Thank you to John Kell, CEO, Hycast Metals for the tour of your facility. The skilled production of your metal products was extraordinary to witness. It was also fantastic to see that your two daughters, Annie Keller and Caroline Hugall, have followed in your footsteps in the management of the business, to improve it even further. Congratulations on your continued success. I look forward to returning to Hycast Metals in the future and supporting this great Western Sydney manufacturing business.

### ORANGE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the volunteers of Orange and District Historical Society. Since 1949 the Society has worked to acquire items, documents and photographs to preserve the rich heritage of Orange. Every week volunteers devote countless hours to preserving our history to be enjoyed by generations to come. Historical documentation from the 1850s gold rush at Ophir near Orange is just one example of history preserved by the Society. In 2012 the Society took on the mammoth task of transferring negatives provided by the Central Western Daily Newspaper from 1959 to digital format. This task was embraced with great enthusiasm by the volunteers so priceless images of our city's past would be preserved and shared forever. This dedicated team of volunteers is truly keeping history alive in Orange and indeed without their commitment much of the documentation of our city's past would have been lost forever.

### WANGARANG INDUSTRIES

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to recognise the work of Wangarang Industries, who are celebrating 60 years of providing support for disabled residents of the Orange community. Wangarang Industries is a not-for-profit Australian Disability Enterprise on Forest Road providing a range of jobs, training and support services for residents with a variety of disabilities. Established by a group of dedicated local residents in 1962, Wangarang provides meaningful work in a supported environment for 125 residents of Orange. Wangarang provides services to a range of businesses from cleaning, to packaging and a variety of other jobs. The facility also provides social support and life skills and is a valuable connection for people living with a disability in the community. This in turn promotes a higher level of independence as well as ongoing development, learning and social interaction. I congratulate Wangarang Industries for providing a valuable service over for 60 years.

### JESSICA ASHCROFT

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise the achievements of Forbes resident Jessica Ashcroft. Jessica has the prestigious honour of being named as the winner of the NRL 2022 Women in League Award. Since she was a young girl playing in the Forbes Magpies Juniors, Jessica was a standout with her passion for her chosen sport. As she rose through the ranks to now play in the senior league, Jessica became a role model for women and girls – proving first-hand that rugby league is not just a sport for boys and men. Six years ago, Jessica took on the task of refereeing at a time when sport is calling out for more officials in the game. Her involvement in so many facets of the game from league tag, to playing, coaching and refereeing has given her a legendary persona in the game in Forbes and district. Forbes and my electorate salute Jessica.

### KOGARAH PUBLIC SCHOOL'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—After a two-year delay due to COVID-19, Kogarah Public School recently celebrated its 150 anniversary with a school assembly, cultural performances and historical display. The school originally opened on the site of the current St Paul's Anglican Church in 1870 with approximately 45 students. The infants school moved to the current site in Gladstone Street in April, 1954 and then in 1962, the primary students moved from their premises in Regent Street, part of the Kogarah High School site, to Gladstone Street due to the growth of population in the area. The student population continued to grow and the school now has almost 500 students. Former students include author and poet Clive James, entertainer Jeanne Little, actress June Salter, and Olympic swimmer Gary Chapman. The assembly heard stories of the 150-year history of the school from past students, principals, teachers, current students and the community. There were performances by the school Drumming Group, Senior Dance Group, Chinese Dance Group and Bollywood Dance Group displaying the cultural diversity that is celebrated at the school. Congratulations on an amazing celebration of a local school with a long history that has a bright and colourful future.

### THE KOGARAH BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—The Kogarah Bay Progress Association [KBPA] has secured Federal funding under the Planting Trees for the Queen's Jubilee grant program. This will allow the Association to join many other community groups in planting trees in commemoration of the 70-year Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II. The KBPA was successful in its funding applications in all three electorates that encompass the Georges River Council Local Government Area; Carss Bush Park in the electorate of Cook; in Terry Street Reserve at Blakehurst in the electorate of Banks; and in Vanessa Street Reserve in Beverly Hills in the Barton electorate. The Queen's reign left a significant legacy; planting trees is a simple gesture but one that will also have a lasting legacy. Later this year each Federal Member will be invited to turn the first sod in the planting process in their respective electorate. In 2023, as part of the Tree Planting Program, a formal ceremony will be held at each venue to officially unveil a plaque to honour the late Queen Elizabeth II in acknowledgement of her outstanding commitment to service and duty. Congratulations to the KBPA on successfully applying for three grants to celebrate this auspicious occasion.

### BLAKEHURST PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Congratulations Blakehurst Public School for supporting Bear Cottage with 'Superhero Day' Pupils excitedly swapped school uniforms for superhero capes, masks and gloves recently in support of a fun fundraiser. The students got into the superhero spirit, arriving in their favourite crime fighting characters, with Spiderman, Iron Man and Captain American being popular choices. Pupils also designed superhero masks, and showcased their creations in a 'best mask' competition. Staff wore superhero T-shirts, and there was some superhero guest entertainment, face-painting, popcorn, snow cones and a sausage sizzle. The school's event coordinator, Fay Sleiman, organised the day to raise money for Bear Cottage in Manly on Sydney's northern beaches, which provides support, respite and end-of-life care for children. Bear Cottage is one of the school's major fundraising causes and they are very passionate about raising money for such a worthy charity. Well done Blakehurst Public School.

### PETER PAN PRESCHOOL

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to congratulate Peter Pan Preschool at Wangi Wangi on its 60th anniversary. I was pleased to join with the preschool's directors Lynne Howard and Kristin Hopkins to mark the milestone occasion earlier this month. I also joined Jenny Agnew who officially retired last year after a 32-year career as an educator at the preschool, although she still helps on a casual basis and remains President of its committee. Jenny's commitment and generosity to the preschool is admirable and I thank her for her ongoing efforts for both the preschool and the local community. I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of people who attended Peter Pan's birthday celebrations. It was wonderful to see three generations of the same families turning up, with grandparents, parents and children all having memories of their time at the preschool. The longevity of the Peter Pan Preschool speaks volumes about the high regard in which it's held by the Lake Macquarie community. I have enjoyed several visits to the preschool over recent years and always been impressed with the quality of education and care provided to local children. My congratulations to all involved.

### CHRISTINE MASTELLO

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I want to acknowledge and thank the extraordinary Christine Mastello, founder and CEO of Southlakes Incorporated. Christine is a legend not only in Lake Macquarie but across the state and was one of just four finalists for the 2023 Australian of the Year Local Hero award. Over the past 10 years Christine and her team of 35 volunteers have fed more than one million people and delivered emergency food packs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic via the group's food bank at Cooranbong. In 2017 Christine launched the Community Hair Project and has since provided 60,000 free haircuts to homeless people. Last year, Southlakes Incorporated donated \$1.2 million worth of food, toiletries and clothing throughout NSW. She is currently preparing to launch the Share Your Home project which will match homeless women and teenagers with people who have a spare room in their house for three months of free accommodation. Christine believes that no Australian should go hungry and that everyone should feel cared for and valued. She is an unstoppable force when it comes to achieving these goals, and I thank her for everything she has contributed to the local community so far.

### ASSYRIAN CULTURAL NIGHT

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—I am very pleased to acknowledge the Assyrian Cultural Night which I was privileged to attend on 19th October at Parliament House. The event was held by the Assyrian National Council and hosted by The NSW Parliamentary Friends of Assyria Group. The event included cultural performances by The Assyrian Folklore Dancing Group and an exhibition by the Assyrian Cultural and Social Youth Association [ACSYA]. A highlight was a performance from students of St Narsai Assyrian Christian College, as well as an art display by renowned Assyrian artist Mr Adward Haydo. The traditions celebrated have been practised for well over 1,500 years. I hope the traditions of this very rich culture continue in Australia. Aramaic is a unique ancient language with at least 500,000 speakers. The Assyrian Cuisine has roots in Syria, Iraq, Northwest Iran, Turkey, Greece, and Israel. I was truly impressed with the unique and rare diversity of the Assyrians culture and traditions. I thank the Assyrian National Council and the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Assyria Group for the invitation and for hosting this excellent showcase of diversity.

### CANTERBURY & DISTRICT SOCCER FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION – VOLUNTEER'S RECOGNITION DINNER

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—Canterbury & District Soccer Football Association was formed in 1922 and is the largest and most culturally diverse association in NSW. Their motto is 'One game, many cultures.' I once again have had the honour of attending their Volunteer's Recognition Dinner. Recognising the contribution of volunteers is a key aspect of this organisation's vision and drive to enrich the community through football. I am very familiar with the great work they do and can attest to their significant contribution to our community,

especially when it comes to reinforcing acceptance and inclusion based on gender, culture, race, and religion. It is through this spirit they prove that they promote diversity and enrich our community. I want to commend the Chairman, Armando Gardiman AM, Chief Executive, Ian Holmes, and their team for their exceptional leadership as a long-running organisation that continues to strive towards combating bullying based on gender, culture, race, and religion. I also want to commend them on the success of their annual dinner and for the acknowledgment of all the well-deserving volunteers who form the backbone of this organisation.

### CREATING CHANCES

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—On 17 October I had the pleasure of meeting with Brad McCarroll and Craig Regan of Creating Chances. Creating Chances is an innovative youth development program that uses sport to equip participants with life skills to reach their full potential. They collaborate with the Department of Education and have worked with more than 20,000 participants from more than 100 NSW schools over the last seven years. Their programs are tailored to building confident, capable and future-ready young people including professional development for teachers, seminars for community and youth workers and accreditation for sports coaching. They are now looking to expand their focus into encouraging students to enter teaching. As a former educator I am very supportive of initiatives that encourage our best and brightest into the teaching profession. Given the challenges the education sector faces with teacher shortages this is very prescient work. I am very grateful to Brad and Craig for coming out to the Electorate Office to brief me and congratulate them on all their work to date.

### PLAN YOUR OWN ENTERPRISE COMPETITION

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate Riley Dowd from St Columba Anglican School Port Macquarie for his recent recognition in the NSW Final of the Plan Your Own Enterprise Competition. Described as an entrepreneurial talent, Year 11 student Riley Dowd made the final of the Plan Your Own Enterprise Competition for his comprehensive business plan linking people that have been affected by floods, fires and domestic violence with crisis accommodation. Riley's proposal seeks to address the need to highlight support options available for community members requiring refuge following traumatic and life changing events to prevent the added stress of impending homelessness. The Plan Your Own Enterprise Competition is run by the Business Educators Australasia Inc. The competition enables students to see the interconnectedness in business operations, promoting organisation and planning, decision making, enterprise thinking, reflection and action, prioritising and collaborating and innovation. I congratulate Riley for his outstanding business plan and his critical thinking which secured his runner up status at the NSW Plan Your Own Enterprise Competition. Well done Riley!

### CLUB HARRINGTON FISHING CLUB

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I acknowledge a former fishing club in the Port Macquarie electorate who has generously donated more than \$10,000 to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. The Club Harrington Fishing Club has been a valued organisation wrapped in history and tradition for over fifty years boasting record-breaking catches, annual competitions and that infamous fish that got away. After a legacy of casting and trawling the Manning River, the Harrington Fishing Club members have made the painstaking decision to wind-up the organisation and donate their remaining funds to a worthy cause. President Ted Muddle, Weighmaster Yvonne Machin and member Laurie Machin presented the Westpac Helicopter with a cheque for \$10,321.20 marking the official end of an era for the Club which was formed in 1972. Special mention goes to Club Member Ian Sheather who has been with the organisation from the beginning. Thanks also to Michael Burgess from Club Harrington for supporting and promoting recreational fishing and its members for many years. Fishing will always be at the heart of the Harrington community and I have no doubt the Club will be sorely missed.

### NATIONAL AWARD FOR BAGO MAZE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise the Mobbs family from the Bago Maze and Winery in the Port Macquarie electorate and to applaud them on their recent win in the small project category for a Landscape Architecture Award. The award recognises a work of excellence demonstrating consummate skill that contributes to the advancement of landscape architecture. Bago Maze began in 2006 and has been the ongoing project of Ian Mobbs who accepted the award on behalf of the Mobbs family. The maze design incorporates various aspects inspired by the surrounding vineyard and the local wine. The journey through two interlaced spirals represents the cyclic and seasonal nature of the vineyard and are a figurative depiction of grapevine tendrils and a bunch of grapes. The Bago Maze is a stunning architectural design using plantings of native Lilly Pilly creating a magical place for all to enjoy including hidden walkways, sunken pathways, bridges and lookout towers. An impressive attraction for locals and visitors to enjoy and I congratulate Kay and James Mobbs and their children Ian, Steven and Kellie and their staff on winning this coveted award.



### SEAFORTH WOMENS BOWLING

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)**—Today I congratulate Seaforth Bowling Clubs grade four women's team who were recently crowned district champions bringing home the flag. Their win came after a nail-biting regional play-off against defending champions Warrawee at Belrose bowling club. The team is now off to the State Playoff to compete for the state championship. Congratulation to the team this a tremendous accomplishment and the club and community are immensely proud of you. Further I would like to wish them all the best of luck for the State Playoffs hopefully there is more success to come.

### MANLY UNITED

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)**—Today I congratulate Manly United Football Club. Recently their Under 16 MWFA team finished their 2022 season undefeated and have been crowned champions of their competition. They defeated Hills football in a dominant fashion with the final score being 7-0. Congratulations to the team and coaches to have such a dominant season is to true testament to the level of hard work and talent present at Manly United and I hope next season is as successful.

### QUEEN'S GUIDE AWARD FOR MORGAN CLYNE

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I wish to congratulate Morgan Clyne who received the Queen's Guide Award 2021. Morgan is a member of the Maitland-Rutherford Girl Guides who dedicated herself to completing this award to the highest standard. This was a proud moment for Morgan, with the Queen's Guide Award signifying the peak achievement for youth members of Girl Guides Australia. Morgan applied herself to undertake the requirements of the Award which challenge individuals and support personal development and growth in self-awareness. With individuals challenging themselves with something that has value to them, which they cannot currently do, but something that can be achieved with effort. Morgan's Queen's Guide focus was the arts and Morgan practiced vocal skills as part of her interest. She has pushed and challenged herself and as a result has accomplished the goals, she set for herself. Congratulations Morgan you should be so proud of your achievements, and I know that your peers and mentors at the Maitland-Rutherford Girl Guides are so happy with the way you applied yourself to achieving your goals, Bravo!

### MAITLAND REGION SOCIETY OF ARTISTS AND RUTHERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL ART SHOW

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the Maitland Region Society of Artists and Rutherford Public School Art Show opening night, held on Friday 16 September. The Rutherford Public School Hall was a buzz with conversation from Maitland Region Society of Artists members, and art admirers alike. The level of artistic talent was awe-inspiring. The show's exhibition featured the artworks of 900 school children and members of the art society, and raised over \$3,500, donated to the Rutherford Public School by the society to aid in various school and student activities. Congratulations to committee members Kay Sparkes, Verona Luca, Joanne Conder, Jenny Dimmock, Chris Lucas, Janice Bellamy, Julie Hosking, Rene Brager, Julie Hvirf, Lorraine Tindall, Rob Conder and Anna Eggenhuisen on the execution of such a sophisticated and well-run exhibition. Your efforts and commitment to ensuring the continuation of the art show, which has been running since 2012, are praiseworthy and a credit to each and every one of you.

### BIG RED KIDNEY BUS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Recently I had the pleasure of visiting the Big Red Kidney Bus here at Parliament House. A new state-of-the-art bus that travels NSW allowing individuals the freedom to travel without the added stress of missing dialysis treatments. This is a wonderful advancement for dialysis patients, enabling them to enjoy holidays with their loved ones and receive their treatment whilst on the road. The Big Red Kidney Bus program has to date, helped over 500 families, and operates in partnership with Kidney Health Australia and the Royal North Shore Hospital. Many dialysis patients state they feel restricted by their diagnosis, with patients spending around 60 hours strapped to a machine each month. The Big Red Bus attempts to give patients back their freedom, equipped with three chairs, with six sessions available each day at each destination. Patients can have peace of mind and time to unwind as the bus stays in each location for up to six weeks at a time. This is a fantastic program sponsored by AstraZeneca, Toronto Lions Club, Elderslee Foundation and the Australian Lions Foundation.

### TOP BLOKES FOUNDATION

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Wednesday 2 November 2022, I met with Melissa and Daniel from Top Blokes Foundation to talk about their mission and the activities they are undertaking with youth in the Fairfield Electorate. The Top Blokes Foundation have been delivering social education and mentoring programs to young men in the Fairfield Electorate for the past 3 years. Their mission is to give young boys who have been experiencing challenges a safe place to speak and gain advice so that they can move forward to lead safe and

happy lives. One goal which is close to my own heart is the focus on reducing the young male suicide rate and anti-social behaviours, and assisting with mental health. Currently in the Fairfield Electorate Top Blokes is operating 4 programs and reaches 51 boys who are gaining important life skills and mentoring services. I am grateful for the work Melissa and Daniel and the team at Top Blokes do for our local community and I look forward to seeing more of their wonderful work in the Fairfield Electorate.

#### **PAUL ZAMMIT**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I wish to congratulate Mr Paul Zammit OAM FAICD who has been awarded by the Holy Father Pope Francis the Honour of the Knight of the Order of St Gregory, the Great for his distinguished services to the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The order is one of the five orders of knighthood of the Holy See and recognises Paul's personal services to the Catholic Church and the example he has set in the wider community of Sydney. Paul has been a staunch advocate of Catholic values and has upheld the faith throughout his work and dealings with the community. I particularly support his ongoing work in organising the Catholic Breakfasts in Parliament House where Catholics from across Sydney come together and are given the opportunity to listen to guest speakers and to discuss current Catholic issues. I commend Paul's work in the community and I congratulate him once again on receiving this esteemed Papal Honour.

#### **FAIRFIELD ART SOCIETY ART SHOW 2022**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Thursday 3 November 2022, the Fairfield Art Society held their annual Art Show at Club Marconi. The event was well attended by our local artists and art enthusiasts and I congratulate the Fairfield Art Society on their organisation of the event. I wish to congratulate Ms Leane Stitzinger, winner of the Fairfield Local Artist Prize which I have the honour of sponsoring each year. I commend the Fairfield Art Society for their ongoing commitment to supporting and exhibiting the work of local artists and congratulate them once again on a successful event.

#### **SPORT AUSTRALIA HALL OF FAME HONOURS**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—I wish to congratulate former Formula One driver Mark Webber on his induction into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame. Queanbeyan-born and bred, Mark spent more than a decade in F1 in which he claimed nine wins throughout his 215 starts and 13 pole positions. He left F1 at the end of 2013 and joined the Porsche programme in the FIA World Endurance Championship. Now retired from racing, Mark continues as an ambassador of Porsche and manages Oscar Piastri. Mark is the fifth motorsport representative to be inducted into the Sports Australia Hall of Fame, joining Sir Jack Brabham, Alan Jones, Peter Brock, and Allan Moffat. Being inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame is an incredible achievement and further highlights Mark's stellar career at the highest level of motorsport around the world. His achievement in putting Australian drivers back on the map in Formula 1 cannot be underestimated, or the longevity for which he had such a prosperous career. Mark's long-standing tenure during the height of his career and his nine Grand Prix wins makes him one of this country's most successful drivers in the sport.

#### **BRAIDWOOD OPEN GARDENS**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—Perched high in the Southern Tablelands on the easternmost edge of the Monaro and famous for its prized rare truffles, Braidwood is one of the prettiest towns in NSW. It is the halfway point between Canberra and the South Coast, so you will often find its streets brimming with travellers stopping for a lunch break and browsing the antique stores. Historic Braidwood is a National Trust-classified town, the first to be listed on the NSW State Heritage register. Its charming colonial buildings, rustic streetscapes, and rural beauty have been the perfect backdrop for iconic Australian films such as *The Year My Voice Broke*. And with such an historically significant past, Braidwood also boasts some of the State's oldest and most prestigious heritage gardens. After three years of fires, floods, and Covid, a colourful Spring event in Braidwood finally made its return last weekend. The Braidwood Open Gardens is a fundraising event for the community-run, not-for-profit Braidwood Pre-School. I would like to thank the event organisers and the owners of Linden, The Doncaster, Charleston Lodge, 18 Coronation Avenue, and Mona, for opening their beautiful gardens in support of this vibrant and wonderful community group.

#### **CASTLE COVE PUBLIC SCHOOL – NAIDOC WEEK**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was delighted to see the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians celebrated so creatively at one of the local schools in my area. To commemorate NAIDOC Week last July, students at Castle Cove Public School participated in the NSW Parliament NAIDOC Week competition. The competition invited participants to design an indigenous 'message stick' with winners to be decided by a panel of judges. A message stick is a form of communication between Aboriginal nations, clans and language groups, used to pass on or share a message from one community to another. The quality of entries was outstanding, and I was very proud of Isla Rogan Pateman of Castle Cove Public who was 'highly commended' by

the judges for her fine entry. The school made a display of the message stick entries to commemorate NAIDOC week and at a school assembly, students shared their artwork and spoke of the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The young artistic talent on display at Castle Cove Public was both impressive and inspiring.

#### **JOHN SPENDER, KC**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like pay tribute to the late John Spender KC who died in Sydney on 13 October 2022. The son of Menzies' Minister for External Affairs, Sir Percy Spender, John followed in his father's footsteps to pursue a distinguished career in law, politics and diplomacy. Born on 2 December 1935, John was educated at Yale University in the United States and Gray's Inn, London, before returning to Sydney to practice as a barrister where he was appointed Queen's Council in 1974. In 1980, John was elected to Federal Parliament as the Liberal Member for North Sydney where he served with distinction. During his ten years in parliament, John was appointed to Andrew Peacock's shadow ministry with responsibility for defence support and then as Attorney-General in John Howard's shadow ministry. Spencer held North Sydney until his defeat by independent Ted Mack in the 1990 election. From 1996 to 2000, John served as Australian Ambassador to France where he was awarded a Legion D'honneur by the French government for his contribution to strengthening French-Australian relations. John Spender's contribution to the Willoughby area, Australian politics and diplomacy was significant and I honour his legacy.

#### **CLAIRE BARBER**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to honour Claire Barber who is stepping down as CEO of Mary's House Services which operates Mary's House and the Daisy Centre, the latter of which is in Willoughby. Mary's House provides community-funded refuge and support for victims of domestic violence. Under Claire's leadership, Mary's House has provided a homely, welcoming safe-haven for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Helping women get back on their feet, Mary's House also offers professional case management and referrals to support services. Claire has played a leading role in supporting the most vulnerable in our community with practical care and the opportunity to have a fresh start. I've had the pleasure of meeting with Claire many times since elected and I particularly thank her for visiting my office and helping to train the Willoughby Electorate Office staff. I commend her for her dedication to helping transform the lives of people for the better and I wish Claire all the best in her next role with another not-for-profit organisation.

#### **JOHN ENGELER**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to acknowledge the work of John Engeler, CEO of Shelter NSW. John's advocacy with Shelter NSW during the pandemic and over the long term has focussed on providing leadership in the sector regarding the formation, development and operation of social, affordable & rental housing. His hands-on advocacy and support has meant that he has assisted many individuals and community groups seeking support with affordable housing or the protection of their rights in rental housing and/or protection for public housing tenants from privatisation and relocation. John is a strong spokesperson for the increasing numbers of disenfranchised low-income renters in the private sector and on the waiting list for social housing which include young people, people with disability and aging people.

#### **HEALTHY HOMES FOR RENTERS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On Thursday 13 October we were pleased to co-host a Healthy Homes for Renters parliamentary briefing at NSW Parliament to highlight what members of parliament can do to help ensure healthy homes for renters in our communities. On behalf of the Newtown electorate I want to thank Better Renting, the Tenants Union NSW, and Sweltering Cities for bringing this important briefing to Parliament and their tireless work advocating for basic energy efficiency standards so that renters in NSW do not have to suffer through cold, mould, and unbearable heat in their rental homes. It was so powerful to hear the contributions from Joel Dignam, Emma Bacon, Jemima Mowbray, and Gemma McKinnon.

#### **LENNOX STREET STUDIOS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On the first weekend of November 2022 Lennox Street Studios in Newtown held their Annual Open Studio Weekend. Lennox Street Studios has been running for 25 years as a collective artist space in Newtown and was established by Malcolm Poole and Steven Perrin to provide artist studios at affordable rent. It has been home to everything from art school graduates to Archibald Prize winners and fosters an atmosphere of mutual learning and understanding. On behalf of the Newtown electorate I want to thank Malcolm, Steve, and all of the artists involved in Lennox Street Studios and the Open Studio Weekend for being part of such an amazing collective space that allows art and creativity to flourish and be shared in the Newtown and Inner West community. Community events like this only happen with the contribution of so many

volunteers and organisers, so I wish to acknowledge and thank Nedean O'Keefe and Leon Fernandes, and all contributing artist, for making it possible.

#### NICHELLE RITCHIE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Today I acknowledge the strength and determination of Glenmore Park local and mother Nichelle Ritchie who has gone to great lengths in the pursuit of supporting her five-year-old daughter Peyton Wilson who battles a rare chromosome disorder. Ms Ritchie has been fundraising through Facebook to raise over \$50,000 for a specially designed vehicle to transport her daughter. I'm pleased to report that since she launched her fundraising efforts the true spirit of my local community was demonstrated when local organisations The Great Walk Foundation and WestCare came together to purchase the wheelchair modified van to help support and improve Peyton's life. I wish Nichelle and her entire family the very best moving forward. She is an inspiring example of a strong mother. A huge thank you to the organisations who helped to make this vehicle a reality.

#### JOHN LEDBROOK

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Congratulations to John Ledbrook, a Glenmore Park small business owner who made his Ironman 70.3 Western Sydney debut back in September. It was his first ever Ironman and he did so in the hope that he would inspire his two young daughters and show them that anything is possible if you put your mind to it. The effort required to complete a triathlon, let alone compete in a Triathlon is enormous. It is both a significant mental and physical challenge that requires an incredible amount of determination, grit and passion. Once again, a huge congratulations to John on his achievement and his triathlon debut. I am more than certain that your daughters have been inspired by all that you have accomplished as a father and as a role model.

#### MATTHEW BEACH

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Congratulations to Matthew Beach, a Glenmore Park local, who at the age of 22 has been celebrated by the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation. One of the hardest working softball all-rounders, Matthew has become the recipient of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Senior Sports Star Award. Matthew has competed for the NSW U23 Men's team at the Softball National Championships in Victoria and has been selected to be a part of the Australian U23 Men's World Cup squad. At such a young age, Matthew has achieved a great deal and I want to extend my congratulations to him for his efforts. It takes a great deal of passion to accomplish all that Matthew has and I wish him the very best in what I am sure will be a very successful sporting career.

#### SOUTH COAST SEAWEED

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—On behalf of the Bega electorate, I would like to congratulate local business South Coast Seaweed after taking out the 2022 Indigenous Business Month Regional Business Award. Last week I was fortunate to be hosted by Sarah and James Thomas for a tour at Wimbie Beach, just south of Batemans Bay, where we were educated about the local Sea Country and First Nations aquaculture practices. Mr and Mrs Thomas started their business in 2020 with their focus to revitalise their traditional knowledge to create sustainable resources and build an inclusive industry around cultural and ecological tourism. Their 10-year mission however is to develop a commercial seaweed processing and research facility that will foster growing investment in our region, but also empower the next generation of indigenous peoples by providing career pathways for the future. I also congratulate them on their outstanding work in providing cultural guidance and support for other indigenous businesses in our region and across the country, as well encouraging care for country and community through language, dance, and a vision of holistic health. Thank you for sharing with us and I wish you both every success.

#### NSW SES WARRINGAH/PITTWATER UNIT

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I acknowledge the incredible members of the Warringah/Pittwater Unit of the NSW State Emergency Service. Whether in flood or tempest – our local SES volunteers are always out there and assisting our community through our most difficult challenges. It is fitting that the 2022 Pittwater NSW Government Community Service Award has been awarded to Northern Beaches SES Commander Wayne Lyne OAM. Wayne has been involved in the NSW SES for more than 40 years and coordinates the emergency response to all natural disasters across the northern beaches. Warringah/Pittwater SES members – including Wayne's partner Juliet Smith OAM – are the epitome of tireless volunteers, passionate about service to their communities. Over the years Warringah/Pittwater SES members have volunteered time and expertise in travelling to flood affected areas across NSW – work which can be very dangerous. Thank you to all of our local SES volunteers for your incredible contribution and service.

### **GOTCHA4LIFE 24-HOUR ROW FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I would like to acknowledge the incredible vision behind the creation of the Gotcha4Life 24 Hour Row for Mental Health. Like every community, Pittwater is no stranger to mental health issues. And yet there is still a stigma associated with talking about it. In 2018, two Avalon Beach Surf Club members, Mel and Nathan Wellings, had the idea to create an event that would help raise awareness of mental health, and appeal to surf boat rowers by providing a challenging endurance event. Their idea was to alternate rowers on a rowing machine for 24 hours straight. And so the 24 Hour Row for Mental Health was born. Partnering with passionate advocate Gus Worland of Gotcha4Life, the row expanded through other surf clubs on the northern beaches and then across Australia and further afield – with thousands of participants. With some rowers on the machine for one hour each – this event takes significant endurance and is no mean feat. Recently Mel and Nathan Wellings were deservedly recognised for their efforts as recipients of Pittwater's NSW Government Community Service Award. Thank you Mel, Nathan, and Gus for inspiring so many through this powerful event.

### **WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I acknowledge that today is World Town Planning Day and recognise the importance of urban planning and the planning profession in creating and sustaining healthy, just and productive towns and cities across NSW. This year, World Town Planning Day also coincides with COP 27, which emphasises the urgent need to deliver inclusive and ambitious climate measures and to support a just transition to net zero. I further note the NSW Net Zero Cities Action Plan was released last week. The Plan recognises that Sydney alone contributes 38 percent of NSW greenhouse gas emissions and contains a series of ambitious policy reforms to drive the change we need across our cities to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.

### **MUNGINDI SCULPTURE TRAIL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the collaborative efforts of Kath McMillan, the Mungindi Progress Association, Moree Plains Shire Council and Balonne Shire Council to present the exceptional sculptures of Tony "Nikko" McMillan to the public through the Mungindi Sculpture Trail. This has been a lengthy process made possible by the generosity of the McMillan family. Mr McMillan sadly passed away far too young, but his genius remains through his perspective on art and nature and can now be appreciated on the 2.5km trail. Mungindi deserves this creative boost after taking the worst of drought, fire, flood and covid. In spite of the challenges of the land, Mrs McMillan said that "she and 'Nikko' had a beautiful life together in Mungindi. Mungindi was in his blood." I congratulate the community efforts that have brought the Mungindi Sculpture Trail project to fruition. I commend Kath McMillan, the Mungindi Progress Association, the Moree Plains Shire Council, the Balonne Shire Council and the McMillan family for their commitment and generosity in ensuring the public's appreciation of Nikko's sculptures and for giving Mungindi a boost.

### **BRONWYN PAULL-GUYRA CENTRAL SCHOOL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Guyra Central School teacher, Mrs Bronwyn Paull as the 2022 Premier's Spelling Bee Coordinator for the additional time taken out of her full teaching schedule to make this important event possible. The Premier's Spelling Bee offers a fun way for students to broaden their vocabulary and improve literacy skills, encouraging students to become more confident users of language. I congratulate the Kindergarten Spelling Champion Lachlan. Stage 1 of the Premier's Spelling Bee was won by Hugh Kliendienst, Stage 2 Champion is Laney Orfordhill, and Stage 3 Champion is Oakley Brazier. Both Laney and Oakley will represent Guyra Central School at the Regional Final. I commend Ms Bronwyn Paull and Guyra Central School for entering the Premier's Spelling Bee and ensuring the positive outcomes which at the very least promotes improved literacy skills which is a fundamental requirement for a good education.

### **HAMISH BIDDLE- NSW RUGBY UNION YOUNG REFEREE OF THE YEAR**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Mr Hamish Biddle of Armidale for being named the NSW Rugby Union Young Referee of the Year for the New England Zone. Hamish began his career as a young man and has been perfecting his skill over four years. This season has seen Hamish referee his first senior games where he could demonstrate his prowess. Although 19 year old Hamish could feel intimidated ruling against older players he has taken advice from experienced Rugby Union referee Peter Haynes who advises to stay strong; his decision is the call and nothing can change that. Highlights this year have been officiating at a first grade fixture, officiating the women's 10s grand final, and refereeing at the under 12 NSW junior championships. I congratulate Mr Hamish Biddle as the NSW Rugby Union Young Referee of the Year and his step into the senior ranks. I commend Hamish for his passion and commitment to the game and his willingness to learn and take advantage of every opportunity.

### **WALKTHRUS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Jackie Mautner from WalkThrus on winning the Photography Business of the Year category at the 2022 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. WalkThrus was established in 2018 by Jackie Mautner with the vision of 'making virtual a reality'. Given Jackie's extensive knowledge in the field of technology, it is unsurprising that WalkThrus has built rapport and assurance on quality in all aspects of work including full colour floorplans, customised FlyThru videos, and 3D virtual tours no matter the size of the project. Jackie provides her services to a range of clients by utilising her own software programs impressively allowing for a space to be enhanced, explored, and viewed from anywhere in the world. Across Sydney, she has worked on significant projects including the creation of virtual tours for the Parliament of New South Wales and Cronulla RSL. This NSW Small Business Month is a fantastic opportunity to highlight local businesses like WalkThrus that are an important part of our community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I again congratulate Jackie Mautner from WalkThrus on her success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

### **GYMEA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the GyMEA Chamber of Commerce and the significant role it plays in promoting small businesses in our community. The GyMEA Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic not-for-profit organisation that seeks to boost economic growth, represent the voice of local businesses and help its members succeed. Established in the 1950's, the GyMEA Chamber of Commerce currently consists of over 120 business including retail, cafes, restaurants and service providers. With nearly 7,400 small businesses in the Miranda electorate and 98 percent of businesses in our State being small businesses, the Chamber is vital in creating a thriving network of local businesses through social and educational events. None of this is possible without the Executive Committee members who strive to maximise business potential in the Sutherland Shire. I recognise President Andrew Schwartz, Vice President and Secretary Dean Eades and Treasurer Esna Lee. I commend the GyMEA Chamber of Commerce on their advocacy for local businesses.

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the Cronulla Sutherland District Junior Rugby Football League A Grade Premiership winning team from the GyMEA Gorillas. The Gorillas' 2022 Open Age Gold Premiership Team included 11 players who played in the Under 6s and have remained together through to the Open Age Competition. This exemplifies the Club's culture and ability to nurture its juniors. I acknowledge the incredible players whose skill, growth, and love of the game culminated in taking out the Premiership including Alex Affleck, Jarrod Fitzgerald, Matt Bird, Cooper Ferrow, Jayke Childerhouse, Mick Newton, Corey Lucas, Jed Hardy, Mitchell Wynn, Corey Willis, Joshua Stevenson, Nathan Wynn, Grant Davies, Kerrod Ward, Oliver Warner, Grant Smith, Kristian Dixon, Oscar Pinkerton, Harrison King, Kynan Hodges, Rhys Bobeldyk, Hayden McCrae, Logan O'Grady, Sam Leaf, Jack Allen, Malakai Manoa, Samuel Ollerenshaw, Jackson Lenzo, Matthew Day, Sebastian De La Paz, James Budd, Matt Stubbs, and Zac Brooks. I also acknowledge their coach and officials including Paul Homann, Luke Phillips, Keith O'Grady, Rick Fewtrell, Terry Waters, Jason O'Brien, Paul McCormack, Cain Homann, and Brett McNamara. I commend the GyMEA Gorillas A Grade Premiership team on their win and extend my best wishes for next season.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:57 until  
Wednesday 9 November 2022 at 9:30.**